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Some Place All Can Exist

- JOHN ODELL, allthelandandsea.wixsite.com/wordsofwords

A Note from the Publisher

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

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

~ Gabriel

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How We Share Our Burdens —

By Christine Wilson

“You don’t need to be religious to be moral, but it makes a huge difference to be part of a community dedicated to being a blessing to others.”

~ Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

“I don’t drink these days. I am allergic to alcohol and narcotics. I break out in handcuffs.”

~ Robert Downey Jr.

“I think that the power is the principle. The principle of moving forward, as though you have the confidence to move forward, eventually gives you confidence when you look back and see what you’ve done.”

~ Robert Downey Jr.

“He’s a grown man, what am I gonna say? The only advice I would give him is, you know, don’t get arrested.”

~ Robert Downey Jr. on Charlie Sheen’s addiction issues

I have never met Robert Downey Jr. but I went through a little bit of an obsessive period when his addiction issues were in the news. I had gone to my sister-in-law’s wedding in Palm Springs and some friends had stayed at a separate hotel, where I hung out poolside with them. The next week, Robert Downey Jr. got arrested there for possession of heroin and whatever else he had driven from LA with. When he arrived at the courtroom, he told the judge: “It’s like I have a loaded gun in my mouth, and I like the taste of gunmetal.”

That got my attention. He’s always had such an innocent way of presenting himself, so my caretaking urge went to Mach 1 about his well-being. To my credit, I will say I used to live at Mach 3, which is three times the speed of sound, so I was feeling pretty proud of traveling merely at the same speed as sound.

He was in and out of jail and spent some time in an inpatient treatment center. He also did outpatient therapy, a 12-step program, yoga, and meditation. There is an additional, kind

of magical, source of healing that he tapped into, which was the power of his connections. He was about to lose his partner and access to his children if he stayed on the addiction path. His love for them and their longing to have a healthy relationship with him motivated him to get clean and sober.

Fast forward to when Charlie Sheen was spiraling out of control on the world stage. RD Jr. had some sober years under his belt, so I knew he had accumulated enough wisdom to be of help. He was interviewed on a late-night talk show and the interviewer had the same idea I had. What advice would you give Sheen, the interviewer asked.

None, he said. I gulped. He had done enough of his own work to want Charlie Sheen to do his own. Eventually, Charlie Sheen followed the same path. As far as the internet is concerned, he’s been sober since 2017. He has been focused on his children. Again, it was community that helped him clean up his act.

Codependency is as old as dirt, but the modern acknowledgment of its

existence gained some structure starting in 1942. At that point, the German psychoanalyst Karen Horney coined the phrase “morbid dependency.” The term we are more familiar with became popular in the late 1970s. The 1980s were full of books on the topic, initially related to families in which there was an alcoholic.

I distinctly remember reading one of the books which made a reference to the arrogance of wanting to fix other people. It implies that you know better than they do about their lives and you think you have the right to fuss with their journey. I was alarmed, because I was good at that fussing business. Annoyingly, as it turned out.

I was way better at noticing what was going on with other people. In fact, I gradually realized I thought more about them and with more worry and longing than I did about my own life. I was the personification of this joke: “Did you hear about the codependent person who was drowning? Other people’s lives flashed before her eyes.”

By the late 1980s, I had clients who were afraid to care about other

Random Acts of Community

people because they thought it was codependent. I was coming at it from the opposite end of things. I thought it was selfish to care about myself. There were two mini-lectures I developed at that point.

We are pack animals. The problem is not our love and compassion, either for others or ourselves. The problem is how we navigate those feelings.

The mini-lecture I developed for people confusing compassion with codependency centered around the fact that we are wired to care about each other. Our society depends on the majority of us living on the higher ground of that compassion. Plus, our relationships are richer when we connect with each other on that ground.

The mini-lecture I had to give myself was based more on the metaphor of the oxygen masks on a plane. “In the unlikely event,” they usually say, “of a loss of cabin pressure, please put the mask on yourself before assisting a child next to you.” On one of my flights, when the flight attendant might have been bored, she added “or any person behaving like a child.” Either way, we can’t help others if we ourselves are running out of oxygen. It is not selfish to have a self.

The question is, when are we supposed to help others and when are we supposed to focus on ourselves. Christian teaching lays it out nicely in the second chapter of Galatians. The recommendation is that we carry our own load, and we help each other with burdens that are too big to carry. If, for example, you are trying to remove rocks from your property, there are some that you can carry out of the field yourself. There are other rocks that will give you a hernia, and yes, I’m speaking to a specific, beloved person

here. We get in trouble when we want other people to carry our little loads and when we try to carry loads simply too heavy for us.

Buddhism and Hinduism have similar teachings, focusing on our need to let go of the outcomes. We can be attached to a fixed sense of who we are: I am what I am, as Popeye said. We can be attached to what we think other people should be. Harville Hendrix talks about the second stage of a relationship where we say, “We are one, and I am the one.” We get attached to thinking that life circumstances should match our desires, as opposed to what Anne Lamott calls “living life on life’s terms.”

RD Jr. believed from his own work that Charlie Sheen was going to have to, as they say in AA, hit rock bottom.

I was relieved to find out that, once he did, he turned his life around. That is not codependent. That is celebrating the success of a person who crawled out of what could have been a lethal hole.

The life we live is a struggle between balancing our own daily load with the burdens of others. It is noisy and messy and, sometimes, a wild ride, but if you are lucky, you have the give and take of friends. I have had times in my life in which I didn’t have the support I wanted, so I set about creating it. The reward is that you get to have a community of people to share the ride with.

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

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'I Visited the Nursing Home and a

By Dr. Barry Bacon, MD

Not all human encounters end well. There are sometimes unintended consequences to gestures of kindness.

A friend of mine was minding her own business on a visit with a friend to a nursing home not far away. There, she recognized another old friend who was wheeling about in a wheelchair, and she greeted him. A polite conversation ensued, until he made a remark about being married to a doctor. Another resident overheard and shouted, "That's not true. That never happened! You're a liar!"

Suddenly war broke out. Food was flying along with canes, ankle braces, whatever was not tied down. There was significant whacking of wheel-

chairs. The staff had to quickly move the various antagonists to separate ends of the hall in order for peace to return.

Nobody meant for it to happen. My friend slunk out of the nursing home unobtrusively, hoping not to be noticed, while the staff quieted the warring parties.

Life is like that. We may mean to create peace but end up with war. We may intend to help but then cause pain or misunderstanding.

My friend Richard was despondent about life. He was ready to throw in the towel. Human beings all seemed to be only about what they could get from you, how they could take advantage of you, move you down the road. It was too much. In his despondency, he made plans to move out into the forest and live in a tent. In January. In Stevens County.

Richard did one thing more. He prayed that before he died, he would meet people who were genuine, truly loving, and not living just for themselves. He arrived in Colville, spent, worn out, broke and ready to trade his vehicle for a tent and a stove and move out into the forest.

We met Richard that January and looked for ways to bless him. We offered him a place to live at the old building we had been gifted, to stay warm while keeping the pipes from freezing. We needed him, and he needed us. He was surprised by the kindness. He liked it but wondered if it were real.

A week later, my wife Shelley invited him to our place for supper on a Friday evening, along with some other guests. To be honest, it all seemed a little creepy to him. I mean,

who does that? Richard thought. He and another guest crept around the house, looking for a secret chamber, a dungeon underground where people were kept to be tortured and eaten later. "Is this a cult?" Richard asked the other guest in a secluded part of the house. "Do they eat people here? Is this the beginning of a horror movie? When are they going to ask me for my money?"

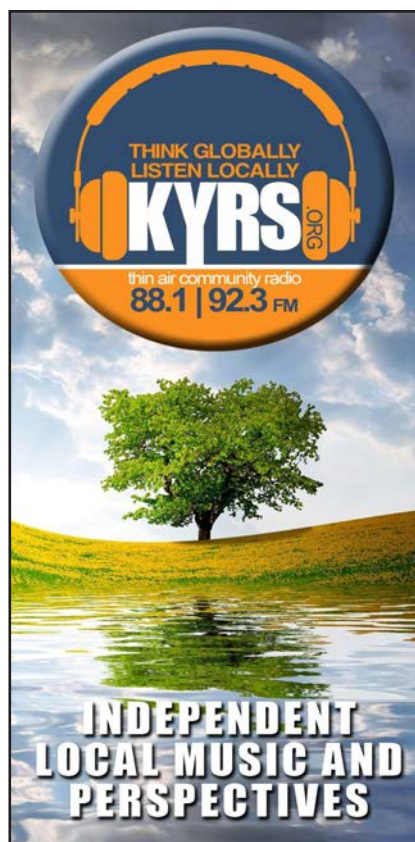
No, the other man assured him, there is no ulterior motive.

Richard had never been treated this way before, and understandably, he was suspicious. In his experience, human beings don't offer kindness to strangers just for the chance to bless them.

Each morning when I meet with the men at the recovery house, we talk about such things. What does it mean to be surprised by unexpected kindness? How does it change us?

Another friend told me of a time when he was homeless, despondent, desperate, out of money. Self-esteem was at its lowest. A woman noticed him and offered him half a panini sandwich. Years later, he is still profoundly affected by that one memory. A single kindness. No other motivation. Just a human responding in kindness to another. Noticing their situation and being moved by compassion.

Another friend told me of the special, healthy cake some folks offered to bake for her as a wedding gift. It was awful. It was heavy and tasted like sawdust. No one could eat it. The dog wouldn't eat it. The horse wouldn't eat it. What was intended as a blessing ended unexpectedly badly. The marriage has lasted for nearly



Riot Broke Out' ————— Life Matters

50 years, even as the wedding will always be associated with the worst cake imaginable.

I'm sitting in a booth providing first aid to folks in our community at an event at the park. Lots of folks coming and going. Children, dogs, adults, strollers, people eating hot dogs and tacos and ice cream, a laid-back, relaxed day. A soft breeze is blowing. The sun is shining. It's warm and people are smiling as they pass. Two girls stop by and ask for an ice pack for someone who was hit by a baseball. We package up some ice in a plastic bag and they are off.

