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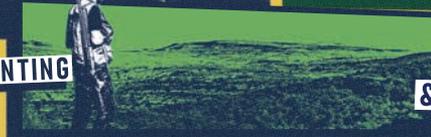
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Look Inside There's Things Living Everywhere

- 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

Proudly printed in the USA by the independent, employee- and family-owned *Lewiston Tribune* and TPC Printing, of Lewiston, Idaho, using soy-based ink with recycled printing plates on recycled paper.



March 2026

Vol. 33 ~ Iss. 11

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Subscriptions

The *North Columbia Monthly* is available for free at over 500 locations in NE Washington and at ncmonthly.com. Subscriptions are \$36/year to cover postage and mailing envelopes.

North Columbia Monthly

P.O. Box 983, Kettle Falls, WA 99141
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Noise Leading to Peace

By Christine Wilson

“Way back where I come from, we never mean to bother. We don’t like to make our passions other people’s concern. We walk in the world of safe people and at night we walk into our houses and burn.” ~ Dar Williams, “Iowa”

“Getting beat up by life – periodically, of course, with some time in between to recover – may just save your life. Hard times can strengthen us, and when we’re strong, it increases our capacity to celebrate and enjoy our lives.” ~ Jason Linder

“Resilience matters in success. Character is not formed out of smart people. It is out of people who have suffered. I wish upon you pain and suffering.”

~ Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang to a group of Stanford students

“My pessimism does not let me off the hook.” ~ Joan Baez

“There must be something like the opposite of suicide, whereby a person radically and abruptly decides to start living.” ~ The editors of Substack

The hog barn at the Stevens County Fair was noisy, smelly, and crowded when I was there last fall. I loved it, for the same reason I took it as a compliment when my mother called our home a three-ring circus back in the day. Our family included two kids and typically a bunch of their friends. There was bantering. The door to the snack shelf swung open with the frequency of a saloon door in an old Western movie. There was usually music or video games or movies filling the airwaves.

The energy I felt at the hog barn was like that. One particular adolescent boy caught my eye. He was leaning up against the back wall of his pig’s stall, scrolling through his phone. His pig was next to him, pushing on him with his nose. They understood each other’s language and I felt like I was watching siblings. The boy’s phone kept getting jostled which led the boy to bark at his pig-sibling. The conversation between the two of them was fun to watch. The whole room was a satisfyingly peaceful three-ring circus.

In the ‘90s, when El Salvador was in upheaval, a pundit described the country as quiet. He said there was no curfew, there were no soldiers in the street, and there were no tanks to be seen. At night, however, there were so many people disappearing that they were given a name: “los desaparecidos.” The family of one of them fled to Spokane and described their absent father as having carried a picture of Martin Luther King Jr. in his Bible while speaking about his admiration for the scriptural message of nonviolence. The pundit said, “Never mistake quiet for peace.”

In the tradition of northern European manners and culture, I grew up in a quiet household. Many of my peers did. We were taught that conflict and anger were uncivilized. No need to “make our passions other people’s concern.” Hearing the distinction between peace and quiet caught my attention. I’d been hearing therapy stories from people who grew up in households infused with hush. I listened to people who thought their marriages were broken

because there was conflict.

When I would ask how their parents resolved conflict, they would often say they never saw any. That usually led me to quote Carl Whitaker, one of the early innovators of family counseling. He asked two brothers what their divorced parents’ arguments were like and one of the brothers said: “Oh, they never argued.” Dr. Whitaker said: “Well, no wonder they didn’t get along.”

My clients sometimes had to endure the metaphor of my 100% English-American grandparents’ 1947 Dodge. Their lives were neither frivolous nor raucous and they never drove that car farther than the one mile to the grocery store and back again. By the time I was old enough to inherit the car, it was so clogged up it stopped running. I inherited another pattern of clog from them as well, which was the quiet I was eventually warned about by the Central American expert. I left my childhood home thinking I never got mad and that relationships survived only if there was quiet.

Random Acts of Community

I saw cracks in my theory that relationships couldn't hold together in the presence of disagreement. I began searching for something that made more sense to me. I learned that peace can be noisy and that, when done with respect, it can be a good thing.

Getting to a livable kind of noisy took some time. It turns out I do get mad sometimes. I think of feelings like a color palate, with five primary emotions: happy, sad, mad, scared, and ashamed. There are a bazillion feelings, just like there are a bazillion colors, but those five were my gateway into making acquaintance with that world. The next stage was to express them out loud. Friends are a valuable resource for that. They can hear you out, help you hone in on what's going on, and, hopefully, challenge you when you are veering off course.

I'm cheating a little bit personally, for two reasons. First of all, my work has allowed me the privilege of hearing divergent perspectives on the roots of conflict. The first two years of being a therapist were like being in therapy myself. It was a crash course in my own veering off course. Sometimes I'd hear someone complain about someone else and feel like I should run out of the office to call someone up and apologize.

The second reason it might have been a bit easier for me is because I was so devoid of skill that I didn't have much to unlearn. I was starting to be a runner at the same time. I had been so sedentary that I didn't have bad habits to undo. I listened and watched and incorporated a running style that worked for me. At the same time, I studied other people to see how to express feelings in a way that made resolution more likely. Also, I watched people who could sit with differences of opinion and experience

no panic or disdain. I was a dry sponge, soaking up every bit of emotional moisture I could find.

I'm not saying I got it right all the time. We are all a work in progress, needing friends who will point out our careening. They've helped me to figure out that noisy peace. As a therapist, I listened to people who said they did not believe in agreeing to disagree. I watched how that philosophy seemed to create an unsettled quiet rather than tranquility. It clogs up the channel to peace, both internally and with other people.

I admit that I do love quiet at this point in my life. Maybe my nerves are rattled from the panic and disdain for disagreement in today's world. One thing I know for sure is that I am not

reverting to my childhood version of quiet. I am grateful for all I've learned about emotional intelligence.

I'm even more grateful for the courage I've found to use that knowledge in my life. Genuine peace starts with speaking your mind. Farther down the road to peace, I've learned to thoughtfully listen to other people's hearts and minds. That's where it can get noisy. Of course, other people have a right to their own perspective and, well, that's when the noise can lead to a deeper sort of peace. From my vantage point, that's the radical and abrupt shift into the good life referred to by the Substack editors.

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

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The Strange Woman on the Plane

By Dr. Barry Bacon, MD

I'm on my way to Africa to teach emergency care – basic life support and advanced cardiac life support. These are subjects that students graduating from six years of medical school have never had. A first in the country of Kenya, I have been invited by Uzi-ma University in Kisumu on the banks of Lake Victoria to help fill in gaps in the students' training.

This is huge for the young physicians because they know this training will improve the quality of medical education and affect outcomes for their

patients for the whole of their careers. My suitcases are filled with resuscitation manikins and practice defibrillators and airway sets – things the students have never experienced before.

But I'm not quite ready. I am on board the jet that will take me from Seattle to Amsterdam, working on my phone as people are boarding, working through tasks that still need to be completed – lectures to write, Power Point presentations, order of training, quizzes and tests – not knowing exactly where the gaps lie in their training,

but assuming that we will need to begin at a basic level.

My thoughts are distracted by movement to my right. A woman is entering my row from the far aisle. With bags and parcels in hand, she makes her way slowly over the woman at the far end of the row. I'm not looking at her, but I can see her. An older woman, she carries herself slowly and delicately to the seat adjacent to me. Odd, I think, why would she climb over people from the far aisle when she could simply have come from my



side?

She does not look at me. Her clothing looks old, worn, ill-matched and frayed around the edges. She wears a mask, glasses and a black hat which is too tight for her head. Her blond hair looks dyed and fake. I decide not to engage with her. I keep to myself on such flights, since I have a lot to do before arrival at my destination.

A few minutes later, a flight attendant greets me and asks if I am Mr. Bacon. I reply that I am.

He hands me an envelope and says he has been requested to personally give me this message. I thank him and politely place the envelope in the seat pocket in front of me for later reading.

The attendant doesn't leave, however. "I have been instructed to have you read the letter now," he continues.

This seems like a strange request, but I comply and take out the single sheet of paper from the envelope. I read to myself: "Your wife of 46 years misses you and wishes you a safe and productive journey. In fact, she misses you so much that she has decided to travel with you. She is the woman sitting next to you right now."

I ponder these words, but somehow they are not penetrating my mind. I look next to me at the woman with the bad blond hair, thick glasses, mask and black hat. I look quizzically at the attendant, then back at the woman.

"There's no way," I think to myself. "This is not my beautiful wife." Try as I might, I cannot see the woman I married behind the disguise. I can't hug her, I can't kiss her, it would have seemed completely inappropriate to do anything but sit there with a dumb look on my face. "This is not my wife" was all I could come up with. Meanwhile, the flight attendant is filming this whole, confounded interaction.

A light is slowly finding its way into my thick mind. My beautiful wife of 46 years has so disguised herself that I cannot recognize her, solely for a chance to surprise me on my journey, give me the pleasure of her company, be there to cheer for me as I receive an award from the president of the Republic of Kenya for my commitment to global health.

I can see her eyes smiling behind the mask, but I still can't believe this is my wife. The lightbulb is coming on, but it's a slow burn. This is the depth of her love for me. She has come to cheer for me, to celebrate with me this once-in-a-lifetime achievement on the other side of the globe.

Slowly she begins peeling away the layers of her disguise, and I can now see what I could not see a few minutes earlier. I am delighted to see her. It is a wonderful surprise.

And as it turned out, she worked really hard alongside Gabel, the other instructor, and me. As a teacher, she graded tests for the 400 students we taught and created beautiful certificates for each of the learners to document their training in basic life support and advanced cardiac life support.

Through this work, we taught 50 police officers, some of them captains, basic life support. These are skills they had never been trained in. They are functioning as first responders to trauma and cardiac events, yet they didn't know how to perform CPR or how to check a pulse. (They relayed stories to us of patients being transported to the morgue, not realizing they were still alive and had a pulse.) The police, along with 350 medical students and physicians we trained, will create better outcomes for the whole of their careers. That will be our payment, bet-

ter care for patients throughout the region.

At one point, I looked out over a classroom filled with 140 students. "How many of you have had this training before? Anyone experienced resuscitating a patient?" No one raised a hand. I am baffled by this. How do you get through six years of medical school without understanding how to provide basic CPR, I wonder. We're going to change this.

Normally this training costs around \$400 per person. I explain to the students at the end of our intensive week of learning that they owe me \$160,000. They stare back at me. Then I explain, "Don't worry, you don't have to pay me. I just need you to pay it forward. Teach someone else." They smile in relief and promise me. They will do it.

I am leaving all our resuscitation training equipment and manikins with them. There will be more training sessions in the future. Some of them will teach alongside us. Uzima University's vision is big and broad. They aspire to be a center of excellence. Being the first medical school in Kenya to provide this training as an integral part of their curriculum is a big feather in their cap. Students who just graduated stay for an extra week just to receive this training. They see its great value.

I'm incredibly grateful to teach and experience this life. Even more so, to share it with the strange woman who showed up in disguise. I reach out and take her hand. After 46 years, it's still pretty special.

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.

Laundry

Article & Photo by Tina Wynecoop

“...moonlight will flare into sunlight, and sunlight, like a whole week of sunshine at once, will flood the land.”

~ Eugene Peterson, *The Message*

What came to mind when you saw the title “Laundry” for this column? Perhaps you thought, “I have better things to read.” I won’t try to guess, but maybe something welled up in your memory like it did for me, something(s) from the mundane to the wonderful.

All sorts of things washed over me. Of course, I could have titled it something more enticing like “As the Washer Wrings” or “Why the Dryer Tumbles,” but nope, the title word deserved to stand alone, elegant in its simplicity. As for me, the title “Laundry” triggered several memories, including “My socks didn’t match.” More about that recollection a few paragraphs down the page.

As a youngster, I loved to help my mom on laundry day. It was a time of companionship with her. We had a wringer washing machine in our basement. It required electricity to operate. There were newer, roller-less washing machines on the appliance market, but my parents were reluctant to invest in new technology, even though the model we used posed severe safety hazards. My mother constantly reminded me to be careful because “the powered rollers could/would catch hair, clothing, and limbs, leading to crushing, amputation, skin avulsion, and potential fatality.” Thank God I survived.

Next to the washer sat the laundry tub, commonly known as a utility sink, with a faucet and drain. The washer water was drained into the tub for disposal, but I don’t remember how that happened. My current home (since 1976) has a laundry tub, and I don’t think I would want to live in a home without one. There are such practical uses for it: soaking dirty work clothes, shampooing hair when there is no time for a bath, bathing toddlers too little to pop in the shower, cleaning live chickens (I won’t go into details), and so on.

The day of the week we did the laundry varied, although that old nursery rhyme proclaimed, “Monday is the day we wash our clothes. Tuesday is reserved for ironing.” Ha! Ironing?

I appreciate people who like to iron. I remember the time in 1985 when I went for a job interview at the downtown library. There were several supervisors waiting to assess my qualifications. When I entered the room one of them complimented the blouse I was wearing. I thanked her and said, “My husband ironed it for me.” There was

laughter – and appreciation. The tension dissolved. The interview went well. They probably wanted to hire him instead of me!

Back in the early 1950s, using the wringer washing machine required an orderly process: fill the tub with water and wash the white garments and the “delicates” first. Next, squeeze the excess water out of them by passing them through the rollers, and then set them aside for rinsing. Now add the colorful clothes to the same water, and finally the work clothes. Drain the spent wash water into the laundry tub, refill the washer with clean water and repeat the order for the rinses: whites, colors, work clothes.

My mom didn’t have a dryer sitting beside her wringer appliance. An indoor clothesline strung from wall-to-wall served as the washer’s companion. She depended on those lines when it was raining. Seattle is known for its abundant rain, or as Murr Brewster calls the stuff “God’s tinsel.” Otherwise, she relied on her trusty solar/wind-driven twirling-on-a-pole drying apparatus in the back yard. Why was it placed in the yard behind the house? I suppose one wouldn’t want to have that clothesline in the front yard with its delicates waving at the neighbors passing by.

