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— WHERE AND HOW WE LIVE —



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### TOWN & COUNTRY DAYS

**Kettle Falls, WA**

## Family Fun

June  
FESTIVAL 5-7

<p><b>Friday, June 5</b></p> <p>Pickleball 9am to 3pm Vendors 12pm to 8pm</p> <p>Sasquatch Saloon Beer Garden 12pm to 10pm</p> <p>Free Live Entertainment Center stage 2pm-10pm</p> <p>Kids Fun Fest 3p-7p Free bouncy houses \$1 carnival games</p> <p>Free Kids Parade Elementary school check-in time 5:30pm, parade starts @ 6pm</p> <p>Cornhole (TBA)</p> <p>All Mediums Art Contest Front of the library</p> <p>Grumpy Grouch Giddy Up At the library check in starts at 5pm. Race starts 7pm</p>	<p><b>Saturday, June 6</b></p> <p>Pickleball 9am to 5pm Vendors 10am to 8pm</p> <p>Grouches Breakfast 7am-10am Car Show 9am-2pm The BIG Parade 11am-12pm</p> <p>Sasquatch Saloon Beer Garden 11am-10pm</p> <p>Rotary Club Duck Drop Mama's Boy Corner 1:30pm</p> <p>Free Live Entertainment Center Stage 12pm-10p</p> <p>Big Money Jackpots at the Human Slot Machine 2pm-4pm</p> <p>Slam Jam 3 on 3 Basketball 8am-2pm @ the pool</p> <p>Shootfest Basketball 3pm-7p Elementary School</p>
<p><b>Sunday, June 7</b></p> <p>Pickleball 1pm-3pm, Happy Del Park</p>	

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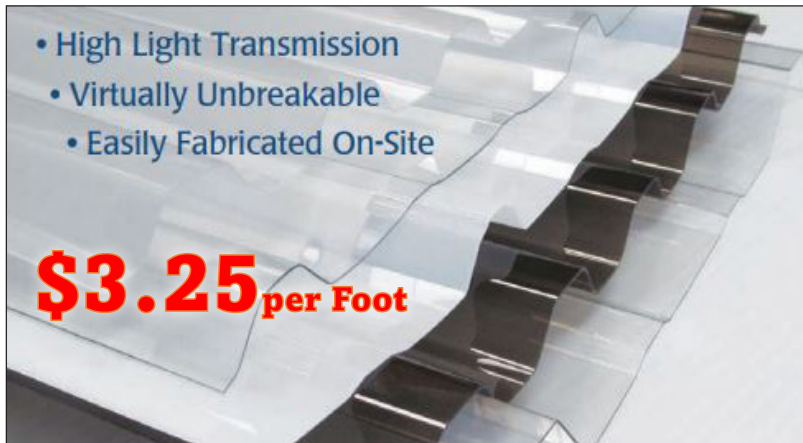
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# What's Inside

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## Those Helped Again Now Kindly Say

- JOHN ODELL, [allthelandandsea.wixsite.com/wordsofwords](http://allthelandandsea.wixsite.com/wordsofwords)

### A Note from the Publisher

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

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

~ Gabriel

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# For Now, Celebration

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By Christine Wilson

*“I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down into the grass, how to kneel down in the grass, how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll through the fields, which is what I have been doing all day. Tell me, what else should I have done? Doesn't everything die at last, and too soon? Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?”*

~ Mary Oliver, “The Summer Day”

*“Whence this fragrance wafting through the air? What sweet feelings does its scent transmute? Whence this perfume floating ev'rywhere?”*

~ “The Lusty Month of May” in Camelot

*“The future is an infinite succession of presents, and to live now as we think human beings should live, in defiance of all that is bad around us, is itself a marvelous victory.”*

~ Howard Zinn

*The “capacity for paying attention and for intelligent action can be cultivated beyond our wildest dreams if we have the motivation to do so.”*

~ Jon Kabat-Zinn, *Coming to Our Senses*

We are soon entering the season of, to borrow Mary Oliver's term, our “wild and precious” summer, which, like time in general, is mysterious and fleeting. We cannot predict what it will bring to us. Moments of relaxation? Connections with people who bring us joy? Gorgeous sunsets? Fires? Wild shenanigans across the world? Free time? Boredom? Glorious hikes? The promise of an autumnal harvest?

We have these “successions of moments,” as Howard Zinn described them. To enjoy them, I propose following a combination of Mary Oliver's idleness and Jon Kabat-Zinn's challenge to both pay attention and use intelligent action.

If you are sitting by a river and see a couple of mergansers swim by, that is a lovely moment. If a minute later, a discarded plastic bag of garbage floats by, that can cause your face to wrinkle up. Both views travel on the same flowing water. Personally, I want that first sighting to slow down so I can relish the beauty. I want the garbage to shoot past me and around the bend out of sight as quickly as possible. Bliss feels great, but not all moments are blissful.

Each season has its own mix of appealing and unpleasant tugs at our attention, and we can't speed them up or slow them down any more than we could push that river. They end up in the category of what we cannot change. What we have agency over is how we navigate the blissful and unblissful moments. Jon Kabat-Zinn encourages us to start at the

most basic level, which is to listen to our body's five senses.

I always thought of those senses as separate from each other, chugging away at their own individual tasks. I also thought they were immutable. Watermelon, for example, was disgusting, and that was my final word on the subject. Then I was backpacking in high school and one of the other girls twisted her ankle. Two of the men helped her out to the trail head and waited for her parents to rescue her. The next day, the men returned with watermelon in their packs. We had been eating freeze-dried food for a few days. I watched them reach into their packs and pull out two giant watermelons, which they dropped onto rocks. I was impressed with the visual display but sad that it was watermelon and not chocolate.

However, I was desperate for something real. We'd reconstituted a salad the night before and I had actually cut my gums on a piece of vegetable we hadn't soaked long enough. With some urging, I picked up a chunk.

The crispness, the sweetness, the soothing taste on my tongue, the smell, the joy I felt – I was converted. And then, when I found out how low they are in calories, this sugar addict was committed. We are entering watermelon season and my whole sensory intake system is grateful I changed my mind.

I thought the same thing about the smell of skunk. It

# Random Acts of Community

was disgusting, obviously. Then I heard a story about an exchange student coming here from France who thought it was an interesting smell. Since hearing that, I've been more neutral about the smell, although I'm not going to test it by getting sprayed, if I can help it. I'm sure, she being French, stinky cheeses like Camembert brought sensory delightful to that student. For people who like Camembert, they might feel delight when they see a tray of cheese and crackers that includes stinky cheese. That's not just smell. It's the smell combined with taste, sight, the feel of bread being torn into pieces, and the communal experience.

So, nope, not predetermined and not separate from each other.

2026 started out for me with cataract surgery. It did repair some of my vision problems, but I have this thing called exotropia, which means my eyes are wandering off in opposite directions, in what I describe as the "ever-expanding universe." That gives me double vision. I had to function without glasses for about six weeks, follow a three-eyedrop regimen throughout each day, accept the fact that the repair took away my ability to see close up, get an updated eye exam, and then have the new prescription turned into working lenses. I cycled through two of the three Buddhist sources of suffering: longing for what I didn't have (corrective lenses and the ability to see close up) and resistance to what I did have (double vision and a collection of prescribed meds that required organization skill above my pay grade).

David Abram, in *The Spell of the Sensuous*, describes seeing a raven. He says: "My various senses, diverging as they do from a single, coherent body, coherently converge ... just as my two eyes converge upon the raven and convene into a single focus." He was obviously taunting me with all that coherence talk. I had to close one eye to prove to myself that

we only had one dog. I walked past a group of fire fighters at the local fire station and thought there were two groups. I closed one eye and the one group on the left was visible. I closed my other eye and the one on the right was visible.

"There is no leaving the world," Jon Kabat-Zinn says. I was having to work at accepting his "paying attention and intelligent action" aspiration. The wildest dreams he seems so cheery about were a little too wild. Into his quote he sneaks in a plug for motivation. "Sadly," he says, "as individuals, that motivation only comes when we have already experienced a life-threatening disease or a severe shock to the system that may leave us in tremendous pain in both soma and psyche." Boy, howdy.

In contrast to the world's many shocks, my shocks were in the category of whiny, baby distress. I'd worn glasses for 65 years and I felt like I was walking blindly through life, as if I'd forgotten an article of clothing. Even my hearing seemed impaired. I have new glasses now, both regular lenses and lenses for sunshine. I'm celebrating that coherence David Abram refers to. My senses were all working in that interim period, of course. I was just needing an attitude adjustment about the information.

It's more fun to celebrate the five senses when the weather is glorious and our bodies are cooperating. Jon Kabot-Zinn discovered early in his career as a psychologist that those five senses and our attitudes about them can be used to lead us to peace when our world is more inglorious and our bodies aren't obliging us with easy joy. For now, however, I'm just going to enjoy paying attention when the weather is grand, the world is greening up, and the views in our neck of the woods are delightful.

*Christine Wilson is a retired psychotherapist in Colville and can be reached at [christineallenwilson@gmail.com](mailto:christineallenwilson@gmail.com) or 509-690-0715.*

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# Making Room

By Dr. Barry Bacon, MD

May is my favorite month in Northeast Washington. There is still moisture in the ground, flowers are blooming, the air is warm, and birds have returned from their wintering grounds. Gardens are being planted and fruit trees are budding out. Lakes are visited by migratory ducks and other waterfowl, though many have headed to destinations north already. Some decide to stay.

It is not one thing in particular, but the totality of the May experience that makes it so special to me. Longer, warmer days. Plants awakening. The eternal cycle of life and the seasons.

I'm trying to find enough time to enjoy the outdoors coming back from its winter slumber, especially this year. One of my colleagues is unable

to work for a time, so I am flat-out working every long day at the clinic. I don't mind the work, but I would like to be out digging in the dirt and watching plants grow.

One pair of tiny birds got our attention this year. Black-capped chickadees have made their home in the tiniest of birdhouses, more of a decoration than a domicile. The opening is only 1¼ inches in diameter, yet this seems to be just the size they were looking for. Territorial and protective, the male announces his presence, prepared to defend. Try singing back to him, and he won't like it. He will be sure to size up any intruder.

It's good to see tiny life forms making their homes among us humans, taking advantage of the small gifts we

leave them. A morsel of food, a water bath, a tiny home. One of the men here thought about another creature's wellbeing and carved out time to make a place for a bird to find shelter. And the birds paid us the compliment of receiving it as their own. This intrigues me. Somehow, they intuitively seem to know that this is for them, and they move in.

There are other species that make their homes among us, some more welcome than others. I frequently find myself cheering for the bluebirds and swallows versus the house sparrows and starlings, both of which were imported from Europe. One such creature that has made its home at our place is the black-bellied marmot. They are not particularly desirable,

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but when two of them moved into the rocks at the foundation of our storage shed, I decided not to argue.

I've since observed their keen appetite for dandelions, so much so that our lawn is virtually void of them now. I can't bring myself to run them off. For me, it's part of the wonder and adventure of living in this part of the world. Noticing and making a place for other species, within reason. Quail, turkeys, deer, birds, amphibians, reptiles living among us, adding to the wonder of our lives.

It's a philosophy of life that spills over into the rest of our world and finds its way into other relationships. Let me illustrate.

Just a few days ago, Daryl was in a rehab center, wondering whether he would have a place to live when he was released. "Life on the streets is hard," he said. "You don't know who to trust. You can lose everything. Everyone seems to want to take advantage of you. Abuse follows you, often at the hands of people who live in houses." We made a place for Daryl. We decided to give him a chance in our recovery house. Making room for other creatures, and for other humans, has become our way of life.

Today, I'm out on a crazy adventure to help him regain his valued possession: a 1972 motor home. It's his prized and nearly only possession. So much has been lost, but someone was kind enough to let him store the vehicle on their property while Daryl was in rehab. But now it's time to move the lunker, and I am the chosen driver.

We have our phones on as we pull the motor home gingerly through town to its new storage location. In true "Beverly Hillbillies" style, I pull this behemoth behind my pickup

down the highway at 35 miles per hour while no one is looking. Another kind individual has offered a location at no charge, as a kindness to Daryl, since he is newly in recovery. Someone understands the challenges and heartache of stepping into recovery, only to lose everything.

Seven anxious miles and two tow strap failures later, we arrive at the vehicle's new resting place. We have a friendly chat with the property owner. We park it in place and load up the pickup bed with blocks, wood, flagpoles, old jacks and abandoned tools, and head back to town.

Daryl and I talk about our lives. Turns out Daryl loves to talk. He's a great guy whose life has been pocked by heartache and disaster, hard work and injury, addiction and redemption. He confides that his one dream was to find some people who were true. He would cry out at night to the sky, asking if there were any good people left in the world. "Somehow, I feel like this is where I was led, for a reason. This is my answer."

He can't stop thanking me. A roof overhead, a shower, a place to rest and heal, men who support him in sobriety. He has begun to hope again.

I think about the good people who have stepped up to help this man. The care navigator who came to his place in a remote part of the region and brought him to the rehab center. The folks at the rehab center who started him on a better journey. The men in our recovery house who came alongside him and gave him a chance, and who encourage him daily to live better and to attend recovery meetings where he meets more people who love and support him. The guy who offered the kindness of parking his motorhome for six months without

charge so he could get on his feet.

The chickadees are nestled in their tiny home. It's safe there, a roof over their heads, a place to raise their young, a place worth protecting. Their lives are visibly better for it. I watch one of the pair flit from branch to branch, guarding his treasured place. I think of Daryl and how his modest room among us makes a measurable difference in his outcome. Making room for people who would otherwise fail is not complex. It's hard, but it's beautiful.

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



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# In the Company of Moths

Article & Photo by Tina Wynecoop

“Too many interests and not enough time” ~ Seabrooke Leckie

Seabrooke Leckie?

My friend Beth was living in Wellpinit when I arrived in 1970. Ours has remained a friendship nearly as old as we are. Nature is the “glue” which binds us.