During the event, we are offering free dog therapy. The particular dog we have selected for this service is a young corgi, a cute snarf of a puppy, eager to greet everyone and be their friend. The idea behind dog therapy is that anyone can come and spend a few minutes with the dog, talk to the dog, and whether depressed, anxious, despondent, angry, grieving, or otherwise, they'll feel better.

Dogs are good as marriage counselors. They never give bad advice. They make us live longer. We recover from surgery more quickly. They lift our spirits. We advertise this little dog as especially gifted in mental health consultations, grief recovery, nutritional assessments and yoga classes. Money-back guarantee. Of course, the sessions are free. A steady flow of folks come by, especially children, who want to interact with the dog. He brightens their day. Mainly, he wants to play.

Not all of our good intentions end well. Sometimes the visit to the nursing home goes awry. Sometimes the wedding cake flops. But our intentions should count for something. The little dog didn't always get it

right. But he tried his best to get everyone to play and feel happy. That's got to be worth something.

In a world where far too often, we may distance ourselves from each other and live in a loneliness epidemic, a kind gesture of friendship and half a panini sandwich can change a

life. Maybe even save a life.

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.

They Draw Their Stories on Walls

By Tina Wynecoop

“The whole point of [drawing] pictures is so that you don’t have to explain things with words.”

~ Elliott Erwitt

I’ve learned that a small-town building in our region may soon be wearing a mural befitting its library’s standing in the community. Painting murals on the walls of buildings is not a new concept. Worldwide, Indigenous artists have drawn their stories on walls, mindfully commemorating significant aspects of their presence since – well, since forever.

“Art is an intriguing and beautiful way to create awareness and understanding in a non-threatening manner that embraces and weaves us all together,” writes Angela George in *Blanketing the City*.

Murals created by three amazing Indigenous artists, Aspen Decker, Ric Gendron, and Emma Noyes, appeared recently on outdoor walls in Ronan, Montana, and Nelson, B.C. They came to mind when I heard about the library project. Each mural is grand and unique.

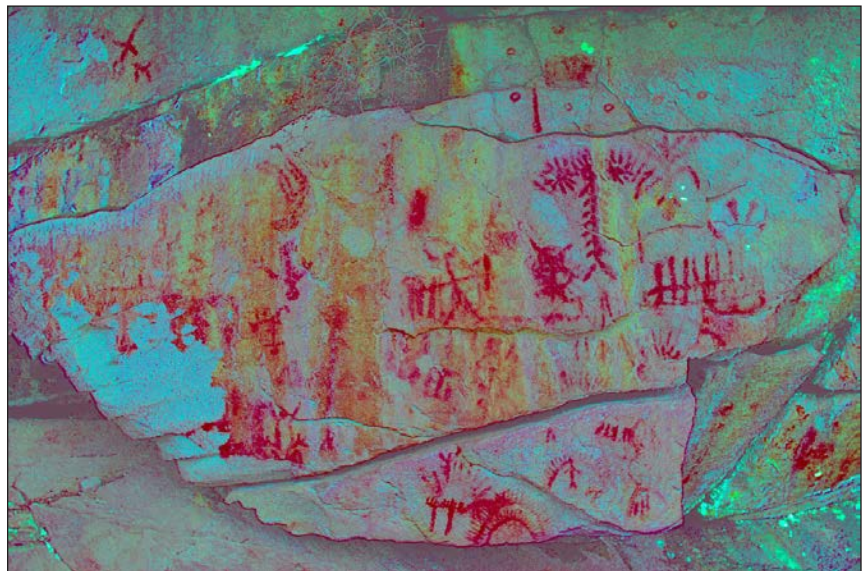
A brief mention of pictographs on stone outcrops which were painted by earlier artists beyond the reach of memory is in order:

Norm Lehrman, a knowledge bearer and husband of a Spokane/Sinixt tribal citizen, has long been documenting wall art in the Columbia River watershed. Sadly, most of the murals he’s located are fading after centuries of exposure to the elements. After capturing their barely discernible presence with his digital camera he utilizes a special program installed on his computer to enhance their visibility. His *DStretch* is a digital imaging tool adapted from NASA which makes nearly invisible

pictographs visible. Here is an example of an enhanced wall, before and after courtesy Norman Lehrman:

During a pause in my teaching ca-

rental home was being used for the tribe’s summer youth program. I didn’t mind at all. I learned so much during that time of waiting. Nearby,



reer, I tent-camped for three months on the banks of a nearby river. My

and long ago, an artist had drawn his masterpiece on a granitic outcrop. It

was a timeless rendition of the same mosquito(s) who visited me in camp, and the painting was my introduction and impetus to commemorate wall art in its unique iterations, past and present (photo at right).

All that is known about the ancient artist is that his/her palette consisted of red ochre mixed with an oil – perhaps bear or salmon.

Outdoor murals abound. They are found on all continents except for Antarctica and are varied in their depictions, from pictographs and petroglyphs to the designs graffiti artists spray on the sides of railroad cars. My focus is on three contemporary artists whose people never left – still here on their “home ground” where their murals are vibrant and visible in all their glory.

Aspen Decker

The fresh paint has barely dried on the outdoor mural in downtown Ronan, Montana (pictured below, courtesy the artist). It is designed and executed by artist Aspen Decker and her husband Cameron. Aspen says “art” in Salish translates as “something good with your hands.” Her Spring Creek Mural



brings Native identity to Ronan. Her art is “something good!”

The official news publication of the Flathead Indian Reservation, *Char-Koosta*, covered the story of the creation of one of the largest murals in Montana and quotes the mayor of nearby Polson, Eric Huffine, who says, “It’s so big that it’s bold, just shows this is who is here and that we’ve always been here.” “What a way to dress up downtown!” adds Ronan resident Dee Dee Barbour.

Aspen’s online bio states, “I am an

enrolled member of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes and a speaker of my tribal language, Nséliščn ‘Salish language.’ I graduated with a master’s degree in linguistics from the University of Montana in 2021. I earned my bachelor’s degree in Tribal Historic Preservation from Salish Kootenai College in 2018. I have a Montana Class 7 Native American Language and Culture Educator License and have been teaching Salish for 10 years.

...continued page 12



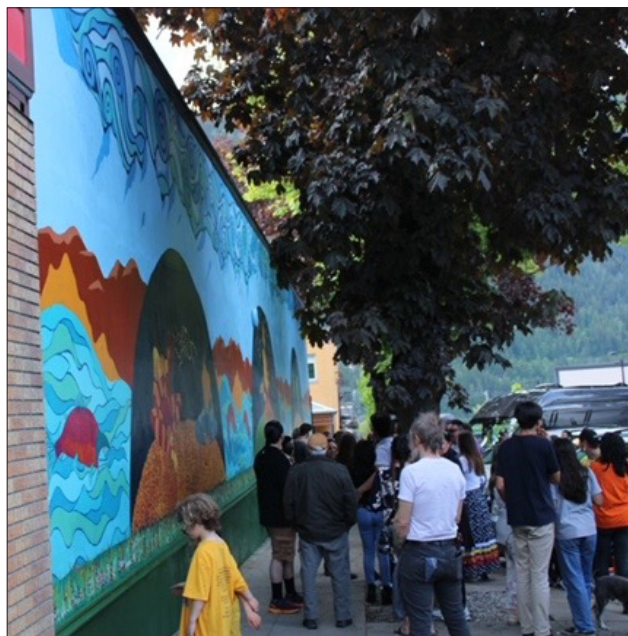
Continued from page 11...

My passion for Salish language began when I was 13 years old, learning from my elder Patlik Pierre. He taught me about the importance of perpetuating Salish language and culture. Raising my children in the language as first language speakers has been one of the ways that I honor his teachings.”

Ric Gendron

Of his vibrant art on a building in British Columbia, he said, “I’m honored to do this work on the traditional territory of the Sinixt People. I am a citizen of the Sinixt Band of the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation and of the Umatilla Tribe of Oregon. Nobody was painting the Indian the way the Indian actually lived, reservation life and things that go on in Indian culture.”

His mural was completed during Nelson’s week of ceremonies respect-



Mural address by Ric Gendron and assistants. 417 Hall Street, Nelson, B.C. PharmaSave building. June 2022. Photo by Richard Hart.

of the Arts in Seattle, and at Eastern Washington University. Gendron was a powwow singer and drummer who shared his cultural teachings. He was an artist-in-residence at the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe and taught art at Gonzaga University in Spokane. His art is the focus of two books, *Rattlebone* and *Kwilstn* (Sweat Lodge). (Marmot Art Space bio.)

fully welcoming and acknowledging the presence of the Sinixt (Arrow Lakes) People. Nelson resident Keith Page notes “the light colors and deep symbolism of the piece really opens up and renews the streetscape atmosphere.” Cheyana Shypitka, also of Nelson, remarked, “Such a huge improvement and the use of space. Great colors, great composition, beautiful meaning and relevant to many connected Indigenous cultures.”

The prolific artist (1954-2023) studied at Spokane Falls Community College in Spokane, at Cornish College

Emma Noyes

She is “dedicated to creating a future where Native peoples thrive and enjoy whole person wellness through connection to land, culture and community.”

Her 2022 “Extant” mural adorns an outside wall of the Capitol Performing Arts Theatre in Nelson, at 421 Victoria Street.

The city of Nelson embraces her ancestors. Emma Noyes, also a citizen of the Sinixt band of the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation (as is her photographer) is an artist, au-

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thor (*Baby Speaks Salish*), researcher, and educator living and working in Spokane in the traditional territory of the Spokane Tribe. Emma has continued the storytelling traditions of her family by finding new ways to depict characters of *chaptix*/coyote stories with an emphasis on coyote's wife, mole woman, according to her *Spkn Arts* bio.

Each of these three artists mindfully weaves their ancestors, their stories, and their cultural ties into the warp of their beloved landscapes now blanketing city walls.

"We see the coming together of many Native nations with their songs, prayers, teachings, and gestures of kindness, all equally welcomed and respected. ... Their expressions are multiple: many languages, many teachings, many songs and prayers, but all experiencing and expressing the same wondrous reality that we are all one family, one living circle, with welcome and respect for all," says Patrick Twohy, a true friend of these people, whose third book *Syāyā?ya?* (Friends) was published by Lushshooseed Press, 2025.