These days I have an old *New Yorker* cartoon taped to our indoor dryer. The drawing amuses me with its images of a washer labeled “washer,” of a dryer beside it labeled “dryer” and next to that a similar appliance labeled “folder.” The cartoonist captioned his drawing: “You wish.”

Actually, I don’t wish, because my spouse not only irons, he also folds our laundry. Pretty nice support from a burly logger, don’t you think? Long before I met him, he was in the military where one is required to fold uniforms, etc., with precision. Perhaps that was where he learned to iron?

The photo, taken in 1973, of my first baby’s diapers drying on the spinning clothesline outside our living room window was such a source of new-mother pride for me.

Our indoor dryer was helpful in another way: When it was in motion it covered the sound of ore trucks regularly passing through Wellpinit on the way to the mill off Reservation. I would turn on the empty dryer to cover the jackhammer sounds of the trucks’ jake brakes being applied when slowing down through Wellpinit. With the help of the dryer, napping babies could sleep without interruption.

After assisting my mom with the laundry, and before the babies or the teaching career, when I attended college, I was on my own in every way. Tuition and books, room and board, and transportation were nearly insurmountable costs for me. My parents declined assistance since they thought I should do secretarial work. I was unaware that parents usually paid for college, so I felt liberated instead of deprived. Doing it my way, I learned resilience, determination and ingenuity alongside my college studies.

Perhaps that was their intent. My boarding house didn't have laundry amenities. The laundromat was quite a walking distance from where I lived. Those were the days when perfumy detergents and dryer sheets hadn't been invented. Those were the days when a walk down the store aisle to pick up some detergent didn't cause one to hold their breath and flee.

I didn't mind the laundromat experience in college at all. As happens in communal laundries, often a single sock would get separated from its partner. Whoever managed the laundromat would put the orphans in the lost-and-found bin. There were quite a few unclaimed ones. My heart went out to them. Occasionally I adopted the left-behinds – and that is why my socks never matched.

I saw a comic strip where the wife points out that her husband is wearing mismatched socks. He replies that it is his way of expressing his artsy, creative self. She tells him that he doesn't have an artsy, creative inner self – “you have a careless, disheveled inner self.” Maybe I do too.

Today, at our home we have the electric washer and dryer *as well as* an outdoor clothesline strung between the trunks of two pine trees. It is a such luxury to sleep

in clean bedding that has spent time outside enjoying the natural world as much as we do.

Danny Heitman, the essayist who inspired me to write about laundry, writes: “Laundry and other humble routines of parenthood sometimes made me restless, and I'd sigh and hope for the day when I might be able to focus on higher things.” “But,” he adds, “some wise words from writer Kathleen Norris helped me keep things in perspective. As she deftly noted, to call a household chore ‘menial’ is to evoke a Latin word meaning ‘to remain’ or ‘to dwell in a household.’ In this way, the tasks we often regard as domestic drudgery are really about family connections, about family and household ties.”

The opening lines of his essay are, “When my wife and I heard a plaintive whinny from our laundry room the other day, we knew that our old dryer had cycled its last load. The dryer had lasted three decades...”

As I was writing this piece, my friend called to chat. She mentioned her 40-year-old dryer had “whinnied” its last breath. She was busy looking for its replacement. She said she was running out of clean clothes to wear. I couldn't believe what I was hearing! Neither of us had any idea what the other was doing – laundry. There I sat writing about the subject, the same subject preoccupying her. Coincidence? Serendipity? Whatever, it was worthy of being added to my list of laundry memories.

I'm thinking back to when we rented the house next to the store. A schoolgirl, Linda, lived nearby in a home that may not have had indoor plumbing. She confided to her teacher-friend that her happiest times were when her family would

Continued on page 12...



March Random Thoughts

By Bob Gregson

Winter gives a person lots of time to randomly contemplate.

Houses. Bonnie and I have spent more time of our 38 years together living in this, our fifth home – 15 years – than the entire time I spent growing up in Pasco. That latter was 14 years. That's crazy because these last 15 years here have seemed like just a stack of months, while pre-kindergarten through senior high school in Pasco seemed like most of a century.

On a sort-of-related subject, one wonders how long it will take before the state runs out of license plate number/letter combinations for cars registered in Washington. By the year 2100? 2200?

Nope. It will take many centuries before we run out, eventually going to all letters. Each space on a current license plate filled by a letter represents 26 options instead of just 10 for numbers (assuming the state uses both zero and O). A license plate showing just three letters in a row, starting with AAA, has 17,576 differ-

ent alphabetical options: AAA, then BAA, then CAA, and so on, ending on ZZZ. If plates eventually include up to seven letters and no numbers, by the time you get to ZZZZZZZ there will have been over 8 billion unique license plate combos issued for vehicles. That should do the trick for a very, very long time.

It was fun noticing Washington license plates some decades ago because each county had a different single or double letter prefix, followed by numbers, probably based on county population. A prefix was for King County, B for Pierce County, C for Spokane County and so on. We thus knew where each car came from. Franklin, my home county, was FN.

One evening, seeing that FN in Virginia jolted me. While in line at the military police-guarded gate leaving what was then Fort Myer, Virginia, where I was stationed in 1967, I was slowly following, and admiring, a new, large, light-colored Cadillac with several people aboard. They

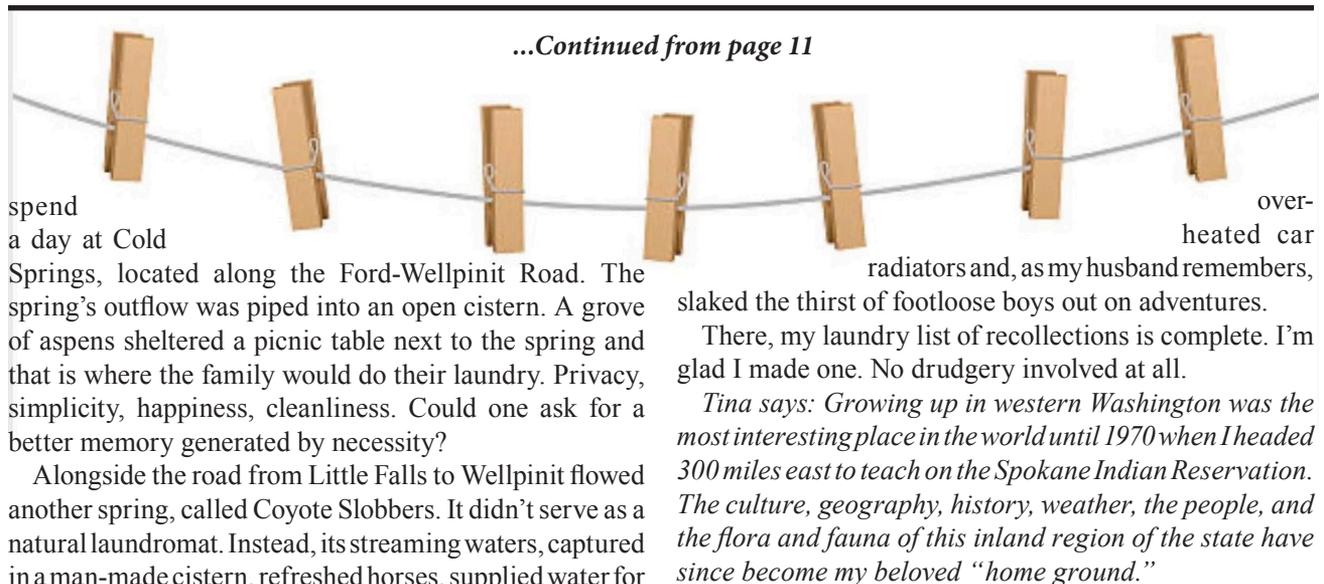
stopped at the gate to ask a question of the MP. I had to stop too, and suddenly their license plate jumped out at me: Washington state with an FN prefix! A LONG way away from their home and where I grew up.

I was too startled to honk or do something else to stop them and have always regretted that. So, if any of you NCM readers recall visiting the Arlington National Cemetery in 1967, in a Franklin County-registered, new, cream-colored Cadillac four-door sedan, please let me know so we can reminisce.

Another thought: This is still the season to do jigsaw puzzles. You may have needed the dining room table during the holidays but it's probably vacant now, ready to lay out all those puzzle pieces in neat rows.

In the early years of this century, we made an annual trip across country in our RV to visit a son in New Jersey, or to attend college reunions or college summer sessions for adults, or a Habitat build, or sometimes all during the same trip.

...Continued from page 11



We liked to check out the local thrift shops en route, especially for jigsaw puzzles and men's shirts. Some Mid-western thrift shops became a port of call every time we passed through, and we'd be sure to get there during open hours. One thrift store in South Dakota and one in northern Ohio are especially memorable for great stock and low prices, with a variety of inexpensive men's shirts and jigsaw puzzles – often 50 cents each for the latter.

A collection accrued, some of which we still enjoy putting together every winter. Those were often 1,000- or 1,500-piece puzzles. Now we're more focused on 500- and 750-piece versions. Recently we were brought up short by a riotously colorful 300-piecer. Initially thinking it was probably beneath our skills, we were soon put in our place. It was really hard! Had it not been borrowed, it would have immediately gone to Goodwill or in the garbage.

Data check: News media now use the words "large data" this-or-that, which often relates to the wonders of computer simulations of human

thought (artificial intelligence) or encyclopedic machine knowledge. It's all about massive amounts of data stored in The Cloud, or somewhere, so we can ask Siri or his/her cousins questions and get mostly correct answers. Instantly. Sometimes I wonder about the accuracy of stuff like that. The "large data" phenomena bit me once and so it's hard to just fall in line and believe.

That bite came about while I worked for Ford Motor Company out of Seattle in the early '70s. I dealt with Motorcraft auto parts, a Ford subsidiary. A small auto parts retailer in Seattle wanted to add Motorcraft parts to what he sold and also update his inventory based on Motorcraft's "best sellers." I was assigned to help him.

Well, I used some large data of that era – the global Motorcraft reference catalog, which listed a multitude of parts. I went through it to figure out what parts he should stock and how many of each, based on current sales popularity. He ordered those I recommended.

But what I, as not-a-parts-guy did

not realize was that their compilation was WORLDWIDE Motorcraft parts sales. European and American cars had mostly common electrical parts, but South America was quite a different automotive world back then. Cuba still is. In the '70s, the folks in Brazil and Venezuela and the rest were still driving lots of 1940-50 models and even some Model A Fords from the late 1920s. And THEIR substantial parts needs were included as sales in my "large data" reference pamphlet from which I dutifully selected the best sellers. The result: My man in Seattle now stocked parts for some seriously elderly Ford products.

The moral: Beware of large data things.

I'm hoping that the owner of that little Seattle store forgave me before he retired. He was a really nice guy.

Bob Gregson, a 1964 West Point graduate from Pasco who served two combat tours in Vietnam, left the corporate world to organically farm on Vashon Island. He now lives in Spokane, his "spiritual home," where his parents grew up.

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Snow Drought

Article & Photos by J. Foster Fanning

When I started this article for the *North Columbia Monthly* in early February, most of the Pacific Northwest was under a snow drought. A lack of snowpack in typically snowy areas can severely impact water supplies, ecosystems, and economies. The consequences include significantly reduced spring/summer water availability for domestic and agriculture use, increased wildfire risks, disruption of wildlife habitat, and major losses in winter tourism.

This is my 49th winter in these Okanogan Highlands and not only is the lack of snow worse than I've ever seen, but consistent unseasonably warm weather is unusual as well.

Scientifically, we get the information about snowpack in the higher elevations via a SNOTEL site (SNOW TELemetry), an automated remote

weather station in mountainous regions, primarily in the Western U.S. and many parts of Canada. These sites collect data such as snow depth, snow water equivalent, precipitation, and air temperature. This info is automatically transmitted to help forecast water supplies and manage resources. The system is operated by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

As of January 20, approximately 23% (16,199 square miles) of Washington was under drought conditions and another 47% (33,391 square miles) was abnormally dry. These are disturbingly low numbers.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's NRCS said the Pacific Northwest's snowpack was in some of its worst shape ever. And the state had only 52% of its normal volume of water in the first week of February.

You may recall from last year how low water river flows were in this region. It could happen again this year; the stage is being set right now. As of early February 2026, the Pend Oreille River showed significantly low water levels near Albeni Falls Dam according to the National Water Prediction Service of NOAA. The Kettle River, flowing below normal since the start of winter, recently picked up due to snow and ice pack melt. The Colville River was running above normal but that was due to early snow melt and lack of freezing.

Most of us know that snowpack acts as a critical seasonal reservoir for the environment. It stores large amounts of water in high elevations during winter, releasing it slowly as snow melt during the spring and summer. The snowpack functions as a foundational



element of regional ecosystems.

Our northern forests are already experiencing severe impacts from generally warmer winters and reduced snowpack. This year may accelerate the problems. The effects can include increased susceptibility to pests and diseases, damaged tree roots, and decreased carbon sequestration.

Our forests rely on deep winter cold to suppress invasive insect populations. Sub-zero temperatures can kill overwintering bugs, reducing outbreaks during the growing season. Warmer, milder winters decrease this natural control and boost survival rates for species such as bark beetles, grasshoppers, and spider mites, while drought-stressed trees become more vulnerable to infestation. Furthermore, warmer winters impinge on the forestry industry by shortening the season for harvesting on frozen ground and increasing the likelihood

of shutdowns because of early dry conditions.

Snowpack is crucial for the ecosystems that support and nurture local wildlife. Less snow means less spring/summer water, reducing available habitat for fish, waterfowl, beavers, otters, muskrats and more. Lacking available water, animals must change their normal travel patterns, which can put them in conflict with other animals and humans. Lack of snow can make it harder for animals to find food, especially when food sources wilt from not having a protective blanket of snow. As food and water become scarcer, animals such as bears, coyotes, and cougars roam farther, increasing encounters in residential areas.

