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— WHERE AND HOW WE LIVE —



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What's Inside

Cover: House finch and ornament, by Joanie Christian.

See more at joaniechristianphotography.com.

- 6 Random Acts of Community**, by Christine Wilson
- 8 Life Matters**, by Dr. Barry Bacon
- 10 Home Ground**, by Tina Wynecoop
- 12 A Botanist's View**, by Cindy Talbott Roché
- 14 December Random Thoughts**, by Bob Gregson
- 16 Creative Being in Stevens County**, by Marci Bravo
- 18 This Great Big Life**, by Tina Tolliver Matney
- 20 A Fresh Air Perspective**, by D.L. Kreft
- 22 Silver Screening**, by Sophia Mattice-Aldous
- 23 Being of Service** (*Sponsored page*)
- 24 Listen Up**, by Michael Pickett
- 25 A Good Read**, by Terry Cunningham
- 26 Forever Young-ish**, by Rob Sumner
- 28 Life's Stretch**, by Brenda St. John
- 30 Contemporary Native American Art**, by Coleestah Finley
- 31 A Year on the Farm**, by Michelle Lancaster
- 32 Reflections on Life's Journey**, by Karen Giebel
- 35 They Rest Here**, by Donna Potter Phillips
- 36 Down to Earth**, by Joe Barreca
- 38 Mystery Visitors**, by Steven Bird
- 41 The Shooting Star**, by Judge Wynecoop
- 42 Family Ties**, by Becky Dubell
- 44 It's Been Quite A Hike**, by Rich Leon
- 46 In Nature**, by J. Foster Fanning



Be Enlightened Love Is Eternal Faith

- JOHN ODELL, allthelandandsea.wixsite.com/wordsofwords

A Note from the Publisher

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

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

~ Gabriel

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**AD RESERVATION
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20th of each month

The Free Gifts

By Christine Wilson

“She always wished her father would come in and build the fire, but he was firm about these things. ... The best people he knew were poor, he said hardship was edifying, and there was joy in strife.”
~ Hanna Pylväinen, *The End of Drum-Time*

“Money can’t bring you happiness, but it can buy you the things that can.”
~ Sheldon Wilson, my joker of a father

“There is nothing wrong with desire. It is the excesses that cause the problems.”
~ Dr. David Schnarch

“Temptation is real; it’s not just a battle of the mind but a battle of the heart. If we do not take care of our inner thoughts, they can turn into actions that lead us astray.”
~ Joyce Meyer

“More than wealth and power, education is the key to human dignity.”
~ Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

“Q: Are you self-reflective? A: I don’t know; I’ve never really thought about it.”
~ Unknown stand-up comic

Before I had a credit card or children, I traveled to England with a friend. Our itinerary was arranged by a woman in Seattle, where I was in graduate school at the time. She gave us our schedule, we scraped together our limited funds, and then we paid her for the trip. When we got to the car rental spot in Oxford, we discovered she had paid for only the first day’s rental. We had to hand over a significant amount of our remaining cash.

She’d done this before, the rental company representative said. The rep then proceeded to call her to give her a piece of her mind. We couldn’t hear the Seattle person’s side of the conversation, but it was satisfying to watch the English woman’s smile as she said: “Yes, I do realize it’s the middle of the night where you are. But you left these young people with very little money for the rest of their trip.”

All the places we stayed over the next days were paid for and, fortunately for

us, included breakfast. We were on the cutting edge of intermittent fasting. We binged on breakfast each day at the latest possible time. After that, our daypack supplies carried us over until whatever limited dinner plans we could muster up. We searched for any free activities we could find. By our return to Oxford, we were essentially broke. It was the holidays and the coldest Christmas since World War II, adding to the drama of the trip.

During our journey I saw a sign on a wall at York that said it was built in 8 A.D. I had to say that out loud several times, since I grew up in a town established by the U.S. Army in 1943. Eight, I had to keep saying. It was definitely a “joy in strife” moment, since it was so fun to imagine the sweep of the centuries while also being cold and running out of money. Pretty much all the best memories I have of that trip are ones we paid nothing for.

One place we stayed had been built

“only” four hundred years earlier and the owner kept apologizing. He then proceeded to tell us about his bee-keeping operation and how much he loved his brilliant colonies. In his very old (to me) living room, he acted out a dance the bees do in order to help each other find their way home. I think he offered us sherry, although that might be just something it seems like such a man would have done. We had paid for the room but his bee dance was a joy-inducing freebie.

In Oxford, ancient cathedrals offered free concerts, and the music echoed across the ceiling. I had taken a humanities class and all my rubbernecking from my free and warm spot on a well-worn pew made me appreciate the architectural section of the class. Those beautiful venues and the music we were able to listen to did not deplete our shrinking wallets. We walked all over Oxford and went into shops we couldn’t afford just to browse

Random Acts of Community

near heaters. We found people who commiserated with us when we shared our story. Empathy is free.

My father was a teenager when the Depression hit, and he experienced the dark side of financial trouble. I wouldn't say he was full of joy about the strife they endured, and he was definitely one of those dads that stood next to you when you were on a long-distance call, reminding his children of the expense such a call was in that era. He loved a good bargain and knew how to ride out difficult times.

As fond as he was of joking that money can buy you the things that make you happy, he did not suffer from greed and found delight in (to him) simple things like using his oscilloscope to help repair electrical gadgets people brought over. I'm not idealizing the financial limitations of my childhood, and I was jealous of my friend in high school who had access to her mother's credit card, but it cost nothing to hear my quirky father's laugh when he watched Yogi Bear cartoons. I carried on that tradition when our kids were growing up and there were a couple of movies I put on just to hear our younger son's laugh. Delight is another free source of joy.

December can be a painful time of year when it comes to money. Over the years I have done a lot of EMDR about childhood memories of the fallout from the depression and panic and rage that comes from the holidays. It is hard not to fall prey to the image of a story-book Christmas with lots of presents and decorations and expensive food, but I'm a sucker for those stories about lonely, poor people who find each other on Christmas Day for a simple meal they can share in community.

Jack Kornfield, a Buddhist teacher,

said that when he was living in a monastery in Thailand, they had to beg. They would take their alms bowl out into the public square. He was appalled to discover that he coveted the alms bowl of the monk standing next to him. In the Christian tradition, that is where the word "temptation" shows up. Coveting other people's possessions is one of those battles of the heart. Matsuo Basho, a 17th century Japanese poet, wrote: "Even in Kyoto, hearing the cuckoo's cry, I long for Kyoto." He had a flair for the poetic. I'm more likely to flail about with the obvious: It can feel like there isn't enough even when we have enough.

I apologize to whichever standup comic first said the joke mentioned above about self-reflection. I assume it's something Rabbi Sacks would have thought of as an essential part of our education. We can learn to develop an immune system against greed. Why do I want what I want? When is it enough? Am I hoping that I will like

myself better if I have some certain thing? Am I thinking I will be worthy of others? Am I guaranteed the love of friends and family by what I get for them over the holidays? Can I sit in peace with what I have?

Dr. Schnarch talked about the inevitability of desire after he had written a book on the subject. We don't need to be ashamed of wanting things, he said. It's just that, left to its own devices, it can make us depressed or anxious or disappointed. The antidote to Basho's pining away for something he already has isn't pretending that longing doesn't exist. It is educating ourselves about our desires as our own compassionate witness and then exhaling the loving kindness taught by the world's great traditions. And, as always, finding joy in moments of community we create.

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



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Family Stories and a Crippled

By Dr. Barry Bacon, MD

I've been thinking about my grandmother. Hers was a complex human story. I was a child for most of my memories of her, so I never fully appreciated the dynamics of family criticism, animosity, and disrespect surrounding this woman. How could I know? There were others who knew of her foibles and weaknesses, and they held her in contempt. But you would need to understand the rest of her story, I think, to appreciate the strengths she brought to her life.

Grandma Josephine was the daughter of immigrant farmers arriving from Prussia (what is now Poland) and Ukraine when she was very young. She traveled by wagon across Minnesota to their prairie homestead in North Dakota. One of the earliest memories of her childhood was the death of a calf. "That calf was bawling and bawling," she relayed to me over 80 years later. "He was so thirsty. So, I gave him some perty green drink, and he drank it, and then he died." She had given the baby cow a pail of insecticide. It was a major loss for the immigrant family.

Grandma B, as we called her, was the brunt of many family jokes. She walked with a horrible limp all her

life. The family doctor had diagnosed her with polio. This disability made her undesirable in their prairie farm community, so she still wasn't married at the age of 26 – fairly old for young farm women. She had a boyfriend in the nearby town, and he came to visit while her parents were away. She became pregnant, but in that time and place, conceiving out of wedlock was considered a disgrace. So, Josephine was sent away to live with relatives in Minnesota.

There she delivered her firstborn daughter. She met a younger man by the name of Al, and they were married, though I don't think you could call it a happy marriage. Seven more children followed. The rest of the story of that family, with the chaos that accompanies alcoholism and its related brokenness, was passed down to the subsequent generations. I'll not divulge the torrid details here. Those stories are too personal and painful for those who remain.

Grandma B lived with the secrets of a broken life for generations. She was uneducated and had few marketable skills. She worked hard, sang well, played the church organ abominably, cried easily, and warped the truth constantly. She loved her children and grandchildren but managed and trained them marginally. Mainly, she put up with Al's shenanigans. The dysfunction that followed infected the next three generations.

Life is like that. Many of us have relatives like Grandma B. We love them but are embarrassed by them. We visit them reluctantly and question their sanity. We smile when they give us Christmas presents and cringe when they play the organ. It's

what we call family. We didn't choose them.

I met someone this week who made me stop and consider – a man in his 20s with years of mental illness, living on the streets not far from here. I was called by my colleagues to see what we could do to help him. My team member was uncertain about how he would respond to me. He had been triggered not long before by someone shouting insults and epithets at him and had erupted in his own self-absorbed mental health mini-crisis, talking incessantly to no one, sitting alone on a curb, battling unseen demons in his head. That's how I found him.

I introduced myself and he smiled. "I remember you from a long time ago, when I was little," he said, and went on to describe the circumstances of that meeting. I nodded but had no idea what he was referring to. "I'll come in in a minute," he assured me. I agreed and went inside the building to await his arrival for a medical evaluation.

A few minutes later he appeared in the doorway, careful to avoid any unwanted stares of the people in the room. His hair was a mess and he hadn't shaved or showered in a week. His clothes were matted and dirty and I noticed that he held his head in a precarious posture. He bent low so that I could examine his neck, the source of his discomfort. I pulled his collar down so that I could see the nest of boils there.

I spoke to the young man gently, asked if I could help him, and offered antibiotics and a chance to clean his wounds. As I made the call to the clinic to help his healing, he began to



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tell his story. In this moment he was lucid, despite his mental illness, and I listened.

His voice began to choke and tears came to his eyes. He wept silently for himself, for relationships lost, family separated, for his situation living without shelter, without safety, without hope. I couldn't fix much of that, but I told him I would go and get him some medicine if he agreed. He nodded.

As I drove the few blocks to the clinic and back, I couldn't help but reflect on his situation. Who was he? Where did his life run amuck? Surely someone loved him. Surely someone was mourning for him, maybe praying for him, maybe even looking for him. Perhaps he was too embarrassed to ask for help. Perhaps he was

so far gone that he didn't know the way home.

