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Article & Photo by Gabriel Cruden

Recently, I've experienced a significant spate of breakages and equipment failures. These include everything from small things that are easily remedied, such as a section of horse fencing, to many much bigger and far more expensive things, like the car. There are always perennial repairs and replacements that crop up and need tending to, but this last month has featured far more in quick succession than I've ever experienced before.

Aside from the costs of time and money – frustrating and hard on the budget – I've noticed that the parade of foundering equipment and failing appliances has had an emotional cost. A feeling of struggling just to maintain, which has threatened to eclipse any effort at moving forward. Like swimming with rocks in my pockets.

And so I take a breath and remember that they are just things. *C'est la vie*. And feel enormously grateful for all that I do have. And refocus myself on what is actually important – the people I love and care about in my life, and how I am choosing to show up for them – and for myself – each day.

I was recalling a fellow I met when I was 15 years old, Greg Michael, who worked an office job at a company where my aunt was in a leadership position. What stood out to me about Greg was how completely and genuinely happy he was in that moment to be talking to me. I was a budding nature photographer then and he was very kind in taking the time to look at every single one of my sizeable stack of prints, asking questions about my process in such a respectful and generous manner that I felt like a photography expert, even though I was only a beginner.

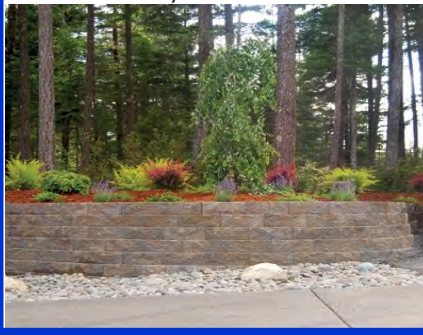
Greg's way of being with me during

that single visit made such an impression on me and I have since harkened back to that experience on multiple occasions. Recently, my eye was caught by a dandelion seedhead glowing in the evening sunlight. By getting all the way down on the

ground, I managed to position the sun directly behind the seedhead. Such a different perspective. And, by intentionally seeking that perspective, I found the unlooked-for gift of the moment and saw, in the seedhead, rainbows.

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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 or 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 becomes 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



Sunshine Usually Makes Me Enjoy Relaxing

- JOHN ODELL, WordsOfWords.com



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Joy, Peace, and Art

By *Mayah LaSol*

This month I'd like to write about something that I've been considering for a while: joy and peace. A few months ago my mother said something about how she wants her life to be more peaceful, rather than more joyful. It wasn't that she never wanted to feel joy, but that peace was more of her end goal as far as an idealized way of living.

I'm not sure whether I agree with this or not. The thing is, I've always thought that instead of bad, people want their life to be good. I mean, that seems obvious, right? But what does good really mean? Does it mean

you're happy and joyful instead of sad or angry, or does it rather mean that life is calm and peaceful?

As usual, there is no certain conclusion here because life is full of grey areas and nothing is simple (as much as you or I may wish it to be). But I do think that having a mixture of peace and joy in your life would never be a bad thing to aspire to. Joy, in some ways, makes life worth living. If I knew that I'd never be excited about something again, then I'm not sure if that would simply be "calm" or if that would turn into depression.

But I do think there's some credence to the intent behind what my mother was saying: that sometimes life is only the highs and lows and that it'd be nice to have neither for a while.

And this truly gets me into a very existential thought train: If humans never experienced high emotions like ecstasy OR low emotions like grief, how different would life be on this planet? There might be less crime, there might be more cooperation. But I don't think there would be much art – or at least much interesting art – because I believe art comes from feeling.

Take me for example: I write these articles and find the writing cathartic, a way to release my inner thoughts and feelings. The same goes when I write poetry. I can also find catharsis in working on a novel, but this usually brings more excitement than a reflective feeling. Without the excitement of building a new world and characters to get to know, I wouldn't bother trying to write fantasy novels!

But now that I've gone down this rabbit hole of considering a different world, I am reminded of something else I heard recently: that artists shouldn't have to suffer to make art. There is a romanticized vision of "the artist," created partially by real artists and partially by society. This romanticized artist is tormented by something, or multiple things, and it is because of this inner turmoil that they are able to create such beautiful art ... or so the story goes.

On occasion, I have fallen into this trap of romanticization, because when I'm feeling down it's somewhat encouraging to say, "Hey, at least I got a good poem out of it." But that's not really healthy, is it? So, I rather agree that people shouldn't have to be unhappy in order to create something beautiful ... but then I'm not sure where that leaves me with the idea of a world without such a broad spectrum of feeling.

Unfortunately, I am not going to solve this problem for us. This must be what it feels like when professors leave you with a ton of unanswerable questions at the end of a class, knowing you're going to have to write a paper later ... such a power kick! But I will simply leave anyone who has read through my ramblings this far a question to consider: If we lost the ability to feel anything but calm and also lost the ability to create art, would it be worth it?

Mayah LaSol is a teen reader, writer, bookstagrammer, and all-around arts enthusiast who geeks out over books and cats. She shares book reviews and poetry on her instagram account @mayahlasol.

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Choosing What to Practice

By Christine Wilson

“Welcome to the internet. Have a look around. Anything that brain of yours can think of can be found. We’ve got mountains of content, some better, some worse. If none of it’s of interest to you, you’d be the first.” ~ Bo Burnham

“...attention comes to us pre-consciously, and bypasses any willed action.”
~ Iain McGilchrist

“Our brain has no pride. It will think anything.” ~ Jack Kornfield

“Attention is the beginning of devotion.” ~ Mary Oliver

In 1995, Edward Hallowell published a book called *Driven to Distraction*. It seemed at the time to be such a precise little book, applicable to a specific group of people with ADHD. My, oh my, how naïve we all were. Here we are now, pulled in a million different directions. It seems like most of us are driven to distraction. We have a nonstop stream of facts, opinions and drama to pay attention to. Welcome to the Information Age.

Fifteen years before that, a futurist named Alvin Toffler published a book called *The Third Wave*. He was predicting a future in which we would all be driven to distraction, although he didn’t word it that way. Life would be upside down. Democracy would be in turmoil. Relationships would be tumultuous. He was describing the

transition from the Industrial Age to the Information Age. He predicted that, assuming we survived the transition, it was going to be awesome.

Some of us are still waiting for the awesome, but I believe it is coming.

Years before his predictions, I read an article in my beloved Child Craft books that asked the question “Can our brains ever get filled up?” I am not sure how the author answered that, but I assume it wouldn’t apply now anyway, because our knowledge of the brain is light years ahead of that era. Basically, from what I have read more recently, it isn’t a matter of getting overly full as it is what our brain will let us pay attention to.

According to Dr. Amesha Jha, a professor of psychology at the University of Miami, we can think about only

so much at a time. Her neuroscience research finds that multi-tasking is both kryptonite for our brain and not actually realistic. When we think we are multi-tasking, we are really putting one thing forward and the rest in the background. She describes attention as “the brain’s capacity to prioritize some information over other information.” The background tasks distract us and, for some of us, keep our brain rattled. We become, you guessed it, driven to distraction. The cereal box will end up in the fridge and the milk in the cupboard.

I think of our brains as being kind of gossipy. We want to know what is happening. We are prioritizing, always. What we initially pay attention to, to quote Iain McGilchrist, is pre-conscious. So when we say “the devil made me do it,” we can blame our wiring. Dr. McGilchrist says we are not “active choosers.”

The good news is that what happens next is within our control. Think of Mahatma Gandhi chanting his mantra, Rama, as he was being killed. It was his mantra, repeated over and over as part of his meditations. This spiritual practice was so much a part of him that it came easily to him. He did not have to think about it. We get good at what we practice.



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Random Acts of Community

Now for the cautious optimism news. As Vince Lombardi said: "Practice doesn't make perfect. Perfect practice makes perfect." If we practice being grumpy, we get good at being grumpy. If we practice gratitude, we get good at gratitude. If we practice being courageous in our communication when something difficult comes up, we get good at courageous communication. Practice wisely as we pick what our brain attends to and we will develop what Abraham Lincoln called our better angels.

Saint Thomas Aquinas said that it is important for a human "to know what he ought to believe; to know what he ought to desire; and to know what he ought to do." It seems to me that if what we believe moves us toward more compassion and wisdom then we are moving in the right direction. Life-enhancing desires and behavior follow with greater ease. That perfect practice makes our life an infinitely more positive experience.

A car drove into a van at the intersection by our house. The first thing I did was find Greg, because he is stronger than I am and I knew I would need the help if there were a person to be saved.

While looking for him, I grabbed my phone so I could call 911. I went outside and found Greg already there, holding an older woman's hand as she hung precariously in her van. The teenage boy who had knocked the vehicle on its side was sobbing in horror.

The police arrived, extricated the injured older couple, and whisked them off to get medical attention. The boy's mom arrived. She sat next to him at the curb, her arm around him to comfort him. I sat next to her, my arm on her shoulder as she said: "He's a really good boy." The medical people declared everyone uninjured.

Mary Oliver said that "attention without feeling ... is only a report.

"...attention without feeling ... is only a report."

An openness – an empathy – was necessary if the

attention was to matter." When that accident happened, we were acting on what caught our attention combined with empathy for the people involved. That led us to the desire to help. That led us to the behavior seen that day by a host of community people.

I know that sometimes desires come into conflict with beliefs, even with the best of intentions. If we were starving,

maybe we'd see if there were any food spilling out of the crashed vehicles. If we were impoverished, maybe we'd focus on money. If we were zombies ... well, that's a bridge too far.

A lot of this takes conscious effort. Well, except for the zombies, I suppose. Those of us not of the undead category have to put energy into our choices. From my observations as a therapist, the more difficult the times, the more empty our background of empathy, the more conflict between our beliefs and desires, and the harder we have to work at making honorable choices.

Our belief system can be expanded by what ethicists call "moral imagination." Dream bigger than hard facts. Imagine who you could be, how you would like to act, living as the person your dog sees you as being. Without effort, we fall into older, possibly less honorable choices. With effort, what we do with what gets our attention gradually leads us toward behavior we can feel good about. As we live our life, our practices reflect our devotion. The question is, then, what do we want to be devoted to?

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

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A Different Kind of Courage —

By Dr. Barry Bacon, MD

I was caring for a young woman who suffered from an embarrassing predicament. She loves fishing, especially fishing for walleyes. She found herself in the line of fire, you might say. Her son was practicing his casting from the deck of their boat and caught a treble hook in the lobe of her left ear. As a result, she had come to the clinic to have the fishing hook removed.

Removing a fishing hook from the skin is not as easy as it might seem. The barb is difficult to remove because in pulling backward on the hook, the barb digs in. Various methods for removal have been described. Some physicians recommend cutting the eyelet off on the shaft of the hook and push the remaining lower portion of the hook forward in a wide sweeping arc through the skin.

I have never thought this was a good idea, in part because it traumatizes additional tissue and is more likely to introduce infection into deeper structures. It seems to me that the best option is to remove the hook directly back the way it went in. This takes good local anesthetic and a nick in the skin with a sharp scalpel. The hook is grasped with a surgical in-

strument and pulled backwards until the barb tents the skin. Then a small nick is made through the skin directly over the barb just large enough for the hook to be removed. Usually, the hook comes out easily after that.

As I prepared the patient for the procedure, we talked casually about her life, the fishing trip that had to be cut short because of the fishing hook, the virtues of using a fishing hook as a substitute for an earring, and the hazards of fishing with small children. She mentioned the acute need for a relaxing time with family. “My father just died last weekend,” she told me. Her voice was steady but strained.

I told her how sorry I was to hear this. Tears began to flow down her cheeks. “At the end he was really struggling,” she continued. I asked her to tell me about that. He suffered from dementia, and as the disease progressed, she explained, he lost control not only of his strength, his balance, his memory, and his body functions, but also his emotions. He became combative and volatile. “It was so hard to watch,” she confided. “I realized that I couldn’t take care of him any longer. I needed to place him in a facility. That was a hard decision to come to.”