This spring she shared her photograph of a peach-colored moth basking in her San Leandro garden across the bay from San Francisco. I recognized it as one of the geometer family only because I had found a similar lemony-colored moth in *my* yard in Colbert in 2009. At the time I thought the winged insect was a butterfly and I spent a lot of time looking for its name in vain in my butterfly field guide. Butterflies and moths are in different families in the Lepidoptera order, and I hadn’t learned how to tell them apart since they are not grouped together in a single field guide.

Since then, I have gained a smattering of knowledge to differentiate a moth from a butterfly – the shapes of the antennae are one clue – but not enough to identify Beth’s moth until, and here is the happy coincidence: The same day she sent the photo of “Peachy” (we nicknamed him/her), the North Spokane County Library notified me that a book I had suggested earlier for their collection had arrived and was available for me to check out. It was Seabrooke Leckie’s third moth identification field guide: *Moths of Western North America* (2026). I already owned her field guide to *Moths of Northeastern North America* (2012), which was great except it focused on moths far from my home ground.

The new field guide was a godsend. Then I wondered, who *is* this prolific author with a name like none other? I looked her up in that other incomparable field guide, Google, to learn she is an avid moth-er, birder, and proud mother of two small children. Is it a coincidence there is also a ‘moth’ in ‘mother’? She is a writer and naturalist who is “curious about anything nature-related that tickles her fancy.”

Leckie’s introduction to her newest field guide explains “the book is illustrated “with *living* moths in their natural resting poses, presented with range maps and information to help with their identification.”

She continues: “For years, moths have been plagued by bad press. The stereotype is of a drab brown creature that, at best, flutters aimlessly at your lights and, worst, chews holes in your clothes. While there are species that do both

things, they represent a tiny minority of the incredible diversity found in the world of moths. Nearly *13,000* species of moths are currently recognized in North America. There are large moths and small ones, plain moths and bright ones, nocturnal moths and day-fliers.”

Our family knows about one of those largest moths. Many early winters ago, my four- and six-year-old sons and I were exploring the edges of a large, vernal pond on our neighbor’s land. Red-osier dogwood bushes, aspens, mature cottonwoods and other native vegetation lined the pond’s edges. The osiers tend to keep some of their dried leaves all winter and we found a large cocoon camouflaged among them. We didn’t know what species of insect made the cocoon, so we brought it home to observe.

The cocoon and the stick it dangled from fit nicely in an unlidded quart canning jar. We checked it daily. The old saying (sadly, not true anymore), “It was like watching a glacier melt,” fit. Throughout that winter the mystery cocoon remained unobtrusively on the kitchen counter, a silent member of our household.

The next spring, our kindergartner, Jake, and I returned home from morning grocery shopping in time for him to have lunch and catch the afternoon school bus. As we carried the groceries into the house, we noticed a huge, dark, pulsating liquidy blob hanging above the kitchen doorway. We freaked.

We watched from a safe distance (the living room) as wings appeared. Of course, we had to do some research on what kind of moth it was, so I phoned a wise friend who often helped me identify this and that. Jan Reynolds was my human Google, and we learned our cocoon had held the pupa of a Polyphemus moth, a giant silkworm moth indigenous to much of North America, having a wingspan of 6 inches. Besides the behemoth’s size, two large, purplish eyespots on its hindwings would startle predators like birds, squirrels, raccoons and other insects.

Meanwhile, our moth grew larger and larger until it finished unfolding its wings and our fear dissolved into a sense of wonder at what we were privileged to witness.

After school, the kindergartner and first grader returned home and we released the moth outdoors. It was very beautiful as it rested for a long time on the trunk of a birch tree growing outside the window. I phoned

our friend Jim Curtis and invited him to bring his fancy camera and photograph the moth. Show and tell was a big deal in grade school and the boys got to take the empty cocoon (but not the moth) to their classrooms.

We still have the cocoon. I also had my opportunity to “show and tell,” but had to wait through spring, summer and fall before using Jim’s moth photo on the cover of the Christmas cards I was making. The greeting inside was *Merry ChristMoth!*

I appreciate Seabrooke Leckie’s decision to use photos of *living* moths to illustrate her text. Her empathy reminded me of the high school science project our sons were assigned in the 1990s. That fall, their biology teachers had them “collect” as many insects as they could find. They were told to pin each specimen to a Styrofoam slab and label it. Weeks later, during the school’s open house night, we visited the biology classrooms. I was horrified to see some of the insects, still alive, desperately moving their legs, trying to get off their “crucifixion” pins. The important lesson: Humans are not the only sentient/conscious beings with the capacity to suffer.

The geometer moths such as Beth’s *Omnivorous Looper* and my *Crocus Geometer* emerge as caterpillars on host plants and display a way of transporting themselves that is charming. The caterpillars are “inchworms” who travel by lifting their posterior end and curling the body forward behind their front legs, then lifting the front legs to stretch out straight again because geometer moth caterpillars have forelegs and hind legs and no appendages in the center of their soft bodies.

One summer, while huckleberrying in the Selkirk mountains, I found an inchworm moving about on a huckleberry. It looked to me like it was measuring the berry’s great size, for what I assumed was bragging rights. This berry patch was not far from where, in 1953, Judge Wynecoop, his brother Chick and Uncle Glenn were in a similar

mountainside with “huckleberries so big we had to roll them to the car.” Those three guys picked 22 gallons of huckleberries that day. Truly something to brag about!

We gather huckleberries in grizzly bear territory. We feel like an inchworm when getting out of the way of these mammoth bears ... our feet just can’t move fast enough.

Moths help bears get ready for winter in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem (GYE). I’ve never been to Yellowstone National Park except in a wonderful book titled *Letters from Yellowstone* (1999) by Diane Smith in which I first learned about the importance of moths in the bear’s diet.

The grizzlies consume moths in preparation for hibernation. It is surprising to learn that the enormous bear *Ursus arctos horribilis* interacts with and depends on the delicate winged insect *Euxoa auxiliaris* whose caterpillar phase is the immature army cutworm.

“It has been estimated that one bear may consume 40,000 moths a day. These miller moths are one of the most energy-rich sources of food for grizzly bears. Other moth-eating animals include black bears, ravens, coyotes, birds, bats, mice and spiders,”

according to a newspaper account in the *Billings Gazette*. “Good eating at 11,000 feet.”

So here we close or, rather, expand our sense of wonder for the majesty of creation. All the Beths, Seabrookes, Dianes, Jans, and Jims – and you, dear readers – may “surround yourselves with the wise ones, the wild ones, the kind ones, the awake ones. You don’t have to do it alone,” says Chameli Ardagh. (Now there is another name look-up!)

*Tina says: Growing up in western Washington was the most interesting place in the world until 1970 when I headed 300 miles east to teach on the Spokane Indian Reservation. The culture, geography, history, weather, the people, and the flora and fauna of this inland region of the state have since become my beloved “home ground.”*



# May Random Thoughts

By Bob Gregson

First, Franky. It's great to have a cameo role in bringing together eligible souls who are perfectly matched, who truly love each other ... sometimes even at first sight! That was pretty much wife Bonnie's and my experience early in March. We went along on a first date arranged online by my younger sister, somewhat alone for more than a decade since the passing of her husband. Perhaps unusual to want company for a first meeting situation, but it was what it was, as we stoics often say.

We traveled north in her pristine Subaru Forester with pleasant conversation all the way to the outskirts of Colville.

We met the date, an interesting guy named Franky, at the pre-arranged time and place. And it WAS love at first sight. He was jumping up and down, clearing the ground by a good six inches on every leap! Pretty darn good for a ten- or eleven-year-old chihuahua/terrier mix!

OK, he's a dog. But not at all an ordinary dog. He's a lover and mostly well mannered, brimming full of energy; he tolerates cats and absolutely loves to chase and play with a tennis ball or equivalent, inside or outside. His prior owner had to give him and

several other dogs to the Colville Valley Animal Sanctuary. Those nice people at the sanctuary also fell in love with Franky during his week-long stay.

Sis did all the paperwork and paid the fee, plus a donation. Franky got another two shots and went home with us without a qualm, lying quietly by my side – or sometimes on my lap – in the back seat all the way with nary a peep.

Franky is the perfect addition to my sister's household that was down to just two senior cats. She is and always has been a cat lady. Now she caters to senior cats (up to three at a time) and dogs (just one) adopted from animal shelters, providing a wonderful final home for each one. What a great thing to do! After losing her most recent dog, Gus, she is now enjoying her amazing new companion, Franky. A "marriage made in heaven." And we proudly can say we were there at the beginning.

Neighborhoods. During one of my short morning walks around this area as the taller member of dog Barney's two-guy recon trips, I was reminded how this neighborhood used to look when my aunt and uncle bought an acre or so nearby with a small brick house in 1957. The houses were almost all modest, built before World War II on large lots. The men probably mostly worked in the nearby paper mill. Many families had large gardens and a good flock of chickens plus a calf they were raising to fill a freezer come fall. Or were growing an acre or two of Hearts of Gold cantaloupes – what this valley was mostly known for at the time – to sell to locals from their driveways in late summer.

Decades later, most of those acres have been filled in with new houses on very small lots; most people simply don't want or need acreage, even if they could afford it. It was different in the '50s. Many were families who had endured the Great Depression and two world wars where good food and jobs were sometimes scarce.

The how and why people choose their homes is so diverse – if they do have the finances to actually buy a home.

My sons never had war or depression concerns and set up their own family living circumstances accordingly.

Elder son, the UU pastor, used to live, by choice, in downtown Boston, in a tall narrow brownstone hemmed in by common-wall neighbors, with no yard whatsoever. Then he lived in a large, stately, 1700s home (with non-milled timber rafters still in good shape) on a small lot in dense New Jersey near The City, again by choice. He values nearness to urban social life within walking distance of a traditional East Coast deli and commuter train station, that sort of thing. Even though the church he was pastoring at the time was an hour's drive away.

Younger son, a regional insurance company exec, eventually bought a home on a small lot in a nice neighborhood near Seattle to get the best public schools for his children and the ability to rub elbows with potential corporate clients while being within easy commuting distance for him and his federal attorney wife.

In contrast to my sons' urban proclivities, Bonnie and I have always wanted grass, trees, and substantial veggie/fruit garden space, plus room



for chickens. That's just how we're wired. It's also a big plus to have a library within walking distance. Hence the Valley neighborhood we chose.

It's good that all we Westerners don't want exactly the same kind of neighborhoods!

Many people have little choice anymore due to the very high cost of new or used homes almost everywhere. We are constantly shocked by the high price of building materials. They are disproportionately WAY beyond what those same things cost us in 1997 when the two of us did the bulk of building our new home at the farm on Vashon Island. Same for remodeling several Spokane homes 15-20 years ago.

It's not obvious how our country can get back to the place where young working families can purchase a home early on.

An interesting fact. Turn signals are standard on all new cars, and have been for probably 75 years, but Washington state still requires knowledge and demonstration of the old hand-out-the-window turn signals during driver license testing. I think of that while driving on particularly cold winter days.

Who knew? The petroleum jelly product Bag Balm used to carry a warning that said "not tested or approved for human use" or something like that. We used it when we had six sheep. It felt good on my dry hands, but I felt a little guilty because it seemed sort of illegal.

That warning was a little like the warnings on sofa cushions and pillows – the little white tags "Unlawful to be removed" ("except by consumer" is now also included, but I could swear that earlier the tags were curt orders that ANY removals were illegal). My youthful musings wondered if there were police who went around checking for misdemeanors like that.

And also checking for human use of Bag Balm on hands and bodies. My upbringing was terrifically law-abiding in all respects.

With that mindset, I was shocked to have a dermatologist recently tell me that my use of Bag Balm on cracked skin of heels was a good idea! It turns out that the FDA approved Bag Balm for human use in 2018. Hearing that was a relief; I was no longer a flagrant Bag Balm law-breaker.

But here's a reassurance to my law enforcement friends: I will NOT remove the little white cautionary tags on our sofa cushions and bed pillows. Just in case.

*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.*



The poster for China Bend Winery features a central illustration of a woman with long blonde hair holding a tray of wine glasses and a bottle of organic wine. The background shows a scenic view of a valley with mountains and a river. The text is arranged in several sections: a banner at the top, a central text box with contact information, a large stylized title, a starburst event title, and a bottom text box with dates and admission details.

**China Bend Winery**

**Tasting Room Open Daily**  
Noon - 5:00 Closed Mondays  
3751 Vineyard Way ~ Kettle Falls, WA  
On the Northport-Flat Creek Road  
On Lake Roosevelt  
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**Memorial Weekend**

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Admission Free  
Organic Wines & Gourmet Foods  
Hors d'Ouvres ~ Special Prices

# A Sense of Place

By Brad Shaffer

The opening of the transcontinental railroad in 1869 essentially ended the arduous journey by wagon for settlers in the western migration of this nation. My great-grandparents took that train, like thousands of others, leaving their farms in Illinois to forge a new life in the American west.

In the spring of 1889, Williamson Black Bankson and his wife Celia Belle (Fisher) were in their early 20s, with a month-old baby, when they traveled by train to San Francisco, by steamer to Astoria, Oregon, and again by train to the end of the spur line at that time, in Dayton, Washington territory. They arrived only a few months ahead of Washington becoming a state in November of that year.

In Dayton they bought the immediate supplies needed for farming, including wagons and horses, and headed north, driving those wagons and mules and cattle toward what was then Spokane Falls. They stopped in the Mt. Hope area, just south of what is now Spokane Valley, and set up farms on the rich soil of the northern Palouse. My great-uncle Russel was the small baby, and he would eventually become a writer and editor for the *Spokane Chronicle* newspaper, a writer of Westerns during the pulp fiction era, and eventually the regional head of public relations for the internment of Japanese citizens during World War II. In the early years of farming at Mt. Hope my great-grandparents had two more children, my grandmother Gladys Ione and another of my great-uncles, Glen Payton.