I delivered the medicine and gave instructions. He nodded that he understood and I saw hope returning to his eyes. And I thought of my grandmother.


Family. It's a powerful word. We don't get to choose our grandparents. We don't get to choose our siblings. Some are smart, some are not; some are tall, some are wide. Some family members take a wrong turn with their lives, some are straight and narrow. It's not perfect, but it's the best thing we have when there is love.

Grandma B had an X-ray of her hip when she was 85 years old. The doctor told her she didn't have polio after all. Her hip was dislocated. It had been so since birth. Her clumsy,

lumbering gait which had made her so unattractive and unwanted had in fact been the result of a missed diagnosis in infancy. It could have been cured all those years ago. Who knows how it would have changed her story?

It doesn't matter. What matters is whether we treat those who we find within our circle kindly, within the boundaries of genuine love and respect. And then, I suppose, whether we treat as family those who are strangers.

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



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Stalking the Wild Bridge Spiders

Article & Photos by Tina Wynecoop

“Imagine if spiders screamed when you found them.

~ twitter/@slvppy

Great-uncle Vince was a bridge tender in Seattle. He “tended” the Fremont Bridge, which spans the narrow ship canal that connects Puget Sound with Lake Washington. The bridge, built in 1917, has such a low clearance that ships and sailboats must toot their horns to signal the tender to raise both of the two decks to enable passage. Then and now, street traffic is halted many times a day.

In the old days the kid (me) in the car’s back seat always wished the bridge’s decks would rise as we neared. I especially hoped my dad, the car’s driver, was first in line as the stop-gates blocking car passage swung across the street before dual mechanisms were readying the bridge’s decks to raise and let boats pass.

There are several of these bascule bridges in my former home ground. Each one has a windowed room built high atop the bridge structure. What an office! What stories great-uncle Vince loved to share about his unique profession.

Here’s one: One day jewelry thieves robbed a Seattle store. They were being pursued by police. Uncle witnessed the robbers as they disassociated themselves from the incriminating bag of booty by tossing it over the Fremont Bridge into the canal.

I especially remember him talking about the time he observed something else of great value hurled over the bridge. Hearing the familiar signal of a ship’s horn, he stepped outside his little “castle in the sky” into the bright

sunshine. The sun caused a mighty sneeze which propelled his false teeth into the watery abyss below.

We all laughed and laughed over that one!

Recently, I had my own memorable bridge encounter while volunteering for Spokane Riverkeeper. Our assignment focused on litter cleanup along



the banks and in the water beneath the high bridge spanning Latah (Hangman) Creek. It was interesting to be walking under the bridge that I often drove on. The perspective from below the massive structure was awesome. The enormous amount of litter tossed from above was disgusting. (Oh, when will we learn not to sully our beautiful landscape?)

We volunteers had our dreary work

cut out for us. Yet, like a beam of sunlight on a gloomy day there was still wonder to behold: I looked up from my collecting. At eye-level I saw a little brown bat clinging, head down, on one of the bridge’s concrete piers. It was such an unexpected treat to see one of these small mammals up close as it rested during daylight. Of course, I pulled my cellphone out of my pocket and photographed the little creature!

Speaking of creatures who might be scary to some, years ago I would have recurring nightmares about lots of insects crawling between the sheets (not bedbugs). No matter how tired I was, I would attempt to crawl into a different set of blankets without my feet touching the floor. Those bad dreams have long since ceased, replaced with feelings of profound appreciation, respect and even kinship for other species living in *their* own natural habitats.

I do understand that the chasm connecting bridges, bats and spiders might be too vast to leap across for some *NCM* readers. Please accept my apology for now sharing the rest of the story promised in last month’s column about stalking the wild cucumber vine. Friend Mary and I had been single-mindedly searching for the native plant when we encountered gazillions of tiny spiders in their tiny mesh webs stuck to the concrete surfaces of the vertical piers holding up Highway 395’s Wandermere Bridge. This bridge spans the Little Spokane River north of Spokane’s city limits. Out came the phone cameras. This phenomenon was worth learning

about and sharing!

Mary did a search on her cellphone for the spider species name. We learned these spiders are called, of all things logical, “bridge spiders.”

One of the groups I follow on Facebook is “Eastern Washington/North Idaho Insects and Spiders.” I posted our spider’s image, asking for more specific identification. The entomologists monitoring the website provide feedback from other bug enthusiasts: Yes, our spider is a mesh weaver, a.k.a. bridge spider, a.k.a. *Dictynidae*.

I asked, “Would this specimen found in the hundreds of thousands adhering to the bridge piers be a female? Internet searches show a similar one without the white markings. I’m guessing the ones depicted online may be of the male with its soft brown colorization instead of the white markings on ours.” I added, “I write for a non-scientific publication, and I am describing the encounter with this bridge spider, and I need to include accurate information.”

Several responders agreed that our photo is of the female bridge spider. One person said the outside walls of her home are covered with these same mesh webs.

For the wild cucumber vine’s verification, we had turned to the plant

archives held in the Burke Museum on the U of W campus in Seattle. Also among the museum’s publications is “An Annotated Checklist of the Spiders of Washington” in *Contributions in Anthropology and Natural History*, No. 5, Robert L. Crawford, author. There we learned about meshweavers (family *Dictynidae*) and their characteristics.

Most species in the family spin messy-looking webs of cribellate silk (sometimes with zigzag lines). These spiders are small (less than 1/8 inch) or very small. Their clypeus (large space between eyes and jaws) is distinctive. The spiders build a complex mesh tangle in the tops of small bushes or the dry standing remains of last year’s weeds (as well as on bridges and houses). The spider is sometimes difficult to see because it is grey or brown and hides in a silk retreat near the center of the tangle.

Linda Weipert has a weekly column in the *Spokesman Review*. Recently, she wrote about orb-weaver spiders and quoted the author of the checklist: “Spiders are voracious eaters that control insect populations. ... Even though you don’t like spiders, you need them in your backyard, in your garden, in the farmer’s field [and on man-made structures]; a world *without* spiders is

scarier than a world *with* them.”

Jewelry thieves, projectile false teeth and nightmares are scary, too. Yet, we have found, like poet Mary Oliver, that by being observant, in awe, and eager to share with others, abject fears can dissipate into amazement and wonder.

We left the cucumber vine, and the bridge adorned in spider webs stationed to capture hapless insects to snack on and chose a nearby Starbucks to celebrate our eventful morning. Sitting out on the sunny patio, we gloated over our successes while consuming sweet treats and hot drinks instead of invertebrates. We should have invited Little Miss Muffet to join our table:

*Little Miss Muffet
Sat on her tuffet,
Eating her curds and whey,
Along came a spider – and she ate
it too!*

Then again, maybe not. Somebody might scream...

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



Our Regular Swan Visitors —

By Cindy Talbott Roché

Here we are in December already and gearing up for Christmas. The lyrics to the “Twelve Days of Christmas” remind me of the swans that serve as harbingers of spring in northeastern Washington.

In March, as the grip of winter loosens, the barking of swans overhead announces the arrival of spring. The annual northward migration of waterfowl coincides with the snowpack melting into shallow lakes in the valley floor south of Chewelah. According to Jack Nisbet, swans at Chewelah typically peak around St. Patrick’s Day. When the spring thaw is drawn out, the swans may be present from late February to early April. On March 8 this past spring, local birder Dave Kreft logged 90 tundra swans among the hundreds of geese and ducks on the part of my farm that floods south of Chewelah.

In recent years, some trumpeter swans have joined the migrating tundra swans stopping at Chewelah, and even more on Calispell Lake in Pend Oreille County. One of the trumpeter swans that visited my farmland in mid-March 2023 was wearing a GPS transmitter collar. She had been

captured at Summer Lake, Oregon, where she was fitted with the collar marked “@24.” She flies to the southeast Yukon each spring and spends the summer there to nest. In the fall she returns to Summer Lake for the winter, presumably with her mate and offspring. Because Summer Lake is a refuge my husband and I visit several times a year, we’ve probably seen her and her family.

Biologists estimate there were 100,000 trumpeter swans in North America in the 1600s. Hunted heavily during the 1800s, trumpeter swans were on the brink of extinction by the 1930s. Washington state joined reintroduction efforts in the 1960s and in 1988 introduced a mated pair at the Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge near Cheney.

After decades of high mortality (poisoning from lead ammunition, shooting, predators, and many birds that were just never seen again), there are finally two or three pairs of trumpeter swans at Turnbull. Most years they nest successfully. In addition to these few year-round residents, trumpeter swans migrate through eastern Washington as part of the Rocky Mountain population (the Cascade

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Range serves as the dividing line between the Pacific Coast and Rocky Mountain populations). These two populations apparently do not intermingle: they go to different areas for breeding and wintering.

The trumpeter swans do mingle with the tundra swans. Tundra swan populations were less affected by human settlement than trumpeter swans because they nest on Arctic tundra and migrate long distances to favored wintering areas. Their numbers are not what they once were, but they still greatly outnumber the trumpeter swans.

According to Pend Oreille County birder John Stuart, Calispell Lake is a month-long staging pond for north-bound tundra swans – and then they all get up and leave within about a week either side of the first of April. Historically, as many as 10,000 to 15,000 birds used Calispell Lake in the spring. Tundra swans don't stop there in the fall, but some trumpeter swans now use Calispell Lake in both the spring and fall migrations.

Why do the swans stop at Chewelah as winter fades into spring? They need rest stops on their long journey from Oregon to the Yukon, but mostly they need to eat. Swans lose weight during the winter, and long migrations take a huge toll. Compared to fall migration, the birds make shorter flights in the spring, with more stopovers for feeding so they can arrive on the breeding grounds ready to lay eggs and raise their cygnets.

While floating on the water, swans feed by dabbling with their bills, sifting various food bits out of the water: sedge seeds, floating duckweed, algae, aquatic invertebrates. They also tip their tails upward, submerge their heads, and extend their necks to nip off vegetation as deep as three feet below the surface.

Historically, swan diets consisted of these floating bits



Tundra swans wintering at Lower Klamath Refuge, Oregon. Photo by Robert Korfhage.

as well as tubers and rhizomes of aquatic plants like cattails, sedges, and bulrushes (sometimes called tules). Because many of the wetlands in their wintering and migration stops have been converted to agricultural fields, there is much less natural food for them. As a result, the swans replace their natural diet with farm crops, including winter wheat, potatoes and corn. While winter wheat seedlings are a valuable protein source, swans really need to supplement their diet with aquatic invertebrates (insects, snails, small crustaceans), which provide essential calcium and protein for producing eggs and chicks.

This coming March, when slogging through slush and mud, listen for the arrival of the swans overhead. Then imagine what glacial Lake Chewelah looked like full of swans during the Holocene when water covered the entire valley. Early spring would have been a noisy time indeed.

Cindy is a 1973 graduate of Jenkins High School. Her publications include the Field Guide to Grasses of Oregon and Washington, grass illustrations in Flora of North America, and botanical articles in Kalmiopsis. Her current passion project is restoring wetland habitats for wildlife on the family farm. She can be reached at her website, grassesandmore.wixsite.com/grasses or via email at grassesandmore@gmail.com.