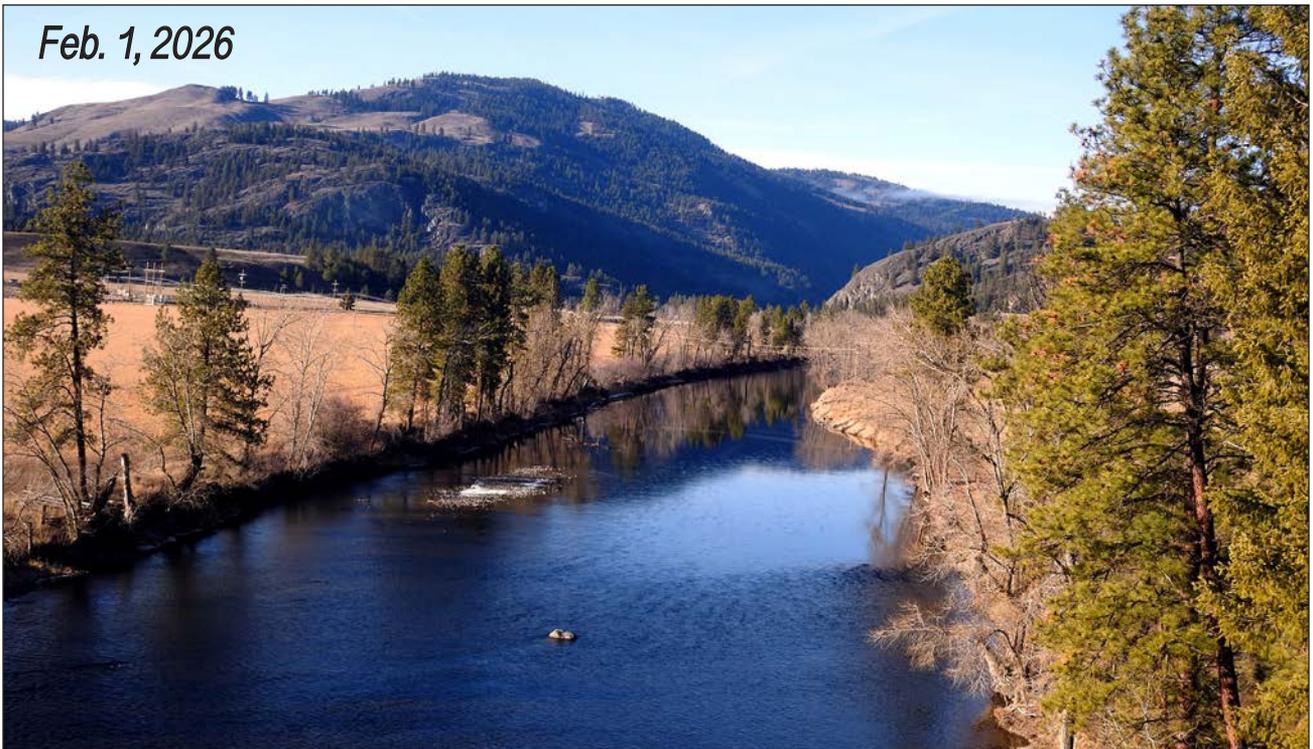
Dormancy of wildlife is interrupted in winters with less snow and can cause bears to stay active later into the fall and wake up earlier, affecting their ability to gain weight and birth healthy

offspring. Snowmelt can impact small mammals and insects that rely on deep snow to act as an insulating blanket, protecting them from freezing temperatures. Lack of snow can expose these animals to extreme cold.

All things considered, while the snow drought and mild temperatures make an easy winter for most of us humans, they are a bane for the natural world surrounding us. If you know any snow dances, March is a good month to practice them. I hope to be able to cross paths with many of you out in the backcountry skiing on a good snowpack in our mountainous regions well into late spring. See you out there.

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.

Feb. 1, 2026



Two Owls and a Cranky Hawk

Article & Photos by Tina Tolliver Matney

At this writing, there is an ornery red-tailed hawk sitting quite comfortably in the flight pen. His name is ... never mind ... I can't type that here. Across the drive in the owl house is "Grace," a beautiful barred owl. And out in the small owl house is "Poot," a western screech owl. These birds came to me via my veterinarian in Spokane where I dropped off two bald eagles a while back. After a tech came out to grab the last eagle he said, "Hey, Dr. S wants to talk to you, can you hang out here for a minute?" "Sure, he probably wants to bring out the little screech owl we talked about last night." "Heh ... yeah, that's it."

I should have picked up on that little bit of snark, but I didn't, until I saw the vet come out the door with a medium-sized box in his hands.

Followed by a tech with a bigger box in her hands. And then another tech with a little box in her hands. They were all grinning like Cheshire cats while I wracked my brain trying to pinpoint in our prior evening's conversation anything I might have said that meant "Gimme all your birds!"

As I got out and opened the canopy and they made their way to my rig, I remembered that I had said, "All my pens are empty right now." But I stood up straight and graciously accepted this menagerie of messed-up birds that needed only to be fed and conditioned for release. Except for Grace; I'll elaborate more on her in a minute.

Dr. S is a godsend. No matter how busy his practice is, someone on his staff always listens to my plea for the sick or injured bird in my care, puts me

on hold for a brief moment while they talk to him, and then comes back to say, "We'll see you when you get here." They have never turned us away.

The eagles I handed over to him had been poisoned, not intentionally but they were very sick birds. He basically had held my hand through the worst night of my rehab career by texting me instructions and walking me through their care until I could get them to him the next day. So, I wasn't about to say no to these new birds we traded in the parking lot.

This thing we do is a group effort. This is how I wish it could be every time, that he could get the critically ill and injured ones first, fix them and then hand them over to me. That is in essence how raptor rehabilitation is supposed to work. I have become better at explaining that to callers who tell me they have an owl with a broken wing, for example. I explain to them that the veterinarian has to be the first step, especially if the situation is closer to Spokane than it is to me.

I spend a lot of time these days coordinating transport to the vet. For the most part, people are very helpful and understanding. I've grown a thicker skin for the people who are not. I swear, by the time I'm done with this thing, I will look like an armadillo.

Anyway, that is how I came to have three raptors to care for at the same time. And here is where I need to tell you the very saddest news, that I lost Whoolio just as this new year was beginning. So, my pens literally were empty and I had the same feelings I had when Bella died. Empty, rather lonely and a little lost while the unfamiliar feeling of not having a dog or little owl by my side didn't sit well and still does not. Feeling "what now?" I've



had a raptor of one kind or another on the property for rehab or educational purposes for well over 20 years.

It was just a few days later that the eagles came to me, so sick I fully expected them to die. But they recovered and we released them just a week later. I did my best to put out a PSA about the drugs used for euthanasia and the responsibility of the folks who oversee the landfill. This was an unfortunate situation, but it was really no one's fault, nothing was done maliciously. We can do everything in our power to prevent situations like this, but nature doesn't always follow the same rules.

This red-tail (pictured left) was supposed to be fed and conditioned and released. The process should have taken just a couple of weeks. We don't release wildlife when the weather is unfavorable, so we held on as temperatures plummeted. And we never let a bird loose when it's hungry. So, I fed him all he could eat and then he went to the ground. I thought he was sick.

But it turned out he was stashing his food where I couldn't see it and had a smorgasbord that weighed him down for four days.

His conditioning also came to a screeching halt when he simply stopped flying when I tried to coax him to exercise. I have empathy for his plight – but “Dude! Move!” Instead, he sits on the perch above and just does his best to poop on me. If he happens to be lower to the ground, he makes himself as large as he possibly can and summons the rattlesnake-like reflexes in his feet.

I'm giving him more unwanted

attention this week so that when the weather warms, I will hand him his eviction notice. It's time for him to go.

As for the owl, Grace (pictured below), I accepted her as a long-term tenant until summer when she would grow a new set of wing feathers. Both



wings have large gaps of missing feathers. She can get a little loft, enough to stay up on the perches in her pen... but if she were released now she wouldn't be able to hunt or navigate through the woods.

The same week I got her, I had an idea. I put out a plea to state Fish and Wildlife who put out a request to other rehabbers and their own biologists and a few days later I received a complete set of barred owl feathers via FedEx. I know... the weirdness just never ends in this great big life. Grace will soon be getting a new set of feathers, and I will

turn her loose into the flight pen. She'll need to be conditioned as well, but I'm pretty sure she'll be more inclined to cooperate and less inclined to rip my face off than the current tenant.

Poot the screech owl will be released this week. For weeks now he wakes me around midnight. I can hear him calling through my bedroom window that I keep slightly open. I think he's calling for his lady... and I pray he finds her. He deserves to get on with the life he was living before he tangled with a car.

So, these are my current guests who make life anything but “normal” here by the river. I have learned to better respect my own limitations but also to be flexible enough to do what I can to make sure our feathered friends always have a place where they can transition back into the wild, where they belong.

It's not an easy thing we do, saving the birds from the accidents and mistakes that are generally a result of human error. But we do it anyway. From the vet who will stay up all hours to coach a tired woman through a dire situation, to the ones who step up and retrieve or transport these wild ones on their own dimes and their own time – I appreciate you. Thank you for helping our wild ones.

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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These Days Are for Us

Article & Photo by Thomas Self

These days are for us. Maybe the air is mostly still and silent as the fog creeps ever-so-slowly up this corridor in the foothills. Or maybe a dense and rushing mist fills the meadow following the deep sound of its approach through the forest. Maybe hoarfrost is sparkling along fence wire and pine needles in the morning light. Or maybe there is an impossibly illuminated, frozen-timbered mountaintop to the southeast in a solid gray sky with no other sign of a setting sun.

These days, in any case, are not the fairest of days. The air is often frigid and unwelcoming, but there is no implicit mandate to pack the schedule and “enjoy the beautiful day,” or take on a major project. Nothing is in urgent need of repair and the livestock appear well. There are no errands to run, no social engagements on the calendar, and it seems that this is also the case for the other people of this sparsely populated neighborhood in the countryside. There’s no chainsaw running across the creek, no rumbling of old engines up and down the county road below, and not even the whir of logging machinery in the distance. There are only the sounds of the mountains and maybe the pitter-patter of snow or rain on my soiled and tattered raincoat.

On these days, even the farm chores are mostly manageable and mundane. I can beat sundown without moving at a dead sprint. There are no especially burdensome decisions to make, and nothing especially laborious to be done. The aches and pains of the body are relatively tolerable, and even my inner monologue is unusually calm and pleasant. There’s no abuse over a recent failure, no fretting or anger over things gone wrong, and no looming dread of things to come – just a subtle gratitude for a mostly uneventful day, a renewed admiration for the natural world, and an appreciation for the doldrums.

Soon enough, these days will be gone for a time, replaced by cloudless skies, plentiful warm sunshine, endless places to go, and endless things to do. Grins will return to the faces of the winter-weary, but I’ll be longing for these days – these relics of a bygone era, this tender aloneness, these enchanting doldrums – these days that are for us.

Thomas Self is a restaurateur and owner, founder, and operator of Waterloo Ranch and the Locally Grown Grub food wagon. He has lived in Louisville, KY, Rome, Italy, and Seattle, WA, and has been a resident of Stevens County since 2022. Both the ranch and food wagon are based out of Rice, WA where Thomas lives with his wife, Jennifer, and his son, Noah.

The Winter That Stayed Home

Article & Photo by D.L. Kreft

Writing about the weather when the weather isn't done is risky. This article might not age well, depending on what happens between now and publishing. I'm generally risk-adverse but prone to fits of foolishness from time to time. So here I go, reflecting on the winter that stayed home. Prove me wrong, Mother Nature!

It is mid-February and it's snowing – finally. Life in northeastern Washington this winter has been, let's say, unusual. We might even call it remarkable, because it will be one of those that folks hold as a standard for its mildness and distressingly snowless qualities. The forecasters say this storm won't amount to much, but what snow does fall eases the mind that some normalcy is possible, even with capricious winter snow clouds.

What this winter did have was a goodly measure of rainfall, above average in fact. So far. Folks in the weather and water runoff profession, hydrologists, start recording the annual water year on October 1st. Since that date, we have received the benefit of warm tropical moisture carried

by upper-level jet stream winds. The rain resulting from a series of atmospheric rivers flooded the west side of the state and drenched our soils with steady rains; nearly every bit of it infiltrating and not running off over frozen ground.

This is the good news, and it is certainly welcome. But in the back of our minds is the gnawing awareness of the lack of snowpack in the mountains. That frozen treasure is like a savings account, whose slow withdrawals of melted snowflakes steadily feed our streams, springs and ponds. Perhaps more concerning is the potential for devastating wildfires this summer. We'll just let that sleeping dog lie and not think about it for now.

There's always hope for more snow. The potential is there if the jet stream dips south and cold air continues from the arctic regions and meets warmer Pacific Ocean moisture. These fronts can drop additional snow in the higher elevations and help ease the potential snow-water deficit. Here in northeastern Washington, I recall one February in 1982, over a Presidents Day weekend, when the local area had 18



A Fresh Air Perspective

inches of snow dumped on it. A few years later, when we lived in the Columbia River Gorge, another Presidents Day storm dropped 22 inches of snow followed by a half inch of freezing rain. It shut down the gorge highways, and our grocery stores became a little crazy with panic buying.

It was a storm that almost killed my wife and her friend in a traffic collision with a loaded logging truck. They had left the children at home with a sitter and headed to the store for bread and diapers. The car slid through an intersection at the bottom of a steep hill and headed right toward the trailer of the logging truck.

We are thankful the truck driver saw it happening and sped up just enough that only the edge of the rear wheels impacted the car, knocking it out of the way like a little red curling stone in the Olympic games. Both were remarkably unhurt with just some soreness from the jolt of the impact.

I was driving back from Yakima in the same storm. When I arrived at our home I pulled into the driveway and quickly wondered why there was no car and why my wife was at the front door calling “We’re okay!!” I soon found out why and offered prayers of thanks.