And I see that the time for the appearing of these murals is throughout all time – even at the library!

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 cul-



Emma Noyes mural at 421 Victoria St., Nelson, B.C. Photo by Patti Bailey.

ture, geography, history, weather, the people, and the flora and fauna of this inland region of the state have since become my beloved "home ground."

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Things With Wings

Article & Photos by Kelley Shelton

Dear readers, we are trying something new with this In Nature column: occasional guest photographer-writers. This month please welcome Kelley Shelton, a resident of northwest Ferry County who is an accomplished photographer with a very diverse catalog.

~ John Foster Fanning

Dragonflies are, to me, among the most fascinating insects in the animal kingdom. If it appears I am mesmerized by them, that would be true. As a birder, I have found them

to be another thing with wings to study and enjoy.

According to the fossil record, dragonflies have inhabited the earth for more than 300 million years, with some of that record coming from my hometown of Republic, Washington. Early relatives had a wingspan of up to two-and-a-half feet. Odonata, or more commonly, dragonflies, have been part of recorded human culture since 300 BC, as represented on pottery, petroglyphs, statues and jewelry. They carry the distinction of being extremely effective hunters, with a 97% success rate catching prey.

Dragonflies are easy to observe in season, making them accessible to all of us. And they are beautiful, with gossamer wings, brilliant colors and incredible aerial abilities.

When we think of dragonflies, we likely picture them in flight. I found it surprising to discover that they spend most of their lives under water, beginning as eggs that become larvae. The larva (also called nymph or naiad) stage is the longest and can persist from one month to five years. During this lengthy stage, the nymphs experience 6-15 molts, getting bigger each time. After the final molt, they are ready to hatch.

This is accomplished by crawling up a sturdy nearby stalk and clinging to it as they emerge from their exoskeleton. What remains is a bug-shaped armor with dangling, threadlike breathing tubes still attached. These appear as if they have been unzipped. I have yet to watch an adult emerge, but it's on my bucket list. The adult insect takes a few hours to inflate its body, pump up its wings and then wait for its new exoskeleton to harden and develop true colors.



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Spokane Falls Community College absolutely prepared me for university. I got to EWU knowing how a college works, with good study skills, and a degree behind me already.

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After all this effort, adults generally live only 2-4 weeks.

Dragonflies do not have a sense of hearing or smell and cannot vocalize or walk. They make up for those deficiencies by having the largest compound eyes of any insect. A dragonfly eye has about 30,000 lenses, providing almost 360-degree vision processed at 200 images per second.

Among insects, dragonflies are also the fastest fliers, with some clocking speeds up to 36 m.p.h. Flight is enhanced by two sets of wings capable of independent movement because each of the four wings is attached to separate muscles. They can fly in every direction, including backward and upside-down, as well as hover. They can execute very sharp turns. The G force exerted making a turn can be as high as nine times the force of gravity.

They are well designed to be super predators. Odonata eat a large variety of other insects, including as many



as hundreds of mosquitoes per day. I like these guys more all the time!

Dragonflies appear symbolically in many cultures throughout history. They are the national emblem of Japan. There they represent power, courage and agility, and have been

considered protectors of children because of their appetite for disease-carrying mosquitoes. In China they represent agility, with their skill at navigation between air and water. One Native American symbol I read about is illusion, which is associated with their translucent wings.

The list of representations in European history is more sinister, including references to the dragonfly as “eye-poker,” based on the misconception they could sting and the needle-like shape of their bodies.

Dragonflies are highly sensitive barometers of wetland health. Their welfare is a strong indicator of overall welfare. They play an important role in the food web, keeping populations of other insects balanced. Studying their population changes can reveal changes in water ecosystems. Dragonflies play a critical role in the natural world, and they’re pretty cool to hang out with, too.

More of Kelley Shelton’s work is viewable on Instagram and Facebook.



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Barely Half a Step Ahead of Garden Chaos

Article & Photo by Bob Gregson

It's difficult to non-chemically control Mama Nature on even a small bit of land. During our Vashon Island farming days, we constantly struggled to stay slightly ahead on our 13-acre farm – two tilled acres, 11 more in pasture where sheep grazed under decrepit old hazelnut and walnut trees, and where blackberries, Scotch broom, and noxious weeds wanted to take over.

To counter those invaders, we mowed that pasture acreage with a bushhog tractor attachment from time to time and eventually traded a flatbed trailer frame for a young goat named Tooter. He worked wonders eating the thorny blackberry bushes and was a kick to have around for his antics ... though he would occasionally sneak up and butt you just for fun. That got old and we eventually traded him to someone else who needed blackberry control.

Now, almost three decades later, in reduced land-owning circumstances, we're still struggling with unwanted vegetation on just over an acre in Spokane Valley. No wild blackberries here, but a heck of a lot of various weeds.

Everyone knows that almost all "weeds" are simply plants in a place you don't want them; they are just Nature's way of stating, with a laugh, that you are simply not in control. Ha ha ha! she says.

My maternal grandparents lived on the outskirts of Hillyard for about 60 years, just a few miles from what we now refer to as our 1.14-acre farmette. While my grandpa ran passenger trains back and forth to Wenatchee for the Great Northern Railroad and was away much of the time, Granny tried her best to keep up with Nature on their four adjoining city lots. She kept a flock of around 15 chickens in a fenced area, cultivated a quarter-acre veggie garden, tended various flower beds, and maintained

a large, grassy yard during her life of intensive gardening before, during, and after the Victory Garden drive during the World War II era.

One of her solutions to keep up with everything was to start out on a mission to, say, weed and irrigate the beets, then enroute became distracted by worse weeds in the delphinium area, spending 10 minutes weeding there, then while enroute to changing the watering location – almost a full-time job moving lawn sprinklers and soaker hoses during the summer – she'd be distracted by flowers that badly needed to be staked ... and so on, all day long, dawn to dusk. Maybe she'd get to the beets the next day, dealing with the most urgent crisis points as she moved around the area.

In her prime as a young senior citizen, she tended to wear bib overalls with a straw sunhat and carry a trowel or scissors. She was immediately ready to dig out a large weed, cut dead flowers, mow the lawn and spread grass clippings as mulch, or get down on knees to weed or mix up the compost, as the needs became apparent.

My wife Bonnie and I try to be more systematic about those "maintaining" duties, but it's still hard to avoid stopping on a path among the 40-plus raised beds, setting down the empty egg basket – the mission at the time – and yanking out a weed or three that seem to have grown about a foot overnight. Of course, when I bend over to do that, I notice another batch of baby weeds nearby, and they'll be a foot tall tomorrow, so I really need to deal with them now, and toss them to the chickens before gathering the eggs. And on it goes.

We tend to allow self-reseeding volunteer flowers like snapdragons and johnny jump-ups and larkspur and California poppies to grow in some less-used walking paths

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to attract pollinators. They do grow nicely, coming up every year along the edges of the groundcloth that covers all our paths; those flowers make for a colorful but messy situation. And many of them eventually need to be pulled to keep the right-of-way open during mid-summer.

Aside from those four flower varieties that want to take over around the raised beds and under the grapes, raspberries, blackberries, and corn – the only things we don't grow in raised beds – there are way too many weeds growing alongside them that are hard to control. Especially in the gravel driveways.

Some of those with small leaves and tiny flowers are not easy to identify in books or online; I think of them as UGOs (unidentified growing objects). They mingle with the well-recognizable purslane, bindweed, crabgrass, cheatgrass, dandelion, mallow, and yellow toadflax. Meanwhile, lavender, catnip, catmint, coreopsis, sunflowers, and feverfew are doing their best to work their way out of the flower borders around the house and interlope on a grand scale. The mint family members among them are especially hard to keep corralled.

And there's another clover type with small yellow flower buds – some call it Japanese clover, but that doesn't seem to track with pictures in the literature – that infests our lawn and pretty much all over. It radiates out in low arms from a center and has a deep and hard-to-pull root.

Every one of those weed families wants to take over the hard-packed gravel driveways and are hard to pull without breaking off the roots ... which, left in place, will shoot right back up at you in a few days. Then you can struggle with their deep roots all over again.

I'm sure all of this is not news to anyone who had, or has, at least a modest-sized yard and garden in this part of the country. Memories of my short-term Army vegetable gardens in Virginia, North Carolina, and Michigan indicate weeds are more varied and spring up faster here in NE Washington than elsewhere in the country.

Some vines are weeds unto themselves, like English ivy and kudzu. Silver lace vine is quite pretty in mid-summer bloom but awfully hard to get rid of once it gets going;



Virginia creeper is even worse. Golden hops and hardy Kiwis will overwhelm if allowed to have their way. They all have a bit of kudzu-like action. If you haven't seen kudzu in the South, you've missed out on a phenomenon. It covers EVERYTHING in its path with luxurious, green foliage in a very short time. Friends there say you don't want to stand too close or too long near it. It'll git ya!

These are all nuisances for us gardeners – actually, they run some of us ragged – but they are just part of the wonderful game of “growing good stuff.” Avoiding total green chaos is very much a balancing act. And, as noted, for some of us, the balance is usually precarious!

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.

Creative Being in Stevens County

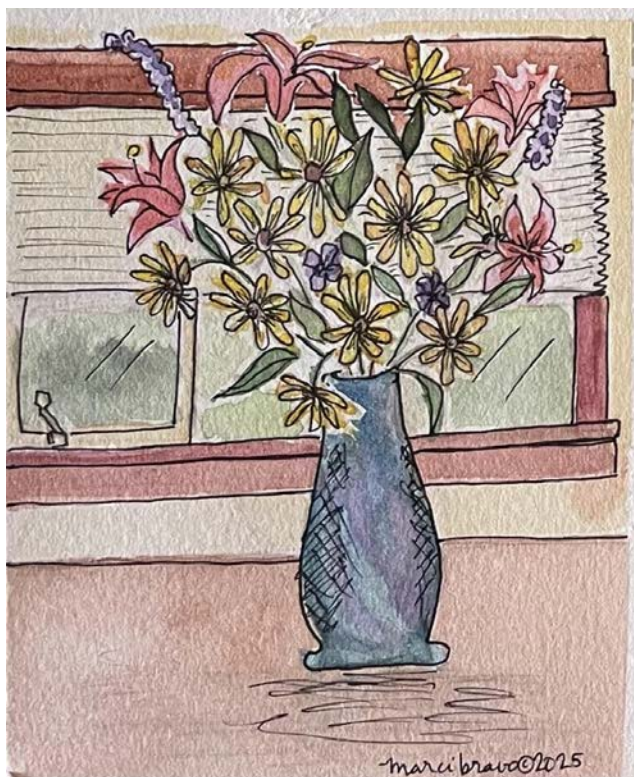
The Daily Practice

Article & Illustrations

by Marci Bravo

Amid all the unsettling situations that stain our nation, our safety, and our dignity, I must daily remind myself to also examine what is good in this existence. Truly there is no shortage at either end, but for me, deliberately recognizing the joys and kindnesses at the beginning of my day help fortify me to not give in to depression and despair, but to keep moving through the world with a gentle heart, as much as possible, anyway.