My great-grandfather Williamson became a notary public, and after a decade farming in Mt. Hope, he ran for the office of Spokane County assessor. He lost, but the man who won offered him the office of assistant county assessor, and he immediately accepted. The family built a stately house on Lacey Street in Spokane.

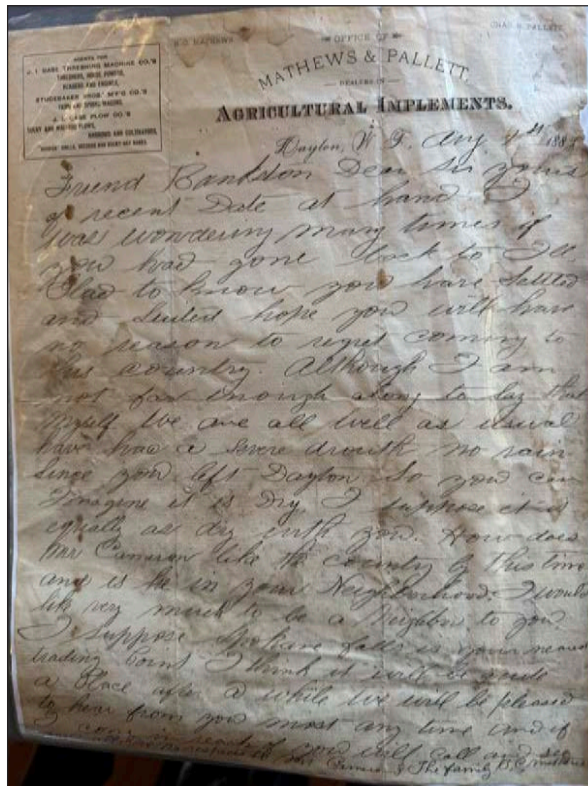
It was in the role of assistant assessor that Williamson heard about land available north of Spokane, adjacent to Waitt's Lake, and the family went for it. The 160 acres they homesteaded was heavily timbered with ponderosa pine and had no water running through it. It was beautiful land, running nearly to the lakeside with a clear view of the Huckleberry Ridge, and just across the wagon road that led to Valley. Waitt's Crick ran on the other side of the road.

My great-grandfather set up what was known as a dry farm, dependent on the weather and whatever wells could be dug. During the course of his life he dug many wells, deep pits which can still be seen here and there. Several years ago, a friend fell into one of the wells that had been hidden by a thick covering of snowberry. I now use that former well as a burn pit, since it is located next to my garden and greenhouse. Only one of the wells ever hit water, the last one Williamson ever dug, and it dried up by August every year.

For the first few years of life on the Waitt's Lake ranch, Williamson kept his job as assistant assessor and would travel up from Spokane to work on setting up his farm. At first the family traveled by wagons, a two-day journey, spending the first night at Deer Park in what is now Pioneer Park. Later the railroad arrived, and they would take the train north to Valley and

then the three miles by wagon to the farm.

Williamson and Celia, with the help of their children, first put up four buildings: a blacksmith shop and cabin in which to live, a chicken coop, a barn, and an ice house. They would sledge large blocks of ice cut from the lake every winter to provide a "cold box" in which to store perishables. The ice-cutting was a community event, with many families gathered on the frozen lake and working together to move the large blocks to their properties. The ice, stored



**A letter from 1889 from an implement dealer in Dayton, Washington Territory**

in a double-walled building and surrounded by sawdust, could last deep into the summer. I still use the ice house for storage and have restored the old kitchen ice box they used. I also have the gigantic bellows and a number of implements my grandfather made by hand at the forge of the blacksmith shop.

My great-grandfather died in 1944, and I never met the man. My great-grandmother lived to be 101, and I met her many times, and at her hundredth birthday was proudly shown a birthday card signed by President Richard M. Nixon. My grandfather, Royal Faber Shaffer, became a *Spokane Chronicle* editor and famously hosted Babe Ruth when he came to Spokane, touring him to various sites including Shriners Hospital. My grandfather even spent a year or two at the *Chewelah Independent* in the 1950s as a writer and editor.

The property didn't get electricity or running water until 1952, and my mother recalled that, upon first coming up to the Waitt's Lake ranch, she took the barn lantern with her to the outhouse as the last thing to do every night before bed. The cabin had an elaborate system of gutters and rain barrels, so washing hands and hair and dishes was with water softened by nature.

I like to tell people that I've been coming to this area since I was in utero. My earliest memories are filled with summers at the lake, driving up from Spokane Valley with pets and kids and swimsuits and watermelon. I heard many stories, hundreds of them, during that time, under a huge apple tree that grew next to my grandfather's garden, and I remember the picnic tables and wicker furniture, the fresh apple cider and Italian plums and cherry pies, fried chicken overflowing a plate next to logs of fresh corn on the cob and mashed potatoes with chicken gravy. Cousins, uncles and aunts, people of all ages and types, enjoying long conversations in the piney woods at the Waitt's Lake ranch.

Those were good years. The cultural upheaval of the '60s, the outcome of Vietnam and the great awakening were yet to come, a different story entirely.

My ancestors are long gone now, their children and their children's children have all passed away, and I am one of the few in my family who remember those people and

those times.

I live on the last remnant of the original homestead, 15 acres of heaven. The ice house still stands, having become a summer house for guests when the main cabin overflows. I built a greenhouse where the chicken coop once stood, added a shop and a woodshed, and am building a sauna where I can meditate and ruminate during the cold winter months. The old barn fell down in the late 1960s. Arsonists burnt the old cabin down on April 20, 1999. We rebuilt the cabin – bigger, modern, and with better insulation than the cardboard boxes glued to the walls of the old place. If I could choose, I would take the old homestead back in an instant.



*The author's great-grandparents, Williamson and Celia.*

I feel like a lucky man to have this history in the area, for the roots it gave me, for the land and home in which to build my own dreams. The gratitude I feel toward these people is immeasurable. It is hard to imagine how self-sufficient they were in this modern world, the independent ideal of the American West.

We know those who came before us experienced all the grief and confusion life holds for those who live it; they lost children, fought in wars, suffered great disappointments. Yet they also experienced great joy, pursued noble dreams, and shared buckets of love. We stand on the shoulders of these people, our characters, outlooks and the trajectory of our lives molded by their loves and losses and distant places once traveled.

I remember those stories told to me as I sat at the family gatherings, at the dinner table and on the porch swing with my grandparents and parents, and have tried to pass along the fables to my own children and grandchildren, because nothing and no one is gone as long as it is remembered. No matter where we live and travel, our return to these mountains and valleys is always coming home, with the dust and sunshine and smell of pine woven into the fabric of who we are.

*Brad is the fourth generation to live and work on the "Waitt's Lake Ranch" in Stevens County. After a career as a legal professional, he has retired to pursue photography, writing and to build beautiful things. Always a pilgrim of the world, he meditates every morning and is grateful every night.*

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# May 18<sup>th</sup>

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Article by Steven Bird, Illustration by Doris Loiseau

*Pressure increases toward cataclysm at the edge of the Cascadian Shield. The shingled plates of Earth radiate from the Yukon toward the Pacific as rows of waves, one gathered behind the other, pushing, one into another. And the wave crests, the pressured and interlayered edges, are the serrate chains of mountain ranges, and the hearts of those mountains in the farthest West are soft with fire.*

The tree planters rode the crew van in dust-mote silence. I sat shotgun looking out the window thinking something big was coming. The signs were there. You could feel it. Dangerous energy accumulating. Thick air. Tension. Mysterious whip-crack electrical flashes in the clear blue sky above the mountain. The ground liquid and shifting. The signs were there, alright. Risky, I thought, planting trees at the base of the volcano while all of this was going on. Latent danger stifled conversation in the usually chaotic crew van. Everybody was feeling it.

We passed the campground where a family of West Coast nomads had parked their homemade plywood camper. The mom and dad, two little kids, a boy and a girl. The Intermountain crew passed them every day on the way to and from the job and the children always waved and jumped up and down, dancing to make sure we saw. The family was harvesting the pea-sized pumice from recent St. Helens ash spews and selling it to tourist shops around Portland and Seattle. A small creek flowed beyond the campground. Once, as we passed, I saw the boy fishing.

I preferred the cheap room at the old Packwood Inn to the pink motel where most of the crew stayed. The Packwood had no television. The

bathroom with black and white floor tiles was at the end of the dark paneled hall. I liked the lingering rose light of years long extinguished and the great mounted bull elk head dominating the Victorian foyer downstairs, where I took the phone call from Decker, boss of the Intermountain crew over in Montana, planting a big Forest Service clear-cut near Thompson Falls.

"Hey. Steve. Me, Decker. What's up man? Volcano gonna blow up on you guys or what?"

"Yuh. What it looks like. Can't believe they still have us planting this close to the mountain."

"Well hey, I need another lead man. We got good ground but the work's still going too slow. Extra crew we hired over here are a buncha prima donnas. I need a stepper to get their butts moving. Already talked to Shultz and he said it was okay if it's okay with you. It's a little more money. Forest Service set us up with a nice campsite on the Thompson River. Got your fishing stuff with you?"

"Always."

I hung up the phone, then selected a dog-eared *Field & Stream* from the table next to a worn damask settee and looked at the date on the cover. It was nearly as old as me. I tucked the magazine under my arm, looked up at the elk mount, considered the immense curved beams and tines, wondering if such still existed, then turned and climbed the darkened stairwell leading up to my room, the hundred-year-old steps creaking beneath my boots.

\*

A mescaline clarity of stillness fused the morning on May 18. No birdsong riffed in the cold dawn. No flash of wings from the ancient firs behind the Packwood Inn as I loaded my gear

into the pickup.

The Blue Spruce Tavern looked shabby and garish in the morning light. They slept now, the pompadoured bartender, the deadeye pool cue heroes and their jangling sloe-eyed ladies of the jukebox night. I saw the mountains and sky reflected from the darkened windows as I rolled out of Packwood, headed toward the pass and Yakima.

The '61 Ford 4x4 had a free-breathing straight-six engine that got 22 miles a gallon. It began life as a government truck belonging to Idaho Fish and Wildlife. A 6-weight Fenwick flyrod and a Winchester .30-.30 hung in the gun racks, ready. It got me to the jobs, and the jobs were often close to the great rivers. I rode the Ford east over the pass and through Yakima and out onto the open sagebrush and wheat country of the Columbia Plateau.

\*

The assembled forces of Gaia were suddenly loosed and rose in a deafening, triumphant shout. The ground beneath their feet swelled and the Intermountain crew working at the western base of Mount St. Helens dropped their planting hoes and tree bags when the shockwave hit them. Bold, tough men, the reforestation crews, the Kings of the Woods they called themselves in all seriousness, and they were quick to back up that claim on Saturday nights – and now some prayed who never prayed before and some pleaded for the iron shield of their mother's love and others wept as they sped tumbling and falling toward the crew van while a terror of gray pumice stormed from the blackest maw in the world and rained down on them. Uncanny intuition as-



sisted by blind luck guided the crew to the van and then down the winding logging road running parallel to the north fork of the Toutle River in the zero-visibility hail of ash and the displaced water of Spirit Lake flooding down the river course, taking out bridges seconds behind them.

\*

Somewhere about halfway between Yakima and Spokane I glanced to the rearview mirror and saw the angry horsehead rising in the west. The black revelation swiftly burgeoned to despairing altitude and spread to a storm cloud arcing perilous blue lightning and expanding to glut the void, clawing up the curve of sky vaulting new and overreaching everything that was, wholly there and flowing, exhausting up and out through the exploding mountain on the distant rim.

I turned the headlights on and the planetary tsunami rose to breaking heights behind the old Ford while I squashed the gas pedal against the floorboards –

Then the world turned to ash.

\*

A fishing rod leaned against the plastic privy. The tip of the rod, about

the last foot of it, extended above the ash with line still running through the guides and a curl of mono flagging beyond the tip. The outhouse door was gone and the interior was filled with marble-sized pumice. The little boy who had pulled a trout from the creek with that rod, who had danced at the sight of the tree planters coming and going, was entombed beneath the ash with his sister, mother and father. The creek was gone, buried. The long, long sky vaulted open above the barren slopes where the dark forest once stood, and to the mountain-notched horizon, all the trees were dead and fallen, juxtaposed over the ash in thatched rows of skeletal fingers pointing the direction the blast wave traveled.

Four hundred miles east in Montana the ash fell as a light snowfall upon the Thompson River camp, accumulated on tree branches like ration flour on the palms of starving Indians.

Decker let me know the St. Helens crew made it out okay. The Forest Service people at Thompson Falls weren't sure what effect the ash would have on the plantings and halted work on

the contract until they could figure it out. The Intermountain crew awaited word, set up in the campsite next to the Thompson River, two miles upstream from the confluence with the Clarks Fork. The work called off gave me a chance to have a look at things.

I took a walk down through the alders to the water. All was covered with a half inch of gray ash, fine as pollen. The stones lining the stream course looked like puffy concrete; the fluid stream ran clear and black. I squatted on the stones to observe the stream and surroundings.

An ouzel flashed by low to the water, then folded its wings and tilted into a riffle upstream. I bent to examine those portions of a large stone not exposed to the ash fall and found an orange salmonfly clinging under an overhang. It seemed healthy. It had a strong grip on the rock and struggled when I pulled it loose to examine it.

I stood up and carefully scanned up and down the stream. A couple of salmonflies coalesced, rising in a shaft of light passing through the dusted alders. Walking slowly along the stream

*Continued on page 18...*



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**May 8**

**Cutter Flower Show**

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First-come, first-served flowers, plants, and vegetables! Come shop local for your garden.

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Show: 7 pm (reservations suggested) \$20

The Cutter welcomes back the best of Irish music and dance.

**May 29**

**Final Friday**

Dinner: 5 pm ~ \$5 | Show: 6 pm ~ \$5

Three 20-minute acts of music, followed by ballerinas.

**May 30 & 31**

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Sat: 6 pm ~ \$20 | Sun: 3 pm ~ \$20

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...continued from page 17

I saw two more salmonflies under leaves on bushes, then a couple more floating on the water.