December Random Thoughts

By Bob Gregson

First: Most of us don't pay much attention to Nobel Prize winners in the sciences. We don't know them, they usually do whatever it is they do in university laboratories in places like Chicago or London or Johannesburg, their areas of expertise are often pretty abstract, and their successes don't usually have much to do with our Inland Empire lives.

So, it was an exception when I happened to notice a trio of physicists who shared the Nobel Prize in physics this year. They researched and figured out something related to the behavior of stuff flying around inside electrical circuits. (That's MY version of the description. Might be wrong about the "flying" part.)

The OFFICIAL description of

their accomplishment was "for the discovery of macroscopic quantum mechanical tunneling and energy quantization in an electric circuit." Well, haven't we all wondered what was going on in electrical circuits? Especially in those nasty little Christmas tree lights where a bulb or two is out and we can't find the problem with the bulb or the plasticized wire? Ha! And I'll bet none of us had a clue that there was some kind of tunneling going on at the quantum level!

Seriously, the quanta theory, which became quantum mechanics, that came along around 1918 via the work of Max Planck has turned our understanding of our physical world upside down and inside out. Incidentally, Planck, a German college professor, won the 1918 Nobel in physics for that discovery.

While it appears that we live in a world that seems to be solid, Planck and other physicists say the world is now known to be made up of tiny packets of energy in wave or particle-like form. And those little guys operate in extremely strange ways. Like performing "quantum mechanical tunneling," whatever that means.

Another example is from Wikipedia where it says matter is 99% empty space. Try repeating that over and over to yourself when you painfully stub your toe on a chair leg enroute to the bathroom at 3 a.m. To paraphrase the comedian Groucho Marx, "Who you gonna believe, the physicists or your painful toe?"

Second random thought: Has anyone else noted how many utility trailers there are around here? Lots of pickup trucks pulling lots of

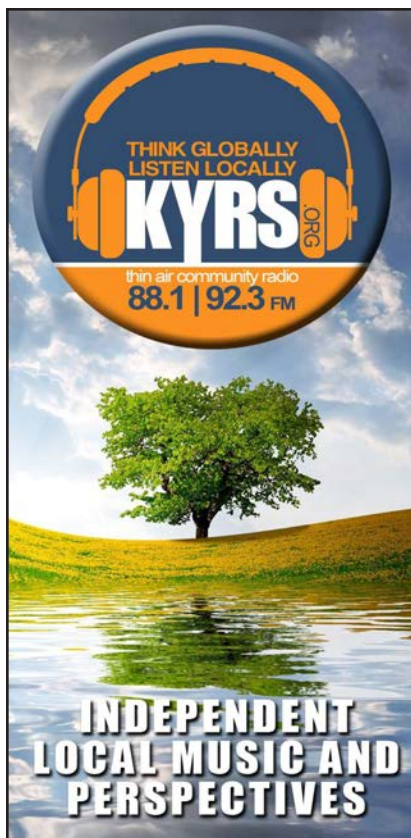
small trailers: building contractors, tradespeople, landscapers, persons headed to the dump, skimobilers, and on and on. Check it out when next looking at traffic.

In our RV travels around the country, we definitely noticed different preponderances of cars/trucks/trailers in various regions. Utility trailers in Spokane and NE Washington. Full-size four-door sedans are prominent in the small towns of Missouri and the lower Midwest. The South is full of jacked-up loud pickups but hardly any camper units on those trucks. Seattle and Portland have Subarus. Maine and upper New England have vehicles with salt-damaged lower body areas. Small cars naturally predominate in big cities.

Third thought: Washington state has as much geographical variation as does New Zealand, except that we lack the funny little mounds featured as hobbit dwellings in "The Lord of the Rings" movies.

So instead of vacationing in summertime New Zealand this winter, touring our state could save you thousands in airfare and two transit days of horrendously long, boring plane rides. New Zealand features clean towns, mostly, plus the inhabitants are very nice, resourceful people, but they drive on the wrong side of the road and seem to speak a different language.

Spelling is similar to what we learn in school and some say it's definitely a version of the English language. Hard to tell. For example, "Gdon-yamite" spells like an exotic explosive, but it's a saying that should be broken out into four words: good on ya mate, meaning a cheerful



greeting or departure comment. Or a rugby player acknowledging breaking five of your ribs while he's bleeding badly from somewhere on his body, all from a rugby tackle. But not a serious enough situation for either to leave the field.

If you choose to ignore this travel warning you might want to break up the trip by coming-and-going stops at Fiji or maybe Hawaii. And if you do go all the way to New Zealand ... 10 years ago I left a sort of bluish short-sleeve shirt with yellow trim in a motel room in probably the town of Christchurch; it was a favorite, and if you find it in a motel closet, please bring it back to the U.S. and let me know. Thank you in advance.

Final thought: While thinking of New Zealand's natural familiarity to Washingtonian's – and we did love the country – I am reminded how much the area from Spokane to the Canadian border recalled for me the central highlands in what was formerly South Vietnam. I saw that similarity from a worm's eye view in the mid-1960s when I was traipsing through the woods with a paratroop battalion.

Then, in 1968-69, when stationed in the main highlands town, Plei Ku, I was an aerial observer, seeing the world from up high. The terrain was hilly and wooded, broken up with large open spaces of knee-high grasslands at the lower elevations. Through the grasslands were well-worn trails created over many decades or even centuries by bare feet of indigenous people. Those people, called Montagnards ("mountain people" in French) by the French colonists and a more degrading name by the Vietnamese, used those trails to get to town or visit other villages. By then, many of them had begun to wear flip-flops or sandals made from worn-out tires.

After seeing those trails from the air, and recalling the history of this part of Washington, my imagination took me back to the Spokane area 200 years ago when OUR indigenous groups no doubt had networks of centuries-old trails near Spokane Falls and various points along rivers and streams and plant-gathering areas way up to the north into what is now Canada. A lot of those ancient trails are now rural or main streets

and highways.

You have to wonder what our current road networks of all types will look like 200 years from now, in 2225. Or in 3225!

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



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Creative Being in Stevens County

Intangible Gifts and Giving

Article & Illustrations by Marci Bravo

Between Halloween and the New Year, the river of advertising and catalogs crests and floods over my field of vision. I start to feel like Christmas is yet another Amazon-sponsored mandate for “On Sale Now” mentality and I get a tick in my left eye while contemplating the increased sales of questionably manufactured products for temporary and unsustainable dopamine hits. And then I unplug from all screens and devices and take off my Grinch hat and breathe.

To me, Christmas was inspired twofold, by the quietude and deep meaning of winter’s longest night married to the idea of a supremely loving and generous God. Contemplating meaningful generosity is the antidote I’m looking for.

I choose to sit still with myself, somewhere quiet, possibly near a cozy fire, considering the intangible gifts that are shared with me all year round, that give my life meaning, that reaffirm my belonging in the world.

Those heartwarming moments and trial-by-fire challenges; the relationships and the unexpected journeys which those relationships lead me through; the generosity of our Land and the life She sustains, and the peace that wraps around me like a comfort when I walk through the trees or watch dramatic storm clouds approach across the valley; kindnesses and heartache and the friends and family who are willingly present for both; the opportunities to

problem-solve and create, and the teachers, artists, poets, leaders and curious humans that support and inspire them; the sacred recognition of unanswerable mysteries and the kindred spirits that sit in intimate circles exploring and witnessing with one another; the gentle or fierce hugs

in times of grief, and the belly-aching laughter in equally appreciated company; warm eye contact and engaged conversations with strangers; opportunities to ballroom dance with my husband, or sweat it out in an energetic dance party at the gym; the sportsmanship and camaraderie of weekly





pickleball games; the unapologetic playfulness, curiosity and candor of children I know well and those I've met only once or twice.

This train of thought (more like a river? ocean??) sparks a creative twinkle in my eyes. The sudden brainstorm of gifting ideas, more often handmade than bought, swirls through my head, heart and hands. The idea of giving back is the true pleasure, the whole point. To give back to God feels like healing what we can of the Earth home that cradles us. To protect and care for the wildlife, and plants and bodies of water that are our Earthling family. And to give back to each other.

The card-making, needle-felting, carving, creating, donating and seeking begins. And within each gift is a prayer of appreciation and gratitude, of recognition and immeasurable love.

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



Ho Ho YOLO! —————

By Tina Tolliver Matney

There I was. “Loaded for bear” as my dad used to say. Although he was usually going deer or grouse hunting when he said it. He taught me that, no matter what the hunt is for, preparation is key to staying safe and being ready for any issues that may arise.

So, I had cleaned out the pickup, made sure the back was swept and all dust was wiped from the dash. Because, no matter how messy my pickup gets, I like to start an adventure with a clean rig.

I cleared the back seat of all hiking gear that had been used only twice over the summer because it turns out building a house and breaking fingers cuts down significantly on time and the ability to tie one’s hiking boots. Then I loaded up everything I needed for two days away from home.

The weather was just transitioning so my clothing pack was a little extra bulky. I had packed enough layers in case the weather went from dashboard cookie baking to scraping the windshield in 48 hours. Because I have “busy hands” I threw in a knitting project I started mid-flu last winter in hopes I could figure out which row I might be on and what I was knitting in the first place. By the overnight pack was my snack bag.

Hush now. I had been planning this adventure for some time. From the very moment the big, grey, plastic potty was delivered down my driveway where it has lived and still lives, until its removal next week. It was time to hunt for a real toilet.

I was ready for this simple luxury

that doesn’t require a flashlight, shoes and a baseball bat to get to at 2 a.m. So, there I was. Loaded for bear and off on a big pooppy adventure.

Because it turned out toilet hunting was not as easy as I had made it out to be in my tired head. How hard could it be to pick out a toilet, for goodness sake? Well, it’s about as hard as picking out lights and that was no walk in the park either. I spent the whole day listening to Christmas music piped over bright yellow lights that bask everything in the stores in a dark amber glow. It did not feel merry or bright or ho ho ho at all.

After heading to my motel that evening, I started to worry that there was no toilet in the big city that was the right style and color and in stock that would work in my small space. I’m not that

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picky, but I know what I want. I did a little more Googling with some peanut M&Ms and a little coffee to ensure I would probably never sleep again.

One thing I learned was that there are toilets out there that cost tens of thousands of dollars, which only added to my frustration of trying to find a simple, common commode to take home with me. There's a whole new world of "we don't have that in stock, but we can have it in 12 weeks" going on out there. What's up with that?!

As morning dawned bright and cold, I layered on just about everything in my pack, drank more bad coffee and texted my kids that I wasn't coming home without a toilet, even if it meant driving to Idaho or Montana to buy one. I was only half joking.

I went to the last building supply with a prayer on my lips. But alas, there was no toilet available in that store either. And when I say no toilet available, I mean I wanted the model that has a "skirt" that hides all the dust-collecting curves on the side. It's like they make these new and better features and then tease us with minimal production.

"Just kidding! We only made three!"

It was Sunday. My cat would be working her way through the cabin by now, shredding any bit of paper or magazine within reach and possibly lacing my socks if I'd left them on the floor. I wanted to go home. With tears in my eyes, I pointed my still clean and uncluttered rig toward home, taking the side route to the biggest box store because I wanted a rotisserie chicken and five years' worth of peanut butter and maybe a new pair of yoga pants for winter. I grabbed the smaller cart that is still huge and awkward to me

and off I went, feeling like a hunter with no game who was about to pack up and head home and sit down to a supper of crackers and spam. Maybe, at best, I could make a cup of tea, put on my new yoga pants and socks and find a toilet online. I hoped it could be delivered before Easter.