So, this month I reached out to several folks with this question: "What is giving you joy right now?"



What I received was a really sweet montage of photos and texts highlighting some of the best of Inland Northwest summers. Cool mornings beckon early walks across fields and through our forest and mountain trails, alone or with beloved ones. The days' 16 hours of daylight have brought forth a rainbow of blooms in our landscapes and gardens.

For many of us, clipping these flowers and herbs and arranging floral delights for ourselves and friends underscore our appreciation of this warmest season.

Berries are another generous abundance this time of year. Huckleberries, dark and plump, cause bushes to droop with their weight. It's cherry-picking as well as strawberry U-pick season, where I've long threatened to weigh my child before and after we pick the sweet, round fruits – crimson-stained fingertips, cheeks and tongues as evidence of misappropriated harvests. In my backyard, it's a banner year for raspberries. In only an hour-and-a-half, I filled two gallon-size milk jugs of sweet rubies, and have another third of my patch left untouched.

Meanwhile, our dogs live their best summer lives, grinning widely next to shining bodies of water, or scratching their backs as they ecstatically wiggle in the cool grass.

For our part, lake or river time is the kindest time zone, where we wade from the sandy shores into cool, clear water. Some paddle in kayaks or atop SUPs, while others jet ski and boat, pan for gold, play volleyball and frisbee, or simply soak up the sun on the beach.

There's a lot to be thankful for, and there's plenty to improve upon in this existence. Here's to appreciating what we have, and to loving beyond our own happiness.

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



Now Playing: Superman

Superman turned 87 this year, marking over eight decades since the Man of Steel made his debut in Action Comics in 1938, going on to help make DC Comics a publication titan and appearing in numerous graphic novels, cartoons, commercials and movies. While there have been many talented actors to don the big “S” on their chest, I still think Christopher Reeves is arguably the most famous cinematic interpretation of Superman and his alter ego, Clark Kent.

After so many iterations, have director and writer James Gunn and his cast and crew managed to make time-honored characters feel fresh and relevant? Yes, I think he has. This Superman has heart and brains besides just impressive

biceps, and actor David Corenswet’s performance is complex, showing fear, charm, vulnerability, anger and a moral heroism that is easy to root for. The plot has him dealing with violent conflicts at home and abroad while going up against archnemesis billionaire Lex Luthor (Nicholas Hoult) and navigating his love for his Daily Planet coworker Lois Lane (Rachel Brosnahan).

While the plotting isn’t very tight and the movie is perhaps longer than it needs to be, this new venture into the DC Extended Universe feels more vital and fun than the dour slugfest that was previous films like 2013’s *Man of Steel* and 2016’s *Batman v. Superman*. Gunn’s Superman is an imperfect being who wants to be better, but never superior



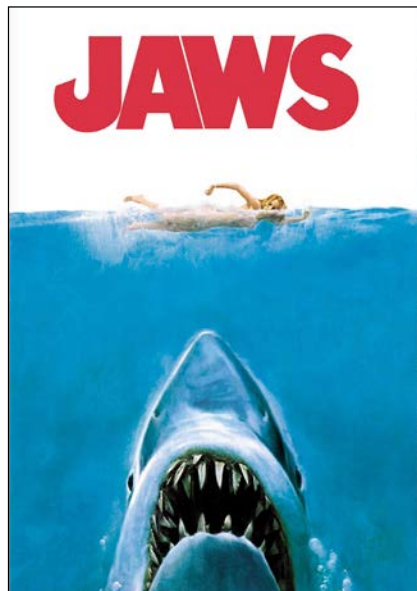
to those he has sworn to protect. In a world that props up a mixture of apathy and aggression, he chooses kindness, no matter if others perceive it as weakness.

That’s a hero worth celebrating, in and outside of the cinema.

***Rated PG-13, runtime 2 hrs. 10 min.**

Classics Corner: Jaws

The world’s most infamous fish turns 50 this year! Under the ¾ time



of ‘Happy Birthday’ you can hear the John William’s tension-laced, two-note theme music that has woven its way into pop culture and the collective subconscious for decades. Steven Spielberg’s aquatic adventure film about a massive, great white shark that stalks the waters of Amity Island is slated for re-release in theaters, including IMAX and 3D formats, starting August 29.

What can I say about one of the most popular films in Hollywood history that hasn’t been gushed over thousands of times by other fans? The cast, including Roy Scheider as beleaguered, but brave police Chief Martin Brody, Richard Dreyfuss as pithy marine biologist Matt Hooper, and Robert Shaw as veteran and fisherman Quint, are still fantastic. The cinematography is

evocative. We’ve already talked about the music. Okay, so the mechanical shark might look stodgy to those who have grown up with more CGI than not in their movies. Personally though, I will take that tangibility and sense of presence any day.

Whenever I meet someone who doesn’t understand how a movie, book, or song can change a person’s life, I honestly feel for them. *Jaws* did that for me. So yes, I’ll allow myself to be scared off the beaches and back into cinemas this summer.

***Rated PG, runtime 2 hrs. 10 min.**

Sophia Mattice-Aldous is a longtime movie buff and a Murrow News fellow at The Newport Miner and RANGE Media through a program administered by WSU. Please email questions, comments and suggestions for film reviews to sophiamatticealdous@gmail.com.



New Blood (In So Many Ways) in Calgary

By Lynn O'Connor

Several Colville Rotarians went to the Rotary International Convention in Calgary to celebrate and explore the global scope of Rotary.

Here is a perspective from one of our members, Mike Humble, a first-time attendee at a Rotary International Convention:

First, I was amazed by the global attendance in Calgary. Talk about a mass of humanity in a tight space! I realized rather quickly that my knowledge of geography was substandard when I saw participants from African and Asian countries that I had never even heard of. I will research more into them in preparation for my next RI conference.

Secondly, I was surprised that our connection, in fact all of our connections to Rotary, means that we are all friends once we take that step to introduce ourselves. To see the mass of humanity gather to improve the world into a better place was awe-inspiring, almost breathtaking.

One of the big discussion issues for the conference was artificial intelligence and how it is changing the way we do business. It is coming, like it or not. Likewise, peace across this great planet is a force we need to embrace and embody (thank you Lynn and Ed for your leadership).

Overall, I had a very enlightened experience attending the conference in Calgary. While there were some events that challenged my personal political biases, I realize that Rotary is a very big tent, and there is room inside for all ideals.

And lastly, I had so much fun with my fellow Rotarians from our little hamlet of Colville. In this vast arena of thoughts and ideas, I was proud to be a member of Colville Rotary. Together, we make changes locally, nationally, and globally into the future!

~ Mike Humble

Thank you, Mike. There were many interesting and fun activities (it's Calgary, right? Yahoo!).

I think the highlight for me was New Blood, a theatre production performed by the Calgary Civic Symphony that blends traditional Blackfoot music and dance with contemporary music by Grammy Award-winning singer-songwriter Peter Gabriel. It tells the life story of Chief Vincent Yellow Old Woman, a residential school survivor who overcame all of that to become Chief of the Siksika Nation in Alberta. The story, as told through the poem "The Indian in the Child," blends young Spirit Dancers with First Nations dance and drumming and the music of Peter Gabriel. That was truly unforgettable.



Scene from New Blood Calgary Symphony performance at the Rotary International Convention in Calgary. Image courtesy Rotary International.

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

LISTEN UP

Reviews by Michael Pickett

Tori Amos: Turning Pages

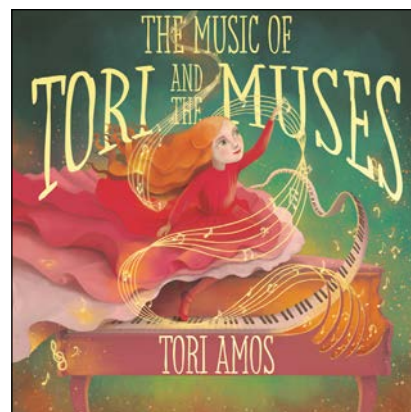
As an unexpected album release to accompany the children's book *Tori and the Muses*, the compilation *The Music of Tori and the Muses* has the quirky-but-creative sound that Amos has cultivated for decades, but crosses over into soundtrack territory in a very cool way.

"Insect Ballet" feels like underscore for a Disney movie, while the over-swirling, kinetic vocals of "Mermaid Muse Speaks" give way to TA's roiling chordal piano in a way that feels in line with her vintage work. Making a hard turn into propulsive, bluesy pop, "Spike's Lament" features the urgent vocals

Amos has made a signature element of her arsenal.

If Tori Amos is anything over the last few decades, it is unpredictable, and *The Music of Tori and the Muses* satisfies as both a great listen and a cool soundtrack for a children's book that underscores the need to tune into and follow one's own personal muses, as the book tells the tale of a young Tori who doesn't want to practice for her recital, and trades her parents' wishes for a floating pink piano and the muses who encourage her to follow her own path.

While the album veers in and out of various musical styles, movements



and acts, it sits nicely in Amos' overall catalog. Is it a concept album? It would certainly seem so ... and while you probably won't find Tori Amos in the prog section of any record stores, this is a creative and unpredictable release that is compelling and enjoyable.