On a dark run, a deep elbow where the stream bends under overhanging blackberry canes, I saw a trout roll on a floating salmonfly, and the big insect vanished into a strong boil.

The Forest Service people didn't know what effect the ash would have on the plantings. Typical of them, I thought. Even though there are thousands of square miles of northwestern forest growing from volcanic ash soil. Scratch a few inches down into the dirt at Thompson Falls and the ash layer deposited during a prior St. Helens eruption is revealed. The government biologists knew that. The agency bosses must have gone into panic mode over the eruption and sent down the order to stop everything.

Decker and I had talked it over earlier and concluded that the government higher-ups just needed a few days to dither and fuss, then they'd settle down and give the order to commence work. So, a little volcano dust goes down the hole when the tree is planted - fertilizer.

Some of the Forest Service planting inspectors and biologists were dawdling and jawboning at the campsite when I got back from the river. Clean-cut, laconic men in green khakis stood in a circle around the wisp of smoke that had been the morning fire, their service radios crackling. The Intermountain guys provided a motley contrast. All were holding coffee cups, sharing opinions and anecdotes about the volcano blowing and the ash fall.

One of the young biologists had on a new pair of White's Smokejumpers and kept sneaking glances down to admire his new boots. I smiled to myself with something like amusement. The biologist knew the contractors

really had no say in the decision but, wanting to sound inclusive while killing more time keeping the conversation and coffee session going, New Boots asked me my opinion on the situation.

"Well ... better to be on the safe side. Probably ought to wait a few days," I said.

Decker overheard my reply but didn't say anything, secretly looking forward to spending a few days at the tavern in Thompson Falls high-siding his money on beer, bratwursts, pickled eggs and Instant-Winner tickets. We shot each other pirate glances while the biologist stared down, getting a good long look at his prized boots.

I broke out my rod and waders. The Forest Service held up the work for three days before arriving at the conclusion it would probably be okay to continue the planting. During those three days I caught a lot of big rainbows and bull trout swinging black Wooly Worms and floating Sofa Pillows - outsized trout that had coursed upstream from the Clarks Fork seeking the concentrated lode of salmonflies emerging from the tributary. It was generous fishing. The Thompson sparkled in the ash-gray moonscape, a clear seam of continuity placed like a silver lifeline over the temporary desolations of exploded volcanoes.

Sometimes you just get lucky, I figured. We make a call and, if things work out, we get to bumble on another day, our firmness temporarily ensured and the inevitable certainty of our infirmity again evaded. Three days. A moment. Nothing holds. In the stream we have less time than we know and that time is fragile, luminous and wild. I laid out a cast and bent to mend the line, thankful for random luck.

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

## The Steady Legacy of Hops

*By Shannon Rosenbaum, Director*

The successful introduction of hops to the state of Washington is attributed to Ezra Meeker around 1865 into the Puyallup Valley ([historylink.org](http://historylink.org)). Several years later, Charles Carpenter introduced the aromatic, bitter preservative to the Yakima Valley. By 1890, following a devastating hops lice outbreak in the Pacific Northwest, the Yakima operation became arguably the most important and lucrative hops producer in the nation. Today, Washington, including Yakima Valley, produces about three-quarters of U.S. hops.

The human labor involved in developing such a legacy industry was a socioeconomic phenomenon all its own. Being seasonally handpicked, the arduous process of harvesting the fragile cones from female plants into commercial or traditionally-made baskets involved long hours and days of which whole Indigenous and immigrant families participated.

Often camping through the whole season, families would come from all over the Pacific Northwest, Canada, and even from Alaska, representing many tribes, from the Coastal

Salish Puyallup, Nisqually and Muckleshoot to the Interior Yakama and Colville peoples. Here families would find economic sustenance in some of the most searing financial times of our national history – World Wars I and II, and the Great Depression. While most agriculture flailed during the Great Depression, hops production remained steady and carried many families to safety during this time.

Following World War II, the mechanization of hops harvesting replaced the need for hired labor and hand-picking and has since bolstered the hops industry to the force it is today. In 2025, Washington operators harvested nearly 62 million of the 83.1 million pounds produced nationally (United States Department of Agriculture).

Meanwhile, the historical work involved in developing this industry is documented and celebrated in many institutions and communities, including the Washington State museum’s Great Hall of Washington History in Tacoma, the American Hop Museum in Toppenish, the University of Washington Special Collections in Seattle, and here at the Inchelium Cultural Research Center.



*Colvilles went to Toppenish to pick hops, circa 1930s. Golden Farm at Toppenish. 2026 Cathy Desautel [Randall] collection. Inchelium Cultural Research Center.*

# Woodchuck, Rock Chuck, Whistle

Article & Photo by D.L. Kreft

What animal is best described in these three words: whistle, waddle, hibernate? If a mental image of a marmot comes to mind, you've guessed pretty well.

As spring builds up to full speed, these largest of North American ground squirrels make their appearance from rock shelters and burrows and announce their presence with piercing whistles. It is a curious thing how they (as a group) have managed to adapt to human intrusion as well as remain the reclusive residents of remote wilderness retreats.

Fifteen species of marmot encircle the Earth's northern hemisphere from North America to the grasslands, mountains and forests of central Europe, Eurasia, Siberia, and the Far East. Different cultures have stories and legends surrounding marmots. They even have a dubious place in history as carriers of the Black Death plague bacteria, *Y. pestis*, of Central Asia.

Having awakened from 6-8 months of hibernation, these stout mammals are in a rush to reproduce and raise their young during the height of spring and summer before returning to their deep burrows and rocky enclaves.

While outwardly cute, with button noses, twitching silvery whiskers and furry coats, they are known to be destructive to gardens and flower beds and to undermine buildings and bridge abutments with their burrows. Anyone venturing along the basalt bluffs above the Spokane River, even in the very heart of downtown Spokane, will

note their presence. Secure in their rock-hard fortresses, they are immune from traffic, and their piercing alarm whistles mock those who try to get closer for a photo, only to have the marmot disappear into one of the countless holes and crevices within a whisker's reach. They are not afraid of living near humans; they just like to keep them at a distance. You may consider them to be a cute nuisance – depending on how they affect your life.

The English word *marmot* is derived from French and Latin roots, essentially meaning “mountain mouse.” European immigrants to North America recognized the resemblance to the Old World counterparts. Different species of marmot have also acquired colloquial monikers such as woodchuck, groundhog, rock chuck and whistle pig. How did these names come about?

We are well familiar with the celebrity status of Punxsutawney Phil, the reluctant prognosticator of spring-like weather. Phil is called groundhog. But how is that different from a woodchuck? And we still don't know for sure how much wood a woodchuck can chuck. What's with the chuck thing, anyway?

Basically, the groundhog and woodchuck are the same animal and typically the one we see east of the Mississippi and in northeastern Canada. With them being diggers at heart, rooting around in the ground, the term groundhog kind of fell into common usage in the eastern United States. Of course, indigenous Americans had their own names, and the early settlers created phonetic corruptions of these. Woodchuck is likely derived from languages such as the Narragansett “ockqutchaun” or the Cree “wuchak” or “otchek.” Even our scientific Latin name for this member of the marmot tribe, *Marmota monax*, comes from the Algonquin word “monax,” roughly translated as digger, or earth mover.

As Europeans moved west, more marmot species were identified. In the lower, more arid habitats we have the yellow-bellied marmot, or rock chuck. *Marmota flaviventris*, literally a marmot with a yellow (*flavi-*) belly (*ventris*), is our common marmot representative in the Inland Empire. Their rough gray and brown coat enables them to blend in with their rocky haunts. We usually hear their sharp whistle before we see them. But once they are on the move, we know their chubby form as they scramble among rock ledges, even pausing occasionally to pose for a quick photograph if you have your camera ready.

Higher up in the alpine and subalpine meadows of the



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# Pig Too ——— A Fresh Air Perspective

Selkirk mountains, we find the hoary marmot, *Marmota caligata*. These marmots hibernate from 7-8 months beneath deep snowpacks, emerging from their dens to feed ravenously on succulent grasses and wildflowers, fattening themselves up for the next round of hibernation. Their Latin species name, *caligata*, means “booted.” The long silvery hairs of their coat are contrasted with black on their feet that make them resemble boots.

I think the whistle of these marmots is the longest and most piercing. I think if any of the marmots deserves the name whistle pig, it's this one. Walking along a trail in the Salmo Peak wilderness, I nearly jumped off the trail when a hoary marmot cut loose with the loudest whistle I had ever heard, not three feet from me. Never even saw it. It took more than a few minutes to recover my composure.

In addition to the woodchuck, yellow-bellied and hoary marmots, North America has three others: the Olympic, Vancouver Island, and Alaska. You can easily guess where they live. The Olympic is the chubbiest of all, weighing in at up to 18 pounds!

All six species are true to our earlier description: waddling, whistling and hibernating. Their cuteness belies their toughness. Their curiosity observes us, but their caution keeps us at a distance. They can live among us and yet they do not need us in order to thrive. They are the heralds of spring, and I welcome their return from the dark depths to the sunny rocks and ledges of our world.

*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.*



## Now playing: Lee Cronin's *The Mummy*

It's another monster for another month of movies in the *Monthly* (I couldn't help myself). We had "Dracula" for April and now we get "Lee Cronin's *The Mummy*." While Luc Besson's adaptation of history's most famous count wasn't for me, I could see how it would draw an audience. With "Lee Cronin's *The Mummy*" I'm not entirely sure which audience this is for.

My curiosity was piqued when I heard there was going to be a new, scary spin on "The Mummy," which got its start in 1932 with Boris Karloff and eventually morphed into the Brendan Fraser-Rachel Weisz action-adventure trilogy, which came to be the version of "The Mummy" that took over the collective movie-going consciousness.

I almost forgot to mention the 2017 Tom Cruise retelling, but I have a feeling no one would be too upset at me for that.

While watching the trailer for this latest version, I was excited, since Lee Cronin directed one of my favorite movies from 2023, "Evil Dead Rise." It was frightening, darkly funny, gross – I had a great time. Understandably not for everyone, but it was creative and engaging for horror buffs.

Yet while the new "Mummy" features some terrific makeup work and body horror, the story feels like a draft version of another *Evil Dead* film.

This mummy is a little girl, Katie (Natalie Grace) who is kidnapped and disappears for eight years, only to be rediscovered in a sarcophagus in Cairo. Despite the fact she looks musty, crusty and dusty with inscribed bindings embedded

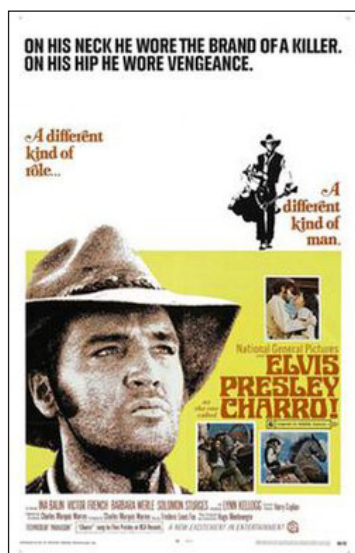
into her skin and she has to be sedated to keep her from self-harming, her parents (Jack Raynor, Laia Costa) decide to bring her home anyway. You could try to make the argument that they are just overjoyed to have their daughter back, but no, this family has the awareness of a box of tacks.

"Honey, we know your sister speaks demon, floats above the bed and tries to bite grandma's face off, but she's just had a rough eight years. Give her some space."

That's not a direct quote from the movie, but that's the gist of it. There is an attempt to evoke a sense of mystery and do some detective work, but the reveal that the filmmakers are counting on to make you gasp is a clue that so obviously should've been turned over to the police when Katie first went missing, it kind of makes your brain fold in on itself.

There are some intriguing ideas here and, again, the makeup is stellar. Other than that, this mummy's brains must still be in a canopic jar, far away from this film.

**\*Rated R, runtime 2 hrs, 14 min.**



## Classic Corner: Charro!

Elvis with a beard in a 1969 Western and it's the only movie of his where he doesn't sing? Color me attentive. For someone who likes to preen her movie buff feathers, I had to admit I had never heard of this movie when it came up one Wednesday at a monthly trivia game at a local watering hole. I figured I better change that.

Directed by Charles Marquis Warren, who helped create the classic Western series *Rawhide*, "Charro!" tells the story of outlaw Jess Wade (Presley) who's looking to go straight, but his boss Vince (Victor French) isn't having it. Vince and his gang

frame Jess for their theft of a gold-plated cannon (yep), but of course, The King isn't taking this lying down. With the help of former flame Tracey (Ina Balin), Jess sets out to avenge himself against Vince and his cohorts.

"Charro!" is not some forgotten masterpiece. The direction is a bit flat and the movie feels more made for TV than a sweeping Western you could imagine filling the big screen. But Presley's performance is impressive and one wonders what this film could have been if it had more panache and grit.

**\*Unrated, runtime 1 hr, 38 min.**



## Providing Food Where It Matters

Article & Photo by Lynn O'Connor

With the help of a Rotary District 5080 grant – funds from The Rotary Foundation – the Colville club decided to address the issue of hunger in our community in two ways. We carried on with our No Produce Left Behind project that we've been doing for years, and added Backpacks to Bellies.

No Produce Left Behind (NPLB) enlists Rotarians to go to the farmers markets in Colville twice a week to purchase (at full retail value) produce the farmers didn't sell from their booths that day. The produce is loaded up and taken to our project partner, the Northeast Washington Hunger Coalition (NEWHC). We help them repackage the produce for delivery to 18 tri-county area food pantries. Sometimes we also make wholesale purchases directly from the farms. An offshoot of this relationship is that many Rotarians help NEWHC obtain more food through gleanings efforts.

Backpacks to Bellies (B2B) is modeled after Second Harvest's Bite 2 Go program that gives schoolchildren packages of food to sustain them through weekends in which they may not have enough to eat. When children return to school hungry, it impacts their ability to focus.