And then it happened. I needed some shop towels, so I headed in the general



vicinity of where I have no idea where anything is. A cart was coming toward me and stopped to ask if I was OK after they heard me gasp. I could only nod and point at first and then I said, "Look at that beautiful toilet!"

"It's a bidet, not a toilet," they said.

"It sure is and it's coming home with me."

They looked at me like I was a little unhinged because I was. That bidet moment in the middle of that huge warehouse will stick with me forever. I snapped a pic and sent it to my kids and I asked, "Is it bad if I spend this much

money on a potty? Is it an unnecessary and compulsive splurge?"

I can't write exactly what my daughter texted back, but in essence they all said, "No, Mom. You've been waiting a long time to get rid of the porta potty." "YOLO the toilet Mom!"

I had no idea what YOLO meant and had to ask my daughter. "You only live once" she said. "Get the bidet Mom!"

And so, I did.

Two strong, young men loaded it into my pickup while I rearranged the back seat to accommodate everything else, and then I came home. Grinning the entire way, knowing that it may have been a splurge. But it was a splurge that made—and still makes—me happy. I had a successful hunt after all! Once it was installed, everything about this situation seemed easier.

You might think it odd to make a big deal out of such a simple thing, but it has been the lack of simple human necessities that make me truly appreciate them now. Week by week the house is becoming a home. Day by day I feel the gratitude right down to my warm toes. I'll never forget these days in this

great big life of working to have a home again and all the people who have made it happen.

My wish for you during this holiday season is that you can find those moments in your own life where the simple things bring you the most joy. Happy Holidays to you and yours.

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.

Snowberry Sonnet

Article & Photo by D.L. Kreft

*"I think that I shall never see
A poem lovely as a tree..."*

~ Joyce Kilmer

Some of us are familiar with these lilting words, the opening lines of an oft-quoted poem. They are simple and expressive of the author's admiration for the beauty, strength, and enduring presence of trees. It started me wondering about writing a poem, a nature-themed poem, of course.

I'm no student of poetry, but I know a "good" poem when I read it. It is usually short and simple, like "Trees." It doesn't require me to think too hard but carries a punch, a subtle turn in the theme. I like Robert Service poems and a few of Robert Frost's.

So, like any good amateur, I turned to the internet, mainly because I couldn't remember a lick of my high school English literature. I needed to brush up on the principles. I quickly realized I was in over my head.

The overwhelming amount of material written about poetry caused a temporary mental paralysis. I didn't know where to start. I thought about letting an Artificial Intelligence program write one, but thought better of it. The AI-generated one would probably be better than mine and my ego wouldn't just deflate like a punctured balloon, it would slink away

sadly and vanish into the darkness. No, it must be original, frail, human.

Not being a total quitter, I decided to write a Shakespearean-style sonnet in praise of something out in nature. Yes, three rhyming quatrains in iambic pentameter, ending in a couplet. What could be hard about that?

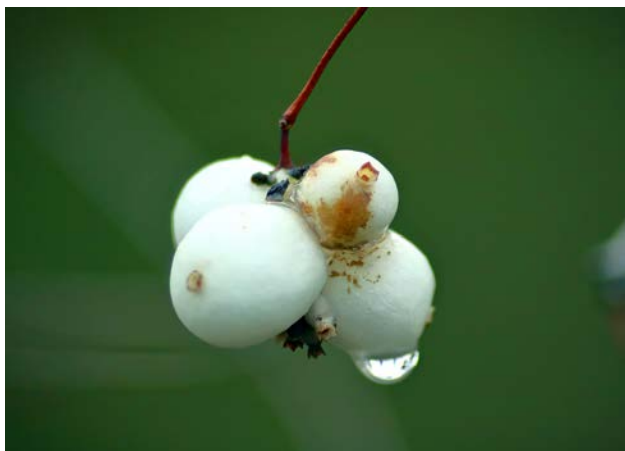
First, I had to study quatrains and iambs and meter and couplets to figure out what those meant. Then I had to pick a subject. I scoured through my photo collections and came upon a series on snowberries. Snowberry bushes are a common sight in northeast Washington. Their fresh crop of plump, round, white fruits are now starkly visible since their leaves have fallen to the autumn winds and

rains. They would be the subject of my sonnet.

Our common snowberry (*Symphoricarpos albus*) is a study in hardiness, utility, danger, and beauty. The snowberry fruit is not a white huckleberry. It is mildly toxic to humans, though some birds can eat them after they have been frosted. I'm not so sure they are the tastiest of fruits because, even after a long winter, many of the

little white globes remain unplucked on the slender brown branches of the shrub.

The common name, snowberry, is self-evident when you see the dense clusters of pure white fruits. Snowberry bushes are usually some of the first native plants to re-establish in abandoned pastures, logged-over areas,



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A Fresh Air Perspective

and fields burned by wildfires. The scientific genus name, *Symphoricarpos*, is derived from the Greek *symphori*, meaning to bear together, and *carpos*, meaning fruit. The specific epithet *albus* means the color white. So, you have a plant with clusters of white fruit – a snowberry.

Now to the sonnet. Sonnets were typically written as “little songs” meant to be read in silence, not performed. They often praised someone or something, then drew a contrast or presented a problem, and finally a resolution in the final couplet. I’ll leave out the technicalities of sonnet structure, mostly because you will be bored and secondly, I will likely get it wrong. I do not wish to be hounded by poets and English teachers for my inevitable blunders.

So, I studied my photographs of snowberry plants, looking for insight and inspiration. I settled on one taken on an overcast day, with a soft light that made the berries almost glow. The final touch was a drop of rain that clung to the underside of one of the berries, trying to hang on against gravity. In the midst of a gloomy day, the resilient snowberry bush produced a point of light to catch the eye and draw the mind to consider its beauty, and its potential

danger to an unwary person.

Snowberry Sonnet

*Not dark or single seen but clustered white
These globes are formed by God so perfect round
In sun they grow and swell to plump by night
They hang by slender branch above the ground*

*O bright green bush in forest fair you grow
And also in the meadow by the stream
In spring your blossoms white and pink do glow
They promise fruit beneath the leaves unseen*

*Your berries bright do beckon and distract
As autumn strips your leaves for winter soon
The birds for food your fruit they will attack
To careless man your poison spells their doom*

*Your beauty calls our hearts and time will show
How best to taste that fruit by those who know*

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

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Classics Corner: 'Leave Her to Heaven'

Jealousy is an ugly thing, unless it's portrayed by Gene Tierney in 1945's noir/thriller *Leave Her to Heaven*. Then jealousy is a sultry-eyed, Technicolor beauty that makes you forget romance is about to curdle like lemon juice added to milk.

Directed by John M. Stahl, *Leave Her to Heaven* features Tierney as Ellen Berent, a gorgeous socialite on her way to scatter her father's ashes in New Mexico. On the train she meets handsome, personable writer Richard Harland (Cornel Wilde) whom she forms an immediate attachment with. Their whirlwind courtship quickly leads to marriage and seemingly domestic bliss.

But this being a noir/thriller, we know all is not right at the homestead, which only becomes more apparent as Richard begins to write his new novel and his polio-stricken brother, Danny (Darryl Hickman), moves in. Ellen's jealousy toward anything that takes her husband's attention from her turns into an obsession, and you can bet she's going to make it other people's problem.

A lot has been written about film noir, whether it's feminist or misogynistic, dramatic or campy, sexy or prurient. Critics more qualified than I have debated on whether *Leave Her to Heaven* even is a noir, or if it's a romantic psychological thriller.

Sometimes I wonder if modern audiences have the patience for movies that aren't churned out like a Netflix original, which usually include an overabundance of smarmy quips, fast cuts and green screen sheen.

However, since I can tend only to my own tastes and make recommendations from there, I thoroughly appreciate uncut diamonds like *Leave Her to Heaven*, with their balancing act of excitements and taut pace, style and sincerity. It's a fun way to take a history lesson on an artistic medium so many of us enjoy.

Oh, and maybe don't marry hot strangers with their parent's remains under their arm on a whim. Even if they look like Gene Tierney.

***Not rated, runtime 1 hr, 50 min.**

Now Playing: 'Deliver Me from Nowhere'

The question is, will director and screenwriter Scott Cooper deliver us from Hollywood's entrenched biopic tropes in his latest film about American rock icon Bruce Springsteen?

No, he has decidedly not.

Biography movies are hard to do. They have a paint-by-numbers approach and the subject is usually portrayed in the softest light possible, meant to inspire and uplift with their tale of adversity overcome. It's rare that we get a unique take on the genre, like the jukebox musical *Rocketman* about Elton John or the vibrant, passionate *Frida* about Mexican painter Frida Kahlo.

What Cooper does with *Deliver Me from Nowhere* doesn't stand out, but it's not bad either. I don't want to give the impression that the film is boring or not worth your time. The cast, especially Jeremy Allen White as Bruce Springsteen, give commendable performances. White

does his own vocals in place of lip-synching, and though I usually do not prefer actors portraying real-life singers to use their own vocal chops, White sounds as near perfect as a person can get. I recommend watching character actor Stephen Graham in anything because that guy shines in whatever the role. Here he plays Springsteen's alcoholic, emotionally evasive father. There are no weak links in any of the movie's performers.

And of course, there's the music. I have a strong bias for Bruce Springsteen, as one of my earliest memories is popping my family's *Born in the USA* cassette into the stereo and blissfully running, jumping and dancing around the house through the entire album (even on the slow songs). His music is a part of my life that has done nothing but deepen in meaning as I've gotten older.

Deliver Me from Nowhere revolves around Springsteen's life as he penned

the now iconic 1982 lo-fi, DIY *Nebraska* after the release of his most commercially successful album at the time, 1980's *The River*. It shows him grappling with burgeoning fame and his attempts to stay connected with his hometown and roots, as well as how the literature and music he consumed inspired his own creativity.

Cooper has helmed a couple movies that I love (*Out of the Furnace* and *Black Mass*), but *Deliver Me from Nowhere* does not join them. I like it, and if you are a fan of Springsteen and rock 'n' roll in general, give it a watch. We'll always have his music.

***Rated PG-13, runtime 1 hr. 59 min.**

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



Well Over 300 Million and Counting

By Lynn O'Connor

I think we can all remember the thrill of opening our Christmas presents as kids. What a special day! Birthdays, too—especially birthdays. All the presents are just for you.

With the Dolly Parton Imagination Library (imaginationlibrary.com), a child, from birth to five years old, can have that experience *every single month*. Imagine their own age-appropriate book, mailed to them in their names, arriving every month to unlock the new world that a book can provide.

Inspired by her father's inability to read and write, Dolly Parton started her Imagination Library in 1995 for the children in her home county. Today, her program spans five countries and gives millions of books each month to children around the world. At least 3,197,250 kids are registered and 301,076,331 books have been gifted.

I loved books as a shy child (and still do). I remember feeling that books were my friends. Even now, when a good book ends, it's almost like saying farewell to a friend.