Branford Marsalis Quartet Fits In

If you've ever seen Branford Marsalis play live (for me, five times), you know there's a signature sound to his work in jazz and pop. His many years with Sting gave him a platform that crossed over into FM airwaves (back in the ancient

1900s) and garnered him legions of extra fans. Yet the Branford Marsalis Trio has now spent over a decade carving out jazz albums and tours all their own, and this latest – *Belonging* (a re-interpretation of the 1974 Keith Jarrett album) – is a really compelling release.

"Spiral Dance" finds Marsalis' trademark sound is somewhat under cover here, as doubled lead lines and piano lay down motifs evocative of Vince Guaraldi. The result is more subdued and warm than the punchy Jarrett original, but midway through the track pianist Joey Calderazzo heads into interstellar improvisational space.

This album is a righteous nod to a great work without being derivative. "Long as You Know You're Living

Yours" channels just a perfect amount of New Orleans jazz and funk, while this recording of "Solstice" feels more intimate than the '74 rendition, as Marsalis' breathy horn-work puts the listener right in the room with the players. The Marsalis Quartet version actually feels more immediate and less affected than the source material.

Some tributes work, and some don't (most Rush tributes require counseling after listening), but the Branford Marsalis Quartet not only fully does the original [ital]Belonging[end ital] release justice, but hopefully steers listeners to both recordings ... because they are fantastic.

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



A Good Read

Northern Jaeger, By Charles Vaught

Reviewed by Terry Cunningham

The lure of the Alaska fisheries is legendary. I've heard stories since I was a child in the 1960s of fortunes being made and lost in the Bering Sea. I hear that the fisheries aren't what they used to be, but the allure is still there. In 1999 Charles Vaught followed that desire for adventure and maybe some good financial reward. This is when his story starts, but the seed was planted with a phone call in a chilly farmhouse in northeastern Washington.

(I'm quite familiar with that attraction of adventure and riches. I also spent time on a catcher processor in the Bering Sea. My shipboard duties did not include handling the catch; they were directed toward the industrial end of things.)

Northern Jaeger: A Commercial Fisherman's Memoir is a great read and very accurate in detailing a typical experience on board a commercial fishing vessel. Vaught's experience on the Northern Jaeger depended on the catch. He never knew how much he would make during the long hours in that cold, wet, smelly, and dangerous environment. His sense of humor was a great help in surviving amid the rolling seas and close quarters with other strangers and newbies.

Time becomes irrelevant as hours blend into days and product piles up until you get back to port, which might be only a brief visit to offload your catch, if you don't transfer it at sea. Work periods last as long as there is product to

process.

The book also probes the question, "Do you know the story behind the food you eat?"

What makes the odors, dampness, cold, and fatigue tolerable is the camaraderie, Vaught finds. Many good friendships are made under these circumstances. Just going to sea can be a big personal test.

And Vaught seems to be a natural storyteller. He has done numerous jobs, including associate producer, bartender, mailman, marijuana industry manual laborer, wildland firefighter, janitor, ESL teacher, and reforestation technician. But, he says, "it is the title of author that I hold nearest and dearest to my heart."

In addition to *Northern Jaeger* Vaught has written the non-fiction book, *State of Fire*, about fighting wildfires.

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."



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Mold Toxicity and the Mysterious Symptoms

By Rob Sumner

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

For adults over 55, unexplained fatigue, brain fog, body aches and poor sleep are often chalked up to “getting older.” But what if the root cause isn’t aging?

A growing body of evidence is pointing to mold toxicity as a silent, overlooked factor in many chronic symptoms that evade traditional medical treatment. The problem? Mold exposure is often invisible, and conventional lab work rarely detects its presence.

What Is Mold Toxicity?

Mold toxicity, or biotoxin illness, occurs when a person is exposed to mold spores and mycotoxins – toxic chemicals released by certain molds. These can be inhaled or absorbed through the skin, especially in water-damaged buildings, basements, crawlspaces, and HVAC systems.

Unlike mold allergies, which cause sneezing or sinus congestion, mold toxicity often mimics more serious conditions. Symptoms can include:

- Persistent fatigue
- Brain fog and poor memory
- Sleep disruption
- Anxiety or mood instability
- Muscle and joint pain
- Light, sound, or chemical sensitivity
- Hormonal imbalances
- Tingling, numbness, or balance issues

Because symptoms vary so widely and don’t fit neatly into standard diagnostic boxes, many individuals – especially older adults – go undiagnosed or misdiagnosed for years.

Why Adults Over 55 Are Especially at Risk

Aging naturally reduces the body’s ability to detoxify. Liver enzymes slow down. Bile flow decreases. Kidneys and lymphatic drainage systems become less efficient. Declining detox capacity makes the body more vulnerable to long-term damage. This means toxins such as mold build up more easily, especially for those who are sedentary, on multiple medications, or eating a low-nutrient diet.

Compounding the issue, about 25% of the population carries a genetic profile (HLA-DR) that makes it difficult for the body to eliminate mold toxins. Many people are more likely to retain toxins in the brain, fat tissue, and organs – leading to chronic symptoms that do not resolve on their own.

Why Mold Illness Is Often Missed

One of the biggest challenges with mold toxicity is that it does not appear on standard medical lab tests. Blood work, imaging, and exams often return as “normal.” As a result, patients are frequently told that nothing is wrong, or that their symptoms are simply part of



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PRESS RELEASE

KETTLE FALLS REGION



Boise Cascade-Kettle Falls Region Office is pleased to announce their recipient of this year's scholarship award for the 2025-2026 school year. Troy Hooper, (pictured here) will be attending Whitworth University in Spokane and will be pursuing a Bachelor's in Science in Environmental Studies.

Kira Kent (Kettle Falls Lumber), Evelyn Hooper (Kettle Falls Region), and Mackenzie Darnielle (Kettle Falls Log Yard) will all be receiving a renewable scholarship for another year from Boise Cascade Kettle Falls Region.

aging, stress, or mental health concerns.

Without proper testing and awareness, mold-related illness continues to fly under the radar.

Real-World Example: Bill's Journey

Consider the case of a man in his mid-60s – let's call him Bill – who experienced profound fatigue, poor sleep, increased joint pain, and difficulty thinking clearly. He had seen several specialists, undergone lab work, and tried different medications, but nothing improved his condition.

Eventually, it was discovered that Bill had been living in a home with chronic water damage. Environmental testing revealed significant mold contamination, and subsequent mycotoxin testing confirmed elevated levels in his system.

With the right plan, including mold remediation, detoxification support, and a structured wellness program, Bill's condition improved dramatically. His energy levels increased, his thinking cleared, and his pain diminished. What had once looked like premature aging was, in fact, reversible mold toxicity.

How to Identify and Address Mold Toxicity

For individuals over 55, raising awareness is critical. Here's a general approach to detection and recovery:

- Inspect the home or past workplaces for any signs of water damage, musty odors, or visible mold. Professional testing, including ERMI or HERTSMI-2, may be recommended.
- Urine mycotoxin testing can assess levels of mold toxins in the body. These tests are often ordered by functional medicine providers or wellness-focused clinicians.
- If exposure is confirmed, the body must be supported through a structured detox process:
 - Drainage and elimination (bowels, liver, sweat) must be optimized.
 - Natural binders such as activated charcoal or bentonite clay can help remove toxins.
 - Sauna therapy and low-intensity exercise can promote detox through sweating.

- Nutritional support is essential for mitochondrial repair and cellular healing.

- In serious cases, professional mold remediation or relocation may be necessary to prevent ongoing exposure.

The good news? With the right testing and support, recovery is possible. Symptoms can abate. Energy can return. And what once seemed like aging may, in fact, be a toxic burden the body is finally ready to let go of.

Raising awareness is the first step. Healing comes next.

For those seeking guidance, a trained wellness provider can help determine whether mold may be affecting your health and provide a personalized roadmap for recovery.

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.



Yoga with the Tomatoes

By Brenda St. John

“Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing!”

~ Isaiah 43:18-19, NIV

Lately I’ve been pondering the commonly repeated yoga phrase “Release anything that does not serve you.” I’ve said it many times, either in class or to myself, and it hit home today when I was pruning the tomatoes in my garden.

I had been searching through the foliage looking for ripe tomatoes when I realized how thickly the tomato cages were packed, and if there were tomatoes at the center of the plant they could not be seen. I knew if I thinned out the leaves that sunlight and air would then reach the center of the plant, so I grabbed my pruners and started cutting.

As I whacked away, I realized I was removing foliage that no longer served my tomatoes. Many of the leaves were huge, and the tomatoes, though small, were plentiful, so I felt that removing extra leaves would make the small tomatoes grow larger and encourage the green tomatoes to start ripening. I also removed any leaves that touched the ground, to prevent the plants from picking up a disease.

After about a half-hour of pruning, I felt the plants’ energy was now more focused on producing large, healthy tomatoes rather than excessive leaf development. Photosynthesis was, hopefully, kicked up a notch with the

improved airflow and light exposure, and I am confident I will have the best tomato crop I have ever had.

I personally release anything that does not serve me by a mental process called introspection. It involves reflecting on my mental habits, which are my recurring thoughts, and analyzing how they serve me in my life. Does my way of thinking lead to joy, happiness, improved health or wellbeing, or a better way of serving others? When I find that a certain way of thinking manifests in negativity toward myself or others, I know it’s time to get out the mental pruners and clip away the dead or diseased thoughts or

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those that are thickly packed among other similar thoughts. Prayer and meditation are my pruners.

As I remove a few negative, unproductive, or uncharitable thoughts, I can more clearly see other similar thoughts which also need pruning. This is not a five-minute process. It takes regular maintenance to keep my heart and mind operating at peak performance so I can be the best version of myself. It is a constantly evolving process.

During a yoga class, a common time to say “release anything that does not serve you” is during a breathing exercise. Inhale and visualize bringing in positive qualities or energy. Exhale whatever no longer serves you. It can also apply to many yoga poses. First, tension is created. Then, tension is released. This is a detoxifying process, mentally, physically, and emotionally. One good example is Pigeon Pose. Pigeon is a deep, hip-opening pose that stretches the hip flexors, glutes, and lower back where emotional tension is often stored.