So, I take February storms seriously. I recall one old-timer in the Clugston Creek area telling me a story that an uncle of his had told him. The story goes that there was a large tree stump along the county road. It seems that on or about March 1 of a year in the early part of the last century there was no snow on that stump. Folks were concerned because there ought to have been at least some snow. Well, the remarkable part is that on March 31, the story goes, there was 30 inches of snow on that stump. Now, I think this might have been a bit of a fish tale, where the size of the fish grows proportionately with the length of the intervening time between the catching and the telling. I have no doubt, however, that

there was truth in the story and that late winter snowstorms are to be reckoned with.

The other item we’ve had plenty of during this “winter that wasn’t” is fog. Fog is not unheard of in our winters, but lingering daily, relentless fog is somewhat unusual. We have had relatively few days of full-on blue skies and no days with temperatures dropping into the negatives. That’s remarkable.

Some places do have relentless fog as the norm. When we lived in the lower Yakima Valley in the early days of our marriage, winter fog was on the menu for solid weeks at a time. If you mentioned it was foggy, the reply from the locals was, “Yeah, it must be Tuesday.” We often became desperate and would drive to the top of the Horse Heaven Hills to get out of the dense grayness. As the road crested the ridgeline you would break out into blinding sunlight, skies of bright topaz blue, and a view that stretched from Mount Ranier in the west to the Blue Mountains east of Walla Walla. In between was a sea of low clouds that went on forever, with islands of scattered ridge tops appearing like an archipelago in a vast ocean. I think of that when I get tired of winter fog.

I look out the window now and it is still snowing, at a pretty good clip, too. But it hasn’t accumulated very much. The forecasters will probably be right. But I’m hopeful the coming weeks will provide additional moisture. I hope the spring rains are good and the heat of summer will hold off as long as it can. Even though winter has pretty much stayed home, I have a feeling it hasn’t entirely made up its mind. Maybe I’ll see if I can find that stump along Clugston Creek Road.

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.

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We're About to Be Fun(d)raising

By Kelli Lippert

St Patrick's Day has always struck me as a holiday of joy, magic, and shenanigans. So, for this year we are hosting a St. Paddy's fundraising celebration! I hope you'll come join us on March 20 for a *hooley*, which is Irish slang for a lively party.

Doors open at 5 p.m. for drinks, appetizers, and perusing auction items. By 6:15 I hope you've found your seat for the best Irish meal in town, prepared by chef Eric Smith. The amazing Haran Irish Dancers start soon after. The audience is allowed, even encouraged, to be hootin' and hollerin' anytime you see something you like, and it gets pretty lively.

This event will be fun and full of merriment. If that's not reason enough to come, then how about the knowledge that funds raised help local community projects.

Afterward, the live auction will be sure to pique your interest with a few things you've not seen before and a few things that were on your list to buy anyway, so you might as well get them here.

Most fundraisers stop after the auction, but this is also a community party, so tell the babysitter you'll be home late and stay to dance, drink and be merry with live music by Old Souls and Antiques.

Rotary has this page in the *North Columbia Monthly* every month because there are so many wonderful things we love to do for the community, and beyond, that we love to share with you. We are a group of people who love to solve problems, fill community needs, and support our neighbors. The other thing we love to do is have fun!

Our fundraisers help pay for programs, grants, and scholarships. We do The Tree of Sharing at Christmas, feeding hungry kids with Backpacks to Bellies, helping farmers and food pantries with No Produce Left Behind, and teaching kids to read with the Dolly Parton Imagination Library. For youth we do both academic and vocational scholarships, a career fair, and an international exchange program.

Ongoing efforts include maintaining the Rotary

Trail, the Rotary Pavilion, and a ball field. We partner with many other organizations such as the Interact Club, the (new!) Rotaract Club, NEW Hunger Coalition, Colville Animal Sanctuary, and many others.

If you are interested in joining a group of people who focus on making our community and the world a better place, then think about joining Rotary. We're not religious or political, just helpful. Our motto is Service Above Self. We meet for lunch at El Patron Taqueria at noon on most Thursdays. You are welcome to come and meet us!

Rotary
Club of Colville

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*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*



LISTEN UP

Reviews by Michael Pickett

Tyshawn Sorey: Monochromatic Light

When not behind a drumkit or teaching at the University of Pennsylvania, Pulitzer winner Tyshawn Sorey is a serious force when it comes to contemporary composing and orchestration. His latest, *Monochromatic Light (Afterlife)*, is an album-length piece created for the 50th anniversary of the Rothko Chapel in Houston. Spacious and brooding, this contemporary work brings sparse orchestral, piano and choirs through dramatic movements and changes.

Inspired by Morton Feldman’s “Rothko Chapel” and Mark Rothko’s monochromatic paintings that adorn the chapel’s interior, Sorey wields an ensemble similar to Feldman’s with viola, piano, percussion, celesta and choir

comprising the majority of the piece.

Haunting, contemplative and supremely confident in its use of space, *Monochromatic Light* begins to roil at the 20-minute mark with vocal swells and tympani, building restrained tension as the piece ascends.

While perhaps not your typical weekend listening fare, *Monochromatic Light* is a fantastic journey of minimalist, abstract composition designed to fill a specific space (I’m betting it sounds amazing in the chapel). By the 47-minute mark, dense choral chords and metallic percussion further escalate the work’s unique qualities as drama builds to quiet crescendos.

Tyshawn Sorey is nothing if not a



phenomenal inventor with sound. His many works weave jazz and avant garde orchestral and thematic approaches that smoothly fill headphones, chapels and other spaces with unique audio experiences. *Monochromatic Light* is a wonderful sonic journey.

DarWin: Evolution of ProgPop (or Something)

Supergroups usually like to capitalize on the “super” aspects of everything. Big names, ego levels and epic faces we’ve seen in other configurations usually create an implosion after two albums. This time is different, with DarWin’s current lineup of Simon Phillips (The Who, Toto, Judas Priest and

more) on drums, guitarist Greg Howe (Michael Jackson and phenomenal solo artist), Mohini Dey (virtuoso bassist across multiple genres), Matt Bisonnette (David Lee Roth and others) on vocals and then the slightly mysterious DarWin on guitars, keyboards.

It starts with the prog-heavy “Man vs. Machine” and the shimmering-clean intro to “Rising Distortion.” There is an almost orchestral (but wry) approach to these tracks, and Howe’s mind-meltingly soulful solo on the latter is worth the price of admission.

And that’s just two cuts into *Distorted Mirror*, the second “concept” album masterminded by DarWin and Phillips. While this band is not short on chops, there is an underlying current

of musicality that would get lost in the hands of a lesser band. Even with the odd-meter, punchy “Cry a River” there are golden melodies that shine through the progressive underpinnings, as Bisonnette – who normally handles bass duties in other bands – sings smooth vocal harmonies over the top as though cutting a radio-ready hit.

That’s the real secret weapon here: Melody is king, and even with sizzling guitars and unpredictable changes, *Distorted Mirror* is a musical masterpiece that just happens to showcase incredible playing by elite, well-known players who seem to like making music together.

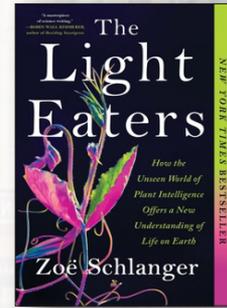
Check out Michael Pickett’s audio and visual work at: <https://mpcreator.com>.



A Good Read

The Light Eaters, by Zoë Schlanger

Reviewed by Terry Cunningham



Zoë Schlanger is a journalist who covers science, health and environment. She's been a staff writer at *The Atlantic* where she covered climate change. She also covered the environment at *Quartz* and *Newsweek*. Schlanger always had a fascination with plants. For pleasure, she would read about the new research that technology was enabling. This has resulted in one of the best recent books on these discoveries, *The Light Eaters: How the Unseen World of Plant Intelligence Offers a New Understanding of Life on Earth*.

I loved this book, not just because it starts out in one of my favorite places, the Olympic rain forest on the Hoh River, but also because I was given a window into what's beyond our senses – a magical world where a certain level of intelligence exists, although it's been a running debate if plants have intelligence.

Like many science observations, it begins with the human experience, which makes anthropomorphism an issue. From what I've come to understand, plants and fungi literally made the Goldilocks condition on earth that allows us to exist. Unfortunately, as a species, we have trod at times on the very architects of our environment, many of us not realizing the incredible work that has gone on for millions of years. As they create life from sunlight, so then can the rest of us can live.

The author traveled the planet, interviewing scientists and researchers, obtaining the most recent and valuable information. About 40 years ago, the book *The Secret Life of Plants* was published, but there was great difficulty in reproducing the experiments and the results couldn't be replicated. This created a controversy about the intelligence of plants that has continued to this day.

Now technology has given us the ability to perceive beyond our senses what is happening in the life of a plant in its natural environment. Millions of years of adapting and evolving to survive in changing circumstances have created survival techniques that go beyond our imagination. It has been discovered that plants have at least three methods of communication. Here are just a few examples.

That tomato plant can identify when a caterpillar is munching on it and send out a signal to attract a parasitic moth. The moth will then lay its eggs in the caterpillar and when they hatch, they will kill the caterpillar.

The *Nasa poissoniana* is a flower that behaves like an animal. This plant has a memory of its pollinator visits

and can be seen preparing to be pollinated by moving the stamens covered in pollen.

The Dodder vine is a parasite that doesn't use photosynthesis but hooks onto its host and thrives off it. The vine is smart enough not to kill its host and can live for decades this way.

Sunflowers follow the sun and work their stems so they don't shade siblings.

Spigelia genuflexa bend down to plant their own seed for new growth.

Boquila trifoliolata – the chameleon vine – can mimic neighboring plants, changing its leaf shapes, colors, stems and even flowers. It is difficult to find because of this ability. Can it see its neighbors' appearance?

The Japanese knotweed, brought to the United States as an ornamental, may be the most invasive plant in the world. It seems to be taking over the eastern U.S. and other parts of the world. It is capable of evolving in one generation to whatever is needed to survive in adverse conditions. This is a great threat to many native species.

There are so many examples of plant intelligence in *The Light Eaters*. I'm going to share a crazy adaptation that seems impossible as my last one. A photosynthesizing slug. Yes, that's right. It eats only one time. Immediately after coming alive, it has to find algae. *Vaucheria litorea* to be exact. The slug digests this algae and turns from brown to green, and this gives it the ability to live on photosynthesis, like a plant, for the rest of its life. It solves the age-old question of what is for dinner. The emerald green sea slug lives in watery places along the Atlantic coast.

Not to anthropomorphize too much, but plants do have many human traits. They have parents, offspring, siblings, families, neighborhoods, friendships, enemies, environmental threats. For me, there is no question that plants have intelligence and we benefit from it in our daily lives. Thank you, plants, for giving the human race a support system and a world where we can thrive. This book only reinforced my fascination with our world.

Terry says, "As a lifetime Earthling, I am constantly stunned and amazed by our world. I had many occupations before I became an arborist, which I retired from after 30 years of very satisfying work. I always had a passion for books and I'm excited to share that with you from my home of over 40 years, here in Stevens County."

Dad Finds Something Glittering

By Madilane Perry

Back in the early 1950s my father was elected prosecuting attorney of Ferry County. At that time, and until quite recently, prosecuting attorneys of counties in Ferry County's class also served as the county coroner. This meant that Dad got in on a lot of grisly and otherwise "unusual" situations. There were a lot of them over a couple of terms, but only one produced a mini gold rush in our kitchen.

Ferry County's population at that time still included a number of elderly, single prospectors. These men had followed gold strikes and rumors of prosperity into the area in the late 19th

and early 20th centuries. Most of them never found prosperity and many were spending their last years in small remote cabins, similar to the gold rush accommodations they had found when they first arrived. Their deaths were often unattended, and that's where Dad, as coroner, came in.

He was once called out regarding the unattended death of an old man in a small cabin up a creek within a few miles of our place. Dad was accompanied by some other official, probably the sheriff. They had completed their examination of the deceased and the circumstances of his death, probably

from natural causes, and were trying to figure out what constituted the old man's meager estate.

The small collection of possessions included a .22 rifle and a small flock of chickens. These were not standard barnyard chickens. They were described as "wild as grouse" and that was pretty accurate. They roosted in the surrounding trees, nested where they pleased and were probably fed irregularly. When the owner wanted to eat chicken, he just walked out and shot one. Rounding them up would be close to impossible and very time-consuming. Dad was asked "Why not just shoot them, take them home and put them in the freezer?" Dad did just that.

When Dad got the several chickens home, he and Mother got busy at the kitchen sink cleaning and plucking chickens. One of them nicked a chicken's crop while wrestling the gizzard out. Among the contents of the chicken's crop were several shiny golden pebbles.

Dad was sure that the feral chickens had struck gold on the ground surface and he got rather excited about it.

Closer examination of the "nuggets" revealed that they were actually brass, not gold. They were the abraded remains of .22 shells. The chickens had picked them up in their search for gravel for gizzard stones and they had gradually been ground down to little shiny pellets.

It was a great disappointment to Dad. The chickens were tough too.

Madilane Perry, a retired archaeologist, was raised on a family-owned hunting and fishing resort on Curlew Lake. She is married to local author Ray Bilderback.



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Being a Historian in the Time of Generative AI

By Shannon Rosenbaum, Director

Inspired by an experience on a popular social media platform, I was compelled to share a growing concern among professional historians and history buffs alike—the rapid use of generative artificial intelligence or GenAI. With its incredible speed and ability to create an image by combing the world wide web in mere seconds, assessing the realness of online images and text is becoming more and more difficult for the average human.

For example, while recently digging for images and information on my hometown of Inchelium, I was confronted with an over-saturation of clickbait – images, memes, articles, and video clips that were quickly created by GenAI. The technology is designed to grab mass attention and commentary, both of which subsequently provide artificial intelligence with the means to better know users.