Many Rotarians help with packaging the bags and delivering to the schools. Like the Second Harvest model, this program connects us to many community partners: the Colville School District, NEWHC, local faith-based groups, Colville Toyota, Spokane Teachers Credit Union (STCU), Second Harvest. These organizations provided space, food, funds, and/or volunteers. The food purchased for this program is carefully selected. It must be nutritious, keep well, require no cooking (imagine an 8-year-old), and no cooking equipment or processes.

These two projects helped over 9,000 people through the food

pantries and the schools.

This coming year we will again be doing both projects, but B2B will go off on its own without the assistance of Rotary Foundation/District grants. This project resonates so deeply with our incredibly generous community that funds are readily donated (for which we thank you from the bottoms of our hearts).



N.E.W. Hunger Coalition Director Stephani Smith (left) and B2B Manager Kelli Lippert (right).

No Produce Left Behind has applied for a District grant again. Our club must match the grant funds, so please support our fundraisers! All those funds get put right back to our farmers who provide such beautiful produce, in addition to the other projects we do.

If you'd like to get involved with us, you are invited to check us out. Our meetings are held on Thursdays at noon at El Patron Taqueria in Colville. You are also welcome to simply volunteer alongside us on anything we do.

**Correction:** In last month's edition, the picture caption incorrectly identified Boy Scouts as helping with trail maintenance – it should have indicated members of Charles Lamica's 1804 Club from Kettle Falls.

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



# Vince Gill Saves Country

There's a hint of Glenn Frey at the start of *Brown's Diner Bar*, the latest EP by uber-guitarist/vocalist Vince Gill. Not altogether surprising, since Gill has been a member of the Don Henley Group (known as the Eagles) for eight years now.

For his ambitious *50 Years from Home* project, commemorating a half-century in the music biz, Gill is releasing an EP every month from late 2025 through 2026. *Brown's Diner Bar* follows October's *I Gave You Everything I Had* and November's *Secondhand Smoke* with stately, classic country that is as much storytelling as it is singing and playing.

The note-perfect waltz of "This Lonesome Old Cowboy" is a perfect antidote to what most people call modern country (overly clever Nashville-penned tunes that invariably have someone waking up on the wrong side of the truck bed with an empty solo cup), and "Nobody Knows" feels like Gill has lived a far more bare-knuckle life on the road than any of us ever knew about.

Honestly, this is what makes classic country classic. It's less about being clever, and more about just painting an honest picture of life. There's a straight-ahead truth in songs such as "Young Again" that capture a real picture of aging



after years in bars, studios and tour buses. The next few months look to be a rich period of Vince Gill laying down everything that's missing from modern country music. Nashville would do well to listen.

# The James Hunter Six After 40 Years

I always like albums where I can hear the room they were recorded in. *Off the Fence* is all that and then some. Forty years since James Hunter released his first album, this Van Morrison collaborator has been



called, by some, England's greatest soul singer. Hunter makes a real case for it with songs such as "Two Birds, One Stone" and the masterful, slow R&B of "Particular."

Bosco Mann's production is nothing short of perfection here. A crisp, digital capture of something like "Only a Fool" would have been just wrong, and as Hunter teams up with his old mate, Van Morrison, on "Ain't That a Trip," the sound of this recording is as warm as the harmonies between the two soul singers.

"Here and Now" is a no-frills '60s bossa nova ballad that pays tribute to Hunter's wife and is as universal a love song as you'd want. At times,

the singer actually sounds like Glenn Hughes at the mic, which is not surprising given how much the two have in common in regard to soul-singing.

While James Hunter was anything but an overnight success, finally getting his due in the early 2000s after thousands of miles and hours on the road, the commitment and grind have clearly only fueled his passion for rock-solid rhythm & blues. *Off the Fence* is one of the best-recorded, powerfully-performed albums Hunter has ever laid down.

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

# A Good Read

## **99 Ways to Die, by Ashely Alker, MD**

Reviewed by Terry Cunningham

With a title like that, you might be thinking this book is going to be a big snooze or TMI (too much information), but Ashely Alker is well qualified on this subject. She is a self-described death escapologist. As an emergency medicine doctor, she has seen firsthand many of these 99 preventable ways.

She's not your average ER doctor; her work in the entertainment industry (keeping the stories accurate and participants educated) including television, Netflix, Hulu, HBO, and Disney, helps make the book lively, including some hilarious stories.

Some of the preventive measures are as simple as wearing your seatbelt on your way to the airport for that hard-earned vacation. Knowing what your destination holds regarding your safety matters, such as the poisonous plants or the animal life – spiders and snakes or lions and tigers. Perhaps worst of all are the little ones, or invisible ones, such as parasites or bacteria.

With the advancement in modes of transportation, humans can sometimes put themselves in unfamiliar environments with unknown perils. But Dr. Alker will help you prepare for a life aware of the dangers and how to avoid them. She covers the vaccines that have been saving lives for decades against polio, smallpox, MMR, tetanus, rabies and hepatitis, as well as modern methods such as CPR and using an AED. Accidents will happen, but how we respond to them can save lives. Things like knowing the emergency phone number in the place that you are in. Not every country uses 911.

You may be thinking: only 99 ways to die, or I didn't know that there are so many ways to die. Either way this book could benefit you. And some of the author's true experiences will make you laugh.

Chapter one is about infections, bacterial and viral. Chapter two covers the vaccine-preventable diseases, such as meningitis, influenza and diphtheria and others. Chapter three is heart disease, which includes broken hearts, heart attacks, arrhythmias and more. Chapter four has brain diseases – mad cow disease, stroke, brain bleeds, dementia, brain-eating disease and a few more.

Five is sex: pregnancy, herpes, syphilis, and more. Chapter six is drugs, medications and recreational.

This is a very important chapter. I learned a lot about what is happening recreationally, good or bad – meth, cocaine, date rape drugs and detectors, to name a few.

Chapter seven covers animals on land and sea. Eight is about poisons such as bad water, cyanide, CO<sub>2</sub>, poisonous plants, mold and yeasts, and health influencers.

Food is the ninth chapter – dysentery and food poisoning, anaphylaxis, mushrooms.

Chapter ten may be the most preventable: locomotion hazards, such as cars, ATVs, motorcycles, helicopters ... anything in motion, use caution.

The list wouldn't be complete without chapter eleven: crime, including murder, serial killers and gun violence. Chapter twelve brings us to nature's elements such as lightning, tornadoes, earthquakes, volcanoes, diving, exposure, altitude sickness.

Warfare is the final and thirteenth chapter, covering anthrax, other biological weapons, chemical weapons and nuclear weapons.

You may find this book very practical and that it offers many conversation starters for entertainment. And I'll just add, when taking pictures, watch where you step.

*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."*

## 99 Ways to Die



And How to  
Avoid Them

Ashely Alker, MD






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## De-Cluttering *By Karen Giebel*

“Clutter is a crowded, messy or disorganized collection of items that obstruct space, hinders productivity or causes mental overwhelm. It represents excess possessions, often unneeded or unused.” Sigh ... well now ...

If you were to walk through my house, you would not notice the clutter because I am also a neatnik, but trust me, it's here. Just well hidden. Oh yes, it is truly here. When my husband and I moved here in 2011, we combined two houses that had been established for 30-plus years. Prior to moving we took truckload after truckload to various charity stores. But when we arrived in Republic, we still had so much excess stuff that we had to rent a storage unit until we could find time to deal with it all.

So, how did we deal with it? Instead of downsizing our possessions, we built a bigger house. And here we are 15 years later, still accumulating things that we may or may not need. Truthfully, I am much better at discarding or donating items that are not needed or used than he is, but I still have room for lots of improvement.

Part of our accumulated stash problem is simply time. We have very busy lives and it's just easier to put things in boxes or desks or drawers to deal with when we have more time (ha, that will never happen) than to sort and dispose of them in a timely fashion. Then again, where do we take all this stuff?

There are a couple of thrift stores in Colville, which is 65 miles away, or one in Omak, 75 miles away. I have been known to bag up items and put them in the guest room only to forget to load them into the truck before we head over the Pass, not once but several times. How about a yard sale? Just the thought of preparing for

one is overwhelming, so there is a huge charitable donation in our near future.

We are not getting any younger, and our kids are scattered all over the country. Trust me, when we leave this earth none of them will be driving over here with a U-Haul to take any of our belongings back with them. They all have their own established houses and probably some clutter of their own.

So, what kind of clutter are we talking about here? Let's start with my beautiful kitchen and its well-hidden clutter. Being short, I can't see what is on the top shelves of the cabinets, but they are full of glassware, serving dishes, vases and other such items. I haven't used any of those in years. I climb up on a ladder to take them down and clean the shelves and then return them to remain unused until once again I clean.

And how about the infamous kitchen “junk drawer” that holds all the stuff that doesn't have a proper home, sort of like the Lost Boys of Peter Pan. All the instruction manuals for all the appliances are stuffed in there, including manuals for appliances we replaced ten years ago.

I have an antique desk that belonged to my Gramps and I love it. When we were moving here from the east coast, I had paper copies of my medical records made to take with me. Why are they still in that desk? They must be headed to the shredder this week. My work desk in the office is another cluttered mess, but nowhere near as cluttered as my husband's. You can't even find his desk. So yes, I have work to do.

How about those closets? That's a tough one for me. Growing up there wasn't a lot of money for clothes and I used my babysitting money and farm labor money to buy material to sew my

clothes. As a young wife and mother, I owned a couple pairs of jeans and a few shirts plus my nurse uniforms. My closet was pretty empty.

Not so much anymore. Working in an office as a case manager and a risk manager, I was finally able to afford to shop and I did. I retired in 2017 to wear jeans and tee shirts, but all those business clothes remain in the closet. I know how hard I worked to be able to afford them, so it pains me terribly to part with them. But part I must. There are many young working moms out there who can use clothing.

The hardest things for me to de-clutter – and maybe the same for you – are the personal memorabilia that bring back precious memories. I have several boot boxes that contain the funeral logs of my parents and grandparents: condolence cards, sympathy notes, cards from floral arrangements and the logs with the signatures of all who attended their visitations. Why on earth am I hanging onto all this?

But then I started reading the cards, and the memories of people I hadn't thought of in untold years come sweeping over me. Dad's hunting buddy and Mom's best friend. There are names of Gram and Gramps' fellow church members, and more, much more. Quietly I returned the boxes to the shelves, knowing I am not quite ready to put those memories to rest.

Wish me luck because I am determined and have already begun some serious de-cluttering. I don't even want to think about the basement. That's a story for another day.

*Karen Castleberry Giebel blogs about life and food at [www.thejourneygirl.com](http://www.thejourneygirl.com) up in the back of the beyond in Ferry County, Washington.*

# Water

By Michelle Lancaster

The Washington State Department of Ecology just announced that the state is in the fourth consecutive year of drought. The Upper Columbia region, as of early April, had 60-70% of average snowpack. Interestingly, the state reported that October to February received normal

precipitation, but primarily in the form of rainfall. Snowpack is an important source of water supply in summer months. According to the EPA, 40 out of 50 states expect to see water shortages under average water usage conditions over the next decade.

What does this mean for us? Panic? I do not panic, because what can my worry do? Worry will not bring moisture. I prefer to put my mind toward focusing on productive, long-term water conservation projects. I need to feel like I am “doing something.”

My focus in recent years has turned toward researching and establishing climate-appropriate plants and moisture retention on our farm. As I implement different ideas to protect our water source, I find immense satisfaction in seeing positive results.

In the years I have lived in Stevens County (all my life, minus a few), I have come to expect not a lot of precipitation with a lot of weather and temperature variability. I actually find comfort in this. We may freeze tonight and then be in the 70s tomorrow. But that is normal around here. We may not get any rain in July or August or April, that is likely, too. A shortage of water is basically the norm, so we might as well live like it and prepare for it.

Within the house, the highest water usage comes from the bathroom. When the toilet broke, I found a replacement that uses a little over one gallon per flush, compared to the home's original toilet that used closer to five gallons of water. I do not shower every day. When the faucet leaked, I was able to turn off the water, replace the rubber gasket in the valve, and stop the leak. All these little changes really add up!

Outside the house, lawns can consume half of a household's water usage. My goal is to be a lawn-free farm. In reality, grass does grow in areas, so we manage that. But I am not actively watering these areas.

I do like to have a little “rural hide-away” that is animal-free and stays pretty year-round. We fenced off an area in the front yard, a park-like setting with tall,



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# A Year On The Farm

old fir trees. The original owners had put in hooks for a hammock, so each April I set up a hammock and we unload a trailer-load of bark mulch from Vaagen's Free Bark Day. I quite enjoy walking along beds of beauty bark; they are just as spongy as a nice grass lawn.

While many may be thinking the beauty bark is for looks, I can also see vast improvement in moisture retention and plant health wherever we put the mulch. There is a bush in front of our house that I used to have to water almost daily. With years of mulch application, I now water the bush a few times each summer in total!

In Stevens County, we cannot irrigate pasture and honestly, most of us do not have the water resource to do so, even if we wanted to. Our pasture can act like a sponge, though. By keeping grass higher with rotational grazing paddocks, all rainfall penetrates into the soil instead of running off. The warmth of the sun does not hit the soil because it's covered, so moisture can also be retained in times without precipitation. Higher moisture retention = more biological activity = more growth and more feed.

In the garden and orchard, where we can irrigate for home use, I installed inexpensive and reusable drip irrigation that targets water to the source efficiently, plus I end up not watering weeds. Fewer

weeds, yay!

Something to consider: If you limit or eliminate hand watering of plants, you will soon find out which plants can survive and thrive in this climate. The plants that survive will typically end up being more productive, plus easier to manage in the long run.

As an example, I mistakenly bought some dwarf apple trees in my earlier years of orchard planting. Those have all been torn out as they die. Now I plant only full-sized rootstock that develops deep taproots that can better survive drought. Our heirloom apple trees are productive and delicious – even when I forget to water them.