To begin Pigeon Pose, start in Tabletop position, which means hands and knees on the mat, aligned such that hands are under the shoulders and knees are under the hips. The spine, from the back of the head to the tailbone, is in neutral. Slide the right knee forward toward the right wrist. Then slide the right foot toward the left wrist as far as your body comfortably allows. Online and magazine models will show the right shin parallel to the short edge of the mat, but in reality most of us don’t have that amount of hip flexibility, and pushing into the pose will result in a knee injury. For safety, keep the right foot closer to the

groin to reduce the angle of the shin.

Progress into the pose by extending the left leg straight back, keeping the top of the left foot resting on the mat and the toes pointing back. Ensure the hips are square to the front of the mat. It is generally considered to be helpful to put a small prop, such as a yoga block or a folded blanket, under the right hip for support. Place hands on either side of the hips for support as you lengthen your spine. The pose can end with the spine vertically aligned, at which point the yogi will linger for several cycles of breath.

For a deeper stretch, fold forward with a flat back over the front leg, resting forearms, chest, or forehead on the mat or a prop. The shoulders should be relaxed. Hold the pose for

5 to 10 cycles of breath while relaxing into the pose. It can be helpful to visualize breathing into the right hip, which may soften the tightness.

To come out of the pose, press hands into the mat to lift the hips slightly. Tuck the back toes under and slide the front leg back, returning to Tabletop or Downward-Facing Dog. Then repeat the pose on the other side.

Just as pruning tomatoes channels the plants’ energy into thriving fruit, Pigeon Pose opens the hips to release stored tension, freeing body and mind to flourish.

Namaste.

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

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Huckleberries

By Coleestah Finley

Many different roots and berries are picked by the Sinixt, but a favorite among them is huckleberries, with their special sweet flavor. Many of us look forward to the huckleberry picking season.

A great deal of knowledge and traditions exist about how huckleberries are harvested and preserved. With all the sites, traditions, and ways to store them, huckleberries continue to be an important and favorite staple of our diet.

The best times and places for picking these sweet fruits can change over time, even in a single year. The quantity and quality of huckleberries depend on the amount of snowfall in the previous winter, with the berries more abundant along the upper Columbia River watershed.

Author Eileen Delahanty Pearkes states, “One of the recorded areas of abundance is around the once large and spreading village of N’kmaplqs, at and around the mouth of the Incomappleux River. ... Another place is Kmarpn (smooth top), today known as Red Mountain, important for Lakes peoples as a picking site well into



Fellow Colville Tribes Summer Youth Workers Kendall, myself, and Skyla with our huckleberry harvest.

the 20th century.”

I prefer to pick at spots near where I live in Twin Lakes, which is near the Kettle River Range. With this delicious food, there are many practices that follow it. One tradition includes leaving some berries behind so bears have something to eat. Another custom is to keep your thoughts and prayers good. Some pickers spread tobacco as an offering (although good prayers and tobacco offerings usually go for any type of food gathering).

The types of containers used by pickers vary, but traditionally the berries were placed in a basket tied to the body. Some people even used a wood comb to help pick. Nowadays pickers usually recycle food containers or use some type of plastic container with a lid.

To preserve huckleberries, people usually seal them in plastic bags that are put in the freezer. Another method is to turn the berries into jam. Arnold (Judge) Wynecoop included his wife Tina’s recipe for huckleberry jam in Pearkes’ book *The Geography of Memory*. Eating them as soon as they are picked works, too, but personal experience indicates that eating in excess can give someone a tummy ache.

Coleestah Finley, daughter of Michael and Jacquelyn Finley, a member of the Confederate Tribes of the Colville Reservation, and resident of Inchelium, Washington on the Colville Reservation, is an honor student at Inchelium High School, and Summer Youth Employee of Inchelium Cultural Research Center.



Huckleberries in a cedar root coil basket.

A Year On The Farm

The Joy of Companionable Kayaking

By Michelle Lancaster

Last year, my sister-in-law, Debbie, took me to Lake Crescent, on the Olympic Peninsula, for the first kayak adventure of my lifetime. I could not have asked for a more perfect day.

Lake Crescent is a crystal-clear glacial lake over 600 feet deep and surrounded by steep mountains. We chose a quiet morning to kayak, to avoid crowds and windy conditions. I glided across the water and within minutes had overcome my fear of falling out of the Pelican kayak.

Debbie taught me how to paddle while we floated across the length of the lake. We then skirted around the lake's east shore, observing the few cottages and watching people and wildlife enjoy the water's edge at the mouth where water pours into the lake. As my arms wore out, we traveled back toward the historic Lake Crescent Lodge, where we jumped out and swam in the clear water to cool off. I am officially now a kayak enthusiast!

When I returned home, I considered buying a kayak, but then I would need a truck or a trailer to haul it and someone with strong muscles to help me move it on and off, to and from the lake. So, I just pondered how I might accomplish that. Meanwhile, my friend from my fiber arts group, Diane, was talking about kayaking and I exclaimed, "Hey, can we go out together?"

Turns out, her family had purchased her a set of kayaks for her birthday, but her husband does not care to kayak. So, she is always looking for someone to team up with. How perfect! I love the connections made in a group. Even though the kayak has nothing to do with fiber arts, one interest leads to conversations about others.

In July, I drove the couple miles to Diane's house, parked, and hopped into her SUV. We drove to Lake Gillette off Highway 20 and met another friend, Nancy, who had her own vessel. After we put our kayaks in the water, we paddled

for Lake Sherry, where I saw turtles sunbathing on a log and heard stories about the Boy Scout cabin that Diane's son used to go to for camping trips.

We paddled lazily around the lake, talking and watching nature and sharing a chocolate bar. We glided back into Lake Gillette, around to the Beaver Lodge, farther around the north shore of the lake and then back to the dock. We rested at the water's edge, enjoying fresh slices of watermelon from Nancy's garden. A sweet treat to help us cool off after a hot day on the water.

This month, Diane, Nancy, and I hope to head to Bead Lake near Newport, where apparently there is fantastic scenery to be had. I have a better idea of what to pack: a wide-brimmed hat to protect my face and shoulders from direct sun, two water bottles that can be tied to the kayak,

nutritionally-dense snacks like meat sticks and granola bars, and snug leather sandals with back straps that will not fall off when we are getting the kayaks in and out of the water.

Kayaking allows me to build stronger friendships, exercise my body with a good workout that helps strengthen my shoulders, and bask in the goodness of quiet nature found in this beautiful rural region.

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



So Many Cherries and Berries

By Karen Giebel

Before we left for a family vacation on June 30, I checked the garden to see how it was coming along. I noted that the pie cherry tree had what looked to be a fair amount of green fruit on it so I figured they would be ready to pick when we returned on July 8.

Arriving home, I went to assess the garden and stood there, mouth agape, eyes staring and slowly blinking. That cherry tree had such a massive amount of ripe cherries on it that it almost glowed red. Holy maraschino! Back inside the house I told Dan there must be a hundred pounds of cherries on that tree.

Now this tree has an interesting history. It died years ago. Dan cut it down and we thought that was that, but it started sprouting suckers that grew

into twigs that morphed into branches and kept growing until we had a 15-foot tall, rounded, and fat cherry bush that grew lovely cherries.

Then, last year there was a late hard freeze as the fruit trees were budding and it produced nary a cherry. It made up for it this year.

For me, our cherry bush is rather convenient because my short self can stand on the ground and pick away, and I did. I picked and I picked and I picked some more. I told Dan I was wrong, there was not one hundred pounds of cherries, there were more like three hundred pounds of cherries, because I literally picked one hundred pounds and that was just the bottom third of the tree. Then I quit.

We never sold cherries before, but we

did this year. We had cherry ice cream sauce, cherry cobbler, 10 jars of jam, and I froze 25 pounds. I breathed a sigh of relief as I put the last bag in the freezer, grateful that I would have a break and maybe do some laundry or cleaning.

But it's also huckleberry season, so the next day we headed up to our favorite spot and got what we needed and headed home. I had no sooner finished rinsing and sorting hucks when Dan excitedly came in the kitchen and announced the red raspberries were ready and "the bushes are loaded!"

Head lowered and arms resting on the kitchen counter, I kept muttering, "No, no, no and no." But yes, it was true – and true to form for my husband, who could never, ever plant just what we need. He has to plant enough to feed a third world country, and they keep spreading. Hubby is the raspberry picker, as I donate blood to the Red Cross and not to berry thorns. And pick he did, and continues to pick, so we can add to the ones from last year still in the freezer.

Today I made a batch of huckleberry jam and tomorrow I'll make raspberry jam. I know I should be grateful for all this free food, and I am, but really? I'd be happier if he actually ate some of this jam, but he doesn't. Nope, not one bite. He's all excited that I make it, but that's as far as it goes for him. I mail a fair amount to the kids who are scattered across the country and they and our grandkids enjoy it.

Then there are the apple trees, which suffered the same fate last year as the cherry tree did. Hubby then pruned them well and watered heavily and they too are loaded with fruit. Yippee ... not! There are four apple trees. Four. Again, he's excited because, "We are out of applesauce and we can make a lot!" At least he will eat applesauce, but a lot?

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Reflections on Life's Journey

Oh, we also have two pear trees and four Italian plum trees. Guess what? Yep, they are all loaded with fruit this year. Don't tell Dan, but I am pretty relieved that the hard freeze last spring killed his peach trees. Oh, go ahead and tell him, he'll read this and find out anyway.

Then there is the rest of our mixed-bag garden, which truly is producing a mixed quantity of produce. Beets, tomatoes and carrots are thriving, as are the English peas. There are three kinds of tomatoes and four cherry tomato plants that look like they will produce thousands of little ones. Cucumbers are coming on nicely as is (surprise?) the zucchini. The Swiss chard got a late start but it looks to be nice and healthy.

So are my herbs. I kind of overdid the dill, but someone in town is always looking for dill. Both the garlic and the onions are ready to harvest and look wonderful. Wish I could say the same thing for my lettuce and radishes. I planted three different types of lettuce and radish three different times. Not one lettuce seed germinated. Not one. A couple of radishes popped up but that was it. They were in raised beds and we think the soil really needed to be enriched, but that didn't happen. I'm disappointed, as homegrown lettuce is

so delicious, but all in all, we're happy with all the vegetables.