In a separate GenAI incident, I embarrassingly learned that I had engaged with a fake image and story that had been circulating on social media. I found slight comfort only in the fact that thousands of others fell victim to the same fake image.

For the most part GenAI is now adding hours to our research workloads. In an already complex profession of deciphering context clues, storytelling, triangulation, and documentation, time spent toward assessing whether images or stories are real, incorporating new applications into our workflow that help determine the validity of content, and teaching our patrons and youth to assess information should be spent instead on developing local programming and community development.

In light of this serious situation, and the kind of embarrassing experience I’m certain many of us have had, I’ve now identified a new path for communication and teaching with youth and elders – two duties already included in my job – that involves displaying an image, whether real or GenAI, and using strategies to discuss and determine authenticity.

For demonstration, I used a well-known open application to generate the following image of “Old Inchelium” strictly for research purposes:

The image shows local pine and fir trees, historically



Old Inchelium image created using GenAI, courtesy ICRC.

accurate store facades, a wide Columbia River with a ferry crossing, and dirt roads filled with tire tracks. It represents a past that, to those unfamiliar with the abilities of GenAI, looks “real.” The people even seem familiar – men and women with crisp, period-appropriate clothing and dark complexions, representing resourceful fashion, the eco-

nomics of harsh summer sun combined with agriculture, and the likelihood of tribal descent – something many of us in Inchelium recognize in our parents and grandparents.

But the image is NOT REAL.

In our new path of teaching, we now have a new angle for contemplating history. After dropping the image into an open-source AI checker, we discuss what elements of the photograph seem real or not and follow the discussion with photos and stories from actual collections. It’s become a fun practice for patrons, as much as myself, to challenge the information we are confronted with daily while building digital strategies and discussing history.

A Foggy Perspective

Article & Photo by Bob McGregor

Sitting in my recliner with our home enrobed in the fog of winter, I watch as the rest of the world seems to disappear. Eventually, only the bare tree next to house, stretching out its skeleton arms to touch the moist air that was so missing in our hot summer, remains visible.

The scene is now like a black and white photo that calms my very soul. Periodically the tree's other partners come into focus out of the clouds of white mist, only to disappear again.

For this introvert, as I sit in my warm home, the fog creates an almost indescribable sense of calm and well-being. I am alone in the world, with no worries, no responsibilities, nothing to do but to enjoy the nothingness of the outer world.

Inside the house, the fireplace rests curtained with two empty Christmas stockings. The kids have long since left, and their stockings have taken up residence in their new homes.

But as all good things must end, so must the fog. It slowly

begins to thin. More trees, then homes slowly come back into view. It is now back to that confusing world of obligations, expectations, and social interactions.

But for a brief period, there was the opportunity to escape from our chaotic world.

So, the next time you are trapped in a world of fog, instead of thinking about all the things you can't do, relax and enjoy the solitude that comes so infrequently.

The above was written in December. It is now February, and we still have that blasted fog! While looking for something to do, I decided I would put together a puzzle.

Not that I am really into puzzles, it just seemed better than most of my alternatives: starting on my taxes, cleaning and organizing my garage, organizing my office – though I did start by going through files that I had started collecting in the 1990s. The health folder contained old magazine articles such as “The Best Cure for Toe Fungus” and “What Do You Ask Your Doctor Before Brain Surgery?”

Well, personally, if I was going to have brain surgery, I

probably wouldn't remember what the doctor told me anyhow. I barely remember which fob goes to which vehicle. Not that I'm concerned about dementia, since I still know what the fobs are used for. Although I sometimes have trouble finding the car, especially in the Walmart parking lot. Thank goodness for the alarm button.

Yes, the puzzle seemed to be a good alternative, until I went on a short hike and returned to find my wife had put most of it together in a single hour.

This was supposed

to be my three-day project. I might have even been able to stretch it out to a week.

Then I thought I would just buy another puzzle, so I looked on Amazon. Beautiful puzzles with not so beautiful prices, and I'm not that much into puzzles. I think I'll swing by Goodwill and check out their puzzle inventory. Well, it's almost nap time, so guess I'll think about that tomorrow, or maybe tomorrow I'll just reshuffle the income tax forms.

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.



A Year On The Farm

Lambing

March is the month of lambs. Most shepherds in this area have either lambed or are preparing for lambs at this time of year. In looking back at March editions of the *North Columbia Monthly*, many of my articles in that month have been on the topic of sheep. March is also the local fiber festival month, a fitting time to celebrate sheep.

I try to plan out the year and am anxious to see how many lambs arrive, as that is always an unknown (we do not ultrasound). This week, I have already been in contact with two people who want to raise a dairy ewe bottle lamb. In my worry about finding good homes for the excess lambs, without even advertising I have likely sold a few! That is a big relief. Last year turned out similarly, being able to pre-sell an extra ewe and ram lamb to a good friend.

The funny part of last year's lamb sales was that if I could have chosen the number of lambs for the sheep to have, that is exactly what they had. They each twinned, all girls but one. This year I have made a similar delivery request to the ewes. I have four ewes lambing and have kindly requested that each have one natural-color (chocolate brown, a pretty color of fiber to spin) ewe lamb. I'm just joking. We will be happy with all lambs that arrive. And if I get what I ordered a second time in a row, that proves that East Friesian sheep speak English!

Our ewes are due to lamb the first of March this year, a bit earlier than last year. Melody and Harmony look like boats about to be swamped with water, their bellies are hanging so low (a hint

that perhaps they have more than a single lamb in there). Glory and Lily do not look pregnant, but first-timers can have small lambs and they're due about a week later, so hopefully they are each bred.

As the impending day looms, Jay and I keep trying to check off this imaginary list in our heads to be well-prepared for lambing season. Jay cleaned out all the lambing jugs, just in case the ewes missed the "only have singles" memo. I sourced fresh supplies for the lamb bottles. We stocked up on bulk organic grains from Azure Standard to mix up a grain ration



for the milking ewes.

I also purchased a new set of scissors. Apparently, you cannot sharpen those cheap steel craft scissors – now I know (side note, why would anyone make a cutting product that couldn't be sharpened?). My new cutting tool is a guaranteed resharpenable authentic English-made sheep shear with blunt safety tips, as I would rather go slow than ever make a skin cut.

If the fog lifts enough, I hope to shear before lambing. I use electric shears for the body, but prefer scissors around the legs and udder regions because those areas can get extra dirty while at the same time being the most sensitive skin. Once

they are sheared, which we do while the ewe is standing, I can monitor them better as they get close to lambing and they will be nice and clean for milking time.

We retrofitted the milking platform to fit the ewes better. I purchased hobbles to hopefully preserve my sanity this lactation as I train two more first-time ewes to milk. I sorted freezers and pulled out all the frozen milk, turning that into chicken cheese and setting aside the extra sheep colostrum in case we have an emergency need. Good to know where that is at. I made gallons of vinegar and baked dozens of pies and other desserts, so that I can have my mason jars back and clean to fill up with milk products.

I guess we will find out soon enough if we thought of everything.

I worry about doing a good job and being well-rested in case we have a long night here and there. Then I remember the euphoria

of having baby lambs around. Folks ask what we are up to and how our sheep are doing. When they hear the ewes are due to lamb, they all say, "I love lambs." That about sums it up. The lambs always give me enough energy to care for them, yet, as a backup plan, yes, I really did order 10 pounds of French Roast coffee.

Come see me at the Colville Valley Fiber Friends Spring Fiber Festival on March 28 at the Ag Trade Center in Colville if you want to hear how lambing went.

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

Yoga Through the Seasons —

By Brenda St. John

“Yoga teaches us to cure what need not be endured and endure what cannot be cured.”

~ B.K.S. Iyengar

To everything there is a season, although weather-wise this was the year that was *almost* without a winter. I’ve worn my down coat only once this season. Most snowfalls have been gone in a day here in the valley, but currently snow has been accumulating for almost a week. That’s a good thing.

Our lives can be correlated to the seasons too. Birth to puberty is Spring. Our adult years are Summer. Midlife is Autumn. Our senior years are Winter. It’s not really an age thing, it’s more of an ableness-marker – how well we get around, the speed of our reflexes, cognitive ability, range of motion, and things of this nature. Some people are in Winter by age 50, others are still in Autumn at age 80. We’ve all been dealt a hand, and the only thing we can do is play our hand as best we can. We can’t play cards we don’t hold, as my pinochle friends would confirm.

I was just thinking about how my yoga practice has changed over the 18 years since I began it. I would say my season back then was Late Summer, and I will give yoga all the credit for keeping me in Autumn now for, hopefully, many years to come.

There is a saying that goes something like, “How can you say you don’t have time for yoga? It adds 20 years to your life.” Back in the early days, headstands, handstands, and other inversions were a frequent part of practice. My focus these days is hip, shoulder, and spine strength and flexibility.

My father (Winter) has been falling frequently again. He had many episodes about this time last year, but then things seemed better with changes to diet and medication. When I last visited him in October, he seemed to be doing quite well. But now he is falling again. This reinforces to me how important it is to keep our legs strong as we move into the Autumn and Winter of life. I looked into recommended leg-strengthening exercises for seniors and realized my chair yoga class already does most of them on a regular basis.

Another benefit of yoga is the community aspect. Bonds develop fairly rapidly among the students of any given class. I remember years ago, a woman (a Winter) told the class how grateful she was for each and every one of them, because without the class, she said, she might otherwise go weeks

without visiting with anyone. Her words touched my heart and have stuck with me over the years.

Busy moms and dads (Summers) might find that hard to comprehend, but it’s real. Kids grow up, move away, and get busy with their own lives. Friends move away or get sick or become homebodies for other reasons. Most of my dad’s friends and golfing buddies have passed on. Our priest recently said we have a loneliness epidemic here. I have been pondering that statement and wondering what I can do to help, considering how busy I already am taking care of my household of six and keeping tabs on children, grandchildren, and my father long-distance.

Although I don’t do inversions much anymore, I recently brought an easy one into my class. It is usually called Dolphin, but it is also known as Half-Peacock. (The Sanskrit name is *Ardha Pincha Mayurasana*.) Inversions are poses where the head is lower than the hips. They are well-known for giving the yogi a different perspective. When a problem seems impossible to solve, practicing an inversion might reveal a solution that was otherwise hidden.

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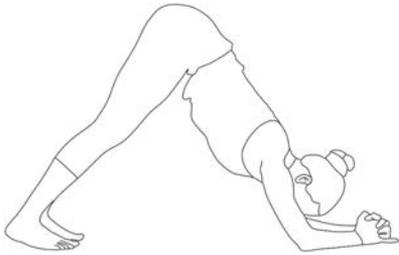
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Dolphin pose is basically Downward Dog with forearms on the mat instead of hands. It could be a good alternative to Down Dog for people who have wrist pain or carpal tunnel. However, it does require more openness in the shoulders, upper back, chest, and hamstrings than Down Dog.

To do Dolphin pose, begin on hands and knees in Table Top pose. Place forearms on the mat, positioning elbows under shoulders. Forearms can be parallel to each other or hands can be clasped in the middle. Tuck the toes under, activate the core, and on

an exhalation, lift the hips as high as possible, just like in Downward Facing Dog. Straighten the legs and press the heels toward the mat. Draw the belly in. Push forearms firmly into the floor to lengthen the upper body. Shoulders move down and back, but maintain length in the spine and the space between the shoulder blades. The head does not touch the ground. Hold the pose for five to ten breaths. To come out of the pose, lower the knees to the mat, sink the hips toward the heels, and rest in Child's pose.

There are a couple contraindications for Dolphin. Refrain from the pose if you have any eye problems, such as glaucoma, or high blood pressure. Bend the knees if you have injuries in the shoulders, back, neck, or arms.

Variations to Dolphin include lifting and lowering the heels with breath, moving back and forth between Dolphin and Forearm Plank, and lifting one leg at a time for more glute activation. Advanced students can take this pose to Forearm Stand (a.k.a. *Pincha Mayurasana*) by kicking the legs up in the air. It is similar to a handstand except palms, forearms, and elbows are all on the mat instead of just the hands. This should be done with the help of an instructor.

A new season is right around the corner. I am looking forward to spring! 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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An Origin Story Rooted in Energy, Movement, and Longevity

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.

Years ago, before I ever opened my own clinic, I spent my days driving from home to home as a physical therapist. Home health is humbling work. You walk into people's lives at their most vulnerable moments, often after illness, injury, or years of slow decline.

I still remember watching people use nearly all of their energy just to get out of bed and walk across the room. By the time we finished a short session, many were exhausted – not just physically, but emotionally. There was very little hope that life would get easier or stronger. The goal wasn't about thriving; it was surviving the day.

Those experiences changed me.

I cared deeply about helping people, but I couldn't shake the feeling that I was arriving far too late in the story. It was meaningful work, but it was reactive. The body had already spent decades losing strength, balance, confidence, and energy. There was no runway left to build something better.

One day it became very clear to me: I wanted to create more.

More opportunity.

More hope.

More time spent helping people *before* their energy was gone.

That's when I began to think differently about health.

There's a basic principle from physics that stuck with me: Energy cannot be created nor destroyed – only transferred. The body works the same way. If we don't intentionally use energy to build strength, resilience, and health while we have it, we'll still use that same energy later ... just to stand up, walk across a room, or recover from a fall.

The cost of poor energy is incredibly high.

So instead of waiting until energy was gone, I wanted to help people invest it wisely while they still had it.

That vision led me to open my own physical therapy clinic. But it didn't stop there.

I quickly realized that physical therapy alone wasn't enough. People would feel better, move better, and then return to lives that slowly pulled them back into the same patterns. They needed a place to continue building strength, not just recover from pain.

That's why we added a training facility alongside the clinic with a team of personal trainers whose sole focus is programming, progression, education, and accountability. These trainers don't just hand out workouts. They build plans that evolve, meet people where they are, and adjust as life changes. They coach movement, reinforce habits, and help people understand *why* they're doing what they're doing.

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Just as important, they help build community.