Also, while it's not always possible to buy fall plants, try fall planting of perennials. I mostly source plants from spring Conservation District sales and farmers markets. If planted in spring, those plants almost immediately go into not only transplant shock but summer heat and drought stress.

Now, I plant trees, bushes, etc., in my

garden where they can be partly shaded and monitored for watering. Healthy roots develop in the compost-enriched soil. Then, once fall comes, I dig holes and plant the trees and protect with a wire cage. I try to mimic a wild planting by placing rocks, a rotting log, and loose branches around each tree – for added protection from weather and wildlife. My transplants have gone from almost zero percent success to almost 100% survival.

In summary, these are some ways I think about conserving water. There are many other avenues as well. Reducing water waste can be as simple as growing food only you will actually consume. Or doubling up on "lawn" space as part of your orchard, so the watering goes toward food-producing plants, too. I will keep thinking on ways to protect what little delicious, clean, fresh water we receive.

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

## Resources:

[ecology.wa.gov/about-us/who-we-are/news/2026/april-8-statewide-drought-declared-due-to-dismal-snowpack](https://ecology.wa.gov/about-us/who-we-are/news/2026/april-8-statewide-drought-declared-due-to-dismal-snowpack)  
[ecology.wa.gov/ecologys-work-near-you/earth-day/water-conservation](https://ecology.wa.gov/ecologys-work-near-you/earth-day/water-conservation)  
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[theconsciousfarmer.com/ruminants-methane-pest-carbon-sequesterer](https://theconsciousfarmer.com/ruminants-methane-pest-carbon-sequesterer)  
[adaptiveseeds.com/featured-seed-categories/dry-farming-adapted](https://adaptiveseeds.com/featured-seed-categories/dry-farming-adapted)

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# Sequencing for Brassicas and

By Brenda St. John

*I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase.”*

~ 1 Corinthians 3-6

I've never claimed to have perfect timing. I thought I jumped the gun when a warm, sunny day lured me into planting some starts from my greenhouse into grow bags. For the previous six weeks, I had watched numerous YouTube videos on what could be planted in February, March, and April, but until that particular sunny day, April 15 to be specific, I just couldn't do it.

I raised those plants from seeds I started in late January and early February, and even though the videos said they could go in the ground, I was too protective of them, having raised them myself. The "starts" represented an investment in my time and energy. I had modified their potting soil with fertilizer and powdered eggshells. I had watered them and brought them inside on really cold nights. I had watched them grow. I had bonded with them.

That beautiful sunny afternoon of April 15, I added fresh soil and fertilizer to my grow bags and then started planting: broccoli, cabbage, mustard, spinach, kale and arugula. The YouTubers said they could all survive cold temperatures, so I wasn't worried a bit. I filled four

large grow bags, and then we left for Newport for a high school track meet. While we were in Newport the weather got very cold, and on the drive home, it snowed like we hadn't seen all winter.

I started lamenting my poor plants and what bad timing it was for me to choose that day to expose them to the brute force of Mother Nature. By the time we got home, the plants were already buried under a blanket of snow. I grabbed a frost cloth from the greenhouse and draped it over them, snow and all. There was nothing more I could do.

Much to my great surprise, all the plants survived! Those cold-hardy plants are truly cold-hardy!

In choosing which garden seeds to plant first, I was employing "sequencing," to go along with "timing." I was thinking about when they could go in the ground, and what it took to get them to that stage. How long was their germination and seedling stage before they could be potted up? By late February and early March, I had to move them outside to an unheated greenhouse because, by then, I needed the space under the grow lights for tomatoes, peppers and herbs. Sequencing. It's all sequencing. My current stage is the cucurbits. These are plants from the squash, melon and cucumber families.

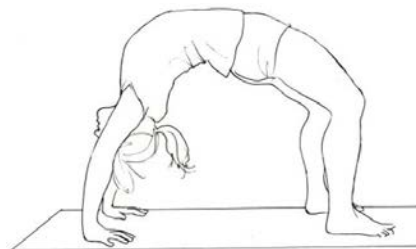
The sequence must be followed precisely or I will not have a successful garden.

I must start with the brassicas, then move on to vegetables and herbs, and finish up with the gourd family. Switching up the order could lead to the vegetables and cucurbits freezing due to planting too soon or the bras-

sica bolting from the summer heat. The sequencing has served me well, and I have done things this way for the past few years. The only variation is having my plants snow-covered on the same day I planted them. Now I know they can take it!

Just as planting a garden requires proper sequencing, so do many other things, and that includes a yoga practice. New yogis might not be aware that there is a specific sequence to follow when practicing yoga so as not to risk physical injury or create confusion in the body's nervous system. For example:

- Begin with a simple warm-up that connects the movements with the breath. This increases blood flow, lubricates joints, and establishes a quiet mind.
- Progress from simple movements to more dynamic and challenging movements. Make sure to alternate sides when doing asymmetrical poses.



- A common guideline is that backbends (which are energizing) should be done before forward bends (which are calming).
- Neutralize the spine as needed with counterposes. After a series of twists, follow up with a backbend. After a series of backbends,

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- follow up with a forward bend.
- Arm balances precede backbends with arms raised overhead.
  - Always include a cool-down period made up of calming poses such as seated forward folds and gentle twists.
  - Every class ends with *Savasana* or another acceptable asana such as *Viparita Karani*.
  - Other than *Sama Vritti Pranayama*, save breathing exercises for the end of class.

This sequence can be adapted to apply to a home yoga session, a yoga class, or even a particular yoga pose.

To illustrate the point, you can accomplish the asana “Wheel” (a.k.a. *Urdhva Dhanurasana*). Prepare by warming up the spine with cat/cow and side bends, warm up the front of the hips with High Lunge, Low Lunge and *Supta Virasana*, the glutes and hamstrings with Bridge Pose, and the shoulders with Plank and Downward Facing Dog. Since Wheel is a large backbend, practice some smaller backbends such as Locust and Cobra. Handstand would be a good arm balance to stabilize the shoulders, but if that is too much, go with Dolphin and then walk the feet forward.

With the body properly warmed up and limber, begin Wheel Pose by lying on the mat in Constructive Rest Pose (supine, knees bent, feet on the floor, arms at your sides, palms down).

From CRP, raise arms up overhead and place them on the floor beside your ears, fingers pointing toward your shoulders. On an inhalation,

press firmly into feet and hands to lift hips and shoulders off the mat. Come to the crown of the head briefly (if it feels safe for your neck), then press into hands to lift fully into Wheel Pose. Straighten arms as much as possible and lift chest toward the wall behind you. Feet should remain parallel and thighs hug in toward the midline.

Hold for 3 to 5 cycles of breath, keeping the neck relaxed and gaze soft. To come out of the pose, lower down by tucking your chin and bending your elbows. Follow up with Happy Baby as a counterpose.

*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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# Be Ready for the Moments That Matter

Article & Photos by Rob Sumner

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A few weeks ago, I had the chance to hike to the top of Cervidae Peak with my kids. If you've ever been up there, you know it's not just a casual walk. It's a steady climb – over two miles uphill, gaining about 2,000 feet in elevation. The kind of hike that makes you feel every step. And I felt it. About halfway up, my breathing was heavy, my legs were working, and I found myself hoping we were closer to the top than we actually were.

Then we saw them. A husband and wife, probably in their 60s, coming down from the summit. But what stood out wasn't just that they had already made it to the top, it was how they looked. Relaxed. Energized. Smiling. They

weren't exhausted. They weren't struggling. They were enjoying it. As they passed us, they encouraged us to keep going – told us we were getting close, even though we still had another mile or so to climb. And then they continued down the trail, steady and confident.

That moment stuck with me. Just a few steps before that, I had been focused on how tired I felt. And here they were, farther along in life, farther along in the hike – and moving in a way that didn't match the story we often tell ourselves about age. It was a powerful reminder that ability doesn't care how old you are. It reflects how you've lived, how you've moved, and how you've taken care of your



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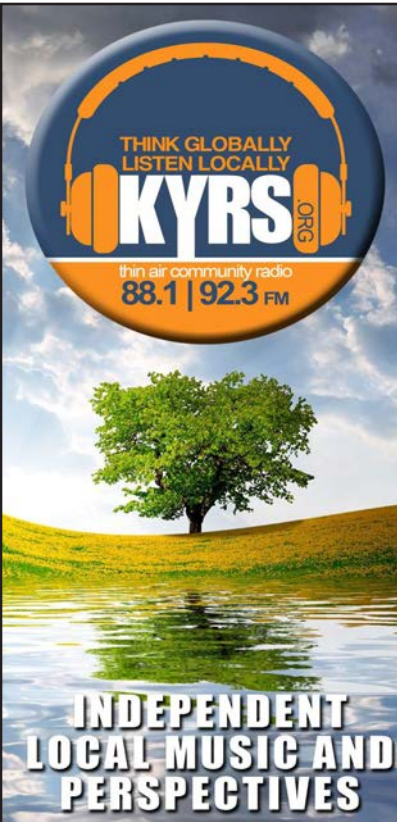
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body along the way.

Later on, we stopped for a break. We sat on a rock, catching our breath and taking in how far we had already come. My 19-year-old daughter said something I won't forget. She told me she was thankful she had a dad who could do this with them. That hit me in a way I didn't expect. Not because of the hike itself, but because of what it represented. The ability to say yes. The ability to show up. The ability to be fully in the moment with the people who matter most.

Here's the truth. I didn't have months to prepare for that day. I had one day. My daughter told me about the hike the day before. There was no time to get ready. I was either ready ... or I wasn't. And later, as I thought about that couple on the trail, and that moment with my kids, it became clear: This is what it's really about. Not the hike. Not the elevation. Not even the view at the top. It's about having a body that allows you to participate in life when the opportunity shows up.

Because life doesn't usually give you a heads-up. It doesn't say, "You'll need to be ready in six months." It simply presents the moment – a hike, a trip, a day outside, time with your kids or grandkids. And your body either lets you step into it or holds you back.

I keep coming back to that husband and wife on the trail. They weren't chasing anything. They weren't proving anything. They were simply living in a way that allowed them to be there – to climb, to move, to enjoy the experience. They didn't look like they were pushing through it. They looked like they belonged there. And that's the difference.



The goal isn't to hike Cervidae Peak. The goal is to be able to do it when the opportunity comes. The goal is to move through life with enough strength, balance, and endurance that you don't hesitate when something meaningful shows up. Because the moments that matter most aren't always planned. They're often the ones that happen on short notice. The ones that require you to be ready right now.

That day was about realizing what it means to be able to keep going. To climb when it's hard. To breathe through the effort. To stay in it – and to do so alongside the people you care about most.

And maybe that's what longevity really is.

Not just adding years to your life, but building a body that allows you to live fully inside the years you're given.

*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.*



# The Lives and Good Times of

By Cindy Talbott Roché

I haven't yet seen a river otter on Cottonwood Creek or the Colville River. So far, they've successfully hidden from me in the tall reed canarygrass. But I know they are there, because I've found their poop.

There are four aquatic or semiaquatic mammals in our streams: American mink, muskrats, river otters, and beavers. Their diets range from strictly carnivorous (meat eaters) to strictly herbivorous (plant eaters). Mink are the strict carnivores. River otters are predominantly carnivorous, but eat some vegetation, especially tubers and roots. Muskrats are primarily herbivores, preferring roots, stems, leaves and fruits, but eat some animals, such as freshwater clams, mussels, snails, crayfish, small fish, and frogs. Beavers are strictly vegetarian.

The first time I found otter poop was in late October. It contained almost exclusively crayfish bits, which could have been mink, but the diameter was too big. The second time was at the end of July when the poop was full of grasshoppers. Grasshoppers are plentiful in fields and pastures at that time, so it was not surprising. It did force me to imagine the otters out of the river, chasing and pouncing on grasshoppers.



*River otter. Photo by Robert Korfhage.*

I started to say, "Otters probably prefer eating fish over grasshoppers, but clearly, they eat what they can catch," but then I realized I had forgotten to apply the adage in science that, "Absence of evidence is not evidence of absence."

One thing that crayfish and grass-

hoppers have in common is an exoskeleton. Every part of a fish is far more digestible for a river otter than those exoskeletons, so fish leave less evidence in the poop.

According to wildlife biologists, river otters prefer to prey on fish, turtles, amphibians, crayfish, mussels, and crabs because of the rich nutrients they provide. When they can get them, river otters will eat birds and their eggs, even baby beavers. Since crayfish spawn in the fall, the otters could have been deliberately targeting them for their eggs (when I found the poop in October). Their diet also includes fleshy parts of cattails, bulrushes and water lilies. I'd like them to eat the invasive yellow iris along the Colville River, but that doesn't seem to be something they are



*Otter poop full of grasshoppers (left). Bits enlarged (right). Photos by author.*

# River Otters — A Botanist's View

interested in doing.

River otters live in river, lake, pond or marsh habitats, but may make extensive overland excursions from one body of water to another. Unlike beavers, they are quick and agile on land and can easily run fairly long distances.

They have a reputation for being playful. If you've been around river otters at all, you've either seen them running up a bank and sliding back down to the water or seen slide marks where they've been doing this. It doesn't seem to matter whether the surface is snow, grass, or bare soil, it looks like it is all about having fun. It's not surprising that they focus on nutrient-rich foods, since all that playtime burns a lot of calories.

I've learned that otters are less bothered by muddy conditions in the river than the fish are. When hunting at night or in murky water, they use their long, sensitive whiskers to detect vibrations caused by movement of their prey animals, like fish and crayfish. Their paw pads are highly sensitive, allowing them to feel for prey in the mud and under rocks. There is evidence that they can smell underwater, using bubbles released from their noses to detect prey. Their eyes are adapted for underwater vision: a transparent third eyelid functions as a swimming goggle to protect their eyes and enhance visibility of objects in water that you or I would not be able to see through.