There are only so many hours in the day, and I spent most of mine with berries and cherries. Wishing you all a wonderful August full of delicious fruits and vegetables, either from your

garden or from one of the local farmers markets. Those farmers work hard to put food on our tables.

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



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Overmarsh Farm Commons

By Joe Barreca



I have experienced mixed results with community projects. One food co-op I helped start is still going strong. Another failed after many years. Some collectives of people living near each other dissolved over time. Others have gone on for multiple generations. Some community gardens flourish while others peter out. So, I was particularly interested to see how a project on San Juan Island was holding up while I visited the island for a family reunion in July.

Overmarsh Farm Commons is part of a host of activities taken on by the San Juan Grange, the largest Grange in Washington State. Other activities include a weekly Coffee Hour on Wednesday mornings, agricultural training sessions, and a booth at the farmers market. The official mission of the Grange is to “support a resilient community.”

No doubt that vision is brought into sharper focus by living on an island. Leaving the island or taking a ferry to it generally needs to be arranged in advance. Disruptions can occur because of weather, economics or even mechanical failures or personnel shortages on the ferries.

In that situation, having a supportive organization with food, skills, tools and spaces to use in common definitely makes the community more resilient. Their vision was to have a common agricultural location that would allow individuals to grow their own food. But it goes beyond that to include growing food to sell or store collectively; starting an orchard and training people to graft their own stock of trees; preserving an area that still produces a field of daffodils every spring; building a greenhouse for winter gardening; storing equipment to use on the farm; mob-grazing animals on fenced fields; producing compost to fertilize the garden; saving seeds acclimatized to the location, etc.

Agriculture is evolving quickly. Eco agriculture is opening the use of sap analysis, biostimulants, (substances or microorganisms that, when applied to plants, enhance nutrient uptake, improve stress tolerance, and boost crop quality and yield, without directly providing nutrients), cover cropping, foliar sprays and other techniques that increase yield, build soil and cost much less than chemical additives. All this means that education

needs to be continual for farmers. The Overmarsh model provides a mechanism for person-to-person agricultural education.

In one of his monthly letters to members of the San Juan Grange, President Roger Ellison (pictured at left) stated that, "We recognize that combining efforts with others creates synergies, where the result is bigger and better than the sum of the parts. More importantly, though, we derive personal benefits to our mental health from being part of a community. Working with others gets more done and makes you feel good while doing it." (Full disclosure: Roger Ellison is my brother-in-law.)

One of the benefits of having people with a variety of skills involved in the Grange efforts is that the organization has been able to leverage its legal status and history to garner major support. The land for the commons was secured through a 20-year lease by the San Juan County Conservation Land Bank. Additional funds for fencing, construction and solar-powered irrigation to every plot comes from the Land Bank and from community donations during the San Juan Island Community Foundation SJC Cares campaign at the county fair. Tools to use at the garden have been donated by individuals and are stored on site in a building built with community funds and labor, using discarded shipping pallets for framing.

At the farm, I was impressed by the variety of growing techniques in use on the individual plots. One group with animals had their own supply of manure that made for abundant growth. Unique trellises for beans; companion flowers; a separate area for corn so it would not shade row crops ... the list goes on and on.

The bottom line is that by seeing how each other's techniques and tricks function side by side in the same soil, the best methods arise naturally. This combination of competition and cooperation is bound to stimulate annual advances in the best methods for crops on that site.

It will doubtlessly also highlight the best seeds for that soil and climate. Since the Grange intends to save seeds and distribute them, the whole community will benefit. That part of the project acts just like nature itself does, selecting the best combination of plants that creates the most mutual support and growth at any specific location. The diverse set of skills in farming, organizing, grant writing and construction that make up the Grange en-

vironment mimics the diverse range of organisms with different strengths and needs that form a healthy biome.

Overmarsh Farm Commons is just getting started. Having been there, I cannot prove that it will last for generations. But I did see the elements that make it stand out from many other collective efforts I have been involved in. It was not an idea that was started and then searched for a community. Instead, it was the product of an existing community with a vision for its own future. It was not a singular idea but a part of an interactive web of community activities created to make the community more resilient and also a lot more fun. It will be a worthwhile endeavor to keep an eye on.

Northeast Washington shares a kind of rural isolation with San Juan Island. In these challenging times, we could all stand to be a little more resilient.

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



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Bear With Berries *(This is not a menu item...)*

By Madilane Perry

Several years ago, I was picking huckleberries in one of my favorite patches on South Sherman Road in Ferry County when I realized that I'd been hearing quite a bit of noise from the other end of the berry patch, a hundred feet or so away.

I had been interpreting it as "cow noise" but my subconscious had apparently noticed a few details that my conscious mind had missed. These details included the fact that, in all the years I'd picked there I'd never seen cow scat or hoof prints, and that I didn't remember the Forest Service having a grazing allotment in the area. My subconscious came to a conclusion and sent it up to the front of my mind.

The conclusion was that these were wildlife noises. Wildlife large enough to make such brush-crunching and creek-splashing noises was pretty much limited to moose and bear, or possibly an especially vigorous deer. I didn't particularly want to meet either moose or bear, so I started moving gradually but rapidly toward my nearby car.

Apparently, the bear, which it turned out to be, had come to the realization that it was sharing the berry patch with a human pretty much simultaneously with my realization that I was probably picking with a bear.

The bear reacted faster than I did. It passed me at a dead run when I was still 20 feet from the car, raced across the road, scrambled up the bank and disappeared into the trees.

I decided that we'd both had enough excitement for one day, got

in the car and went home..

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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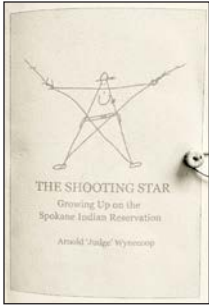
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The Shooting Star: Growing Up on the Spokane Indian Reservation

By Judge Wynecoop

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

POWWOWS

The old powwows were great events, officially called “fairs,” which they pretty well were. There was a large building, two stories, which was the exhibit hall. There would be farm produce exhibits, and special talent exhibits such as beadwork, quilts, embroidery, baked goods, and other works our people were proud to display.

During the day, a horse race was held. In this relay race a horse and rider would start with other contestants in front of the grandstand, making a complete circle on the track that circled the powwow grounds. He would dismount, usually leaping from his horse and mounting another horse, and off he would go around the course again. Some of these riders were really good at dismounting and quickly remounting. Some would land on their feet and run and leap over the

rump of the next horse and fly out of there. There would be several riders doing these things at the same time.

Most nights there were stick games going on and gambling of other types, including poker, dice and *wahlukes* (a traditional card game). Wahlukes players usually kept their money in their Levi pockets, so it was kind of a rolled, wadded-up mess the player would throw out for his bet. It didn't seem to bother the other players 'cause they threw out something just as messed up. Years later we would kid each other if we had a dirty-looking dollar bill – it was wahlukes money.

The stick games were great! The further back I can remember the games, the more haunting they are. Being there with some old-time stick game players – well, the feeling is hard to describe.

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The powwow building.

All manner of Indian people from all over the northwest would be at the powwows. There were long-standing teams and individual competitors. Flatheads, Colvilles, Kalispels, Coeur d'Alenes, San Poils, Lakes, Yakamas ... and probably others visiting from the coast or from Oregon. The playing would go on all night.

Since we lived across the meadow from the powwow grounds, we could hear the singing and pounding very well. I really loved the sound – interesting songs sung along with the drumming. There were both male and female voices. The tempo of the singing would change as some exciting thing would happen. Somebody won a stick, maybe, then the song may go on normally for stick game singing and all at once there would be a very high voice ... very high and strong. It would make the hair on my neck stand up!

There were also war dancers. Seems like the regalia and dancers from the earlier days were more authentic. The dancers I most enjoyed were our own Spokans: Paul “Stink Bug” Elija, Paul Phillips, and Little Dan Sherwood would really put on a show. They danced wearing breech cloths, moccasins, and bells strapped to their ankles. You could really imagine they would be up and heading out with a war party the next morning.

CAR WRECK

We had a cousin named Curtis Wendlandt who would come out to visit us at times. His family had lived nearby, when we still lived in the log house, but they moved into Spokane to find work. He came out one hot summer day and he had a '36 Chevy sedan. It was really a well-kept car. He asked Chick and I to go with him to Turtle Lake for a swim.

We went with him and after the swim, on the way home, Curtie missed a turn in the gravel road. Over the bank we went – down, bouncing and jumping over rocks, logs and I don't know what else. Thank God he didn't try to correct the

car on that bank, or we would have rolled for sure. We went down and hit a large fir tree that was lying on the ground. We just fit between two large standing trees and hit the tree on the ground.

No one was hurt but during the scary ride someone screamed! Chick and I could safely say, without anyone to question us – it was Curtie who screamed. It had to be.

CAUGHT CHEATING

When I was in 5th grade, I got caught cheating on a spelling test. It was a case of being one of the guys. Other classmates told me what to do, which was to put a small piece of paper with “problem words” written on it, and just keep it on the desk seat between the legs and no one would know, they said.

I usually did well in spelling but a few words on this test were tough, so I tried it. Things were going well. I would peek at a word and write it down. But all at once, Miss Winch, our teacher, asked me what I was doing and came straight to me and stood over my desk. I was caught like a rat!

She stood, looked things over, and, bless her heart, turned and walked back up front to her desk! I loved her. I never tried anything like that again.

Next month: “Two Dan Sherwoods”

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On Approach for Landing

Article & Photo by D.L. Kreft

This summer has been quite a flight so far, and it's only half over. I'm looking forward to a little down time, so to speak. My summer break was already full of planned and/or anticipated happenings and projects. I was trying to find a balance between planned time and unstructured time, where I could be free to do what looked good that morning. Seasoned generals know the best-laid battle plans go out the window in the first hour of any fight. I was about to become "seasoned."

As school ended in early June, I immediately packed and headed to Yakima for an annual birding conference that I was responsible for. The event had been 10 months in the planning with innumerable Zoom meetings, email exchanges, and phone calls. All was going well, and the 250 attendees, from most of the western United States, Canada and Mexico, were in for a great three-day weekend.