For adults over 40, health is not just physical – it's social and relational. People stay consistent when they feel supported, known, and encouraged. That's why we've invested so heavily in creating an environment where people train together, learn together, and support each other.

The result? We now have members who have been with us for over five years. That kind of longevity doesn't happen because of motivation alone. It happens because the structure, support, and community are built to last.

As our community grew, another truth became clear. Even strength, movement, education, and accountability weren't enough on their own.

True health span – the years you live with high quality, independence, and energy – depends on what's happening at the deepest level of the body. It depends on how well your cells produce energy.

That's where the mitochondria come in.

Mitochondria are where the body preserves and produces usable energy. When they're under-performing – due to stress, inflammation, poor oxygen delivery, or years of wear and tear – everything feels harder. Recovery slows. Brain fog creeps in. Motivation fades.

That's why we brought in the Superhuman Protocol, a world-renowned system designed to heal from the inside out. It focuses on improving cellular energy production, oxygen utilization, and recovery. For many people, it restores energy that life has slowly worn down.

More recently, we added another powerful tool: the PNOE metabolic analyzer.

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clarity. It tells you where you truly are in your health and wellness journey and, more importantly, what to do next.

No guessing. No generic advice. Just direction.

Looking back, it's humbling to see how far this vision has come. What started as frustration during home health visits has grown into an integrated approach to physical therapy, training, recovery, and longevity.

The goal has never been perfection. Instead, it's possibility.

To help people use their energy to build a life they can enjoy, rather than spend it just trying to get through the day.

And the most rewarding part? Watching people in their 40s, 50s, 60s, and beyond realize that their best years of movement, strength, and vitality don't have to be behind them.

If you've noticed that your strength, balance, or endurance just isn't what it used to be, hear this clearly: It is not too late.

And if you're someone who doesn't want to guess anymore if you're doing the right exercises, eating the right way, or training in a way that actually supports long-term health – there is another option.

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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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Black Earth: Fen or Bog? —

By Cindy Talbott Roché

The word fen comes from the Old English *fenn*, which means mud, mire, dirt, or marsh.

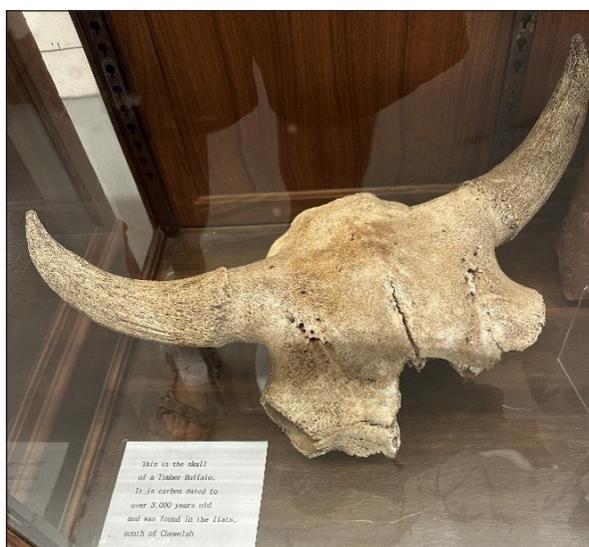
A few months ago, my article in the *North Columbia Monthly* described the black soils in the Chewelah Valley. The black color comes from carbon in compacted fibers of poorly decomposed plants (peat). After reading Annie Proulx's book *Fen, Bog & Swamp*, I was intrigued by the plant communities that produce peat-based soils. Most people have heard of swamps and bogs, but not fens. Swamps are wetlands dominated by trees and shrubs such as willows and alders; they don't produce peat. Fens and bogs mostly lack woody vegetation and both produce peat derived from either moss or sedges.

Because bog and fen are old terms from northern Europe that were only recently (within the last century) given scientific meanings, the term "bog" was used in many place names and publications. This is particularly true in the Pacific Northwest, where most of our "bogs" are actually fens. This confusion justifies a deep dive into the differences between bogs and fens.

I'll start with bogs. Bogs occur in temperate climates with high rainfall. They are fed exclusively by rainwater and dominated by mosses (primarily various species of *Sphagnum*). Bogs are extremely nutrient-poor (because they lack contact with groundwater) and strongly acidic, with surface water pH usually around 4 or even lower.

In the western U.S., the Forest Service ecologists' working definition of a fen is "a peat-forming wetland that relies on groundwater input and requires thousands of years to develop" (fs.usda.gov/wildflowers/beauty/California_Fens/what.shtml).

Groundwater, in contact with mineral soils and rocks, has a higher mineral content than rainwater, giving fens a more neutral pH and



greater fertility than bogs. Fens are usually dominated by sedges, rushes and grasses. Moisture-loving mosses are also found in fens, but they are not the major component.

Both fens and bogs have perennially saturated conditions that prevent decomposition or keep it to a very slow rate. Which leads to another (more macabre) difference between bogs and fens, which is the fate of bodies buried in the peat. In Europe, peat cutters (the folks who harvest blocks of peat from bogs for fuel and garden amendments) have been finding amazingly well-preserved human

bodies that are thousands of years old. In sphagnum bogs, the acid dissolves the calcium in the bones, leaving fully clothed dark brown bags of skin and hair that are several thousand years old.

Contrary to conditions that most of us are accustomed to (that soft things rot when wet and bones persist), in bogs the most enduring parts of a body are *not* the bones. The natural protein keratin, present in skin, hair, nails, wool and leather, is quite resistant to anaerobic acidic conditions, while the calcium phosphate in bones dissolves, given enough time (say, a couple thousand years). Sphagnum moss contains at least two antimicrobial chemicals: sphagnol and sphagnan, which also act as preservatives. In sharp contrast, in fens (lacking the acidic conditions), soft tissues slowly decompose into the peat, leaving just the skeleton.

Did the black peat soils in the Chewelah Valley form under a bog or a fen? Let's look at the evidence. First, fens are fed by groundwater and are not strongly acidic. The two black soils in the valley are not strongly acidic: Bossburg Muck has a neutral pH and mild alkalinity (mineral content) and Saltese Muck is medium-to-slightly acid. Both soils are described having a seasonal water table that ranges from surface level to a depth of a foot (above the surface) from February to May (Stevens County Soil Survey). This water comes from groundwater: springs where the upper aquifer meets the valley floor and from

floodwater from the Colville River. Moderately rich fens (fens with mineral-rich groundwater) create peat with a more neutral pH (5.5-6.9) and low to moderate alkalinity. A solid check mark for a fen.

Second, while the peat soils here haven't yielded any preserved bodies (there hasn't been any peat cutting), there is an exhibit at the museum in Chewelah of the skull of a timber buffalo (wood bison) more than 3,000 years old that was found in the flat south of Chewelah. In a bog, a skull would have dissolved in that time. A check mark for a fen.

Third, I was curious about the original vegetation over the peat soils – whether it was a highly diverse array of sedges, wetland grasses and wildflowers that are found in fens. Most of the peat soils in the Chewelah Valley have been drained and farmed, leaving no trace of the original vegetation; even the areas that are no longer regularly cultivated are mostly dominated by reed canarygrass, an invasive non-native grass. I decided to look on the Stevens County Soil Survey maps for places with peat soil that haven't been plowed. I found several locations in the valley with intact native vegetation: Paye Creek on the north side of Kramer Road, the west side of Waitts Lake, and the northwest side of Loon Lake. A dense cover of sedges, rushes, and other water-loving plants dominate these sites. A solid check mark for a fen.

Considering the evidence, I'm comfortable saying that the valley at Chewelah harbored several large fens at the time that settlers arrived. As I look across the peat soils in the Chewelah Valley, I like to imagine

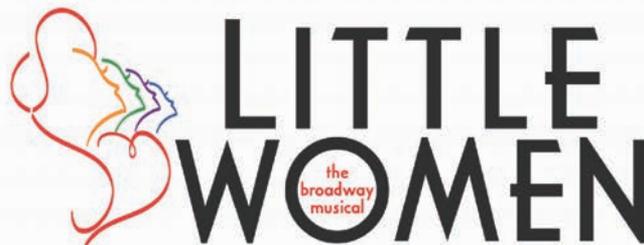
herds of wood bison grazing contentedly in a wet sedge meadow as the last Ice Age glaciers receded north.

Cindy is a 1973 graduate of Jenkins High School. Her publications include the Field Guide to Grasses of Oregon and Washington, grass illus-

trations in Flora of North America, and botanical articles in Kalmiopsis. Her current passion project is restoring wetland habitats for wildlife on the family farm. She can be reached at grassesandmore@gmail.com or at grassesandmore.wixsite.com/grasses.

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Food Fight

By Joe Barreca

Both my mother and father grew up in large families, seven kids each, on small farms in Missouri and Oregon. Both of them left their farms to fight in World War II, never to return to the farm. They went to college on the GI Bill after our triumph in the war. America went big in 1943. It built hundreds of big boats, big airplanes and big tanks. That took thousands of factories, huge supply chains and efficient logistics. They were both very proud of what the United States had done and what the country had become since they were kids growing up in the Depression.

By 1962, when I was in high school, we had superhighways, supermarkets and super-sonic airplanes. Meanwhile, back on the farm,

not much had changed. The New Deal's Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1933 was providing price supports for small farmers (costing a lot of tax money) that allowed farmers to live off the land, produce enough food to win a war and keep prices low.

Government called in the captains of big business, the Committee for Economic Development (CED), to look at the problem. The 1962 "Adaptive Program for Agriculture," proposed by the CED, resulted in a policy recommendation to solve agricultural "overproduction" by intentionally reducing the number of American farmers through government action, moving people to urban jobs, keeping commodity prices low, and promoting larger machinery to replace labor. It was a "bigger is better" approach that my parents would have believed.

This solution to the perceived problems reminds me of "Manifest Destiny," the excuse for the decimation of indigenous peoples and their way of life as agriculture moved west. Both solutions frame their intent as facilitating a transition to an inevitable future. Both ignored the beauty, sustainability and healthy ecological diversity of the landscape they were transforming.

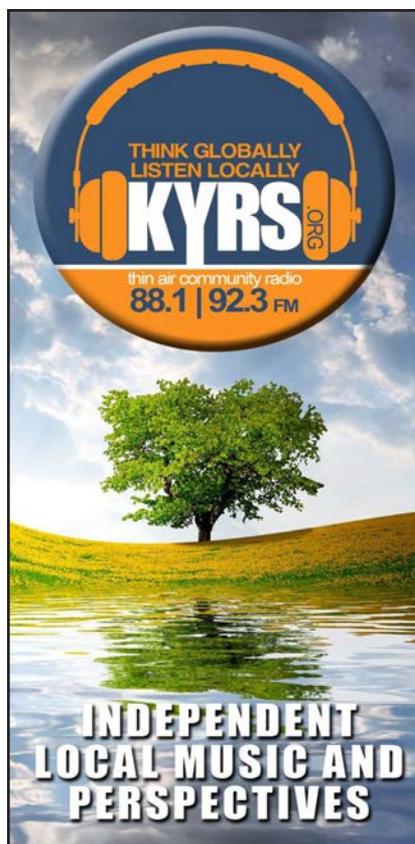
The CED recommendations were soon adapted into the Federal Manpower Development and Training Act and the 1965 Farm Bill. The first helped move young people into cities. The second retained price supports based on previous production whether new crops were planted or not. Note that fruits and most vegetables were not supported. Producing corn, soy, wheat and meat gave the United States advantages in for-

eign markets. A balanced diet was not an objective.

An Okanagan tribe member, Chad Eneas at the En'owkin Centre in Penticton, BC, described the commerce introduced by the fur traders as "extractive." He explained how water that is part of the land where tribal members live is sacred, but in the modern economy it becomes just another commodity, trapped behind dams and rationed out to produce electricity. As such it becomes more valuable the farther away from the source it can be taken.

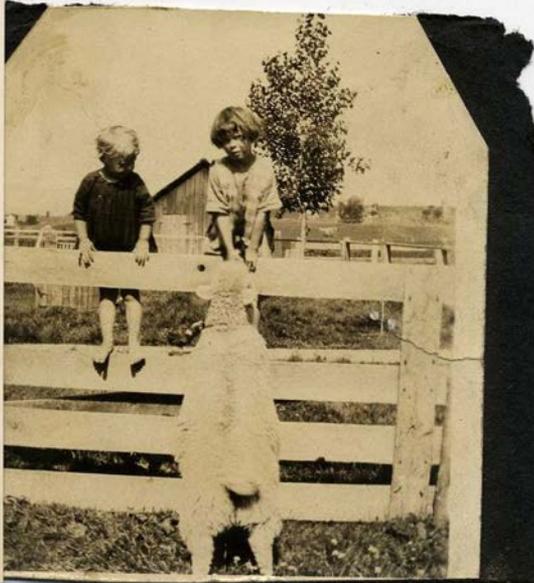
With the arrival of the trappers, the Salish word for beaver began to mean "money." They trapped beaver to acquire specific goods such as knives and guns. But as with all of us, money came to mean wealth with no specific intention other than security, power and status. In our system to increase wealth, you need to control the source of commodities and their distribution. If you extract commodities from their source, consolidate the supply of goods in warehouses and concentrate their distribution in stores, you control the price and accumulate wealth. Long distances between source, storage, distribution and sales increase value. They also increase the demand for fuel.

Over the 60-plus years since the CED recommendations, supply lines have become worldwide. Supermarkets have become supercenters. Millionaires have become billionaires. Family farms are endangered and now farmers have the highest suicide rate of any occupation (thinkregeneration.com). The average farmer makes only 14 cents on every retail food dollar (Pew Research). On small family farms the average an-





Mom's Farm 1928



nual off-farm income was \$82,809 in 2021 while the average income from farming was \$210 (USDA).

Urban refugees are coming to rural Washington. The majority will not be farming for a living. The opportunity to live rural is increasing because of photovoltaics and wireless communications. The ways to make a living on a farm but not from the farm have been increasing since the COVID epidemic.