The downside to this special ability is that eyes adapted for underwater vision are nearsighted on land. Thus, when they are out of the water, they have to depend on keen hearing and odor detection. It is on land that they are vulnerable to predators such as coyotes, bobcats, cougars and domestic dogs. Thus, they are particularly vigilant on land and escape predators

by diving into the water, where their swimming speed and agility and their sharp teeth give them the advantage.

I still wish I'd had the opportunity to watch them catching grasshoppers.

*Cindy is a 1973 graduate of Jenkins High School. Her publications include the Field Guide to Grasses of Oregon*

and Washington, *grass illustrations 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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# Under the Microscope

Article & Photo by Joe Barreca

Diversity and abundance are the hallmarks of a healthy ecosystem. They are apparent when you are out in nature. But what about the ecosystem underground? A pretty sure indication of health is an abundance of earthworms. If those are not visible, how do you check for diversity and abundance in your soil? To answer that, I have always wanted a microscope. Now I have one.

It doesn't look like the classic, binocular, heavy metal instrument you would expect. Instead, it is another device that is made in China and plugs into the USB port on my computer. It gives me 1000x power magnification to look at microbes and lets me take pictures and video, among other things. Also, it cost \$45 instead of \$300.

What pushed me over the edge to start doing this myself was a talk and tour given at the Stevens County Soil Conservation District on April 4 by Claudia Shimkus. She studied under Dr. Elaine Ingham, who is famous for coining the term "soil food web"

and drawing attention to the world of microbes interacting with plants and the rest of the ecosystem under our feet.

Shimkus started the class not with a microscope but with a presentation

than differences in temperature and it has to do with what organisms thrive in aerobic and anaerobic conditions.

Bacteria are fine in water and in moist air. Fungi need both water and air. The roles they play are very different. Think of bacteria as the alchemists of the underground. They break down organic matter into molecules that can be eaten by other organisms. They do the same for minerals. Minerals need to be in organic molecules before plants can use them. Bacteria also serve as food for many bigger and more complex critters because



they are very small. There can be up to a billion bacteria in a teaspoon of healthy soil. Scientists determine the variety of bacteria by analyzing DNA. They estimate 30,000 kinds per teaspoon. We are a long way from figuring out how all these kinds of bacteria do what they do. Under a microscope, they look like tiny dots that change shape but don't move around much.

on compost. The presentation quickly began to focus on air and water. To be more specific, she talked about two kinds of composting techniques, vermicompost and thermal compost. Thermal compost takes advantage of the tendency of compost materials such as fresh grass and offal to quickly raise the temperature of a compost pile to 160° F. (Above that, it needs to be turned to prevent it from catching fire.) In the process, it kills weed seeds and possible plant pathogens in 3-8 weeks. The heat builds up because air is not flowing through the pile. It is anaerobic.

Fungi are the economic, information, defense and transportation system for life underground. In broad terms they are categorized as saprophytic and mycorrhizal. Saprophytic fungi are the usually-white molds that grow on wet leaves and rotting logs. They break down organic matter so other microbes can eat it, but they are not much help underground. They appear as white strands under a microscope.

In vermicompost, organic matter is decomposed by bacteria and fungi in 3-6 months. Worms and other organisms survive because enough air goes through the pile to let them breathe and stay cool. In the case of worms, the pile also stays warm enough to keep them from freezing in the winter. But there is much more going on

Mycorrhizal fungi bond to the roots of plants and form a symbiotic

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relationship. They live on sugars and sap from the plants. In exchange, the mycorrhizal fungi bring water and minerals from long distances to a plant's roots amplifying the area that supplies nutrients manyfold. These fungi know what nutrients will be helpful to the plant. They have also been seen trapping harmful microbes before they can attack plant roots. About 90% of plants have a beneficial relationship to mycorrhizal fungi. So, identifying, promoting and protecting that relationship is key to soil health. They appear in darker colors with uniform strands stretching across the field of view in a microscope, but you don't usually see many of them in compost extract. (We will get back to why shortly.)

What you do see are nematodes, arthropods, amoeba and other protozoa. They are bigger, and easier to identify and to quantify. They are the next step in the soil food web. They eat bacteria and fungi. They poop out organic matter that helps soil structure, moisture, ventilation and drainage.

In Shimkus's class, we were focused on nematodes in compost extract. She prefers compost extract to compost tea. Compost tea is made by

suspending a permeable bag, such as a sock, filled with compost in warm water and adding some sugar, fruit juice or similar nutrient that bacteria can feed on, and waiting a day or so for the microbes to multiply. Add an aquarium air pump and it becomes aerobic compost tea.

Compost extract is made by soaking some compost in water (I prefer rainwater), then straining out the bigger pieces of organic matter. It is fast and preserves fungi, bacteria and protozoa. Compost tea promotes bacteria and becomes anaerobic quickly, leaving mostly bacteria and dead protozoa.

In his excellent book *The Biochar Solution*, Albert Bates states, "If you see any predatory nematodes in the samples, count that compost and tea as being extra beneficial." Nematodes are also known as roundworms. There are more nematodes on earth than any other life form. There are several kinds. The ones known for eating holes into your carrots are small. A healthy growth of mycorrhizal fungi will strangle them before they get into the carrot. A predatory nematode is much larger and eats small nematodes. So, Bates is correct in counting them as beneficial.

The logical take-away is that, if you have nematodes in your compost, it is healthy and you can use it to enhance your garden soil directly or by spraying compost extract. You can also soak biochar in compost extract and it will preserve the healthy biome and transfer it to whatever soil it is added to. It's possible that those living microbes are more beneficial to your soil than any mineral or chemical fertilizer you can add. The microbes create fertility on their own.

Now back to the lack of mycorrhizal fungi in compost extract. Mycorrhizal fungi live best attached to plant roots. Compost typically does not have plant roots. One solution is to grow plants in the compost until you use it. (My compost seems to supply its own squash seeds.) Another approach is to add mycorrhizal spores to compost and compost extract before you apply it.

I'm eager to sample my soil directly, as well as leaves, feathers, ferns and a million other things in the same way I now sample compost extract, under the microscope.

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

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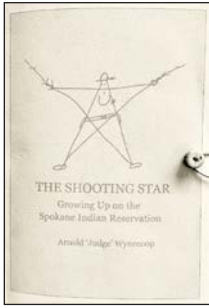
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# The Shooting Star: Growing Up on the Spokane Indian Reservation

By Judge Wynecoop

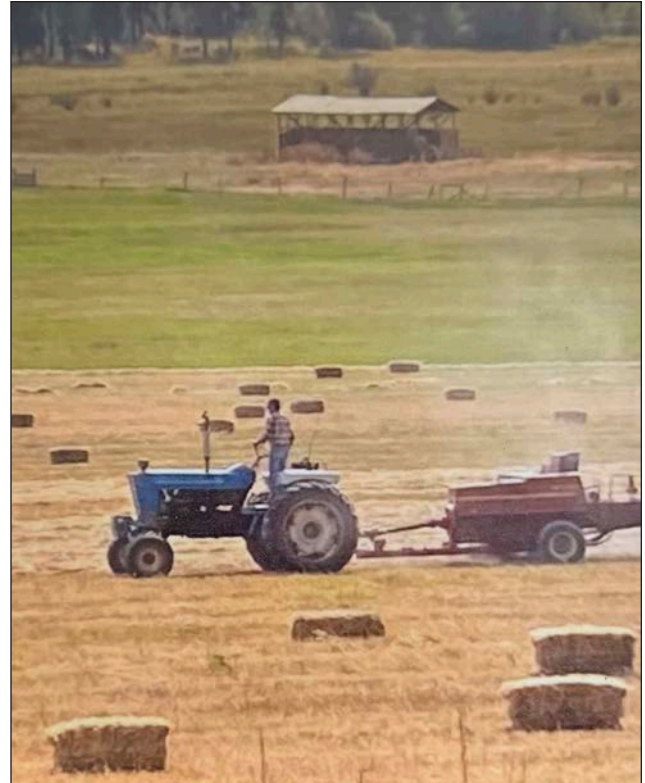
Excerpts from Judge Wynecoop's 2010 book *The Shooting Star: Growing Up on the Spokane Indian Reservation*, reprinted with permission.

## THE HAY SHED

In 1961 Dad decided we needed a hay shed, so we built one. We had a crew consisting of Sam Peone, myself, and brother Dick (when he was available). Dick was busy haying at the same time. Wade was there occasionally.

We had a few mishaps on this job. Once we were putting a large plank at the top of the shed's wall. We had a wheel tractor with a bucket on it and Wade was holding the plank in place while I nailed it. The first couple of whacks with my hammer caused the plank to come loose and the weight of it knocked Wade loose, and he and the plank came down! The plank fell between the shed wall and the bucket of the tractor. Wade did a backward somersault and landed on his butt in the seat of the tractor. One lucky guy!

A day or so later, I was pounding a nail in another plank down low on the same wall and all at once I got hit on the head – hard. I had just yelled and asked Dick to throw me a bigger hammer. This time Sam was holding the plank in place for me. I yelled at Dick because I thought he had thrown the hammer that hit me. Sam was standing right in front of me and he said, “It wasn't the hammer, Judge, it was the axe!” By then the blood was flowing pretty good, so a towel was placed over the cut, and we went to Chewelah to see Doc May.



Uncle Dick baling hay. Photo by Joni Wynecoop.

## CLAIR WYNECOOP'S MISHAPS

When World War II began, Dad tried his best to join up to go fight. But he had two mishaps as a young boy that made

his physical for Army service be listed as 4-F, which meant you aren't physically able to be in the armed forces. One of his accidents occurred while helping his father, or maybe his



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older brother, who was mowing hay with a team of horses and mowing machine. It was Dad's job to go along in front of the horses and warn the operator of ground squirrel mounds ahead. In the process, the horses were startled by something – I think it was a barking dog – and the horses bolted. Dad tried to get out of the way and fell, and the team pulled the mowing machine onto Dad's legs, cutting them from behind and above the ankles into his calves. He always walked fine but he could only run kind of stiff-legged.

The other accident happened when he was messing with a shotgun shell while using a center punch and hammer, which detonated the shell, which sent fragments and powder blast flying into his face, injuring his right eye.

After that, he had to learn to shoot left-handed. He was a very good shot. I think Chick wrote in his book about the blast being caused by a dynamite cap, but I heard it was a shotgun shell. It was too bad his eye had been injured; he would have been a great fighter pilot with his very good coordination and fast hand reflexes.

Some little events that I remember happening to him: We had made a diving board out at Turtle Lake. It was a long, fairly heavy board, probably 3" x 12" x 20', and we had cut a small pine tree off that had grown perfectly positioned to lay the plank on. Then we anchored the one end under a large boulder on the edge of the road. There was another

tree that was the twin of the first one – together they grew into what was called a *school marm*.

We were having a great time diving and playing on the diving board and Dad was sitting on the board near the tree left standing. One of us went out to the other end and did a big jump and when he came down on the end of the board, it came loose under the boulder – or broke, I don't remember which – and down went three people, Dad being one of them, another person was left hanging in the tree. Our cousin Smelly Peone was there. He laughed so hard I thought he would fall in the lake too. I think he was the one left hanging in the tree.

### SETTING FIRES

While hunting, later in the fall, we were taught by Dad to set fires in appropriate places to hold down brush and pine needle build-up. These fires generally burned low and not very hot, and they did a good job. Occasionally, though, we would get a fire going on a tree that had a scar or "cat face" on it; the pitch would have built up in the cat face wound and that fire would really go, but it stayed local to the tree involved. At times the flames would go way up the tree. A fire on a tree like that would be started only very late in the season, usually with snow on the ground. The old-time Indians believed in the value of these burns.

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# They Rest Here

By Donna Potter Phillips

Known as “the white death,” tuberculosis was a leading cause of death in the early 1900s. Today there is a cure, but back then the treatment of choice was total bed rest, fresh air and wholesome food ... in a sanatorium.

Imagine this: a young man, a logger in the woods, used to hard work every day, comes down with tuberculosis and is placed on total bed rest. With no TV and he possibly could not read. That must have been dreadfully awful.

The family of Alfred and Hulda Hanson lost at least two of their 10 children to tuberculosis. Here’s the

family’s story....

Alfred August Hanson was an original homesteader in the Old Domin-



ion (Mountain) District of Stevens County. Homesteading in those early days involved settling in the fertile river valleys for farming cattle, horses and wheat, plus logging. These

homesteaders utilized land freed up by the decline of military presence when Fort Colville closed in 1882 and the eventual opening of reservation lands (that’s a story in itself).

Alfred had been born in Scandinavia, Wisconsin, which gives a clue to his heritage: His parents, Lars Hansen and Sophia Fredericksen Hjort, were both born in Denmark. Alfred married Hulda Sophia Magnuson in 1903. Hulda

was born in Sweden and came with her parents in 1880 to Wisconsin.

(Doing family history means accepting all spelling variations of an ancestor’s surname. In this case, Han-

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# Nice to See You

By Becky Dubell

Look out! You can never tell when someone is seeing your face on the iPad. So ... carrying that idea a little further ... have they now come up with a way for the paper version of this magazine to be able to “see” you? Something that makes me go huuuummmmm.

Last month I missed connecting with you. After I wrote the first paragraph of my April NCM “conversation,” it was decided that the combination of my mind focusing on the screen and the hydrocodone in my system was a TERRIBLE mix. You get put on hydrocodone when you attack a bush in the garden with a hop onto a slippery shovel, tip over backwards, land on your back and hit a rock about the size of your thumb which results in a compression fracture of the spine. OWWW!

Have to tell you that Break (the rock’s name) has a place of honor on my headboard. I’m thinking I’ll get a shadow box for him – after taking a hammer to him to get my frustration out.

Personal note: Thank you to Joe for sounding the siren on the ambulance. Way too cool!

Hope it is my last trip. The doctors and nurses in the ER were dealing with my back when it was discovered that I am deathly allergic to morphine. Hope that is on my next chart in BIG letters.

at the Coulee Dam itself. (There goes a waterfowl of some sort.)