She paused to compose herself. “But then we found that there was nowhere to place him. There were no beds due to staffing or covid or other issues.” What did she do, I wondered.

“We cared for him as best we could,” she seemed to choke on her words. “My husband was so brave. He left his job so that I could continue to support the family while he stayed home to be caregiver for my dad. I

would come home, and he would look like a whipped dog, he was working so hard. But he never complained. He told me it was his great privilege to care for my dad, even though he would take a swing at him or cuss him out.” I waited a moment as her body stopped shaking before continuing with the procedure.

“My husband served his country in the Middle East. He lost his inner peace, his faith, and almost lost his life,” she whispered. “But he told me last week that he regained something by caring for my dad. He said he realizes now it was never about honor, fame, or ego. He left all of those on the battlefield. He said he realized while he was caring for my dad that it was always about just humbly doing your duty, the thing that is right in front of you, and in doing that duty from a heart of love, you gain all of the honor, fame and pride you could ever want.

“He told me that before my dad died, he would have a moment where he seemed lucid, where he seemed to recognize him. He would smile, just in the moment, and say ‘I know you, don’t I? You’re my son. Thank you.’ My dad would call him captain. My husband said he must have gotten a promotion,” she laughed.

“At the end, my husband, even with all of his doubts, would pray for my dad when he seemed to be struggling, and that seemed to give him peace. And then one day last week, he just fell asleep and didn’t wake up. But my husband was there. Beat up, tired, flogged, he said it was like being in the battlefield. But to die at peace next to someone who loves you. I don’t know how it could have



been any better.”

I sat quietly. The hook was out of her ear. But I didn't want to move just yet. I told her the story of my sister and her husband, who welcomed my old crotchety grandfather into their home when he was aged, sick and alone, and gave him a home and companionship in his last days.

The son of Danish immigrants in the Dakotas, he had survived the Spanish flu and had, with his father Marten Thompson, harvested the crops in 1918 when every other man in their community was unable to get out of bed. They had held starvation at bay for the neighbors.

Then the economic inequities foisted on the farmers during the '20s and '30s led to bankruptcies in the prairie states for many. He had worked hard

all of his life, well into his 70s, as hard as any man. In the end, his body was failing, and he would drive to my sister's place and stay for weeks, without invitation or notice, but always welcome. Then, finally, he just stayed.

My sister's husband was a hero. He never wavered in caring for the older man, despite him being ornery, opinionated, uneducated and funny. He treated my grandfather as a family treasure. I had not realized until this moment what that gift had meant, nor what it had cost my brother-in-law. Now I understood.



I gave my patient some instructions on caring for her wound and on the dangers of fishing with small children. I expressed to her how very wonderful this gift was that she and her husband had given to her father.

There is no way to measure its value. She smiled through her tears. "It's funny," she said, "how you can grieve and be relieved at the same time." I nodded. When a loved one is suffering so much, death is not the worst thing that can happen.

I opened the door. As she passed by, I said one thing more. Tell your husband I am so proud of his service. Including for your dad. She couldn't speak. She could only smile through her tears. And place her hand over her heart.

Barry Bacon is a physician who has lived and practiced family medicine in Colville for 28 years. He now works in small rural hospitals in Washington state, teaches family medicine, and works on health disparities in the U.S. and Africa.




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Taking It Slow

By Loren Cruden

Photo by Joanie Christian

In summer, people often have gardening (or wildfires) on their minds. But I keep thinking about ... turtles.

Maybe it's because I encounter them so seldom these days – miss spying batches of them sunning on riverbanks or lakeside logs, tipping themselves into the water if I venture too close. Like how those *Star Wars*-ish military jets above the Columbia tilt to slide through the air above the river's curves. Only, turtles are moving a mite slower, as is their way.

Turtles take everything slow: slow heart rate, slow respiration; turtles that hibernate for months under mud may not breathe at all for the entire duration. Some turtle species' normal pulse is just one heartbeat per minute: a kind of reptilian Mindfulness practice. Turtles and tortoises are long-lived – some take it slow for up to 150 years, a

bit like certain trees with shell-like bark and tremendous staying power. Turtles are slow to give up, slow to die even when terribly injured or ill.

But, despite not being flash-in-the-pan quitters, turtles and tortoises are seriously endangered worldwide: 61 of the 250 species have lately become extinct.

A curator of herpetology at the American Museum of Natural History told the *New York Times* that turtles don't really die of old age. The major organs of a century-old turtle can't be distinguished from those of a teenage turtle. Infection, injury, habitat loss, pollution and illegal capture by traders are what kill them. (A New Hampshire study found that adult female turtles face an 80-100% chance of being killed on the highway while crossing to or from their nesting grounds.)

When I was a kid in Florida my mother rescued and rehabilitated a snapping turtle that had been hit by a car. She tenderly cared for this armored guest until the primordial creature could be returned to its primordial habitat. Watching the turtle's pigeon-toed march down to the lake shore and into the murky water was like seeing a missing puzzle piece seamlessly fit itself back into the scene's jigsaw: wholeness restored.

Reptiles evolved an unimaginably long time ago, turtles being one of the oldest of the reptile lineages, appearing early in the Mesozoic era (over 200 million years ago). Eastern Washington is home to only one native species of turtle: the painted turtle, whose olive-black shell is gorgeously sided by scarlet and yellow designs. The plate underneath is scarlet with a large, evocatively Rorschach-like marking. The legs and neck are flamboyantly yellow-striped; truly, our local turtle is a work of art.

It prefers hanging out in slow (of course) rivers, bottomlands, ponds, lakes, and marshes where tasty edibles such as aquatic plants, tadpoles, insects, and crayfish are found. Painted turtle females lay 1-20 eggs, away from the water in sun-warmed soil. In keeping with not rushing things, eggs incubate for 72-104 days, eggs and hatchlings sometimes over-wintering in the nest – no hurry.

Reading about turtle species in general, I learned that not all of them are as silent as I supposed. Some vocalize

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with grunts, croaks, whines, squeaks, or whistles. Some species climb – or glow in the dark! It was also of interest to note that some turtles demonstrably enjoy human attention and contact.

I've always wondered whether reptiles have a varied emotional life (or sense of humor). But because they don't have mammal-like facial expressions and body language – or zippily-communicated, bird-like behavior – it is hard to tell.

As a kid, like many others, I had a pet turtle for a while. Palm-sized. Figuring it must get bored with its enclosed indoor habitat (as did I) I took the turtle outside to explore the yard. Promptly (for a turtle) it managed to disappear from sight and no amount of frantic searching turned it up again. A heartbreaking rather than heartwarming “Born Free” experience: I cried and cried, imagining the wee turtle coming to a bad end.

Wearing one's house, as a turtle does, no doubt is a plus in terms of survival. I certainly came to feel fundamentally attached to my house during pandemic quarantines. My small, shell-like structure was a protection out of which I gazed at the world or poked my head to assess the weather. As months slowly rolled by, I too, slowed: fewer appointments and places to go, people to see, events to attend. I wrote a novel – vanished inside my shell – and hung out with my cat. Sorted through what comprised my shell-life's interior. Bonded with it. Woke each morning grateful for this luxury of sanctuary, something many folks lacked.

When it came time to emerge, the feeling of exposure was acute. Being outdoors was fine – I'd taken a lot of Marcus-Island walks during my shell-tering-in-place. But being out and about in town, encountering others of my species, the sheer contrast of it all was daunting. It still feels that way sometimes – oftentimes. Too many heartbeats per minute. Not enough time between thoughts, words, responses. Busy traffic. All the vibes flying around.

In May I ventured with my son to Scotland to visit old friends and relations, a major distancing from the home shell – and, indeed, from “Turtle Island” itself. But, though Scotland is for me a very familiar place and people, everything, everywhere these days seems altered by what's

gone on in recent years. As though we've crossed a river into a strange land, experiencing profound changes and losses during that crossing.

Or maybe I've just gotten old. The pace seems to have picked up without due consideration of where this haste will take us.

In the West Highlands and Islands of Scotland, there are a number of single-track roads – six-foot-wide, winding, blind-summit, shoulderless, paved tracks – where cooperative driving is imperative. To allow oncoming (or overtaking) vehicles to pass, drivers must smartly pull into the occasional wee bulges of pavement provided for that purpose. It is a race, not to make the other driver give way, but to be the one who holds the door, so to speak, in this intricate vehicular choreography. A competition of courtesy, not advantage. A graceful willingness to take time, offer acknowledgment. How one gets somewhere has a lot to do with what constitutes that somewhere once one arrives.

On this wondrous planet, we've now gotten to where humans plus livestock plus pets equal 96% of all mammalian biomass, and 75% of the earth's extant bird biomass belongs to chickens and other domestic poultry. I don't know what the collective mass of turtles and other reptiles amounts to these days – actually, it's unnerving to picture a lumped together, theoretical mountain of snakes, lizards, crocs, turtles, and alligators – but the rapid vanishing of all manner of wildlife does feel unspeakably dismal to me. Is it too late to pull over, make way?

One of the everyday human things that invariably lifts my spirits when I run errands in town is how someone will reach forward from behind me or slow down from in front of me in order to hold open the door I'm headed toward. It's just, you know, so *nice*. Such a small gesture, yet it embodies the choreography with which we keep simple decency alive in a world of friction-prone coexistence.

I feel that same spirit-lift when I see someone slow down or stop their car to help a turtle cross the road. To rescue or be rescued by pausing for the other: the small moments more precious than we may know.

Loren Cruden writes fiction, nonfiction, and poetry, available at www.LorenBooks.com.

Daily Dallying with Your Head in the Clouds

By Tina Wynecoop

“If you want to be joyful, you need to be surprised, often. And to do this you really need to go outside. There’s only so much astonishment you can manufacture for yourself if you’re in your house – or worse, in your head – all the time. If you’re outside, paying even a modicum of attention, something is bound to slap you happy.”

~ Murr Brewster, Portland, Oregon

Often, I’ll look up and out from whatever I’m doing and see spectacular skies on display. I gasp in awe. I’ve been slapped happy.

Songwriter Joni Mitchell sang of clouds, those “rows and flows of angel hair and ice cream castles in the air.” She looked “at clouds that way . . . from both sides now.” I have, too!

Truthfully, I haven’t always been enamored with clouds. When I was young, I lived on the “damp side” where Seattle’s clouds usually left me drenched and miserable. I remember being immersed in rain clouds on my long walks to and from school (only uphill on the way home) and wearing clothing that absorbed water like, well, like a cloud. I wished for garments that repelled the liquid elements, for clothing fashionable enough to wear places other than a campground. Eddie Bauer and REI stores carried what I needed and were coming into their own, but I didn’t know they existed.

Even the ubiquitous umbrella, worn like an extra limb, had limits to its protective powers. It often turned irreversibly inside out with any gust of wind. One had to haul around an umbrella, and it wouldn’t fit in a backpack – because backpacks were not yet *deriguer* and umbrellas weren’t compact like they are now.

These days even preschoolers tote backpacks that appear to weigh more than they do. The armload of schoolbooks I carried strengthened my biceps and got just as soaked as I

did. Now that I am thinking about it, a plastic bag would have so helped. However, plastic bags hadn’t been invented yet.

About the time I sought higher education a clothing revolution was on the horizon: pants instead of dresses, sturdy boots instead of pointy-toed shoes that fell apart when wet, and a wool jacket that resisted moisture like the sheep coat worn by the original owner. These changes eased my transition to comfortableness under the cloudy skies of western Washington.

In that era, it took guts to wear weather-appropriate attire to classes. I recall being chastised for the way I dressed by the Dean of Women at my college in Bellingham where the sky overhead was even more prone to drown its pedestrian inhabitants than Seattle’s. The dean told me I must “set a better example” – I replied dryly that I felt like I was!