Overall, however, we still rely on the extractive food economy. My parents would not have believed that many rural areas are now considered "food deserts." Food in our stores travels, by one measure, an average of 14,000 miles. The growing size of farms damages ecology above ground and destroys the biology below the ground. The distances increase prices and decrease nutrition. (I will write more about the need to see food as medicine in a later article.)

Yet, just as we have new ways to build a more independent infrastructure, we also have ways to become more locally self-sufficient. These include farmers markets, community supported agriculture where consumers subscribe to food deliveries directly from farmers, and local stores such as the Milk House that stock locally made products.

There is a growing trend of cottage food industries. We now have at least two bakeries in northeast Washington specializing in sourdough bread, for instance. Perhaps surprisingly, entrepreneurial businesses are more resilient in rural areas than cities (PBS). Cottage food is safe. According to the Institute for Justice, there has never been an outbreak of food-borne illness from food sold under a cottage food law. The money-and-food exchange stays local and not extractive. The sources are transparent and directly responsive.

Washington State's Cottage Food

Law allows individuals to produce non-potentially hazardous foods in home kitchens for direct sale to consumers, with a \$35,000 annual gross sales limit. Permitted items include baked goods, jams, jellies, and dry mixes. A permit from the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) is required, costing \$355 for two years, which includes a home kitchen inspection. Meat/poultry/fish (including jerky), canned veggies/salsas, dairy products,

raw seed sprouts, and refrigerated bakery items are prohibited.

Our state could do better. Washington is one of the three most restrictive states in the country on cottage food laws. For more information, contact the Institute for Justice (ij.org) about their food freedom initiative. This fight can be won.

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

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The Miller Lux

By Steven Bird

My article, “Place,” in the February issue of *North Columbia Monthly* featured a photo of me riding a Miller Lux cutting saddle. Taking it for granted that everybody in the world reads minds, I didn’t bother to label or identify the photo when submitting the article, so the editors mistook me for the 1937 Pulitzer Prize-winning writer from Oregon, H.L. Davis, author of *Honey in the Horn*. This was pure flattery. Yet a mistake was made, so my first impulse was to fire off a needling letter to the editor punishing him for what was, mostly, my own fault. So, I fired one off. And haven’t heard back yet...

Looking at that old photo, taken in the late 1970s when I was working summers as a range man on the Smackout Meadows BLM grazing allotment for ranchers Bob Connelly and John Dawson, did inspire a load of nostalgic memories of days spent mounted on that Miller Lux saddle (pictured), and that leading to fond memories of the old horsemen I knew and had the pleasure of riding with. Most of them gone now.

My friend Clifford Ward is still around. An eastern Oregon buckaroo in an earlier incarnation, he now works as a librarian in Northport and sides playing guitar for Murphy’s Legacy and Planetary Refuges.

There was Conrad Hartbauer of Northport, who lived to be 100. As a young man, Conrad was the Aladdin Valley mail carrier, delivering the mail on horseback, as the road was not suitable for automobiles at that time. Later in life, Conrad earned a living selling knives made from broken saw blades he collected from the sawmills.

He made all types of knives, nothing fancy, yet incredibly utilitarian, the handles carved from native woods. The Hartbauer knives (pictured on facing page) are prized, and I’d wager that most folks who live around Northport own at least a couple.

And there were Pat Graham, Harry Laird, Jack Lael, George Lucero, Bill Mo and Ray Wiley. Ray was in his late 70s and still hard to keep up



with when he and I greenbroke a couple of very juicy quarterhorse colts he had running on big pasture out at his place.

Harry Laird’s wife loved the color lavender to the point of obsession. Harry indulged her, painting the house lavender inside and out, also the barn and outbuildings, and Laird’s Quarterhorses was renamed: Lavender Land Quarterhorses.

Those old-timers I’ve named all began life in an era when horses outnumbered automobiles in our region; they were members of the Greatest Generation, and great they were. They were hard-working, honest, kind, generous and fun-loving. They were

all great storytellers, and some, like Pat Graham and Bill Mo, legendary rascals known for their outrageous pranks and deadpan humor. “I was over there in France in World War Two, an’ ya know, them French kids sure are smart, they can speak that language by the time they’re four years old!” Those sorts of one-liners delivered straight-faced – yet don’t be fooled, it was an act, there was nothing sophomoric about those men.

Bill and Ada Mo were born to pioneer ranchers in the Flathead Valley. They married young, at the outset of the Great Depression, and for reasons lost to history wanted to start their own ranch a long distance from their parents.

For a honeymoon, they saddled their favorite horses, loaded their camp gear on a packhorse and headed west toward Washington, looking for a homestead of their own. They rode and camped until they came up against the Columbia River, where they bought land and created the Mo Ranch, at the confluence of Williams Lake Road and Hwy. 25.

Back in Montana, their parents gave them a small herd of cattle and horses for a start. Bill and a buddy, an Indian cowboy, drove the stock to the Washington place while Ada drove the team and wagon holding their possessions.

After getting the outfit up and going, Ada took a job with the Department of Natural Resources, where she made a career until retirement, while Bill ran the ranch. The Mo Ranch supplied the Colville rodeo with bulls and bucking stock for many years. Bill and Ada were both horse lovers and always had a few that needed training, and I met them when they hired me to start

some young horses. That rascal Bill kept a bottle of whiskey stashed in the tack room, and whenever I was over we'd go in to "inspect the horse tack" and Bill would pull the bottle out.

If that old Miller Lux saddle could talk, what tales it might tell. I got the saddle from Bob Pinkerton who, along with his wife, Sharley, moved to Northport from California in the early 1970s. I got the saddle in trade for painting their house.

As a young man, Bob had worked as a hand on the old Diamond Bar Ranch near Pomona, California. The Diamond Bar was originally a Spanish Land Grant, founded in 1840 when California governor Juan Alvarado granted 4,340 acres of land to Jose de la Luz Linares. The ranch changed owners several times, acquiring more land with each owner. Finally, unable to stand against the burgeoning population growth and development of Southern California, it was sold to housing developers in 1959.

With its close proximity to the Hollywood studios, many of the old westerns were filmed at the Diamond Bar in the early part of the 20th century, with the working ranch cowboys sidelining as extras in the movies. The saddle was used when Bob acquired it from an old cowboy who had worked the stockyards for the Miller Lux Ranch.

The Miller Lux was founded by two German butchers, Henry Miller and Charles Lux, in 1863. Miller acquired lands and cattle while Lux did the accounting and dealt with the San Francisco bankers. They acquired many of the old Spanish ranchos and as much federal land as they could finagle, growing their holdings to 22,000 square miles across Oregon, Nevada and California. The California hold-

ings stretched from Oregon to the Mexican border, including most of the San Joaquin Valley, pasturing a million head of cattle and 100,000 sheep.

Henry Miller was a micro-managing perfectionist who spent all of his time visiting the far-flung outposts of his empire, constantly firing off notes to his ranch managers, covering every detail, including how to introduce cats to the granaries and how many cats each granary should have. The ranch holdings were so extensive, the Miller Lux had its own stockyards on the shipping lines, and also its own saddle makers.

Miller insisted on quality and perfection regarding everything the ranch produced, and that certainly showed in the Miller Lux saddle that came to



me. Though it would have been between 70 and 100 years old when I got it, and showing honest wear, the leather parts were still in good shape, the saddle tree and its rawhide covering still perfect.

Most of the cowboys working for the Miller Lux were Mexican vaqueros (buckaroos) who had previously worked on the Spanish ranchos, and their influence, the buckaroo style, can be seen in the Miller Lux saddle – the high cantle and 5/8ths rigging (position of the girth strap nearly center of the saddle, as opposed to the 3/4 rigging popular in modern roping saddles) and the stirrup leathers placed outside the fenders.

Mine was a cutting saddle, designed for the riders working the stock yards. It was the most comfortable saddle I

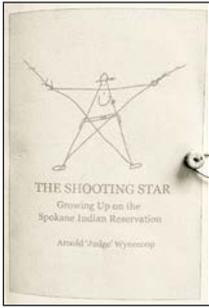
ever rode, with a deep seat that kept a rider up on a horse's withers, and fork swells just large enough to hold you snug. Perfect saddle for starting young horses, cutting cattle, or riding long distances.

Cowboys are pranksters, and the boys working on John Dawson's valley ranch near Colville were no exception. They'd killed a fat rattlesnake and snuck it onto my doorstep in the middle of the night, curling it up and positioning it to look like it was ready to strike – a surprise when I opened the door in the morning. I skinned the rattler and stretched the hide over the cantle of my saddle, tacking the ends with furniture tacks, an idea I got from the Charles Russel painting "Innocent Allies." We were moving cows that day and when I showed up to meet them, I was wearing their snake stretched over my cantle. You should've seen those rascals' faces!

I'd ridden many miles and a lot of green horses with that saddle before losing it in the early 1990s. We had a neighbor, a horse woman, with a crappy saddle. She'd ridden mine and loved it. So, not having any horses of my own at the time, I lent it to her. Meanwhile, an old friend came to stay with us, and while with us, he met our neighbor. There are girls who cannot resist a cowboy.

They secretly fell in love, and she took my saddle with her when she left her husband and absconded with my friend. Never saw the nefarious couple, or my saddle, again. Things come and go, I guess. Wherever the Miller Lux saddle is now, I hope it is being put to good use and taken care of. It carries memories that reach back to a gilded age that will never be again.

Steven Bird is a freelance writer living beside the Columbia River. He is hopeful.



The Shooting Star: Growing Up on the Spokane Indian Reservation

By Judge Wynecoop

Excerpts from Judge Wynecoop's 2010 book *The Shooting Star: Growing Up on the Spokane Indian Reservation*, reprinted with permission.

THE OATS ARE UP

When a boy is learning how to farm, things can go wrong. Dad had given me my first opportunity to plant an oat crop using the wheel tractor and drill. It was a small patch down in the "20 acres," probably about four acres because this patch of land was swampy and the place to be planted was the only high and dry place to plant anything in springtime.

Well, I did my job planting oats and took the equipment back up to our home. Several days went by but no oats showed up. Finally, Dad asked me, "Did you remember to open the ports?" I knew I had blown it because I asked, "What are ports?"

So, back down to the small field to redo everything. Several mornings later Mom called up the stairs at wake-up time and said, "Judge, the oats are up."

What a relief and thank God that one patch was small. What if it had been the size of the field Bernard Floods owned? Dad had "loaned" me to Bernard because the wheat rancher, who lived north of Reardan, had some kind

of problem and couldn't work for a while. Bernard got me lined up and told me how to harrow one of his large fields.

I began harrowing using a TD-9 crawler which pulled 40 feet of harrow. I had worked in from the outer edge and was getting in toward a fairly steep hill, which I had to go up. Part way up, I needed to shift down to a lower gear and in doing so I shifted into reverse and backed over the main beam that the harrow was hooked to. The beam was made out of a tamarack pole, and backing over it broke it.

The next day I was weeding the garden for Bernard's wife. That night Dad came and took me home, which made me happier anyway.

BLACKSTAR

When we got a day off from haying in the summer we used to head for the woods or Chamokane Creek or Benjamin Lake or Turtle Lake – or maybe we would go up to Spokane Butte to the fire look-out. Up there we would find our friend Blackstar the magician. He was a great character. He had been crippled somehow, maybe by polio, which

was one of the feared diseases at the time, along with diphtheria, measles and smallpox.

Blackstar (Ignace Camille) could do magic tricks and tell great stories. He was kind of reserved in his magic tricks. He feared giving away the tricks of the trade since he, at times, would put on a magic show at some event around our area. He had an interesting accent. I remember Carson Sherwood mimicking him. Carson would pretend to be reporting a fire and would squint along an imaginary fire-spotting table and call in, "There's a big smick by the racetrack!"

[In 2024 Michael Claxton published an excellent article, "Chief Blackstar's 'Indian Mystery Revue.'" I hadn't been aware of it until preparing mine for NCM. – Judge]



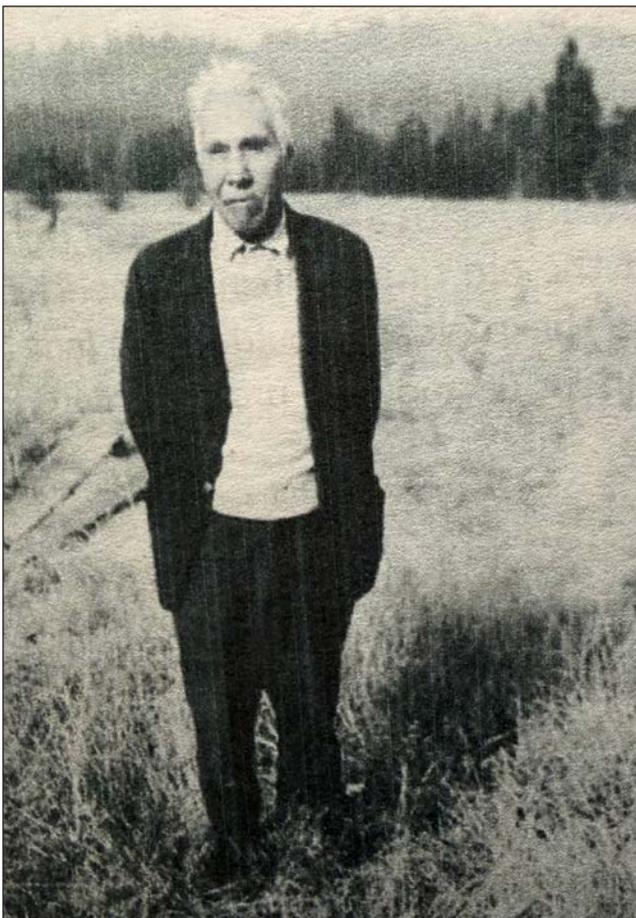
LeBret's Store, and then Galbraith's General Store, a Wellpinit landmark. Photo from The Shooting Star book.