Daddy has a million-dollar view of the lake – no houses in view from the dining table to the water. I am spending some time with Daddy and sister Lanie as company for Daddy until he is a little steadier on his feet. At 95 he lost his wife, Ellen, of seven years. Ellen made Daddy the most photographed handsome man in Stevens County. Ellen could always get, in my words, the silly grin from Daddy that says, “Hi there Ellen. Look at you.” She could get that grin out of him every time.

Yesterday she was described to me as a photojournalist regarding the two of them. We are trying to figure out how many pictures she took of their life. Easily over 3,000. For all we know it could be over 1,000 per year.

I could write a book of Daddy and Ellen stories about their short time together – almost eight years. I’d love to share a few of them but am only gonna do one here. But which one? Guess I’ll start at the beginning.

I’d known of Ellen since she started riding a CanAm Spyder around



Wil and Ellen Bundy.

After keeping an eye on Randy for two months after his hip reconstruction surgery and my six weeks of recovery, mostly addicted to my hot pad along with the hydro, I am right now watching fish jump in the mirror-glass finish of Lake Roosevelt

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2008. My dad came up here in 2015 to help me out when Jim died. Daddy was riding a Honda 1000 at that time. Fast forward to March of 2017. Daddy took a pair of pants in to Petra to do an alteration and make them into a pair that he could put on over his motorcycle boots. I was at the Do-it Center working and noticed Ellen in the line for checking out. Our conversation went along these lines:

She had gone in to see Petra for alterations. Mentioned she would like to meet a gentleman in her age bracket that rode a bike and might be interested in going for rides. Both of the gals in there said, "Go see Becky at the Do-it Center." So ... here she is. Hands me her card that has a picture and contact info on it.

I went home after work. Daddy was staying in the cabin and I always stopped to say hi. Took the card in and gave it to him with the story from Ellen and that she rides a CanAm. Give her a call if interested in going for rides. Left. Got my stuff out of the car. Walked the 20 some steps to the house. Picked up the phone that was ringing and heard, "We are meeting at Ronnie D's tomorrow for lunch."

My thoughts: "Okay Daddy! Cool!" They met. Daddy went to pay for the lunch and had forgotten his wallet at home. While dating, they always said that they were not interested in getting married again. Well ... on February 1, 2018, less than a year after meeting, they ran away to the Hitchin Post in Idaho to get hitched. You go guys!

Ellen loved that Daddy was an old-fashioned gentleman. Opened her door at all times in the car, the house, the store, anywhere. If it was a door, it needed to be opened by Dad-

dy. He is a Korean War veteran and has the hat to wear. A clean one for going out shopping, etc., and, I think, a couple of dirty ones for working outside. The hat always came off when going indoors.

One of the things I loved to see is that they were always holding hands.

## Always be good to each other Find the Joy

*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."*



The poster for the Newport Renaissance Faire features a red border and several logos at the top: Newport, WA Creative District, Pend Oreille County Library District, and Newport. The title "NEWPORT RENAISSANCE FAIRE" is written in large, red, stylized letters. Below the title is a central crest with a shield depicting a knight on a horse, surrounded by ornate scrollwork. To the left of the crest, it says "Saturday May 9" and to the right, "10:00am-5pm". The location is "Newport Rodeo Grounds, 1221 1st St, Newport, WA" with "Free Admission - Donations Welcome" below it. At the bottom, there is a list of activities: Food, Demonstrations, Combat Corps, Knightly Ventures, Entertainment, and Activities, with an illustration of a castle in the background. A small logo for the Pend Oreille County Board of Health is in the bottom right corner.

## Fish Story

By Madilane Perry

This deals with more a recent memory than most of the previous articles, but it takes place on the same stretch of Curlew Lake's east shore that was once Camp Curlew, my family's fishing and hunting resort. Most of the resort is now divided into lots with houses and shop buildings fancier and vastly more expensive than anything the resort ever boasted, but interesting things still happen there occasionally.

Two decades or so ago, I was living in the house that had been my mother's on the hill overlooking the old resort property. One summer day I heard an unusual noise from a part of the neighboring beach hidden by trees and buildings. It was the voice of at least one,

and maybe two, small children. I knew that the out-of-town neighbors who now owned that area were at their home on the west side of the state and that there was no reason for small children to be there.

Curious, I took the canoe and paddled out far enough to look back at the beach. I saw two kayaks pulled up on the beach, attended by two adults and two very small children who seemed to be dealing with some sort of problem. As I watched, the adults helped the kids into the kayaks, climbed in themselves and launched, one child and one adult per kayak.

They paddled out and joined me, apparently concerned that they might

have been trespassing and explained why they had beached there.

The older child, a little boy not quite four, had been dragging a fishing line off the end of one of the kayaks. He had snagged something that had almost pulled him out of the kayak and discovered that he couldn't get rid of it. They had beached to try to unhook whatever it was and found, to their surprise, that it was a long-nosed, toothy fish slightly larger than the young fisherman!

The novice angler had hooked a tiger muskie. Tiger muskies were planted, beginning in the 1990s, to control some of the less desirable fish in the lake. They are a cross between a northern pike and a muskellunge. They are sterile and eat just about anything that moves and will fit into their mouths. They are supposed to be good eating, but the catch to that is that they must be at least 60 inches long, which is a lot of fish fillets.

It's amazing that the muskie hadn't freed itself, since they have teeth like sharpened sawblades and will cut through most lines. The young parents had gotten the fish off the hook and thrown it back into the lake.

We paddled along together for a while discussing the big fish and their first trip to Curlew Lake. He was an airman from Fairchild Air Force Base. They were new to eastern Washington and were enjoying the outdoor opportunities, but the big fish was a little more than they had expected. It was a great fish story to take back to preschool. I wonder if the boy's classmates believed it.

*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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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.



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Peaceful setting in a very private location. Crafted log sided home with covered deck, large carport, workshop with loft, separate dry cabin, garden shed and a 14-ft door RV shop. Beautiful double fenced garden with 2 sets of grape vines. Local rock landscaping around the house. Open kitchen, dining, and living area on the main floor with easy access to the deck. Wood cabinets and built-in pantry. The woodstove will keep you warm all winter. Upper level hosts a very spacious bedroom with full bath, easy access closet with built-in amenities, there is a total of 3 bedrooms, 2.5 baths. Daylight basement with patio and a propane stove to heat the home if you have to leave. There is even 220 amp in the carport for an electric car hook up. You have to see this home to appreciate the beauty!



**MLS# 45774 \$629,000**

Mission Lake Waterfront at its best. This custom-built home has everything you need. Beautiful gourmet kitchen with open dining that lets the views of the lake inside to enjoy while you're cooking or dining. Huge primary ensuite with screened in porch for your outdoor pleasure. Large laundry room, covered deck with access to the lake, daylight basement has 3 bedrooms and full bath plus additional storage area. Walk out and fish from your private dock. Extra-large 2-car attached garage. The house sits down from the road for extra privacy.



**MLS# 44446**

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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-round 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 bed 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. Plus 2 car garage that has been freshly painted.

This home has been updated to perfection! Outstanding kitchen with new Island and expansive counter tops, plus new appliances. Open floor plan to the well-sized living room and fireplace. Beautiful mountain and territorial views. Upstairs bathroom is completely remodeled and 2 freshly painted bedrooms with barn door closets, and laminate floors throughout. Laundry room hosts a half bath and easy access from the upper floor and expansive recreational space that was the garage and is completely finished. Lower level invites you into a comfortable living area with a country tub room and separate half bath. 2 additional bedrooms, extra storage room, with lots of windows. Brand new relaxing deck to the garage/carport and chicken coop. 5 acres is hay pasture. Very private setting, centrally located between Kettle Falls and Colville with easy access to Lake Roosevelt. Separate RV hook up with septic, power and water. 30 gpm well for all your gardening and watering needs. It's all here for your enjoyment!



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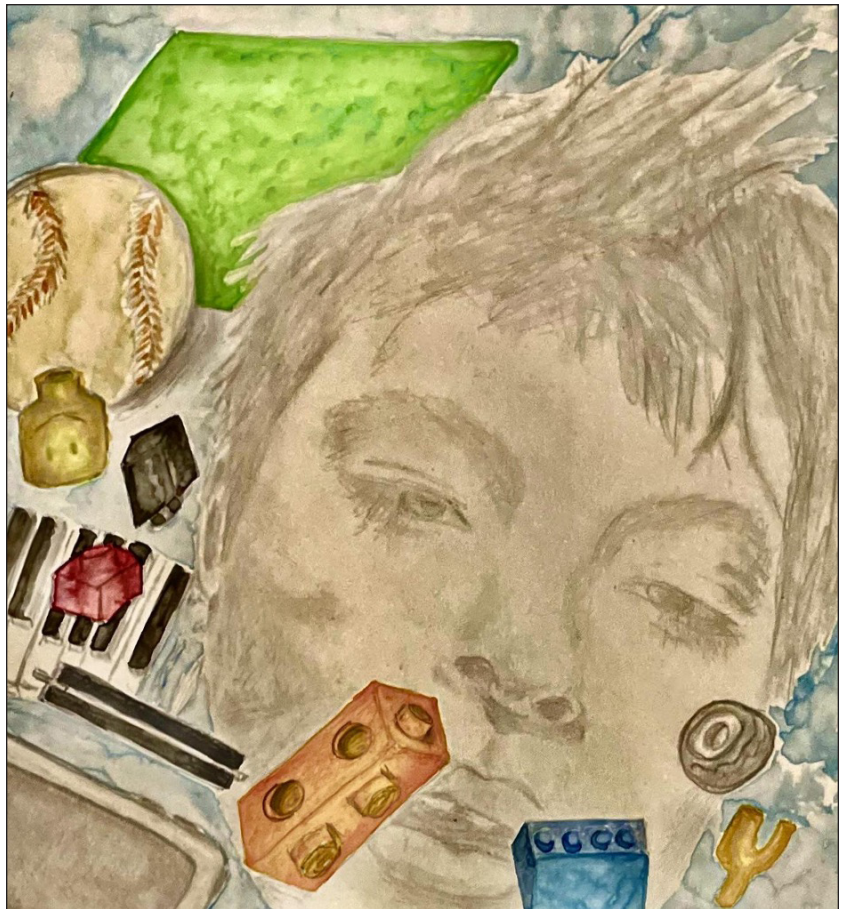
# Springing Forward

Article & Illustrations by Marci Bravo

The days have gotten longer, brighter and warmer, and my reluctance to stray from the coziness of home has melted away as completely as the last shock of spring snowfall. Like the formerly hibernating pollinators that now fill the air with an earnest buzzing, my family and I have fully committed to the new season of outdoor projects, social and athletic engagements, and a new zeal for creativity that seems to be solar-powered.

Firstly, it's baseball season. Four days a week, the Bears (of Colville's minor league baseball) play or practice in fields of green grass after school. My partner and I marvel at the growth of our son, and how the team has evolved over the years. Suddenly, our kid is one of the two most senior members of the team, though it seems like just a few weeks ago (not years?!) he was struggling to conquer his fear of the ball. Now, he catches and throws with skill and enthusiastically encourages his new and old teammates.

A new spring obsession for our 10-year-old has been teaching himself stop-motion animation with Legos. He watches



YouTube tutorials and then applies the lessons to his next animation sequence. A digitized “click” sound punctuates the quiet, signifying each captured frame as blocks and figures are moved with slow intention on a flat Lego board. I love seeing the pride that fills my son when he excitedly shows us the fruits of his labor.

Before bedtime, the piano belts out dissonant, syncopated rhythms as our baseball player now practices for his spring recital. His playing has me shaking my head incredulously at the growth and dexterity he has developed in the past year. I marvel at our human abilities.

In contrast to our son's quiet early mornings when he reads in bed, my husband attacks his days off with the sounds of circular sawing, electric leaf blowing, the metal scuff and ring of post hole digging, and other tool-based operettas. He wears eye and ear protection and has mapped out many future weekends

# Creative Being in Stevens County



with plans to rebuild a fence, screen in a porch, and finish the deck he started last fall. I am awed by his energy and determination and vision. I don't have the ability to imagine construction projects, much less the skills to complete them, so I am doubly glad to have a partner who enjoys this kind of work. At the end of the day, he'll be on his bike to the top of a mountain. Comparison is the thief of joy, but the old adage, "Love the one you're with" goes a long way. With increased daylight, and its inviting warmth, my brains and body are pulled in multiple directions. I want to play pickleball under blue skies with my friends, laughing at the mischievous breeze that taunts us. Figuring out my art schedule for the summer, I am excited to create a new collection of ceramics at my pottery wheel to bring to our local art walk and downtown shops. And then there's the constant urge to get my hands in the dirt of my backyard garden. Pruning fruit trees and fortifying the soil, painting the landscape with flowery annuals,

and listening to birdsong never gets old.

And yet, some days I know even 14 hours of sunlight may not feel like enough.

The warming spring feels like coming up for air after the previous chill and darkness, and I feel like I'm spreading my eager wings.

Here's to longer days loving our families and communities, joyfully increasing our heart rates, and welcoming the scents and sounds these beautiful days bring. Here's to feeling the caress of warm breezes on bare skin and appreciating the silent, dazzling showers of fruit tree blossoms that litter the ground with delicate petals thick as snow. Here's to rediscovering the reasons that

make this corner of the world so delightful to us, and here's to uncovering new aspects of ourselves and our surroundings that ensure we continue, always, to grow.

*Marci Bravo is a multi-media artist, wife, mother, teacher, friend and yogi residing in Colville. Follow her on Instagram @marci\_bravo\_makes.*

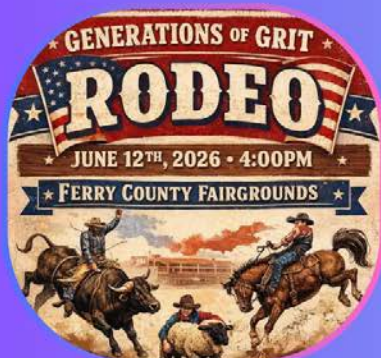




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