The Rotary Clubs of Colville and Kettle Falls have collaborated to bring this experience to more than 900 children in Stevens County by partnering with the Dolly Parton Imagination Library. We do this because early childhood literacy cancels out socio-economic differences in learning ability and strongly influences graduation rates and future success. We do this because rural families often have

limited access to early learning resources (in spite of the brilliance of our own library system). We do this because it is a worthy and worthwhile thing to do for the families of Stevens County.

The Washington state government used to provide 50% of the funding for this program, but the funding is no longer available.

The books are remarkably affordable, but we must still pay for them. It costs \$31.20 per child per year – that's for 12 books. What a deal! The total cost of the Stevens County program this year is \$30,638.40, and the clubs are paying for 100% of that now.

When you donate to fund-raisers that either club hosts, this is one of the programs you are helping us with. Both clubs greatly appreciate your support of all the projects we do.

This program is available to any child from birth to five years old. You can sign your child up by contacting us at rotaryclubofcolville@gmail.com. You can donate directly to the program by going to the "donate now" button on our website, colvillerotary.org, and clicking on the Dolly Parton Imagination Library link.

If you're interested in our activities, come and check us

out. The Colville club meets at noon on (most) Thursdays at El Patron Taqueria in downtown Colville, and the Kettle Falls club meets on Tuesdays at 8 a.m. at Sandy's Drive-In. We love to have guests!



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

LISTEN UP

Reviews by Michael Pickett

Chuck Wild's Liquid Mind XV

Having once co-piloted the still-awe-some Missing Persons through the US Festival in '83, and then jumping into projects with Quincy Jones (and legendary engineer Bruce Swedien), Michael Jackson, Frank Zappa and many more, keyboard wizard and composer Chuck Wild found himself increasingly pulled to a singular calling.

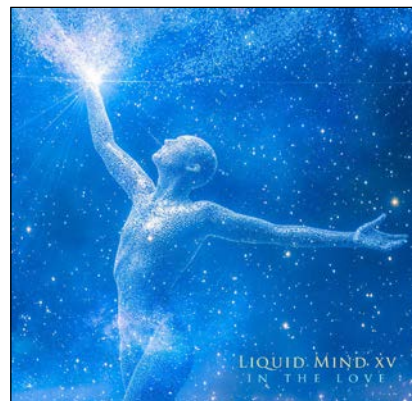
Like so many of us, Wild found himself at the business end of exhaustion and anxiety, and thus the Liquid Mind series was born: lush, cinematic-but-sedate music created to reorient run-down listeners with the rest they crave but often cannot find. Decades later, Wild has the gratitude of everyone from war veterans to a road-weary ex-Journey singer, Steve Perry, and a

rich catalog of superbly crafted relaxation music that has helped millions.

With *Liquid Mind XV: In the Love*, listeners can find themselves cocooned in beautiful chord colors that flow through the gorgeous "Gratitude." Wild's trademark angelic synths have never sounded better than on cuts such as "Sanctuary" and the stately "Forgiveness."

After years of audio-exploration and composing, it's a question how Wild has kept to LM's core mission and if he's refined his approach over time.

"Yes, there has been a gradual evolutionary shift, but I've also purposely tried to remain true to the fundamentals of Liquid Mind," Wild explains. "As time went on, the sonic character became smoother



after *Liquid Mind V: Serenity* in 2001 and tempos even slower in 2006 with *Liquid Mind VIII: Sleep*. I became increasingly more melody-oriented on most albums, and added very quiet background singers (singing 'ahhh') on all recent albums."

For music-lovers who could use a long-overdue dose of sonic comfort, this is the album (and catalog) for you.

Bumblefoot Returns Again

From the gentle stanzas of "Simon in Space" to the minimalism of "Liftoff"... just kidding ... there is nothing gentle about the first track or minimal about the last track. Ron "Bumblefoot" Thal, the player of impossible and beautifully

unexpected Swiss cheese guitar parts (you can see Ron's Swiss cheese guitar via an online search) is absolutely back, and we couldn't be happier.

With the fantastic, fun and insanely unpredictable *Bumblefoot Returns*, the one-time Shrapnel guitar god makes quick work of grooving oddities such as "Planetary Lockdown," the Tool-like "Anveshana" (with the mighty Guthrie Govan), the gut-punching "Monstruo-so" (with ex-Zappa stunt guitarist Steve Vai) and the beautiful but slightly off-kilter "Cintaku" (check out the YouTube guitar play-through video if you want a feel for the level Bumblefoot operates at).

I grew up with this guy on my guitar-radar, and then he was suddenly

fronting a version of Asia (singing John Wetton's parts effortlessly)! Then he was creating masterworks with Sons of Apollo. There may actually be no stopping Bumblefoot, and perhaps that is the warning we receive from the cinematic *Bumblefoot Returns* album cover, complete with weaponized guitar space-armadas and appropriate exploding celestial bodies.

This album isn't a gimmicky guitar extravaganza. It's a superb collection of works and from one of the greatest guitarists to ever play a recorded note. You would do well to purchase his recording immediately.

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



A Good Read

The Darkest White, by Eric Blehm

Reviewed by Terry Cunningham

This book was recommended to me by my 21-year-old snowboarding son.

On January 20, 2003, a hole was shredded into the fabric of the universe when an avalanche ended the meteoric life of Craig Kelly, the Godfather of Freeriding. As one of the pioneers of snowboarding, he left a huge void that will likely never be filled. Eric Blehm took on the difficult task of writing a biography about a beloved friend who just happened to be one of the most influential athletes of his time. It's not always about the skills displayed while participating in the sport, but also about the character of the athlete in the other arenas of life. Blehm knew this side of Kelly, from being his friend and riding bro.

The Darkest White: A Mountain Legend and the Avalanche That Took Him tells this inspirational story while Blehm holds back the tears from losing a best friend but feeling the need to tell Kelly's entire life story with accuracy, fact, admiration and love.

This is the story of a life that could have gone awry in so many places. Kelly's determination to be the best at everything he did was a driving force, but so was his desire to be an altruistic person. He wasn't a perfect person, but he seemed to have a need to carry everyone along on his journey to be the best.

Kelly didn't start out in Washington state. He was very young when his family moved to the Tri-cities. After some time there, and his parents divorced, he moved to Mount Vernon with dad. Here he discovered BMX racing, and this began his career of competing.

He was a good student. He went to the University of Washington to be an engineer. Just short of graduating, he was offered a chance to go pro as a snowboarder, and he took that offer. He was the world's champion snowboarder for years. During this time he helped to develop boards and the sport itself. His home mountain was Mt. Baker, just outside Bellingham, WA, in the Cascade Mountains. Mt. Baker offered challenges more severe than most of the competitions he was in, which seemed to give him an edge. No doubt riding with his gang, Mount Baker Hard Core, helped push him and the gang to levels that hadn't existed before.

On this incredible journey there would be romance

and dreams fulfilled. Sovina was the one he knew right away to be a perfect match. She also was very community minded, and willing to make a drive from Alaska to Chile, an incredible trip with surfing and snowboarding and a new family member, Baby Olivia.

Returning from their adventure, they took up residence in Nelson, British Columbia, heliskiing in the backcountry. The duo had a plan to start a backcountry ski business and Kelly was studying to become a professional backcountry guide. He was working as an intern the day the avalanche happened.

The community mourned and grieved for a long time. Memorials were held all over the world. The Mt. Baker Highway was renamed the Craig Kelly Highway. I didn't know him personally, but Blehm made me feel like I did, with Kelly's unwavering words of encouragement. Blehm makes a point to mention how many people called Kelly their best friend.

I highly recommend this book. It will give you insight into the enthusiasm for winter sports and the people who pursue them. Happy riding, everyone.

Blehm has also written *Fearless* (soon to be a major motion picture), *The Only Thing Worth Dying For* and *The Last Season*, which won the 2007 National Outdoor Book Award and was named by *Outside* magazine as one of the "greatest adventure biographies ever written."

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



How Your Food Can Turn On the Body's Healing Systems

By Rob Sumner

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

Over the past few months in our 4% Club, we've been diving deep into one of the most fascinating and hopeful topics in all of wellness – how to beat disease through food.

The idea isn't about dieting, restricting, or counting calories. It's about understanding that food is information. Every bite we take sends messages to our body – either to *protect* it or to *harm* it.

Thanks to the groundbreaking research in *Eat to Beat Disease* by Dr. William Li, we now have a clearer understanding of how the body's five natural defense systems – angiogenesis, regeneration, the microbiome, DNA protection, and immunity – are directly influenced by what we eat.

When these systems are supported, our bodies don't just survive, they heal, repair, and even reverse disease.

1. Angiogenesis: Building the Right Blood Vessels

Angiogenesis is your body's natural process of growing new blood vessels, which carry oxygen and nutrients to every cell. But too much or too little angiogenesis can mean trouble.

- Too little, and tissues starve.
- Too much, and cancer cells, inflammation, and fat tissue thrive.

Certain foods act as “angiogenesis regulators.” They help the body grow blood vessels where needed and prune away unhealthy ones that feed disease.

These good foods include green tea, tomatoes, turmeric, garlic, citrus, berries, and cruciferous vegetables such as broccoli and kale. They help reduce the blood supply to harmful cells while nourishing healthy tissue.

2. Regeneration: Repairing What's Broken

The body's ability to regenerate comes from special cells called stem cells. They rebuild tissue after injury, keep organs healthy, and slow the aging process.

But stem cells can't thrive in an inflammatory or nutrient-poor environment. Food choices either suppress or ac-

tivate them.

Eating more of kiwi, pomegranates, blueberries, dark chocolate (yes, really) and omega-3-rich foods such as salmon, flaxseed and walnuts can help the body replace old, damaged cells with new, healthy ones.

3. Microbiome: The Gut's Hidden Army

Your gut microbiome – trillions of bacteria living inside your digestive system – plays a huge role in everything from metabolism to immunity to mood.

When the gut is in balance, it produces powerful metabolites that protect the body. But when it's out of balance (from processed food, stress, or antibiotics), the “bad” bacteria take over, and inflammation spreads.

Feed your gut the right fuel:

- Prebiotic: garlic, onions, asparagus, bananas, oats
- Probiotic: yogurt, kefir, sauerkraut, kimchi, kombucha
- Polyphenols: berries, olive oil, green tea and dark chocolate

A healthy gut communicates directly with your immune system and brain. It's one of the most powerful disease-fighting tools you have.

4. DNA: Guarding Your Genetic Blueprint

Our DNA regularly takes thousands of hits from toxins, sunlight, pollution and stress. Normally, our bodies have a built-in repair system that fixes this damage. But poor diet, lack of sleep, and chronic inflammation can weaken that defense.

Foods that protect and repair DNA include blueberries, strawberries, and blackberries, green leafy vegetables, mushrooms (especially shiitake and maitake), and nuts and seeds.

These foods contain compounds that activate DNA repair enzymes, keeping your genetic code intact and your cells younger.

5. Immune System: Your Internal Defense Army

Your immune system isn't just about fighting colds. It's a full-time surveillance network that destroys damaged cells, clears infections, and maintains balance.

But the immune system depends on nutrition. Nutrient-rich foods create strong, intelligent immune responses; poor diets cause it to overreact or underperform.