And yet, “still somehow” I love clouds so much, and the love affair began with a permanent relocation to eastern Washington in 1970. Rain was scant, and the gorgeous clouds usually sailed by without depositing even a scintilla of what they were made of. Umbrellas? Stores didn’t stock them. I dried out.

The varied cloud formations were new and enchanting and above me most of the time. The sky was my entertainment in the remote area I chose to live. I “looked at clouds” from the other side now.

For many years I drove to work past the county jail near downtown Spokane. That concrete monolith was designed to keep its tenants inside. The “windows” were just slits that obscured the view of the wide expanse of sky and its glorious, uplifting cloud formations. I vowed to myself I would never commit a crime – I would never be found guilty and locked away in a tiny windowless cell unable to view the wondrous clouds in my new homeland.

Last year I attended a memorial service held for a special member of my community. When it was over, I didn’t feel particularly uplifted until I left the building and looked at the clouds. My Lord! They were beautiful! They were doing what clouds are designed to do, and they washed away my sadness just like that. The church was in a strip mall. My church was right there, too, filling the sky. I was glad for the camera on my cell phone. I wanted to record and share the sky’s healing touch.

A few days later I showed my cloud photos to Michael as he waited on our table. (His family’s Thai restaurant sits next to the church edifice in the mall.) As he viewed the photos on my phone his smile of appreciation filled his face like an upside-down rainbow (to be technical, it is called a *circumzenithal arc*) and that’s when I learned he loves clouds as much as I do.

He said his friends are not at all impressed when he shows them his cloud photos on his phone. At dinner that evening he gained a friend who



Cumulus cloud formation at Hunters Pass, Stevens County, WA. April 22, 2022.

admires intricate atmospheric beauty as much as he does. We now text our cloud photos back and forth. Our photos are like Michael's dad's cooking, which is out of this world.

I prefer to give books as presents. Books are easy to wrap. For me Christmas 2021 shopping was a piece of cake (or pork fried rice with fresh basil, heat level 1.5). Family and friends received Gavin Pretor-Pinney's glorious book, *A Cloud a Day: 365 Skies from the Cloud Appreciation Society*. I gifted myself a copy and joined the society (<https://cloudappreciationsociety.org>). My member number is 59,014. From now on I have over 59,000 "Michaels" to share my photos with.

As a member I receive, daily, an emailed cloud photo which includes a meteorological explanation of what causes "such spectacular aerial architecture." And as a former grade school teacher, I am convinced cloud science should be part of every school's curriculum. There are so many lessons to draw upon.

In case clouds get puffy with vain thoughts of their exquisiteness – puffed up by adoring thousands of earthlings – I want to let clouds know that the starry night sky is also worthy of admiration. I am a member of the International Dark-Sky Association (www.darksky.org) as well.

As I write this month's column I

remember, with great love, our golden retriever rescue dog who joined our family 25 years ago. He came already named: *Cloudy*.

There is a ten-minute "Ted Talk" on YouTube titled "Gavin Pretor-Pinney: Cloudy with a chance of joy" (<https://youtu.be/lhP52caGW6s>). You shouldn't miss it, joyful cloud watching NCM readers.

Tina says: Growing up in western Washington, I thought it was the most interesting place in the world until I moved in 1970 to teach school on the Spokane Indian Reservation. The culture, geography, history, and flora and fauna of the eastern part of the state is now my beloved "home ground."

Choices

By Tina Tolliver Matney

“Loneliness is being alone – and not liking it. It’s a feeling. Solitude is being alone – and content. It’s a choice.”

This little snippet of Googled wisdom has my mind whirling around a bit these days. And I’m wondering if maybe this little statement really is not all that black and white. Or maybe it is, I don’t know.

I feel like I’m just learning to lean into this new way of thinking and living. Some days I feel like I’m rocking my new routine of taking care of me and my furry companions and basking in the solitude. Yet other days I wind up in a heap of messy feelings over the frustrations of my own limitations or moments of feeling lonely. Furry companions do not make good conversationalists. And it worries me

at times that I test that theory out on a regular basis.

There are times I am truly focused and feeling proud of my accomplishments and then I’ll see something, remember something, or hear a song that makes me stop whatever I am doing and do my best to stave off the waves of uncertainty or sadness that threaten to creep in. Some days are easy and some are not, and perhaps I’m not the only person who feels that the state of our world lately seems to make our everyday routines a little harder and our emotions a lot rawer.

I’ve found myself wondering lately how people who live alone, either by choice or by circumstance, deal with their emotional needs, or if they feel like they just need someone to talk

to or if they just want a simple hug ... and there is no one around to talk to or wrap their arms around. Or, if there is no one to whisper in their ear that everything is going to be okay, then how do they navigate that sea of emotions without getting dragged down by sadness and sorrow?

Please know I’m not necessarily feeling this way myself, at least not on a regular basis. But recently I took a tumble. I did a face plant right into the sand by the river when my boot caught on a tree root in mid-pivot. Luckily it was sand and not concrete where I fell and luckily my hand, instead of my face, hit the rock to break my fall. But I felt bruised, hurt, and a little humiliated as I made my way to the couch with ice for my hand and my knee. All I could think about that evening was that I wanted a hug. Just a “Hey girl, be careful and take care of yourself” kind of hug. An “Everything is going to be okay” kind of hug.

But I didn’t linger in my little pity party. Because in reality I know I’m never far from the ones who love me the most. My kids, my best friends, they are but a phone call or text message away. Of course I can’t feel a hug from a phone call or text. But often I can hear it in a voice or I can read it with the emotion that I know it was meant to convey.

A couple of days ago, while driving down a side street in town, I saw a little girl on her bicycle hit the curb of the sidewalk too hard and fall to the ground. She wasn’t alone but the young woman I assumed she was with was bicycling so far ahead of this child that she didn’t turn around and obviously couldn’t hear her cries.

So I pulled my car to the side of the road, grabbed a pack of tissues and my



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water bottle and walked over to her. She was sobbing and holding her knee, blood running through her fingers as she cried out in pain.

I bent to her and said I was there to help but that first I needed to holler really loud for her mom. “Okay,” she said between sobs, “but it’s my sister.” So I yelled loud enough to get her sister’s attention. She was nearly to the end of the long street at this point, nearly a quarter mile away.

I asked the child if I could please see her knee so that I could try to clean it up a little. She was very cooperative and so I did my best to just dab away enough blood and gravel to see how bad her wound was. “It’s just a nasty scrape,” I said. “They hurt worse than a cut.”

So I gently laid tissues over it and wiped her hands off as her sister pedaled towards us. And then I asked her, “Would you like a hug?” Her tears welled up all over again as she nodded. “Yes please,” she said.

So I hugged her little body to mine and we just sat there while I felt her sobs subside and her shaky hands go still. “It’s going to be okay,” I said. “You look like a tough little cookie and I bet you aren’t afraid to get back on that bike. Just be careful of that curb, it’ll get you every time.”

She smiled then as her sister finally made it to us. We got the little girl and her bike upright and I asked if they would like for me to put their bikes in my car and drive them home. “No thank you,” the little one said. “I’m okay, I’m a tough little cookie.”

I held my own tears in check until I got back in my car, but as soon as those girls were out of sight I let a flood of emotions run right over me and my heart. They hit me as hard as

that little bicycle hit that curb. Thank goodness for the tough cookies and the fragile messes that we all sometimes are. It’s what makes us who we are, in my most humble opinion. I think it builds the grace and the strength we need when life knocks us down, no matter whether we are five years old or older than dirt.

That humbling little experience reminded me that I should not even try to figure it all out. What is there to gain by trying to swim against the currents of your feelings at any given time?

Some days I will feel lonely or sad. Some days I will feel like I’m rocking the solitude and my joy will carry me through. Some days I will accomplish more than I intend to. Some days I

won’t, but that’s okay because those tasks that don’t get done today will still be there tomorrow. But most importantly, in between all of those messy days, I have my circle of friends and family that I hope all know how very grateful I am for each and every one of them.

My wish for you as summer draws us outdoors is that you can gather among your friends and family often and share the real hugs, the kinds that bring those happy tears to your eyes.

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



The graphic features a stylized black and white logo of a river flowing into a circular pattern on the left. In the top right corner is the 'ARTS WA' logo, which consists of a colorful geometric shape. The text 'chewelah creative district' is written in a mix of lowercase and uppercase fonts. Below this, 'Chewelah!' is written in a large, red, cursive font. Underneath that, the tagline 'bringing creatives + community together' is centered. A section with a white background and a dark border contains the text 'There's so much happening...' followed by a list of activities: 'First Thursday Art Walk | Mural Tour', 'Performing Arts | Music', 'Art Galleries | Farmers Market', and 'Historical Locations | and more!'. At the bottom left of the graphic, it says 'Learn more about the Chewelah Creative District at chewelahcreativedistrict.org or scan the QR Code'. A QR code is located in the bottom right corner.



Wildfire Detection

Article & Photo by J. Foster Fanning

With wildfire season looming in the wake of a chill, damp Okanogon Highlands spring, the focus of this article is on wildfire detection. And I'll admit, right up front, an old-fashioned bias in regard to this topic. That said, my old ideas may have just come a full technological circle.

When I started my fire career in 1971 on the Gifford Pinchot National Forest, there were more than 8,000 fire lookout towers in the United States, most of them in the West. The first was in New Hampshire in 1907 on Croydon Mountain.

Here in our Highlands area, according to Ray Kresek's book *Fire Lookout Towers of the Northwest*, Stevens County had 29 lookouts, Ferry 24, and in Pend Oreille County a whopping 60 fire lookout towers. Depending on their location, these towers were staffed by folks from Washington Department of Natural Resources or the U.S. Forest Service.

In Washington State there are 507 former lookout sites registered. As a fire manager I had the opportunity to supervise staff at Franson Peak, along with Aeneas and Tunk Mountain fire

lookout towers, hence I spent a lot of time in those towers watching for smoke, training staff and doing routine maintenance.

During the 1990s a popular but, in my opinion, misconceived notion that aerial detection and observation was a more effective way of spotting wildfires resulted in the demise of the fire lookout tower systems. Also, technology other than aerial detection came with the expansion of more homes and communities over what were once sparsely-inhabited landscapes, including emergency telephone num-

bers. The United States began use the 911 system in 1968, and since then many wildland fire responses have originated with private citizens calling in smoke reports.

Now, once again, technological advances in wildfire detection are on the horizon – this time potentially turning any truly interested citizen with internet access, sharp focus, and determination into partial fire lookouts.

How, you might ask? Dial into ALERTWildfire from the Oregon Hazards Lab (OHAZ) where, according to their introduction page, “Science, technology and community engagement [come together] to understand, detect and mitigate multi-hazards within the Pacific Northwest.” ALERTWildfire provides access to a network of cameras streaming images of mountain peaks, remote valleys, communities, and dense forests to scientists, fire managers, and the general public.

Not only is there the potential to spot and report wildfire smoke but users may also get dramatic sunrises, sunsets and the occasional wildlife encounter. These feeds are 24/7, free and accessible at www.alertwildfire.org. This network system is provided in hope the public will tune in and be on the lookout for signs of smoke, potentially alerting authorities about wildfire ignitions before they pose a threat to our forests or communities.

In other words, you, too, can be a fire tower lookout staffer, if you can imagine your screen as a tower.

Graham Kent, founder of the ALERTWildfire system, states, “You can get that situational awareness, you can look at the wind patterns and see how it’s going in many places – you can look

at it from three, four, five, ten different angles, so you kind of can see what’s happening minute-by-minute.”

ALERTWildfire is a consortium of the University of Oregon, the University of Nevada, and the University of California, with cameras stationed in each of their states, as well as Washington, Colorado, Utah, and Idaho.

Other scientists are focusing on the technology of A.I. (artificial intelligence) in sync with “deep learning” algorithms using computer neural networks for the task of smoke detection via satellites and watchtowers. According to AccuWeather founder and CEO Dr. Joel N. Myers, the U.S. wildfire damage of 2021, including actual damage and cumulative economic loss, is estimated between \$70 billion and \$90 billion, with \$45 billion to \$55 billion of it in California. No wonder there are such efforts to detect and pinpoint wildfires during initial ignition.