ALBERT SAM

Another of the old-timers who would willingly share stories was Albert Sam. Mr. Sam was great. He would lead the congregation of our Wellpinit Presbyterian Church in singing. He would perhaps ask us to turn to Hymn # “pippy pibe” (55) in the hymnal. One song that always stuck in my mind was “Shall We Gather at the Ribber.”

At Christmas we would have a large tree beautifully decorated and the whole community would bring gifts for friends who they may not see for the holiday. Mr. Sam would call out the names from the gift tags. I remember when he held up a gift and called out, “Root Galbrate” (Ruth Galbraith was my mom’s youngest sister). It was a great time. We all got a brown bag containing an apple or orange, lots of nuts, and hard Christmas candy. These gifts came from the First Presbyterian Church in Spokane, I believe.

I remember another time, this time at the school picnic held at the end of the school year. There would be a baseball game between the high school team and the town team, or whomever they could scrounge up for players.



Albert Sam, Wellpinit, WA, circa 1935. Photo by Richard T. Lewis, courtesy Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture.



Blackstar. Photo from The Shooting Star book.

This time Mr. Sam was on the town team, and he drew a base on balls, and when he went to first base he just kept on going in a quiet sneaky-like run and went right on to second base. He got a lot of applause for that move. There had been some kind of confusion going on at the time.

Mr. Sam was in his 60s. We would help with his cattle. Seems like his and ours ran the same range and would be mixed up by Fall. One time my brother Wig, our cousin Hobe (Hobart) Bair and I ran into Mr. Sam at the store at Wellpinit. I remember him saying, “Ho! Bear!” Wig and Hobe had delivered a couple of his cows to him. After this, “Ho! Bear!” became the standard greeting whenever we saw Hobe.

When we were kids, during and just before the Second World War, we would love to go to the Wellpinit store and post office. The store at that time had a long porch on its front, with a hitching rail in front of that. There were always some of the old-timers sitting on the benches on the porch and as we left the store these elders would talk in Indian. We were sure they were talking about us – and they probably were.

Spring Sprung – Just Kidding! —

By Becky Dubell

Mother Nature is one very fickle lady. Always changing her mind. Loves to throw surprises our way. This is what she told me. “Here is 40° for you. Feels pretty good – right? Well ... Surprise! Here are the single digits that I was keeping in reserve just for you! Oh. But before that – here is some white stuff that I found in the back of the shed. I had forgotten all about it. It’s a little old so you might be getting a conglomeration of stuff – sloppy/slushy snow, a skiff to sweep or a BUNCH to plow, white-outs, perfect snowman snow or snowball fight ammo. I can’t guarantee what will happen. Have fun! Tee-hee.” (Personal Note - The picture shows two types of snow - plowed and snowman.)

Well, lady, you did catch us by surprise. I have heard that some snow shovels went back to the barn and, personally, my unused new (to me) plow, known as Rogue, was put under a tarp until a spot in the barn is cleared out for his new home. He had to come out of hibernation to start earning his keep. Dan, my son-in-law, got to test drive him before I could – dangnabit anyway!

And me, being the procrastinator that I am, still had my three shovels leaning against the house armed and ready for me to play with. Not wanting to disappoint them, we went out to play when I got back from my drive. Only needed two of them, though. Hope #3 does not feel slighted.

I am back to doing the volunteer driving for Rural Resources. My first drive was on a Monday when it started snowing. Being a girl that learned to drive in Alaska, it was not a problem until I would get someone way too close behind me. I tend to drive what I consider right for the conditions, and it is not 50 m.p.h. on Sherman Pass in the snow like some people tend to do. Thank goodness there are pull-outs for the slow (cautious) drivers.

I think it added another 10 minutes to my drive. I got there without white knuckles and with all my fingernails. Got to see a moose going across the road. In Alaska these critters spend a lot of time on the road licking at the deicer salt. Thank you, Mr. Moose, for not sticking around. Nothing good ever comes out of hitting a moose, even

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when you are being a slowpoke like me. Also saw one on the return about 10 hours later – pretty stinkin’ cool! Beepers, my Jeep I got from Mom, handled the trip like a trooper. Since she was also raised in Alaska I expected no less.

Then on Thursday ... the snow Mother Nature sent was on purpose, I’m thinking. I planned a trip to pick up sister Lanie at the airport and drive to Grand Coulee to see our dad. Mother Nature knew about this trip, I’m sure. Seems like whenever Lanie flies into Spokane, she brings some weird weather, and Mother Nature just could not pass up this opportunity.

I dropped Lanie at Daddy’s. Drove home through Spokane cuz it was snowing and did not want to do the river roads. Got up where the fields of sunflowers are (in the summer, of course) north of Spokane. White-out conditions. Pulled into the gas station – along with about eight other cars. Called daughter Darcy back in Spokane and was told I could use the couch. It was no longer a white-out and a sanding truck was ahead of me. Thank you, babe!

I am putting ALL my Alaska-style winter gear in Beepers tomorrow. I did not do my usual vigilance – plan for the worst and hope for the best. When I got to Darcy’s, my car looked like it had a bunch of raindrops on it. But when wiped on – they were frozen drops. I figure the roads had to have been frozen also. I consider myself very lucky I did not end up off the road. Added to the Alaska style will be more stuff – like a toothbrush and change of clothes in case a room is available along the way somewhere.

Some suggestions for the winter driving, if I may please.

If you are in a snowfall situation, make sure your headlights are on. Between Arden and Addy I saw about 18 cars that needed more lights showing. Some even had no lights. The one that really spooked me was a semi that I would not have been able to see if I was pulling onto the highway. No way would he have been able to stop.

And ... as Jim used to say, it does not cost any more money to keep the top half of the tank full. His dad, an Alaska State Trooper who knew better, spent two-and-a-half days in a snowdrift across the road around Paxson Lodge during a blizzard with only a quarter tank of gas.



Dad (Dan) and JJ. Photo by Mom (Jamie).

Also ... when traveling from Main Street down to Wynne in Colville, you might discover how some stop signs don’t work in winter. Watch for sliding cars coming at you from the east (uphill side). And the #1 rule in Alaska at our house: Dress for the ditch. How many of you have been asked by me when I was working at the store (Oh, did I happen to mention that I’m retired?) “Where’s your coat?” Just a quick trip to the store? What if you are on Wynne and get smacked by that car sliding toward you?

**Be Patient
&
Safe!**

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.”

Collaborative Spring

Article & Illustrations by Marci Bravo



It was the second week of February when I noticed tiny buds forming like dewdrops on the ends of the thin, golden-hued forsythia branches. In the *Statesman-Examiner* it was reported that someone had already found buttercups. I averted my eyes around the peach tree, reluctant to discover budding that might simply freeze when winter finally graced us with her chilly presence, stripping us of stone fruit like two summers ago. And yet, it was 40 degrees outside, partly cloudy, and the robins were crowding the crabapple trees, in a chatter that sounded so much like spring.

In this state of mind, I contemplated an installation I had been invited to produce for Chewelah Arts Guild and the Chewelah Creative District, starting at the beginning of April. In a large storefront window of Bradley's Tae Kwon Do on Main Street, I envisioned an ode to native early-spring-blooming plants and their pollinators. In the spirit of Earth Day, materials used would be recycled, found and/or salvaged.

My friend and local botanist, Justina, pointed me in the direction of native species endemic to our local forests and meadows and foundational to the early season food supply. These four drew my attention: arrowleaf balsamroot, creeping phlox, Saskatoon serviceberry and sagebrush buttercups. I decided to round out the group with prairie stars, which always make

Creative Being in Stevens County

my heart flutter when I come upon the delicate little flowers suspended like sunlit constellations in the fresh green of spring meadows. All these plants supply sustenance in early spring for pollinators such as native bees, bumble bees, flies, butterflies, moths and hummingbirds, as well as for local wildlife including deer and elk.

Two weeks later, the brakes were thrown on the budding spring of February. It was 14 degrees outside and snow blanketed our world, clean and sparkling. Spring seemed like some faraway place as I clomped around in my snow boots and a puffer coat that fits more like a sleeping bag with a hood. However, the calendar tells a different story, the story of deadlines (my favorite type of motivation).

Spring is its own awakening collaboration, and to echo the season we are celebrating, I would like to invite YOU, my community and my readers, to partake in the making of this installation.

I will supply prompts and patterns to the Colville and Chewelah public libraries, as well as on my Instagram page (@marci_bravo_makes). You can make one flower, or many, pollinators (you can research the internet if you want to be precise or just use your imagination!) or whatever combination tickles your fancy. The window is 7 feet tall by 12 feet long. (Think of the blossom of a lupine as being one foot tall and the buttercups as the size of your palm.) Repetitions of patterns and objects have a wonderful impact on these types of installations. And when you drop off your creations at your local library, please include your name and contact information.

I think this will be a wonderful community collaboration, made the better by being touched by many

hands – hopefully the first of many more!

Please use clean, found or upcycled materials as building blocks for whatever you decide to create (as well as hot glue, glue, tape or whatever you have at hand), and pay particular attention to the size parameters, so that your

creation fits into the composition. You may drop off your completed creations of flowers (on stems preferably) and/or pollinators at the Colville or Chewelah libraries. If you have questions, feel free to contact me on Instagram or the Chewelah Arts Guild (www.chewelhartsguild.org).

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Spring Home & Garden Show

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The deadline for items made for the window installation is Friday, March 22.

Be Kind and Brave, Stay Warm, and Make Art!
Marci Bravo is a multi-media artist,

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



Spring is in the air and we have homes to sell!

Call or Text to BUY, SELL or get your FREE Market Analysis!

Waterfront Oasis: Listen to the sounds of the Kettle River from this stunning, custom built home



situated on 6.52 acres bordering the Kettle River. Large open floor plan with views from the kitchen, dining and living room. Plenty of windows to bring the beauty of outside inside. Main floor living with radiant heat, laundry and primary bed and bath. A beautifully finished basement includes wet bar, stone floors, a wood stove, bed and bath, lots of windows and an outside entrance. Two decks for your entertaining enjoyment & oversized

2 car garage. Secondary house for family and friends, that includes a kitchen, bath and huge bonus room with pool table and room for several sleeping areas and includes 2 car garage. In-ground sprinkler, huge woodshed with storage, Screened gazebo and shed. Custom wood working throughout this home, radiant heat, wood stove and a mini split is included and the pad is in it just needs to be installed. Generator stays, 220 on the outside of the garage and STAR Link service stays - you just have to sign up.



MLS# 44583 \$879,000



MLS# 44403

\$565,000

Over 3,000 sq. ft. in this 4 bed/3.5bath home on a large corner lot within an hour of Spokane, with golf course and ski hill as a part of your new community. This home highlights custom craftsman build including a theater stage and full screen wired for sound/lights and projector for all your family and or entertaining possibilities. Chewelah's Peye Creek babbling through the front yard, under your very own bridge, lighted pathway and established native and elaborate landscaped yard. Fully fenced back and side yard in addition to a 2 car attached garage with workshop. This home has it all and the room and design to accommodate a multitude of living enjoyment and options! Come see it today.



MLS# 45002

\$230,000

A beautiful setting with room to garden, just off the Columbia with water views and close to town. Some established grapes and raspberries to get you started. Features 2 bedroom, with a 3rd extra room for games or additional sleep space. Attached 1 car garage. Starter home or bring your tool belt and bring up to date with your own personal touches.

PRICED TO SELL - SMALL TOWN LIVING.

Very well maintained home. This home is ready for you to make it your own. A large kitchen, 3 large bedrooms, 2 bath and one has a walk in bathtub. Pellet stove, heat pump, ceiling fan, wheel chair ramp, laundry room is off the kitchen in its own room, with exit/entry from the attached carport. Enjoy peace and quiet while sitting on your covered, screened in front porch or on the newly redone porch in the back. Partially fenced, large yard with established landscape and room for a garden. Large shed and/or workshop, existing slab and electrical are ready for your garage to be built, car shelter can stay. So much potential at a great price and READY TO MOVE IN!



MLS# 44404

\$244,999



MLS# 45002

\$230,000

Repairs have been completed, and this home should finance! Nice singlewide home with a large shop on beautiful view acreage. 2 bedrooms, 1 bath, open kitchen to living area. Needs a little TLC. Easy access from gravel road and the views are beautiful. Just updated the decks. Garage door has been ordered to replace. Seller is willing to help with closing costs on an acceptable offer.

2 HOMES: Fantastic opportunity to live in one home and have a rental or guest home too. Beautifully updated 1930s home with stunning hardwood floors, primary bedroom & walk-in closet, updated bathroom with claw foot tub and shower. Door out to your own private deck to enjoy the peaceful setting. New appliances in the updated kitchen with pass through opening to the living room, gas log stove and French doors out to the pergola covered deck. Fenced garden area with shed and a separate greenhouse style shed. Year around pond with pump for watering and a creek that is spring fed. There is a French drain installed around the main house and an outside entry to the basement where the laundry is located and 2 cool storage rooms, Updated 1940 2-bedroom 1 bath ADU with its own fenced side yard. There is so much to this property you just have to see it to appreciate the beauty. The soil is incredible and the creek runs all year. The property is fenced with a few access options for easy entry to both yards. Plus a 2 car garage that has been freshly painted.



MLS# 44446

\$449,000

Beautifully well-maintain home in the heart of Kettle Falls. Close to schools, parks, restaurants, shopping, medical and the Lake Roosevelt Marina. 3 bedrooms



MLS# 45456

\$335,000

1.5 baths with comfortable size rooms, 2 bedrooms have walk-in closets. Wood stove in the living room that keeps the home warm and toasty. Insulated windows, new front and back doors, wood cabinets throughout, Installed new flooring in 2023, Mohawk non-scratch hard surface floors and carpet in the bedrooms. Chain link fenced back yard with alley access, carport and 8'x12' shed, thornless blackberries and raspberries in a fenced garden area. Raised garden beds, strawberries, grapes and the dog-house is included. Front yard sprinkler system, covered porch, it's all here for your comfort and ease.

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