So, eat more citrus fruits, mushrooms, fermented foods, leafy greens, garlic, green tea, and colorful vegetables. These help regulate inflammation and support the production of white blood cells and antibodies – your body's natural defense forces.

Putting It All Together: Eating to Heal Every Day

The best part about these five defense systems is that they work together.

- The foods that repair DNA often also improve angiogenesis.
- The foods that feed gut bacteria strengthen immunity.
- The foods that boost stem cells often reduce inflammation.

You don't need a complicated plan. You just need diversity and consistency. Here's how you can start right now:

- Make your plate colorful. The more variety, the more phytochemicals supporting all five systems.

- Add one "defense food" to every meal. For example: a handful of berries at breakfast, olive oil on your salad, green tea in the afternoon.
- Choose quality over quantity. Real food heals; processed food confuses your body.
- Make it enjoyable. Create an eating plan that you can live with, share with family, and look forward to each day.

Every time you eat, you're not just fueling your body – you're either fighting disease or feeding it. When we eat intentionally, we let the body's natural defenses do what they're designed to do: protect and repair.

Final Thoughts

Food isn't a quick fix or a replacement for medical care, but it is a foundation for longevity, energy, and resilience. The research is clear: When we feed our five defense systems daily, we're not just living longer, we're living better.

If you want my "Eat to Beat Disease Food List," which breaks down the best foods for each of the five defense systems, email me at rob@sumnerpt.com and I'll send you a free copy.

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

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Yoga and the Advent Season

By Brenda St. John

“I am sure that God keeps no one waiting unless He sees that it is good for him to wait.”

~ C.S. Lewis, *Letters to Malcolm: Chiefly on Prayer*, Letter 22

For some, this is the season of Advent. It is often overlooked and lumped in with the Christmas season. However, Advent is very important in its own right, and observing Advent properly makes Christmas much more wonderful in a holy and spiritual way.

Just as Lent precedes Easter, Advent precedes Christmas. It is a time of waiting, preparing for the “big event” of Christmas, the coming of Christ as a baby. There is not a strict regimen of how to do this. It is up to each person to decide for themselves. The three pillars of the 40 days of Lent are prayer, fasting, and alms-

giving. Advent, on the other hand, has a different theme for each of the four weeks. Many people observe these themes with an Advent wreath containing four candles, with each of the candles representing one of the theological virtues of hope, peace, joy, and love.

Yoga, too, is filled with waiting. People practice yoga for a variety of reasons – to get stronger, improve balance, become more flexible, or reduce anxiety, just to name a few – and these things take time. Mastering the poses also takes time. We patiently wait for results, which will manifest over time and with consistency.

Week 1 of Advent focuses on hope. In both yoga and Christian spirituality, hope is not just positive thinking. It is much more. It is confidence that the path is right and heading toward the desired destination. It is a mature trust that the practice will bear the longed-for fruit, provided we stay the course.

Week 2 of Advent focuses on peace. With yoga, we are striving for peace in body, peace in mind, and peace in spirit. Yoga Sutra 1.2 defines yoga as “the stilling of the fluctuation of the mind.” When the mind’s waves are stilled, what remains is peace. During Advent, the focal peace refers to peace

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with God, peace in our hearts, and peace among all people and nations. These gifts are given by the baby in the manger, the Prince of Peace, if we choose to accept them.

Week 3 of Advent focuses on joy. The third Sunday of Advent is referred to as Gaudete Sunday (pronounced Gow-DAY-tay), which is Latin for “rejoice.” In yoga, joy is considered to be our true nature. It shines through when the mind finally stops obscuring it. With perseverance, a quiet background of joy will become who we are, whether we are having a good day, a difficult day, or an ordinary day.

Week 4 of Advent focuses on love. The book, *The Four Loves*, by C.S. Lewis, looks at the different types of Christian love, and, during Advent, the focus is on the type of love called agape. Agape (pronounced a-GAH-pay) is a Greek word which describes unconditional love. It is the highest form of love, it is selfless, and it focuses on the well-being of others. This same philosophy is woven throughout all of yoga.

Waiting is a spiritually enriching time. In yoga, it leads to the yogi becoming a more disciplined person who has the patience to abide in the present moment. Other periods of waiting lead to other things, but there is something universal in common: The waiting is not wasted time. It is an opportunity for glorious preparation and anticipation. We pretty much know what to expect at the end, even

though it’s not yet here and can’t be seen. The waiting itself becomes very special and prepares us for the best which is yet to come.

A yoga asana which exemplifies waiting (as in waiting to master) is Hanumanasana, otherwise known as the splits. The pose is pronounced Hah-new-mahn-AH-sa-nuh and it is a good example of waiting because rarely can people do the full pose their first time practicing it. It often takes months or years before the body allows one to fully drop into it.

The pose is named after a mythical monkey-god who made a gigantic leap from south India to Sri Lanka to rescue a kidnapped princess. An easier version is Ardha Hanumanasana, with the word Ardha meaning “half.” Therefore, it is the half splits, with the front leg straight and the knee of the back leg on the mat.

It is easiest to begin constructing the full pose from Table Top, meaning both hands and both knees are on the mat. Lift the right knee and step the right foot forward between the hands. With the right knee over the right ankle, the pose is now a Low Lunge. From here, flex the right foot and slide the right heel forward as far as the hamstrings allow. Square up the hips by drawing the right hip back. Keep sliding the right heel farther until the front leg is straight, if that is possible. Once the front leg is straight, keep going until the back leg is also straight. The full splits is achieved when the back of the front thigh and the front of the back thigh touch the floor. Focus on keeping the hips squared. The arms are secondary and can be in a variety of positions.

There are many ways to make Hanumanasana accessible to every-

one. Blocks under the hands while building the pose help to keep the spine vertically aligned. A bolster under the pelvis allows rest in the pose without the thighs reaching all the way to the floor. From Table Top, place the bolster in front of the hands and then step the front foot over it. If the foot is on a high-friction surface, such as a yoga mat or carpet, place the front heel on something which will slide, such as a plastic bag.

Hanumanasana is an advanced yoga pose. It takes dedication and waiting in order to achieve it. Happy Advent and Namaste!

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

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Contemporary Native American Art

By Coleestah Finley

As Native artists continue to reclaim their culture from suppression, many new art forms develop from old ones. Today, for example, there are many different styles of contemporary Native painting, fashion, and dance. Just about any art form you can think of, indigenous artists have used in their artwork. Some popular ones that I'm more informed on are ribbon skirts and contemporary powwow dancing.

Although some tribes have different types of ribbon skirts based on their own traditional clothing, they all have a similar, general layout: long skirts made with cotton fabric with ribbons going across the skirt horizontally. A ribbon skirt is a form of cultural survival and is used to showcase identity and tribal solidarity.

Some seamstresses add creative features to their ribbon skirts, such as heat-n-bond designs, special fabrics with patterns and lace overlays. These skirts are mostly worn for important events like ceremonies and gatherings, but they are worn casually, too.

Another form of contemporary Native American art is

powwow dancing styles that stem from older counterparts. In both old and new powwow dancing are, for example, women's fancy, women's jingle, and men's grass. Differ-

ing in dance moves and regalia styles, some bigger powwows divide the old from the contemporary style in contests. Dancers can choose which style matches them best; personally, I prefer to dance contemporary women's fancy, but I think all dances are very powerful.

Native American contemporary art is such a broad topic to discuss, and there are so many styles beyond ribbon skirts and contemporary dancing. So many talented indigenous artists are expressing themselves in old and contemporary ways. I encourage everyone to learn more.

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



My family wearing ribbon skirts or other native fashion. From left, Summer Finley, Jackie Finley, me, and Lori Joseph.

Catch all the action!



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A Year On The Farm

The Making of Beef Sausage

By Michelle Lancaster

My favorite learning experiences are when I learn something that goes contrary to what I always thought. For example, I always thought you had to use casings to make sausage links until my husband and I attended a Spokane Extension class on lamb slaughter and sausage making. There we learned that sausages could be hand-shaped in patty or link form because salt interacting with meat protein causes meat to stick together.

Another assumption I had was that sausage had to be made from pork. A friend even said someone told her the meat would not come together properly unless you used pork. But wait, I see beef sausage in the store, so how do *they* get away with using other meats? We butchered a whole steer and had enough hamburger for the apocalypse, so I figured now was the time to test out some alternate theories.

Sure enough, beef makes sausage that tastes ... just like sausage!

My recipe, for a base of two pounds of ground beef, includes:

- 3 tsp. dried sage, powdered
- 2 tsp. dried thyme
- 1½ tsp. ground mustard
- 1 tsp. ground fennel seed
- ¼ tsp. dried cayenne or chipotle, powdered
- ½ tsp. ground black pepper
- A pinch of ground nutmeg
- 2 Tbsp. maple sugar
- 1 Tbsp. salt
- 3 garlic cloves
- 1 Tbsp. grated fresh ginger

Combine the dry spices to run through a spice grinder again, breaking down larger spices until everything is

fully powdered. Sprinkle the sugar, salt, garlic, ginger, and mixed spices over the meat, then use a stand mixer to gently mix the meat and spices together on a very low setting using a basic mixer head, not the whisk.

The mix turns for only a minute or so. Salt chemically reacts with the proteins in the meat to create a sticky consistency. Too much stirring seems to toughen the meat, so stir carefully.

Form the sausage into patties or links and freeze individually on a non-stick sheet like a silicone mat before placing in a storage container and re-freezing. The sausages can also be made into tiny balls (for a kale sausage soup or Italian wedding soup). *No casing required*; they will hold their shape!

To cook the sausage patties, I simply grab the number I want to cook out of the freezer and place in a cast iron pan. I add a dash of water, place a lid on top, and cook. Our meat has just enough fat for cooking. The sausages also cook well in the oven if you have that heated

up already.

I like knowing exactly what I am eating in ground meat. That goal is what led me to search for a good sausage recipe. My first try at beef sausage was a little salty, so I adjusted the recipe. My second try was a little tough, so I revised the processing method. These sausages were all quite edible and actually pretty delicious.

After experimenting with several recipes, I now have some opinions on sausage processing. More variety is better when it comes to spices. Minimal mixing, as with a biscuit dough, makes for a more tender sausage.

In season, I change up the recipe to substitute fresh herbs and spices for their dried counterparts. This sausage recipe has helped me use up many pounds of hamburger and it's delicious, fresh, and healthy as well.

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



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My Ghosts of Christmas Past—

By Karen Giebel

Unlike the ghosts of Charles Dickens' 1843 iconic novella, *The Christmas Carol*, my ghosts are not scary and are not there to haunt me or to teach a lesson the hard way. No, my ghosts are friendly, more like one of my favorite childhood cartoon characters, Casper the Friendly Ghost. My ghosts are my family members, long since passed away but always on my mind, no more so than this time of year.

The Ghost of Christmas Past in Dickens' story represents memory and its purpose was to show Scrooge his mistakes in life, including greed, animosity, and placing money above love and family. My ghosts are there to remind me of how loved I was. Loved, cared for, supported, taught, disciplined, and more, by a small group of people I was blessed to have raised me. I never feel closer to them than at this time of the year for a good reason.