OK, so what should you look for to report suspicious smoke to the authorities? Try to answer these questions:

- Is the smoke white, gray or dark?
- Is it wispy, puffing up and then disappearing, or a well-defined column?

- What is the location you are observing the smoke from?
- Can you remain at that location and continue to observe and report until the firefighters arrive?
- Do you know the approximate location where the smoke is located?
- Do you know how to get to the area where the smoke is located?

Call 911 and give the answering dispatcher the above information. Also provide your phone number and any other details you think will assist the firefighters’ response. (Depending on the time of year and the wildfire danger rating, don’t be surprised if the dispatcher thanks you for the call and tells you they already have information on that incident or there is a controlled burn in that area.)

As our moist, damp La Niña spring turns to summer and fire season ramps up, stay on the alert for wildfire starts. Being a bit old-fashioned I’ll probably stick to using my own eyes and a speed dial for 911, but you never know.

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

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The Colville Community Senior Center received a grant from the Empire Health Foundation to collect and publish stories of seniors in our area. Here are excerpts from some of the interviews:



RITA CORDREY

Q: Tell us a little bit about your earliest childhood memories.

Well, this is the earliest childhood memory I've got, and my mother said I was three. I was born in North Dakota and we lived close to the Fort Berthold

Indian Reservation and my dad did a lot of trucking for the Indians. He knew them quite well and they were dedicating a bridge across the Missouri river. It's called the Little Mouse Bridge. We went to that celebration. I remember some of the Indians coming to talk to my dad, in their full regalia because it was a big deal, and I was scared to death. I stayed real close to his leg, didn't want anybody to snatch me, you know. And I remember a wagon. It was in the summertime, probably August. Anyway, there was a wagonload of watermelon and that's all I remember about the whole thing was how those Indians were dressed and the watermelons

My dad had like a transfer service. They called it a dry line although they weren't using horses that much, but he trucked the mail from the railroad depot to the post office and he hauled and held cattle for people. They had an icehouse and they cut ice in the winter on the Missouri River and they stored it in that ice house. I can kind of remember that.

And I remember ... I remember the trains. I loved the trains and if I could get a ride with my dad to go to the railroad, I'd go. I wanted to hear those trains and I miss that sound. There's one of the questions I was reading that said, "What memories would you like your children to remember?" That's one of them, that haunting sound of that railroad train at night.

I started school in Missoula, Montana, a parochial school, Saint Anthony, and then we moved from Missoula to Riddle, Oregon. We moved on the train, that was fun. My dad was drilling core holes on Nickel Mountain. Nickel was real important to the war effort at that time, because World War II was going on.

So we lived at Riddle for about a year and then he got a better job for another company at Bandon, Oregon. And we only lived in Bandon ... I'm not even sure we lived there a year. But to hear my siblings and me when we get together it might as well have been 10 years because we have such good memories of Bandon. We lived on the Bullard Ranch and the Bullard Ranch ran clear to the ocean. The Coast Guard had a big station at Bandon and we used to hear the

young men come across the front of our house. Our house faced the Coquille River right on the Coquille River and we'd hear the boys talking at night going past our house. We didn't usually see them because they were patrolling with their dogs and they'd go out to the Bandon Lighthouse. I don't know how long we stayed out there but it was just exciting to us to live there in that place.



CINDY BOGGS

Q: What are some of your earliest childhood memories?

My parents and two brothers and I moved here in December of 1959. My dad was a veterinarian and he had taken a position here with one of the veterinarians. So, he packed up his family and we headed here from Tacoma. It was about one-two o'clock in the morning when we got close to Colville and I looked out the front and the first thing I saw was the cross (on the mountain) and I knew I was home. That was my very first [memory of Colville] when I was 13 and it's always [been] where my heart is.

Q: What experiences did you have as a child that you wish kids today could have?

Oh, my gosh, so many of them. You know the freedom that you had? I could go to the show, walk home at nine o'clock at night and not be afraid. You could go to the park. You could do pretty much anything and feel safe. In the schools you knew everybody. I mean you didn't just know a certain little group of kids. When I was in school you knew everybody from the freshmen on up. You would walk home but you always had to stop at Fuller Drug and get a Cherry Coke – they were the best. Oh, and Tiny's burgers with root beer floats and climbing up Colville Mountain with your lunch packed with your friends, and just things like that. I would love to be back at that time. It was a happy time.



SPENCE BATEMAN

I was born in southern Idaho, a little town, Shoshone. I was born on the snowiest month on record down there and one of my neighbors – who was my friend later in high school – we were born a week apart. When my dad was going to the hospital to see

me after the birth, he got stuck in the same snowdrift as this neighbor who was coming home. So, they shoveled each other out and dad went to the hospital and, Ernie Bozinger was his name, went home.

We had a lot of fun as kids building forts and playing football, basketball, and baseball. We had a good neighbor who was a couple years older that was a really good athlete that kind of encouraged us in that. I grew up on a farm. We had great big willow trees that we built forts in and had a creek that we would walk about three quarters of a mile to and play in and it was a great life growing up.

My mom was the best woman I've ever known. She was patient and loving. My dad was the kind of guy that you just respected, and you didn't cross him, but he was fair and he gave us a really good work ethic. Mom gave us all the love we could handle and he gave us the rest. They worked as a team. I don't think they ever said we're a team let's get this done. It's just that's the way it was in those days.

I remember one time when we had sleds that needed painted and we had blue paint and we had yellow paint and we painted one slat every other one a different color when we got through and worked out a brush we had green, which was amazing to me, so we decided to paint part of the house. We did get a little willow on the hinder for that. That's one thing I remember.

I started irrigating a pretty good-sized farm by hand when I was like 14 or so and had the responsibility of making it green. When I was a kid, we did it all by gravity and each field had what we called corrugates which were just small ditches and you had to set just the right amount of water in each one so they would all go to the end of the field at

the same time. It was usually a 24-hour set we'd call it so there was a lot of shoveling and really a lot of finesse work to it.



MARYANN SCHRADER

Q: What was it like when you were growing up in Colville?

Well, growing up my family

were farmers so money was quite scarce. We had to live on selling eggs to the grocery store and cream to this dairy creamer each week. Selling the grain in the fall to pay the accumulated larger bills, so only the food necessary items were purchased. You learned to take no for an answer. If there was something you really, really wanted, we just didn't have the money for it.

Q: What are some of your earliest childhood memories?

Some of my memories, oh my gosh, there's so many of them. I had to learn to live with the slow pace of life because we did not have any modern conveniences in our house, just the bare bones. I was nine years old when the REA electric company brought power to the farmers out in that area and that was a very exciting day. Before that we used kerosene lamps and we had to pack them from one room to the other at night and we only had two, so we had to share them. After we got [electricity] there was no more packing the kerosene lamps from room to room and, in my room, I had a string from a light bulb that you turned the light off and on. There was no switch. Then somebody came in and wired your house – yes I remember distinctly ... it was Virgil Barton who wired our house, so that was a big improvement. Then we got an electric toaster right away, and oh my goodness!

Of course, all of our farm work was done with a team of horses and for me it was fun to ride on the sled while my brother was out feeding the cows, and the deer would come in. It was just so, so neat. In winter you were able to ride on that sled with the horses pulling us.

We had to go to a well to get water for the house on what was called a stone boat sled. We had two barrels. We'd have to go down there and my brothers would have to drop the bucket down into the well, fill it up, and then pour it into the barrels. And then the horses would pull the barrels back up to the house. I remember one time them getting up there with the water and something spooked the team of horses and down the hill they ran. The barrels of water spilled and, of course, that was the end of what was in the well too so we had to wait for the well to refill for them to go back and get more water.

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Primary Election Candidates Featured!

The *North Columbia Monthly* contacted all Ferry, Stevens, and Pend Oreille County Commissioner candidates, Legislative District 7 candidates, and Congressional District 5 candidates and offered each an equal opportunity to be included in this special primary election feature.

Washington State's Primary election is
Tuesday, August 2, 2022.

ACCORDING TO THE STATE ELECTION OFFICE:

July 15 ballots are mailed by county election offices to all eligible registered voters, no later than 18 days prior to election day. There is no need to request a ballot if you are registered to vote. Ballots for eligible military and overseas voters are mailed 45 days prior.

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STEARNS FOR ASSESSOR (R)

I have lived in Stevens County for nearly twenty years, this is my home and where I am happy to be raising my family. I worked at Vaagen Lumber Mill for over a decade and was cross trained in many departments. I also trained and supervised new employees. I currently work at the Assessor's Office as a Washington State certified



Appraiser. I never dreamed of getting involved in politics but saw a need for ambition and leadership. I will ensure the office accurately assess all real and personal property efficiently, fairly and in accordance with State Laws and the Constitution. I will compassionately work with tax payers to find any tax reductions or exemptions they might qualify for but not make any promises that I cannot deliver on. Whether I am elected or not I will continue to work hard serving the people of Stevens County with integrity, innovation and dedication. I ask for you vote this election and a chance to serve you.

Thank you, Bryce Stearns

BRYCESTEARNSFORASSESSOR@GMAIL.COM

Paid for by Stearns for Assessor.



A Meaningful and Positive Year

By Dr. Katie Schuerman

I love being a Rotarian. As a Rotarian, I belong to a very large international club of 1.4 million people whose focus is to make the world better for everyone. We are People of Action and, as the old commercial says, "We bring good things to life."

Our goals are lofty: bring peace and end conflict in the world; prevent and treat disease (we are so close to ridding the world of polio because of Rotary and our health allies); bring clean water and sanitation to all who need it; improve the health and lives of women and children; bring basic education and literacy, and economic and community development to all areas of need around the world; protect the environment so that ALL of our children can thrive and prosper.

And we can make a difference because we all work together.

As Rotarians we are successful at working together during these trying times because we seek to make decisions every day in our club, and in our personal and professional lives based upon the Rotary 4-Way Test:

- Is it the truth?
- Is it fair to all concerned?
- Will it build goodwill and better friendships?
- Will it be beneficial to all concerned?

We do not focus on differences, political or personal, because we have loftier goals. Our core values provide our direction. We focus on:

- Service (Service Above Self is our motto) - *we make a difference*
- Fellowship - *we have fun and support all involved*
- Diversity - *we include everyone*
- Integrity - *we follow through*
- Leadership - *we are responsible and professional*

As the incoming president of the Rotary Club of

Colville, I feel so fortunate that Covid restrictions are lifting. We have renewed opportunity to be people of action - together! My goals in the next year are:

- Increase our club membership by 10 people. *If any of these areas of focus and values ring true for you, come join us in a project and see what we do. Be a part of the action! Check out our Facebook page.*
- Create and maintain a public relations program that allows the community to see what we are doing and join us or give us feedback. *We will be setting up a new website that will be interactive in addition to our current Facebook page.*
- Bring more fun to projects. *Celebrate while we work. With the help of my community and club programs leaders, we will identify ways to bring back the fellowship we have so sorely missed in the last two years of the pandemic.*
- Establish an ongoing program to partner. *We will connect with churches, other service organizations and businesses to work together on projects to increase diversity and scope of service.*
- We will identify one local and one international project to support through Rotary grant funding.

In this next year we have wonderful new opportunities to work and play together. I am excited to help bring these to fruition. We also face many challenges as our economy continues to be affected by the aftermath of the pandemic, and national and international stresses. Rotary brings us hope as we, people of action, work together to identify what needs to be done, and do it.

Dr. Katie Schuerman is the incoming president for the Rotary Club of Colville for the next Rotary year. Each president brings a renewal of identified goals of its commitment to the community, local and global, and a new perspective to achieving those goals.