While at the conference, I received the sad news of the passing of my mother-in-law; not entirely unexpected, but not in the summer flight plan. In fact, the plan was out the window. After returning home I spent important time

consoling my wife, and I embarked on the path of arranging for the final details of a death and memorial service.

Thankfully, the service was going to be relatively uncomplicated. But because another of the big planned events was coming up, the service would have to be delayed for several weeks. My wife and I headed to the Midwest to attend our oldest grandson's graduation party and see our grandkids and our youngest son. We traversed Idaho, Montana, North Dakota and Minnesota. We weren't too far from my childhood home in Iowa, so we wedged in a side trip to see the old family farm and visit the gravesites of my grandparents and several aunts and uncles.

I hadn't visited there since 2002 but easily located the farmstead. The house, barn and outbuildings had been torn down decades ago. There was nothing standing now but a few trees and a grain bin.

The gravesites of my paternal grandparents and relatives were just around the corner. The neatly tended cemetery and large formal headstones spoke of my German heritage. I had a harder time locating my maternal grandfather's gravesite in town (my mother's mother was buried in Illinois, in a family cemetery there). When my mother and I had looked for her father's headstone (and that of one of her brothers) in 2002 we could not find it. She knew the general area, but it was a mystery that we couldn't solve. Since then, a new visitor kiosk had been set up and I eventually located the stone. It was plain and unadorned, in sharp contrast to where my other grandparents were laid. I thought a lot about that contrast and family history, life and death.

With my mother-in-law's death and upcoming memorial service, and the solemn time spent with grandparents that died before I was born, a long trip home did not excite me. I longed to just land for a while and rest and refuel. Yet we needed to get back home and finalize the memorial service plans and arrangements.

The family had asked me to be the officiant, a task I had never done before. I asked for advice from our pastor, and he helped me with examples from his own experience. Like countless generations before us, we got through it, and the service went well.

A couple more of the summer's planned events quickly followed on the heels of the memorial service, and I had one day until a community event began. I had paid to have a vendor booth to sell some of my photography. I made a push to get final prints made and set up my booth on a

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A Fresh Air Perspective



hot day in the park.

The good part was the shade of several large trees that kept me from melting into a tired puddle on the green grass. The day went well, and I sold many items. That was both good and a little bad. The bad part being I had a three-day vendor booth scheduled at another event the following weekend and I had to make rush orders on Monday to have more items made and picked up before Friday. I was back up in the air.

The three-day event went well, mostly. Friday evening saw a weather front move in with gusty winds. My flimsy canopy tent was no match for that. At one point, I was hanging on to one tent pole as the other three lifted off the ground. Greeting cards scattered and nearby vendors rushed to grab the other tent legs and keep the whole affair from blowing across the park. I had managed to secure the more valuable prints just before the wind hit, but a couple of items received some dings and dents. All I could

do was to pack things away for the night and weight it all down as best I could.

The rest of the weekend passed uneventfully, and I actually had some of my best-selling days ever.

Summer is half over now, and I might even get out and enjoy some high-elevation hiking and photographing before I have to go back to classroom preparation for the coming school year. I think I hear the control tower telling me I can make my approach for landing after all. I found a photo I had taken years ago of a great blue heron gliding into a wetland area to rest and feed. In the image is also a bright orange life ring, in case someone accidentally fell into the nearby pond. I guess the image exemplified the closing of the first half of my summer. I'm looking forward to a safe landing into the second half.

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



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Our Youth, Our Future

Shannon Rosenbaum, ICRC Executive Director

Easily our favorite time of year, summers in northeastern Washington bring us to the ICRC annual fundraising and recently went on a field trip around our reservation district to see historical sites that are described in our records.



Next comes harvesting tule (reeds), weaving, and learning to preserve the many types of berries that are flourishing this summer. We will also wrap up a special project that two of our volunteers have coordinated.

We are recognizing our role in the community as not just a place of education, history and programming, but a site for networking and cultural connection. Through our evolving partnership with the Colville Tribes Youth Development Program, we are building lasting connections with our leaders of tomorrow, helping to instill historical and cultural knowledge, while also exhibiting the possibility of creating careers in culture.

Left: Board member Patti Bailey teaching a youth employee to peel cedar bark. Below: Summer Youth Employees harvesting herbs and vegetables from the community garden.

celebrations, as well as programming with our tribal youth through the Colville Tribes Summer Youth Employment Program.

This year, we were privileged to bring in three Inchelium High School students and entrust them with tasks such as digitizing our collections and diving into historical records for a special project. They are having opportunities to connect with cultural learning in the field with esteemed board and community members.

One of our first cultural excursions of the summer involved harvesting berries and cedar, followed by a day spent working creatively with the cedar.

The students joined with an elder to help harvest herbs and vegetables from our community garden, and



There Is No Joy in Mudville

By Rich Leon

"There is no joy in Mudville" is a famous line from the poem "Casey at the Bat" by Ernest Thayer. It refers to the disappointment felt by the townspeople of Mudville after star player Casey strikes out and loses the baseball game. The phrase is now commonly used to express disappointment or the failure of something hoped for.

I was like Casey, recently, when I tried to find morel mushrooms on Mt. Spokane this year.

I bet your first thought when you saw the beginning of this article that it was about baseball. Sorry to disappoint you, sports fans, but I hope you will still enjoy the article.

My first trip up to Mt. Spokane this year to look for morel mushrooms was in the middle of May. I decided to take the trail I found the prized mushroom variety on last year, and also in previous years. I had on my lucky morel hunting shirt, a mushroom bag for all the morels I just knew I was going to find, and the hiking stick that my neighbor had given me.

After hiking for a couple of hours, my mushroom bag was still empty. I was walking slowly along trail 100,

using my hiking stick to move some of the plants aside. Sometimes morels like to hide from us mushroom hunters and on this day, they were doing a very good job.

After about three hours and still not finding morels, I decided to call it a day and head back to the trailhead by a different route with the hope my luck would change. Well, it didn't, but I did find some really nice-looking coral mushrooms, which I later shared with my neighbor who gave me the hiking stick.

If you have never eaten spring yellow coral mushrooms, you don't know what you have been missing. A lot of people like them as much as morels, and some even more. There is nothing better than some scrambled eggs and coral mushrooms for breakfast or a pasta with coral mushrooms for an evening meal.

On my drive home from the mountain that day, I got to thinking and came to the conclusion that I was out too early for morels. Maybe if I waited another week or so my luck will be better.

So 10 days later I was back on the same morel-hunting trail as my first visit, but I was also going to try

a couple of other trails. At the end of the day the result was the same as my first day: a BIG FAT ZERO! GOOSE EGG! I had struck out again.

I was back on the mountain the next day and the day after that, determined more than ever to find my elusive morels.

I took the weekend off and was back again on Monday and again on Wednesday and Thursday. I hiked trail 121, trail 122, trail 110 and trail 104, and also went up to the cross-country ski area and hiked two of those trails.

The results were always the same: zippo. My poor, sad, little morel bag was always empty at the end of the day. I was about ready to take a torch to my lucky morel hunting shirt.

Still, I had good luck finding corals. I took home a full bag almost every day I was on the mountain, and I shared my good luck with some of my friends, including a lady who works in the Mt. Spokane Ranger Station.

I have been morel hunting for many years now and have had some really good years, and some average years. A few poor years. But I never had a year when I completely struck out.

After nine trips up and around Mt. Spokane, I thought it time to give up my quest. In my version of Mudville, there was no joy.

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

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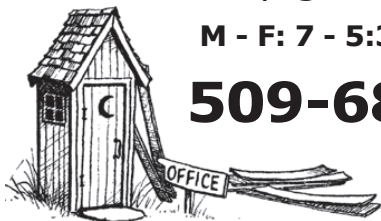
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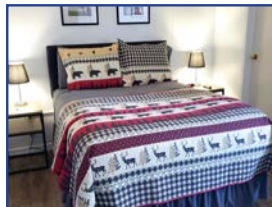


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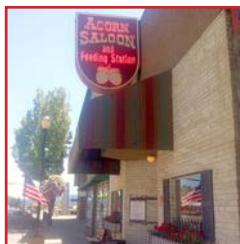
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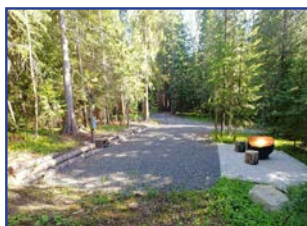


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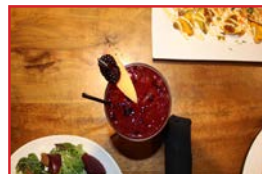
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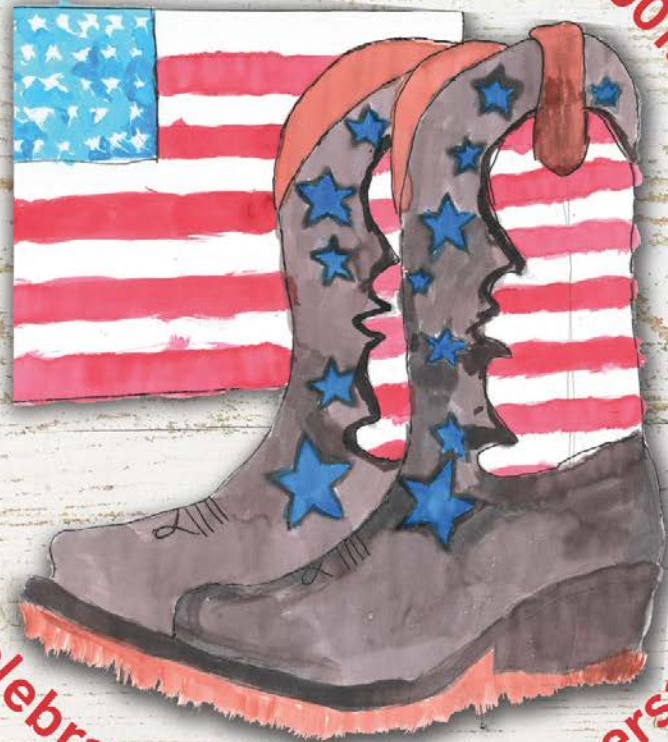
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