Grandma, who lived with us, died on New Year's Eve in 1968 and was buried three days later on her 84th birthday. Dad died the day after Thanksgiving in 1989. Mom died in my arms, at my house the day after Christmas in 1994. So, each year when the holiday season comes around, there are not many moments when they are not at the forefront of my mind. I welcome the memories that flood over me and also flood my eyes at times during the holidays.

Growing up, Thanksgiving was always at our house with our grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins. It was deer hunting season in New York State and my dad always hunted on

Thanksgiving morning (and any other chance he got) and he never failed to bring it home. Dinner never varied: turkey, stuffing, mashed potatoes, sweet potatoes, green bean casserole, and all sorts of pickles and bowls of nuts to crack. Dessert at every holiday featured the four pies my mom baked: apple, pumpkin, mincemeat and pecan. We kids gathered in front of the black and white television, complete with rabbit

wide open, mouth agape, staring at Santa Claus! He "ho ho ho'd" his way into the living room with a sack slung over his back.

At first we kids were too stunned to say anything but that soon gave way to squeals of laughter and excited jumping up and down. Santa asked us what we wanted for Christmas and then gave us each a box of Cracker Jacks from his sack. Around that point, my sister

and I noticed that under Santa's fur-trimmed jacket was a familiar burgundy shirt cuff like our beloved Uncle Dinny wore. We were told that Uncle Dinny was at work and he did work the night shift, so we believed that Santa was real and off to bed we went so he could leave our presents under the tree.

It wasn't until I was an adult and saw that photo with the shirt cuff sticking out that I realized it was Uncle Dinny, not that I believed it was really Santa, but I had no idea who it was. Someone they hired,

maybe? My mom got quite a chuckle out of that.

A week before Christmas, my dad would take a saw and walk back to the acre of Scotch pine that grew on our property and choose the tree that would grace our living room. Like dad's everywhere, it was his job to cut the tree, put the tree in the stand and wrestle with the strands of lights that inevitably had one blown bulb that took out the entire string of lights.

That of course, resulted in endlessly having to test each bulb to find the culprit before being strung on the tree.



ears, enthralled with the Macy's parade.

When I was eight years old, my brother and sister and I begged to go see Santa Claus at the department store in Dunkirk, NY, to tell the jolly old elf what we wanted for Christmas. But my parents kept putting us off until it was too late. There we were on Christmas Eve and Santa had no idea what we wanted for Christmas.

We were bathed, ready for bed and bundled in warm bathrobes when the doorbell rang and my mother asked me to answer the door. There is a photo somewhere of me standing there, eyes

Reflections on Life's Journey

His children would be standing there holding boxes of shiny ornaments, eagerly awaiting the lights to be turned on so we could decorate that tree.

And decorate we did. No fancy themed Christmas tree for us. Oh no ... we had boxes of glass balls but also any kind of child-made, construction-paper cutouts of trees, candy canes, reindeer and more, drizzled with Elmer's glue, heavily sprinkled with glitter and hung on the tree with pipe cleaners. Silvery tinsel was applied heartily and randomly by several pairs of small hands. Finally, dad placed the star on the top and we stood there bright-eyed and entranced by yet another Christmas masterpiece.

The photo of nine-year-old me is someone I barely recognize but remember oh-so-well. 1962 truly is a long time ago. Our cat, Mr. Purry Whiskers Castleberry, was loved by us all. That cardboard fireplace came down from the attic every December to be assembled and hung with beautiful hand-knit stockings made by Aunt Ollie, my mother's sister. She never married but she doted on her family and every child she ever met was knitted a stocking whether they were family or not. Those stockings on Christmas morning contained an orange, some nuts, and a couple pieces of chocolate. I still hang mine up every year.

Christmas was not complete without the children's service at the First Baptist, a church my grandfather founded. All of us Sunday School kids had a role to play. Those who could sing, sang. Those who played an instrument, played carols. Those who did neither took turns reading the bible verses of the birth of Christmas from the book of Luke. My sister, a year older than I (and now deceased), and I sang "Oh Little Town of Bethlehem" every ... single ... year.

I dearly wanted to sing the melody but was relegated to harmony every ... single ... year. The bright side of that experience is that I can sing harmony on just about any song you throw at me. I'm not saying I can sing it well, but I can sing it.

Gail played her clarinet beautifully and Carol sang "Oh Holy Night," every single year. Gail and her siblings were regular attendees. Carol was there on Christmas and Easter and had a beautiful voice. After the service, we young ones were handed a box of candy. Some were filled with fake raspberry jam or chocolate-filled peppermint straws. Included was one, just one, glorious piece of cream-filled chocolate candy – which we automatically gave to our father. I still have no idea what that chocolate

tasted like.

Those are the Ghosts of my Christmas Past.

Blessed. We had little but we had everything.

The ghosts of Dickens taught us this: "There is nothing in the world as irresistibly contagious as laughter and good humor."

The message of *The Christmas Carol* is this: "It is never too late for a person to change and become a better, more compassionate and generous person."

In the words of Tiny Tim, "God bless us, every one!"

Merry Christmas to all!

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



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They Rest Here

By Donna Potter Phillips

There are no oak trees shading Evergreen Cemetery, but there are Acorns resting there. Acorns being a large immigrant family from Prince Edward Island, Canada.

Evergreen Cemetery was established long ago to serve the town of Colville and surrounding areas. The earliest known burial there was on June 11, 1868. Neglected for years, Evergreen Cemetery fell (officially) into the hands of the Northeast Washington Genealogical Society in 2009. Members of this dedicated group have worked tirelessly to remedy the vandalism, to remove encroaching vegetation and to restore damaged tombstones. The society maintains on its website an index of names of those buried in Evergreen Cemetery.

There is John Acorn, born in 1844 on Prince Edward Island. John came west in 1888 as a construction contractor for the Northern Pacific Railroad. John helped to establish the rail line to Colville and that “decided him a new home there.” His family joined him in 1898.

John Acorn had married Harriet Campbell in 1866 on Prince Edward Island. Their eight children were born there: John Cameron in 1867; Jane Elizabeth in 1871; Eva Amelia in 1873; Marguerite in 1875; James Maxwell and William Alexander, twins, in 1878; Edith Maude in 1881, and LeRoy Evans in 1885.

Stop to imagine a 3,000-mile transcontinental railroad trip in 1898 with eight offspring ages 31 to 13. It surely was up to mom Harriet to ramrod four lively boys and four lovely girls and to keep them entertained and fed for this L-O-N-G trip. Not to mention making all the physical arrangements for the trip, including packing for shipping all their belongings. Could you do it?

The oldest son, John, married Mary Isabelle McLeod. He was a contractor in the area and helped to build the power plant at Meyers Falls, the Colville city reservoir and the bridge over the Little Pend Oreille River at Arden. He died in 1927 in Colville and rests in Evergreen Cemetery.

Jane, also known as Jennie, married Charles Carruthers in 1900 in Colville. Jennie died in 1901 of consumption and rests in Evergreen Cemetery.

Eva, also known as Harriet, married Earl Jackson in 1945 in Colville. She died in 1959 in Central Kootenay, B.C., and was cremated.

Marguerite married Frederick Davis in 1902 in Colville. She died in 1957 and is buried in Los Angeles.

James never married. He died in Colville in 1903 and is buried in Evergreen Cemetery.

William married Mary Belle Cousins. He died in 1934 in Ellensburg but rests in Highland Cemetery, near Colville.

Edith married Andrew Simpson in 1920 in Spokane. She was a practical nurse at the Eastern State Hospital in Medical Lake for over twenty years. She rests in Evergreen Cemetery.

LeRoy married Blanche Orr in 1910 in Colville. He was a salesman for the B.G. Ewing Paper Co. He died in 1943 and rests in Riverside Memorial Park in Spokane.

The progenitor of this Stevens County family, John Acorn, died at his home in Colville after an illness lasting nearly a year. He was eulogized in his 1920 obituary, which said: “In his lifetime, Mr. Acorn was a toiler in both mind and body and it was not his inclination to pass around that which could be surmounted. It was his nature to strive rather than proceed listlessly through the affairs of the world. He loved his family and was of a kind and forgiving nature which endeared him to them. His friendships were chosen with discretion and were strong and enduring. ... He was a Christian nobleman, a fine citizen, emulating the oft repeated story: ‘It is not helps but obstacles, not facilities but difficulties, that make men.’”

While there is no stone to mark the location, John Acorn rests in Evergreen Cemetery.

Harriet Moore Acorn lived until 1930 and died in Spokane and her services were conducted by members of the Colville chapter of the Order of the Eastern Star. She rests beside her husband. Harriet was survived by only five of her children, but such mortality was common in that time. The hymns sung at her service were “Abide with Me,” “Safe in the Arms of Jesus” and “Nearer My God to Thee.”

Many Acorn descendants helped build Colville, Stevens County and Washington State. Some have been by marriage named McLeod, Carruthers, Jackson, Davis, Cousins, Simpson, Orr and others. Like acorns from an oak tree, the Acorns grew to sustain our state.

The Northeast Washington Genealogical Society welcomes help from individuals or groups to maintain Evergreen Cemetery. Contact them at info@newgs.org or via their Facebook page or call Lora Rose 509-684-5690 (home) or 509-675-1138 (cell).

Donna Potter Phillips has been active with the Eastern Washington Genealogical Society for nearly 50 years. Her passion is searching out ancestors, learning family histories and helping others find their family's stories. She lives in Colbert, WA.

Tilth

Article & Photo by Joe Barreca

100 years ago, my grandfather sold boxes of apples door to door in St. Louis. He picked them up at the train station. They were labeled “Kettle Falls.” Lenore Bible and her brother worked after school nailing apple boxes together in Kettle Falls to make money for their family after their father died in an accident at work.

80 years ago, chemical companies that made potassium nitrate, an ingredient in gunpowder, during World War II began selling it as fertilizer. Soon, nitrates and pesticides derived from chemical warfare were polluting the soil, air and water. In 1962 Rachel Carson published *Silent Spring*.

51 years ago, author and farmer Wendell Berry spoke at Expo ‘74 in Spokane, delivering a speech called “The Culture of Agriculture” at the Agriculture for a Small Planet symposium. His speech criticized corporate agriculture and inspired the formation of the Tilth movement, an organization focused on sustainable, organic farming. After the symposium, Berry encouraged those who were interested in alternative agriculture to gather, which led to the first Northwest Conference on Alternative Agriculture, held in Ellensburg, Washington. Over 800 of us

attended that conference, where we formed the organization Tilth to support organic and sustainable farming practices in the Pacific Northwest.

45 years ago, Robert Rodale, son of organic farming pioneer J.I. Rodale, coined the term “regenerative organic agriculture” to describe farming practices that go beyond “sustainable” by actively improving the health of soil and other natural resources.



On November 12, 2025, Tilth held a conference at the CenterPlace Regional Event Center in Spokane Valley in partnership with the Spokane Conservation District. Several of us attended that conference (pictured above) to learn about what is happening with Alternative Agriculture.

I am saying Alternative Agriculture because organic and regenerative products still amount to less than 5% of the food grown in the United States, so they are still “alternative.” In one of the first general sessions at

the conference we listened to farmers who are making the transition from completely commercial practices to regenerative agriculture. Their farms were large, thousands of acres.