*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=whereclubsmet*



LISTEN UP

Reviews by Michael Pickett

Adam Huff Comes in from the Cold

Inspiration shows up in infinite ways. Some artists create from places of pain. Others from spirituality, travel or a life-changing series of events. The well of ideas is as deep as it is wide, and is what gives us myriad sounds from countless works of art.

Local indie artist Adam Huff drops the brand new *Icebox* album from his own take on an age-old muse.

“Honestly, love was the main inspiration,” Huff explains. With warm, moving tracks like “Lullaby” and the effusive “Unfall for You,” Huff injects the album with guitar-driven cuts that tell stories of various kinds of love. We find the love of a father to his sons, the love of brothers, and of course the love rooted in romance and sharing

life with a significant other.

Huff’s instantly memorable, unaffected tenor is the thread that ties the album together, as he weaves his various influences into cuts like “Blame It On the Moon” and “Sunset” (a great track for headphones), creating a sound that’s all his own.

“Chris Trapper and Pete Yorn are two of my top influences,” Huff continues. “The Eels and their raw lyrics ... and, of course, Aaron Gabriel (Huff’s twin brother and fellow recording artist) really

influenced my music here.”

While it’s never been easier for an artist to create an album, it’s still not an easy thing to do well. Finding inspiration big enough to fill a CD or vinyl record takes time, talent, and an ability to craft sounds that actually connect with listeners. Huff’s album is a record that captures the purity and innocence of love in its various forms, and connects with listeners in a universal way.

You can check out Adam Huff’s new music on Facebook and Instagram.



Sub Urban Strikes Back

One of the toughest and oft-avoided challenges for a recording artist is to create an utterly unique signature sound. Once you actually have that, it can be a real task to take it somewhere vs. just recycling things over and over.

Sub Urban accomplishes both on *Hive*.

With the same unsettling, airy vocals and off-kilter production that colored all of the *Thrill Seeker* EP, this eerie artist



slinks back to the marketplace with a clever, next-level set of cuts that immediately nods to his awesomely sinister sound, but with a few new twists.

When my kid first made me aware of his earlier work, it just sounded creepy as all hell, but was also super-captivating and insanely well-crafted. With this new album, songs like “Virgil’s Mania” and “Rabbit Hole” are instantly recognizable as Sub Urban subversive gems, but

the composing and combinations of sounds – from nylon-string guitars to the slammed percussion and reversed samples – are a great next step for an artist who has a cool and unique take on atmospheric, cinematic (and deranged) pop.

Matched with hilariously unsettling videos for many of the singles here (“Uh Oh” is a fairly disturbing standout), Sub Urban creates a complete package of haunting, unbeatable classic cuts that make *Hive* a must-have for alt-music lovers. Check out his work at thatsuburban.com.

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

A Good Read

Reviews by Loren Cruden

The Anomaly, by Hervé Le Tellier

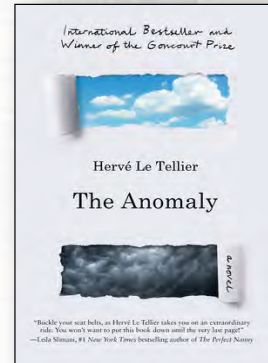
Thankfully, I read *The Anomaly*, by French writer Hervé Le Tellier, after and not before or (even worse) *during* my recent transatlantic flight. Rated by the *New York Times* as a “Best Thriller of the Year,” this clever novel could as easily be termed Science Fiction or Social Commentary – or Quirky French Romance, for that matter. Simply put, it is about what happens to passengers on a Paris-to-New York flight when struck by an extraordinary bout of turbulence.

Le Tellier’s style, like certain frisky French wines, is breezy but not unsympathetic, fun but not (too) glib – “... freedom of thought on the internet is all the more complete now that it’s clear that people have stopped thinking” – and intelligently entertaining. The reader is brought on board through the viewpoints of a select assortment of passengers, including a closeted gay Nigerian singer, a pragmatic American hit man, an ethically-conflicted young lawyer, a tormentedly ageing French architect, and an all-too-precocious little girl, their inner disjunctions laid bare through the anomaly’s reality split: the doubling

of each person aboard the flight.

As events unfold, all the initialized secret agencies and military branches are galvanized, scientists provoked, talk-show hosts jumping on the bandwagon, religious extremists inflamed. Only the hit man seems to ignore the ruckus and carry on as usual: to thine own self be true – despite there being two of you. Denial, after all, may be the simplest way to reduce the pressures of cognitive dissonance.

“We want answers for even our tiniest anxieties and a way of conceiving the world without reexamining our values, our emotions, and our actions.” Tray tables upright and locked? Buckle up for an unsettling ride.



Spokane and Coeur d'Alene Freshwater Shark Attacks, by James P. Johnson

Surveyed readers agree: This is an awfully silly book. (My favorite of Spokane author James P. Johnson’s made-up cover blurbs is “Whatever.”) But a dose of silly may be just the ticket these days.

Spokane and Coeur d'Alene Freshwater Shark Attacks is an alternative guide to familiar regional landmarks. Each of Johnson’s imaginings of their origins is followed by a synopsis of the landmark’s true history. The imaginings are wildly creative tongue-in-cheek but, as someone unversed in the background of these oft-seen landmarks, I found the historical notes of interest, too. For both reasons, these places will never look the same to me now.

On the silly side of it, I was beguiled by how Johnson described Spokane House as the only fort with “a lounge, mirrored walls and ceilings, a raised dance floor and a rotating ball of glitzy mica and pyrite”; how theavenport Hotel enabled Spokane to leave its “hick town

phase behind and [become] a genuine cow town”; and how the Centennial Trail supposedly commemorates early pioneers flocking, not to grab homesteading lands, but to scoop up the region’s “rich huckleberry fields.”

Now go wash up, Jim.

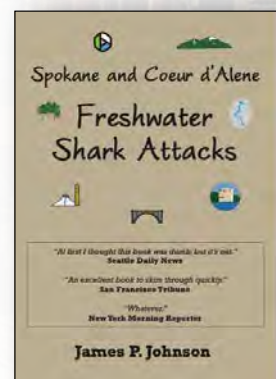
Other recommendations:

Robin Black – *Life Drawing*

James Carlos Blake – *Country of the Bad Wolves*

David Carr – *Final Draft*

Loren Cruden writes fiction, nonfiction, and poetry, available at www.LorenBooks.com.





Puppy Pose

By Brenda St. John

“Petting, scratching, and cuddling a dog could be as soothing to the mind and heart as deep meditation, and almost as good for the soul as prayer.”

~ Dean Koontz

I just got a new puppy, the first dog we have had in nearly 25 years. Her name is Cindy Mayfield, named after a character in an audiobook that I narrated. Cindy has been living with us for two weeks, but we visited her weekly since the day she was born. She is a 10-week-old Australian Shepherd. She really keeps us moving and, although we have only had her a short time, we can't imagine life without her. I decided to dedicate this month's article to Cindy by choosing to focus on Puppy Pose, which is a pose Cindy practices every day!

Puppy Pose, also known as Extended Puppy Pose, is a cross between Child's Pose and Downward Facing Dog. The Sanskrit name for this asana is *Uttana Shishosana*.

Puppy is a very versatile yoga pose. It can be active or passive. When it is done as a Yin pose, it goes by the name “Melting Heart” because the heart area sinks towards the mat. It might seem like an easier version of Downward Facing Dog, but it has many differences and is not necessarily easier, depending upon a person's body.

Puppy is wonderful for stretching the upper body, specifically the arms, shoulders, neck, chest, and back (both upper and lower back).

To assume the Puppy Pose, start on hands and knees in Table Top. Slowly walk both hands forward while keeping hips aligned above knees. Allow the chest to drop down to the mat. Rest forehead on the mat or on a prop such as a folded blanket or a block. The part that can't be seen but only felt is to press hands into the mat and isometrically draw the hips up and back, which generates a nice stretch of the spine and shoulders. Draw the shoulder blades toward each other and the rib cage in, which creates a stretch of the chest. Hold here and practice steady breathing for several breath cycles.

This is a great asana for opening the Heart Chakra because of the chest stretch, including the rib cage area. Some of the variations include:

- Resting the chin instead of the forehead on the mat
- Keeping the elbows lifted instead of resting them on the mat
- Placing the elbows on blocks and then raising the hands into prayer position behind the neck
- Tucking the toes under instead of resting the tops of the feet on the mat

There is a variation that I often use in classes which does not have a specific name that I am aware of, but which I call “Quarter Dog with Block.” Begin in Table Top. Place left palm on a block oriented to the lowest level. Bend the right elbow 90 degrees so the forearm is on the floor underneath the chest with the palm down and fingers pointing to the left.

Keep the hips aligned over the knees while sliding the left arm forward until the forehead comes to rest on the right forearm. Keep the left elbow lifted. Isometrically draw the hips up and back and

the ribs in. Hold and breathe for several breath cycles, then return to Table Top and repeat on the other side.

Puppy Pose does have a few contraindications. The biggest one is that it is not a safe pose for pregnant women due to the direction of the blood flow. It can also be harmful to folks with knee injuries.

The benefits of this pose are many. It is a great stretch of the upper body, it releases tension from the upper arms, shoulders, and neck, it expands the chest, and, as a slight inversion (heart slightly higher than head), it fosters a sense of calmness in the body.

I hope you give Puppy Pose a try and see how it works for you. If you have a puppy, you may have a model to see how it's done!

Namaste.

Brenda St. John has taught yoga classes in Chewelah since 2010.



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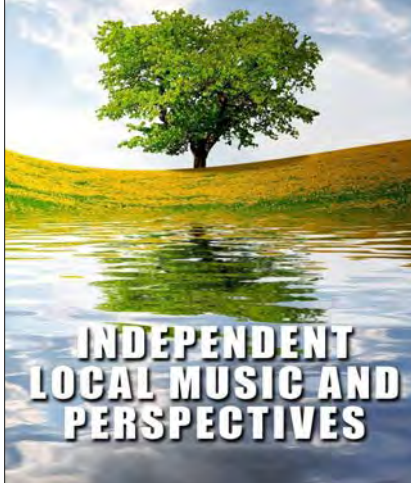
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**New Patients
Welcome**

A Year On the Farm

Sharing

By Michelle Lancaster

A few weeks ago, I posted online about how I had not been feeling well for a long time, but that I had a really good day that day. Our cow had calved, on her own with no assistance, on a gorgeous sunny day. We woke up to her licking a beautiful healthy bull calf. The joy was doubled in that we were able to downsize in other areas on the farm (by selling our sheep flock and our second cow) in order to continue having the energy to care for our milk cow. Once a dairy farmer, always a dairy farmer, it seems.

In response to what I wrote, there was the usual feedback – many people ooh-ing and aah-ing over the calf photo – as baby animal pictures are enjoyed by most. People wished me well, offering up prayers. Medical friends freely shared their time and knowledge to provide me with advice and action plans to heal my body. I was awed by their generosity. I even received a few lovely cards in the mail!

But what surprised me the most were the numerous private messages I received from people. By opening up about how I was feeling, I opened a door for other people to open up to me.

A friend became the guardian of her one-year-old grandson. Another friend is having difficulty with a roommate. A family member just got diagnosed with a disease. Many are struggling with difficulties in their lives and, especially, struggling to make sense of the world we are living in.

A dear friend in Illinois is dealing with a health scare – made worrisome by numerous doctors not understanding how or why the problem started.

She called me and we visited for a long time, crying and laughing and sharing a list of movies we both enjoy. She even sent me the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy in the mail, as she was aghast that I had not ever seen the movies! We agreed to keep in closer contact – to make sure each of us are both still up and fighting.

Finding out that I was unwell has added to other people's stress, and if there is one reason why I try to keep quiet about myself, it's that I do not want to be a burden to others. Yet, I believe we gain more by sharing our troubles than we do by locking them away. By sharing, we can talk through our strategies for healing and be a helping hand back and forth for each other. Neither is a burden; we are caring for each other.

Sickness creates both physical and mental anguish. I do not know about others, but I find myself questioning my purpose in life more so when I am unwell. If I do not feel well, how can I be of service to others? There's a verse in Second Corinthians (1:3-5) that helped answer my questions. Paraphrased: *God comforts us so that we might be able to comfort others in trouble.*

If I never had pain, I could not understand what others in pain are going through. If I had never experienced the hospital system, going through appointments and tests and procedures for both myself and my husband, I could not understand how to reach out to others as they go through similar trials.

Coming out of the past two years of lockdowns and isolation, never more

in recent history have I had a lesson in how important community is – especially when, in almost an instant, we all lost our communities.

“In sickness and in health” is a motto that applies not only to marriage but to friends, neighbors, family and sometimes even strangers as well. As I reflect on my recent conversations, I am humbled and continually reminded that my purpose in life is to care for others by listening and supporting them.

Lancaster homesteads with her family on Old Dominion Mountain in Colville. She writes at [spiritedrose.wordpress.com](https://www.spiritedrose.wordpress.com).

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A Special Kind of Quiet

Article & Photo by D.L. Kreft

I live in a quiet neighborhood on the back side of a small town in rural northeastern Washington, named after a now-submerged set of falls on the Columbia River. I can usually take my morning walks without seeing another person. The steady hum of the nearby sawmill, or the deep-throated roar of diesel engines from the railroad siding, don't seem to reach this far. I usually have no problem birding by ear as I walk along, binoculars and camera at the ready. After years of practice and study I can identify pretty much every regular bird species here by its song or call alone. Normally, this is a peaceful and refreshing experience.

Ah, but today was different.

The accustomed silence was overrun with heavy machinery, grinding, howling, and banging (they're replacing the natural gas lines in this part of town).

Someone was working outdoors, and they must've needed loud music to distract them from the mundane tasks at hand.

School is out and teenagers seem-

ingly quadrupled the normal flow of vehicles through the winding streets. And, of course, they must test the gas pedal every so often to see if it works.

Apparently, today was also a designated lawn care day. Lawn mowers and gas-powered weed trimmers were prevalent. (Full disclosure: I have these noise makers myself. But I usually wait until after 8 a.m. before firing them up.)

Still, compared to morning rush hour in Spokane or Seattle, this was a quiet morning. Whenever I am outdoors, walking, fishing or eating my lunch, I often muse to myself, "I wonder what they're doing in downtown L.A. today?" I smile, and think, "They're wishing they could be right here, where I am." But today, with its unexpected noise intrusions, I was recalling a different kind of quiet. The kind that gives a definition to the very word itself.

One of my favorite places to go birding and photographing is the Little Pend Oreille National Wildlife Refuge. The LPO has four characteristics I

esteem very highly. It's free. It's close. It has scenic beauty. It is uncrowded.

And it is quiet. This is the quiet of creation going about its business. A real kind of quiet. Not the disturbing quiet of absolute absence of sound, the kind where you can hear the blood rushing in your head.

This is the quiet whisper of a breeze moving through a million pine needles in the trees above you. This is the quiet murmurs and trickles from a nearby stream hidden in willows and alders, talking quietly as it spills over a beaver dam. I am constantly amazed at how a half dozen elk can move through a tangle of forest undetected, except for the occasional snap of a dead branch. I try to be quiet in the woods, but I am an amateur.

As a birder I value quiet. I need it first in order to pick out and identify bird songs and calls. Secondly, the quiet helps me gauge how far and in which direction the bird(s) might be. The goal is to view and possibly photograph the bird. But without sufficient quiet, I will miss most of them. The forest,

A Fresh Air Perspective

you see, is dense with leaves, branches, needles and trunks. The quiet lets me find these birds in their serious game of hide and stay hidden from humans.

Not all birds are quiet. I am certain you can name several that are raucous and easily noticed. But there are a host of birds that make very little sound. Their calls and songs consist of flute-like notes, soft rapid warbles, or high-pitched “seep, seep, seeps” that are almost beyond the range of older ears (like mine). I need real quiet to find these.

A good example are the three common species of chickadee we find here, the black-capped, mountain, and chestnut-backed chickadees (I am excluding the fourth, the boreal chickadee, which is found only at high elevations in the tallest peaks of our Selkirk Mountains). The black-capped chickadee is friendly around humans and has a happy “chick-a dee, dee, dee” song most of us recognize right off. The mountain chickadee is a little less common and its song is similar but with a husky, wheezy, tone, like a black-capped with a sore throat. The chestnut-backed is quieter still and you must know what to listen for. This one needs quiet.

One of my favorite places to stop and listen for chestnut-backed is on the self-guided AutoTour on the LPO refuge. On the far end of the tour loop, the farthest point from the refuge headquarters, the single-lane gravel road winds through tall groves of western larch, cedar, Engelmann spruce, and grand and Douglas fir. It is a little higher in elevation here and the rainfall and temperature keep it cooler than other parts of the refuge. This is where you might find chestnut-backed chickadees.

You will likely hear them before

you see them. Their songs and calls are described as, “A squeaky chick-a-dee, somewhat shriller and faster than the other chickadees. Often simply a thin tsee-deee and thin lisping notes.” (From the Audubon field guide). Once you do locate these little birds, be sure to observe what they are doing, constantly inspecting every crevice of every branch, every cluster of freshly budded fir needles, every dangling cone.

I have always had horrible luck photographing chestnut-backed. They are always moving about and flying rapidly in every direction. Recently, my luck was better, and just where I have described here, I managed to find a few cooperative fellows that allowed me to capture them at work. Fresh grubs were on the menu, and it

almost seemed like they paused after each find to show me what they had in their beaks before they darted off. Undoubtedly, they had nests nearby and hungry mouths awaited the next serving of insect delicacies.

Maybe you will find some real quiet the next time you travel in the forest. Be sure to pause, wait, and listen for the quiet sounds. And when you find the quieter ones, wait a little longer and listen for the quietest of sounds. They will tell you about the depth of the forest and the unseen layers of creatures and happenings only our ears can know.

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

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The Way It Was, According to Chick

Growing Up On The Spokane Indian Reservation

By Robert Wynecoop

Excerpt from Robert “Chick” Wynecoop’s book, printed in 2003 by Tornado Creek Publications, reprinted here, with permission.

Chapter 49: The Electric Club and the B-29 Crash

We kids belonged to the 4-H Garden Club and to the Electric Club. The Garden Club required you to do a lot of record keeping, like describing how you prepared your garden plot, what seeds and fertilizer you used, etc. We also recorded our hoeing and weeding efforts. I hated the record keeping part of gardening.

Growing a garden was easy where we lived – except for the dreaded weeding. We helped Mom a little with her garden of potatoes, carrots, onions, radishes, and flowers. But we probably didn’t do a very good job as gardeners, since we always grew more weeds than edible produce.

The county fair was in Colville, 80 miles away, so we didn’t prepare an exhibit to enter there right away. First, I had to win at the local fair before I could enter the county fair. We did put on an exhibit of fresh vegetables and a board with an electrical wiring display at the local fair and Powwow. The local fair paid more prize money than the county fair did, and we were satisfied with that challenge.

We always won a couple of dollars. Once, I did get to the county fair, not as an exhibitor, and I had a lot more fun there enjoying the carnival rides and side show than looking at the exhibits.

The Electric Club always met at Mr. Tandy’s. He was our fearless leader.

Once we had finished the project for the day and the meeting was over, we all went outside and played Kick-The-Can well into the evening. We had so much fun kicking that old can.

Once caught, you were *it*. That meant you had to cover your eyes while standing by the can and counting to twenty while the others hid. If the hiding kids could sneak back and touch the can or kick it, they were *in* free, but if you saw someone, or you out-ran them and touched the can first, they were caught and became *it*. However, if someone not caught beat you to the can and kicked it, everyone went free, and the game started over. At this point, they only had the time it took to recover the can to hide. This was a fast, wild, high-energy game.

One hot August afternoon, as we were working on our Electric Club project, we could hear an airplane

overhead. Since the war was over, airplanes were a fairly common sight. There were two military air bases nearby. Spokane Air Depot or Air Force Base, now Fairchild Air Force Base, was a B-29 base. Geiger Field was a joint fighter and civilian airport.

But this particular plane we heard that day seemed to be making more than the usual amount of noise. We often used any old excuse to get out of finishing our assigned electric project, so we asked to go out to look at the loud airplane. Mr. Tandy eventually gave in, and we all went outside to have a look.

It was a lazy, summer day with cotton-ball clouds in the blue sky. That plane was crossing high and a little to the east of us, but we could tell that something was wrong. It was trailing white smoke! That B-29 was on fire!

Continued next month...



Washington State 4-H meeting. First row from left, Chick Wynecoop, Squeak Tandy, Philip Wynecoop, Marlene Wynne, Janet Wynecoop, Esther Lowley. Second row: Sara Wynecoop, and other delegates from Stevens County. Wynecoop photo.

Learning from Wildlife

Article & Photos by Joanie Christian

I've been thinking a lot about perspective lately. In May, the hubs and I had one of our most memorable wildlife encounters while on a trip to Yellowstone National Park. We came upon a crowd and rangers watching a sow grizzly and her two brand new cubs as they foraged for grubs, gophers and vegetation on the other side of the river. The cubs had the whole crowd

laughing, particularly at the antics of one really rambunctious cub who was very BUSY, mischievous and playful. The cubs were sometimes attentive to the task at hand of finding food, but were easily distracted ... roughhousing with each other, climbing on things, lying on their backs with paws up in the air, and rolling down the hill.

It was a very sweet, innocent scene

... a rare and privileged glimpse into the intimate day-to-day life of a grizzly sow and her young cubs. How magical it was to temporarily drop the cares of our modern life and watch these little cubs playing and innocently exploring their new world.

After arriving home, I enjoyed images posted by other photographers who saw the trio regularly. We all looked forward to following the journey of these cubs as they grew up. As fate would have it, this was not to be. A week after our trip, both cubs were killed by an adult male grizzly. Shock, sorrow, and a reminder of how fleeting life can be settled in.

A photographer captured an image of the mother grizzly standing on a rock afterward, looking down on the scene, her head bowed as a heavy rain pelted down on her. Though scientists discourage ascribing human emotions to animals, the photographer's image spoke volumes, and the despair was palpable.

One of the biggest threats to grizzly cubs are the adult males, who kill cubs of a nursing female to put the female back into estrus (heat), so the male can mate with her. In an ironic and cruel twist, the instinct to mate or defend territory causes male grizzlies to kill what may be their own offspring.

To protect cubs, some grizzly mothers raise them in areas with more human activity, which the males tend to shy away from. Although mother bears are known for their ferocity in protecting their cubs, male grizzlies are formidable.

Things like this cause me to pause and reflect on my experiences in nature. I usually post or write about the good stuff, the experiences and scenes that leave us in awe and wonder. But





over the years, I've had my fair share of unpleasant images and experiences I've chosen not to share that make me sad, angry, disheartened, etc.

Some like this particular incident are just part of nature. The animal kingdom has rules of its own that I sometimes have to work at making my peace with. Other incidents are human-caused, either purposefully or through inadvertent but still harmful behaviors or practices. I learn much about the subjects I photograph, through research and just simply observing their behavior, and have come away with different perspectives than I had before.

The chances of wildlife reaching maturity are low. In the case of bear cubs, for example, the mortality rate is at least 45% in the first year. Very few live to a ripe old age, with human causes being the most common cause of mortality when they are older. There are many obstacles in the wild ... weather, predators, human impacts, pathogens, physical hazards, finding enough food. Last year alone we lost a great deal of wildlife due to the heat and drought – from birds in nests to several hundred eastern Washington deer succumbing to bluetongue disease that is more prevalent in drought years. Life isn't easy for them.

Some wildlife, particularly mammals, display behavior that is remarkably like our own. The ancient Pythagoreans (Greek philosophers

like Plato and Aristotle) believed that animals experience the same range of emotions as humans. I think back on scenes I have personally witnessed or seen footage of: The grizzly sow with her head bowed, mourning the loss of her cubs. Two newborn fawns playing together in the early morning hours before the humans are up. Bison circling around a dead member of the herd in a funeral of sorts. A female mallard duck quacking urgently at one of her ducklings that had gone astray from the group. An orca whale carrying her dead calf for 17 days. The shame of a wolf being rejected by the pack. A female turkey on a tree branch in the pouring rain, spreading her wings as an umbrella to cover her poults lined up on either side of her. A domestic dog barking at a wolf along the shoreline of the river, but then, realizing it was mortally wounded, calmly lying down beside it, not leaving its side until fish and wildlife came and euthanized the wolf. A loon hatchling tucked under the wing of its parent, blissfully safe and warm. The comical antics of various male species to get the attention of the ladies.

While some of this behavior may be explained by other motives, current evidence supports that at least some animals feel emotions like fear, joy, shame, affection, grief, jealousy, love and anger.

Every animal species has both positive and negative behaviors, patterns

of survival, and impacts to our world. Apex predator species are often seen as dangerous animals that cause property loss, but statistically, the reality is less black and white than that. Some “docile” or “harmless” species surprisingly cause much higher losses in terms of property and human fatalities.

By a longshot, deer cause more human deaths and property loss in the United States than any other animal species. Most are due to auto accidents, but there are also fatal deer attacks each year. Deer, dogs, cows, spiders, snakes and bees cause astronomically more human fatalities than predator species do. After hearing about a predator attacking a human, it's natural to be fearful, but statistically a person is much more likely to die from a deer in their yard or a dog attack. I certainly won't ignore the potential threat that predators pose, but will balance that with a healthy caution toward all animals.

The natural world has taught me lessons that have caused me to shift from my previous understanding toward new perspectives and choices. Those new perspectives have naturally led to a focus on education and bringing that experience to others through my lens and writing. I'm just a student trying to pay attention to the lessons.

Joanie Christian, a freelance nature photographer, has lived in NE WA for 40+ years. View her work at joaniechristianphotography.com.

The Grass Is Greener

By Joe Barreca

After this very wet spring everything looks especially green. The color is from chlorophyll, the molecule critical to photosynthesis, which turns sunlight into plant energy, specifically sugars. Looking at the chest-high grass and the purple vetch that has taken over the aisles between my rows of grape vines, I had to envy those farmers who could make great use of this abundance by running cattle or sheep on it. I needed to cut it before it completely took over the vineyard so I could get in to do thinning and other operations on the grape plants.

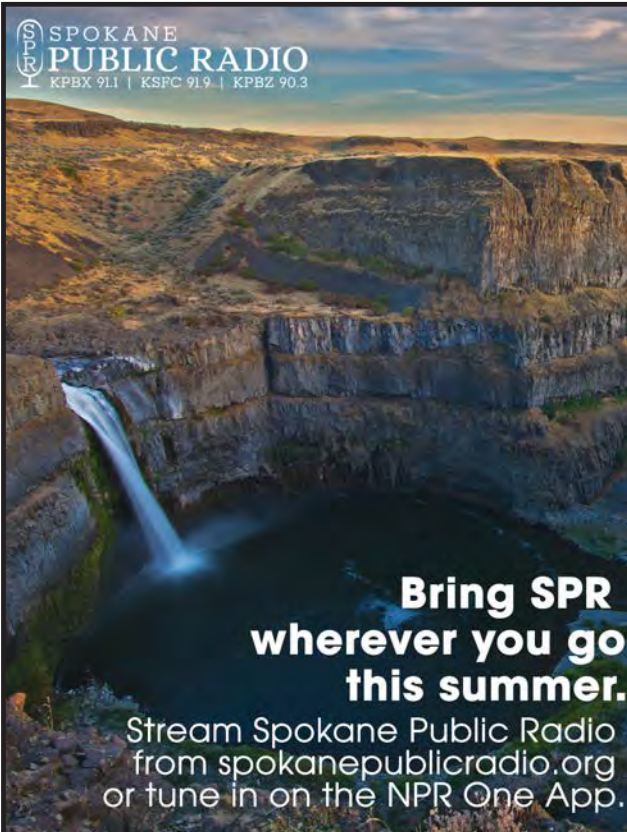
That chlorophyll is rich in nitrogen, the fertilizer most often added to commercial fields. Nitrogen turns a field's color to a darker green. It does not necessarily mean that the crop is more nutritious. But to me this naturally rich green indicates high food value.

Not one to let that much nutrition go unused, I began thinking about its potential. I remembered a neighbor we had when I was young. He threw grass clippings over the bank behind his house and added a lot of coffee grounds to them. That seemed strange to me at the time and I

asked his kids about it. They told me that their dad was an avid fisherman and that the grass clippings and coffee propagated earthworms, probably night crawlers that he used as bait.

I have been building compost piles in old apple bins with the bottoms removed. Before I started using the bins, wild turkeys would tear apart my compost piles looking for worms, seeds or whatever bugs they could eat. This was a big mess that I tried to prevent by covering the pile with wire mesh fencing. Having the big compost pile served two purposes. I wanted the compost and I wanted to have a place that worms could live during the winter without freezing.

It worked. Now that there is plenty of warmth and water, the compost bins have taken on new life. Mushrooms sprout from the top. Worms show up underneath. Deer browse on squash growing over the sides. Deep inside the temperature is 120° F. That is too hot for worms. But they move to the sides and around the hot spots. A worm's digestive track is like a chicken's gizzard. Both need grit



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to grind up food. Worms also really like mushy food. So a combination of food that will rot, dirt that has grit, and sawdust or straw that has cellulose which is easy to crawl through works well for them.

Looking at the green grass and thinking about how it can enrich the soil, I face a number of trade-offs. Contrary to intuition, grass really gets healthier if it is eaten or cut. Grass has a huge root system compared to most plants. In the wild it gets eaten, digested and turned into manure and urine, essential fertilizers. Animals trample it, working those fertilizers into the soil and providing bare ground for new seeds. That way clover and other forbs can grow, providing food for bees above ground and nitrogen fixation underground. The grass springs back from its huge root system. The prairie lives on and the grass really is greener.

But that system depends on animals rotating in briefly to make it all work. If I cut the grass, I need to take it away or leave it in place. If I take it to a compost pile, it can rot and feed the worms. But then I need to move the compost plus worms back to the vineyard, which is a lot of work. Left on the ground, the nutrients could leach out, dry out or just degrade in the sunlight. I needed some advice.

Since these were questions that people who make hay face all the time, I talked to friends with livestock about the nutrition in hay.

You would think that the nutrition in hay is just “cut and dried,” so to speak. It’s not. There are early grasses and late ones. Alfalfa can be good for cows and bad for horses. You might prefer the seed heads almost formed for more protein or green leaves and flowers, dry and still green. Even just looking at hay doesn’t tell you everything. The same crop cut late in the day will have more carbohydrates than when cut in the morning. But with a short window to get it dried in the field, you might want to cut early. Then there is silage, which adds nutrition during fermentation but needs expensive equipment. So much for “cut and dried.”

There is a history of using animals in vineyards. Sheep, goats, geese and cows have all worked to some extent.



One viticulturist, Kelly Mulville, found that by raising his trellis out of the reach of sheep and running them through the vineyard when the grass was up, he could eliminate the tractor labor mowing grass and the hand labor of removing suckers from the vines. At the same time the biodiversity in his vineyard multiplied manifold and production was as good as or better than ever. The same is no doubt true in orchards.

Short of reworking my vineyard for sheep, falling back on doing my own testing and experimentation seems like the best practice moving forward. Sap testing shows that the grass is fairly sweet right now and the vetch is nearly as sweet though definitely juicier. I will compost some of both and leave the mulch in some rows. Time will tell which works out the best and where the grass really is greener.

Joe Barreca makes maps, grows grapes, makes wine and posts blogs on BarrecaVineyards.com.

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Just Keep On Keeping On

By Karen Giebel

We all had high hopes for the month of June, didn't we? Let's just say, June did not quite live up to my expectations. Actually, it did not even come close to meeting my expectations! We muddled (no pun intended) on through the rain and the mud and did as much as we could all the while keeping one eye on the sky trying to gauge when the next deluge was heading our way.

This year my husband decided to make full use of his greenhouse and start as many vegetables as he could with the idea of selling the plants. He spent untold hours researching different seeds that would be good producers in our climate. He looked at soil types, planting methods and fertilizers. Dan developed a plan to maintain a steady humidity using a rain barrel and an aquarium bubbler. It worked quite well.

I did all the paperwork to operate a licensed nursery here in Washington and was tickled when that license showed up at the house. We purchased a cash box and sales receipts, made plans to order signs and more, but then the rains came down and the floods came up. The vegetable plants thrived but, due to the cold and rain, not many folks were interested in planting their gardens. That included us! Every time we opened for selling, the deluge started again. Oh well... we did better than we thought considering the weather, but not nearly as well as we hoped.

On a brighter note, we learned a great deal this spring so next year our learning curve will be much flatter. We will be better organized and efficient and have a greater understanding of what

our customers want. For instance, there was not a lot of interest in dwarf tomato plants. Most folks wanted traditional tomatoes. Other items our customers were looking for were cherry tomatoes, broccoli and cauliflower. Didn't find those at our place. But the people! We met the nicest folks and enjoyed wonderful conversations and laughs. That made all our efforts worthwhile.

Our garden is planted now. Finally. At last. Yes, we have planted all those dwarf tomato plants that no one else wanted and we are kind of excited to see how they produce. They grow full-sized fruits on half-sized plants. Should be interesting.

As I stated last month, due to the astronomical costs of food this year, we will be donating a portion of our crops to area residents who are truly feeling the pinch. There is a senior couple who will receive a food donation from us each month. As a daughter of parents who grew up in the great Depression, I understand and appreciate what it takes to keep food on the table.

So, how's that lawn mowing going for you? The rain has made the grass grow incredibly fast. For most of our yard the walk-behind mower is the right tool for the job, but not this year! We've had to take down the fence to the dog yard so Dan can get in there with the riding mower as the grass is so tall, wet, and thick. I go in with the smaller mower and try to clean up what the rider can't reach. We purchased a battery-operated weed trimmer that I can handle. There is plenty for both of us to do. Like everyone else, we're doing the best we can, one day at a time.

It seems like it was just a short time ago that I put my canning supplies away, but once again the dining room table is covered with canners, jars and lids. The rhubarb is thriving, and I made a batch of my favorite strawberry-rhubarb jam. It will be a welcome taste of summer in the middle of winter. Our asparagus patch has produced an incredible amount this year. So far, I have made pickled asparagus and have frozen multiple bags.

By the end of the harvest season, I will be very tired of all the canning and preserving, so much so that I'll vow to never can again. Oddly enough, however, each spring, I find myself rooting through all my supplies, taking note of canning salt, pectin, vinegar, jars and what more I need to purchase. Stirring that strawberry-rhubarb jam and smelling that wonderful aroma, then ladling it hot, into hot jars, just makes me smile. Huckleberry jam will be next and that's a whole story of its own.

It's hard to believe that LuLu, our Labrador retriever shelter dog, turned two years old on June 2, and Aug. 1 will mark the one-year anniversary of her coming to live with us. We continue to be amazed and blessed by this crazy, fun-loving, smart bundle of ball-chasing energy. She has made our lives so much richer.

So, we just keep on keeping on up here in the back of the beyond in Ferry County, Washington.

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

Lobster Mushrooms

Article & Photo by Jim Groth

DISCLAIMER: When picking any mushroom, be sure of identification and that it is verified by someone with experience.

Here is a good edible mushroom that you might run across in late summer or fall. It is unmistakable. We have collected it and eaten it for years. The story of this mushroom is dramatic in that it is not what it seems.

I have always been fascinated by symbiosis – the idea that organisms have evolved to live intimately with their neighbors as mutualists, sharing available nutrients – and by cases of parasites or pathogens robbing nutrients from unfortunate hosts.

But, like everything else in biology, it is never so simple. This story can be told involving virtually every kind of higher organism on earth. I view life as much more complex than we can ever fully understand or appreciate.

Since my time as a forestry major at the University of Minnesota, I was taken by the idea that the big trees have many plants, fungi, bacteria, viruses and insects (and who knows what else) that not only derive their livelihood from the trees, but often could not survive without them. And vice-versa – the trees could not survive without at least some of their cohort organisms. It is, in every sense, a complex ecosystem worthy of much study.

Here in our area, as well as else-

where, some people like to find safely edible mushrooms. There are many candidates that I like to find. I am no gourmet, but I know what I like and what is safe to eat.

One of our favorites, both back in Minnesota and here, is called lobster. It does not taste like real lobster, nor would it cost as much in restaurants were it even on the menu. The name derives from its bright orange surface, kind of like the color of a cooked lobster. The orange layer has a rough texture – it is composed of tiny hard round structures called perithecia.

The mushroom is really a combination of a normal gilled mushroom that has been parasitized by another fungus – an Ascomycete (most mushrooms are Basidiomycetes) in the genus *Hypomyces*. There are many other *Hypomyces* species, all of whom are parasites of various mushrooms here and in the old world. The lobster fungus is, apparently, only in the new world, and is the only one that is edible and delicious. Lucky us.

The host is a big white mushroom called *Russula brevipes*. It is called the short-stemmed *Russula* (hence the specific name), but I will call it the Big White *Russula* or BWR for short. It is

edible but boring. David Arora in his massive book called *Mushrooms Demystified* calls it insipid and granular, and “better kicked than picked.” I personally don’t condone destroying any mushroom, and I suspect that Arora was just using a clever phrase.

The picture shows an uninfected host mushroom and an infected lobster version, both growing near one another. This is a transitional stage where I introduced *Hypomyces* on my property (described below). Soon the uninfected mushroom will probably not exist there. The lobster parasite completely covers the BWR, often leaving the overall shape and some hint of the gills beneath.

The uninfected host mushroom is very common in the late summer and fall. It often arises under the duff that it pushes up, often without becoming visible. We refer to these as “mushumps,” and always investigate them with a few digs. Much of the time they turn out to be BWRs. Last year in August we camped at Meadow Lake Campground, near Idaho. One of our favorite places, and not just because it is free (our thanks to local businesses and groups). It has loons! Because of good late summer rains, there were large

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and small mushrooms everywhere. This is my version of a good camping trip. All along the many trails there could be seen hundreds of BWRs. But no lobsters.

The distribution of the parasitic fungus that results in lobster is spotty in our area. I have found no lobsters around Colville – let me know at larchsavage@yahoo.com if you have seen them. The closest place I know that they occur is the Priest River area in Idaho where we have found them in good numbers at two places we frequent. We collected many – and made only a dent in the population where we did our collecting. At one location there were many lobsters but no uninfected BWRs.

At our home as well as at our cabin near Lake Leo I had noticed good numbers of BWRs over many years. Wishing to have some lobsters, I inoculated a couple of BWRs with bits of lobster mushroom left from cleaning those collected at Priest River; this was done both at home and at the cabin. It worked! We had our first local lobsters at home in the 18 years we have lived here, and also at the cabin.

I don't condone spreading organisms

like this if they are nonnative. This *Hypomyces* is a native parasite found at least occasionally all across North America. My take on this is that, while the host mushroom has colonized all of the northern forested areas of the United States and in Canada, the par-



asitic fungus is still working on this, being that 10,000 years or so is not a lot of time for this parasite to spread widely. Our ecosystems are still in a transitional phase from the time of the glaciers. I was reading an account of the use of edible wild mushrooms in Mexico and the author mentioned that they have lobsters there. The location was east of Mexico City. So the range

of lobsters is large.

There are often cautions about eating lobster because the host mushroom might be something other than BWR. Other possible hosts, in the genera *Russula* or *Lactarius*, while not lethal, could be spicy hot or otherwise undesirable.

Of course, the lobster version might not share these tastes.

In my experience in Minnesota and here, I have never found a lobster that I did not like. As with any mushroom, picking old and decaying lobsters is always bad form. Lobsters are sturdy mushrooms but they can suffer from bacterial infection or fungus fly maggot infestations, both easily recognized. Do not peel lobsters – all parts are edible, especially the orange layer on the surface.

Jim hopes that every person who wants to eat wild mushrooms possesses and learns to use a mushroom guide. Facebook, etc., advice is usually wrong – amusing but dangerous. Jim Groth taught mycology for 21 years at the University of Minnesota. His love of the West and of quiet rural living prompted his wife Jo Ann and him to move here in 2004.

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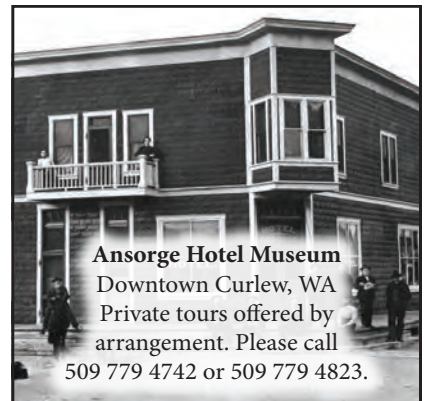
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Happy Birthday America!

By Becky Dubell

It has been a while since we have had this kind of soggy ground to celebrate the birthday of our nation. Don't know about everyone else out there but I discovered, while digging a hole, that the dirt is still wet when that hole is two feet deep!

When I was able to return to work at the Do-it Center, after six weeks in my little "nest" in the basement, I was very thankful for the view. I was looking out onto my little corner of the Colville world up toward Colville Mountain with the C and the cross. Wow! So what if it was raining most of the time – it is a gorgeous view!

We have had quite a few people come into the store to buy replacement seeds. I'm thinking the rain kinda sorta washed the original ones away or just flat out drowned them. Whatchya think? In my two planter boxes I can't tell if the growth is weeds or the plants coming up. I guess I'll see in a few weeks. I do know that the weeds/grasses outside of the boxes are really growing – up to my waist already. Have not had enough dry time to get out there and mow or weed whack.

But ... guess what? I'm loving being outside. Trying to look through the plastic-covered windows in my basement was not the highlight of my day. Are you thinking that I am done with basement life? Think I'll drop some more seeds in my planter boxes.

Our little neck of the woods changed quite a bit again on me. The creeks got to running a little fuller. The fields have a lot of growth. The baby cows and their mamas got moved somewhere else. The burros/donkeys need to get to trimming the ditches on Hotchkiss Road. Hatch Lake has a lot more water now than the last trip to town. The new driveways on my road look to have become pretty muddy.

The ladies (JJ's chickens) have got their feathers back and are making eggs. Ground squirrels have decided to move "back home" after being gone for two years. Lilac bushes at my place have lots of growth but where in the

world are the lilacs – planted about five years ago, so what is the story!?! Snowbirds are returning – thanks for coming in, Phil and Lois.

Paved driveway at a new house. Many Realtor signs have been removed and work has been started.

You most likely get tired of me saying it but ... I love my hometown! On a recent Monday morning there were school buses on the road when I knew there was no school – oh – a make-up snow day. Heading west on Hawthorne, at the flashing light for turning at the Jr. High, no flashing light but every car was driving as if the light was flashing. I thought that was sooooo stinkin' cool! Do you know of any other town where that would be happening?

I love my customers (and the people I work with) at the Do-it Center. With a walking boot (peg leg) on the right foot and a patch covering the left eye I got to play the pirate. Thank you for putting up with me – makes the recovery so much better and maybe the messed-up plumbing that needs to be fixed a little lighter to deal with.

On Senior Awards Night, it was my pleasure to present Tanner Goff a James (Jim) R. Dubell Memorial Scholarship for the trade school he will be attending

I was helping a customer, Janice, and she looks at my name tag and says, "Oh, you are the one that works at the hardware store and you write for the *Monthly!* I love that magazine! I have learned so much about this area. I love all the articles!" So ... good job Gabriel!

Whatever you have planned for the Fourth of July – travel to family, picnic on that soggy lawn, boating, fishing, fireworks (if allowed), camping, kicking back for the three-day weekend – please be smart and safe and have an absolute ball!

Happy Fourth of July 2022!

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

Dandelion: The Super Weed

By Rich Leon

To many people the dandelion is a noxious weed. A constant battle is waged against them and every method possible is used to eradicate them from the face of the Earth.

Instead of trying to get rid of this so-called weed, I encourage its growth. You probably think I have been out in the sun too long without my hat on. No, I am not a crazy environmentalist. Well, maybe just a little bit. I think many of my fellow humans have a tendency to use harmful chemicals to solve a lot of their yard and garden problems. It may be the easy way but I question whether it is the best way or right way.

Back to the dandelion. It is native to Europe and can be found

throughout mild climates of the northern hemisphere. The dandelion name comes from the French words *dent de lion* which means lion's tooth. This common weed has a long history in traditional medicines across the globe dating back to Arabian physicians of the 10th century using the plant to cure liver and spleen ailments. Dandelions are ancient plants said to have first appeared some 30 million years ago in Eurasia. As with sunflowers, dandelions track the sun, opening an hour after sunrise and closing at dusk.

The young dandelion leaves make a wonderful addition to a wild edible salad. Be sure to pick when they are young because, as the plant ages, the leaves become bitter and displeasing

to many people. The flowers can be used to make dandelion wine and the whole plant can be used to make beer. As for the roots, they can be roasted, ground, and made into a coffee beverage. It has a distinctive taste that might take a bit of getting used to before becoming pleasurable.

A one-cup serving of dandelion greens contains ten percent of your daily recommended dose of calcium. The dandelion is also an excellent source of vitamins A and C.

An interesting way to try the flower heads is to coat them in flour and then fry them in butter. They taste like a morel and are a lot cheaper. Another fun way to use the blossoms is with pancakes. Put the young heads on the top of the pancake batter on your frying pan. When the pancake is turned, the heads are cooked, giving you a unique breakfast.

Now, I hope you never look at a dandelion the same way again. I am going to go out and find me some salad fixins.

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.

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Chewelah

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



Colville

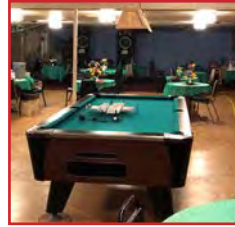


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CAFE ITALIANO: Authentic Mediterranean cuisine featuring local, organic veggies and fresh seafood. Ask about our specials. 151 W. 1st. Call for hours open: 509-684-5268.



COLVILLE EAGLE'S 2797: Open to the public for lunch Tue-Fri Noon-5pm with salad bar & a great menu. Wed & Sun Bingo 5:30, Fri dinner & salad bar 5-7pm with line dancing & karaoke, Sun breakfast 9am-Noon. Pool-Darts-Poker. Check us out on FaceBook. New members welcome. 608 N Wynne. 509-684-4534.



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



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



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



POUR HOUSE: A fun, family-oriented craft beer tap house and restaurant with the best burgers, paninis, salads and wraps, 20+ rotating taps, wine, good food, and classy, fun atmosphere. Banquet/party/event center/conference room available for private parties and meetings. 202 S. Main. 509-685-7325. facebook.com/ColvillePourHouse.



Featured Dining & Lodging 2022

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



SELKIRK MOTEL: Here you will find comfort and quietness in one of our 19 rooms. We have rooms ranging from budget friendly, to rooms with stove tops and full size refrigerators. Check out our updates on Facebook & Instagram. 369 S Main St, 509-684-2565.



HANSEN WOODLAND FARM: Perfect accommodation for out-of-town friends/family or staycation for you. 40 acres of trails, quiet, private, loaded with amenities, natural paradise, pet-friendly. DD_kathy@tmd9.club, hansenwoodlandfarm.com.



Kettle Falls

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