Today, the average farm size is 444 acres; 671,000 farmers manage small acreage farms while 46,000 manage large farms (usfarmdata.com). About 84% of our food comes from large farms averaging 5,500 acres, or about 8.6 square miles. The

irony is that both large and small producers feel trapped in their production practices.

Large farms have over a million dollars of equipment, a host of employees and often lease payments, taxes and loans to repay. Only large agribusiness companies can handle their volume through

commodity markets with low per-unit pricing. Farmers often rely on government price supports that will cover losses only if the farms conform to general practices that include chemical fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides. Farmers markets and direct sales to consumers will not keep them in business. Often, their crops and seeds are patented, so farmers can’t grow their own seeds. Often the crops are genetically engineered to resist herbicides and need chemical fertilizers to grow.

Large-scale farmers need to sell

to large-scale production facilities that turn their production into small items that the average consumer can afford. Even though regenerative practices produce the same amounts or more of grain, beans, livestock, etc. at lower costs than conventional methods, and sell for more than non-organic products, when selling to commodity brokers, large regenerative producers can't make more money per unit of output than conventional farmers. Those trying to make a transition have to take small, incremental steps or risk losing the farm.

On the other end, small producers have to not only focus on their soil health and production, but they often have to process their own products, market those products and distribute them directly to consumers or to smaller local outlets. It is a lot more work, time and money for a smaller overall income. They need expertise and connections in more diverse areas per farm. So, it is hard for them to grow bigger.

The science is not standing still. People came to this conference to learn about new methods of testing, managing and increasing the health and diversity of their farms. Here are some of the innovations we heard about:

- Sap testing takes samples from both old and new growth to see what nutrients are being lost over time and need to be replaced.
- DNA analysis identifies not just the lineage of the crop but also of microbes and species that have symbiotic or parasitic relationships with it.

- Reverse osmosis is softening the hard water often pumped from wells and used for irrigation. It decreases disease and increases production.
- Green lightning is a technology that increases the nitrogen content of water with electricity, much like natural lightning does to rainwater. It lessens the need for chemical fertilizers.
- Microscopes are being used, not just in the laboratory, but also in the field to tell in real time what is happening with the plant, the soil and the biology on a farm.
- More sophisticated methods of composting agricultural waste into fertilizer are making compost into its own product that can be worth hundreds of dollars per ton.
- Compost teas of many kinds can be made on the farm for fertilizers, pest control and plant health enhancement.
- Bioextracts store longer, ship further, are more efficient and can be scaled to larger operations than compost teas.
- Cover crops enrich the soil and protect it from being leached out or dried out. They can either be grown with a main crop or between harvest and planting.

In all of these things, biology is becoming the key to increased health, production and biodiversity. Regenerative agriculture works by recognizing and leveraging the symbiotic relationships that nature already provides.

In our lifetime, agriculture is try-

ing to change dramatically. There are a lot of groups helping to make that happen. Tilth is partnering with many of them. Eat Local First was at the conference with maps showing local producers. Buying local keeps money in the community. Slow Food is international but focuses on local areas. Ours is Slow Food Upper Columbia (slowfooduppercolumbia.wordpress.com). We meet almost every month to share food and friendship. The Huckleberry Range Community Collective (facebook.com/groups/huckleberryrangecommunitycollective) wants to make it more accessible and more affordable for families and homes to be self-sufficient, within a supportive and cooperative community. They share tools, seeds and supplies.

A good, local, all-around source of help and information on farming is the Stevens County Conservation District. You can talk to Darla Clowser, 509-684-7579. "Tilth" means "ground suitable for sowing seeds." We still have a lot of growing to do.

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



Mystery Visitors

By Steven Bird

This happened on Christmas Eve, a long time ago. We were young then, our first child only a few months old. Maybe we were just young and naïve, but there seemed to be more mystery in the world then. More of a chance that strange possibilities might become reality.

At that time, in the early 1970s, Stevens County had only about a quarter the population it has now, and it seemed like this part of the world still held one foot in an older, wilder time. There were still wide swaths of country that did not feel *settled*.

We lived far from town, far from any neighbors, in a small log cabin beyond the power lines. The river road was still gravel and sparsely traveled. Just across the Pend Oreille River from Canada, it was rumored the cabin was a bootlegger hideout during Prohibition. The remote cabin, just a short row across the river to legal Canadian hooch, was perfectly situated for a smuggling operation.

Located on a bluff near the confluence of two major rivers – the Columbia and Pend Oreille – our 20 acres attracted wandering game. A throng of mule deer wintered in the hardwood scrub on a bench below us. We had a lot of bear visitors through spring and summer.

Once, while canning peaches on the woodstove, the door open, a very large and bold bear, unable to resist the scent of the peach processing, sauntered into the cabin, showing no fear of me and my traumatized young wife who, no doubt, was then having second thoughts about having followed me to this dangerous place at the back of beyond.

Unfortunately, the raiding bear was fearless and aggressive and I had to grab the rifle off the wall and bring the frightening show to a sad end. The great bear was wearing a Banff B.C. metal tag in

its ear. We were over a hundred miles south of Banff...

And there were visitors perhaps stranger than the Banff bear. We witnessed a herd of maybe a dozen extremely rare woodland caribou come single file from the woods and pass through our meadow heading toward the wilderness of Zee Canyon up the Pend Oreille. With their immense beams curved along the length of their backs, they looked like something that stepped out of the Ice Age. They passed like ghosts. We saw them that once, and never again. I have since heard that southern woodland caribou face extinction.

Then, stranger still, were the mysterious visitors that we never saw.

One night while we lay in bed up in the cabin's loft, something hammered a corner of the roof with such force that it rocked the entire cabin, knocking some of the chinking from the massive logs. It was like a giant balled fist had slammed down on a corner of the shake roof – BOOM.

Doris sat up in bed, terrified. I climbed downstairs and ran outside. Nothing. No sign of damage to the roof and no sign of any ruckus in the yard. Possibly an owl flew into the roof, I wondered. But, I reasoned, a hit that hard would surely have killed any bird, and there was no tell-tale body or even a single feather stuck to the shake roof as evidence. And whatever it was that hit the roof with enough force to shake the cabin like that had to have been much heavier than even the largest of owls... That incident remains a mystery.

Then there was the night we were outside enjoying a campfire, and what looked like a very bright star over the mountains caught our eye. It was larger than a star. Then, while we were watch-

ing, it suddenly made an impossibly fast change of position, shooting upward at a slight angle to a much higher altitude, then abruptly stopping.

It hovered there for a minute or so, then quickly dropped back to its original altitude, its flight path having drawn an acute triangle – no maneuver any earth-made craft I knew of could possibly accomplish. It hovered again. Then suddenly it shot straight up and disappeared into the starry night.

Yet the most mysterious visitor came on a Christmas Eve.

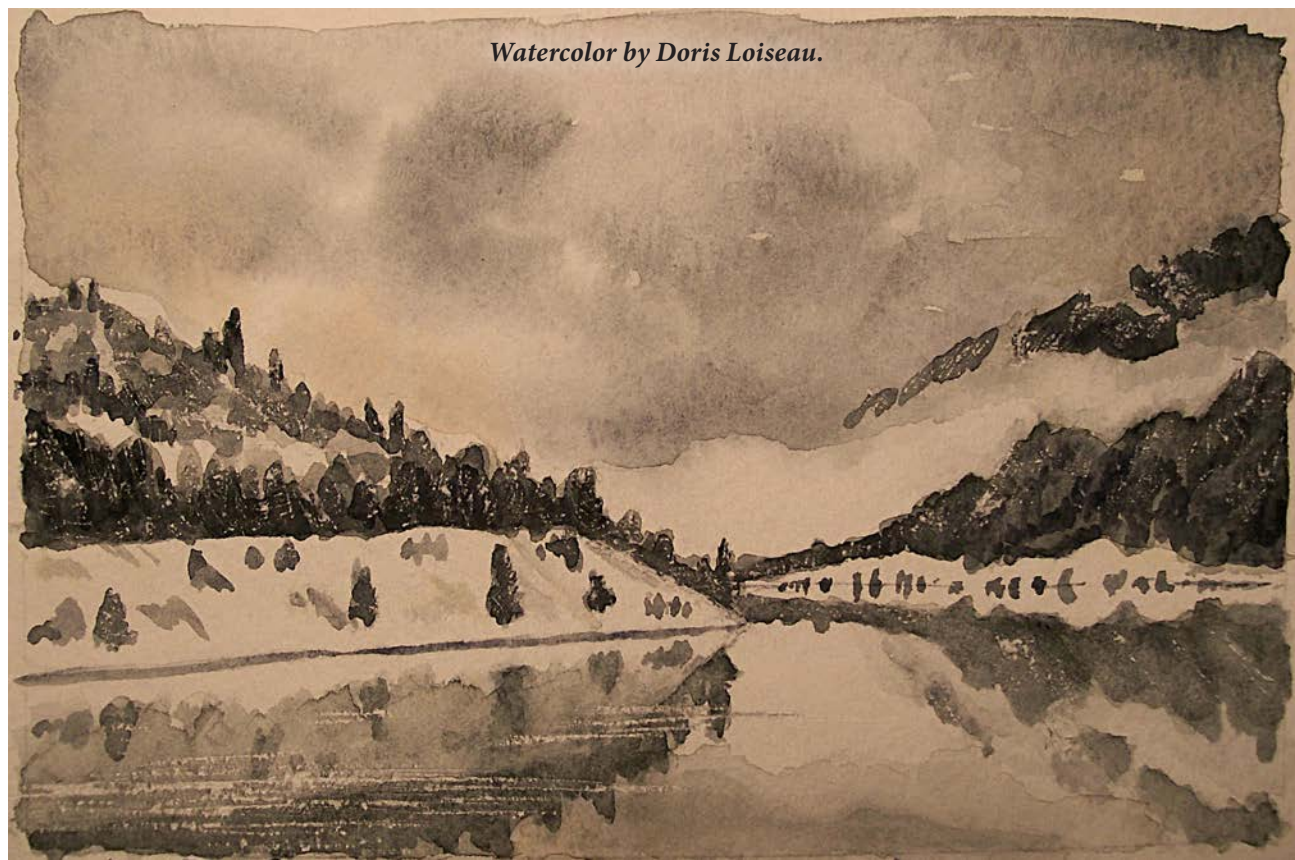
Light snow fell throughout the day. When we left for a Christmas party down the valley, our meadow lay pristine with untracked new snow. All the young people within 50 miles were at this party. You knew everybody in those days.

We arrived back home after midnight, and as we swung into the driveway, the headlights lit up the meadow near the cabin, revealing strange tracks in the snow – a left-right pattern like a human would make. After packing Doris and the baby into the cabin and banking up the fire in the stove, I grabbed a flashlight and tromped out to examine the tracks.

There was about 10 inches of snow on the ground. Maybe half an inch had fallen since the tracks were laid down, blurring the outline slightly. It appeared a barefoot human had walked across the field. I could make out the five toe-prints, the slope of an arch, the heel. I estimated the foot to be about fourteen inches long, maybe six inches wide.

Now, when a human or a large animal walks through ten inches of snow they scuff a trail as they go. However, there was very little scuffing between these tracks. Whoever or whatever made them must have had quite long

Watercolor by Doris Loiseau.



legs, picking its feet up enough to avoid breaking snow in between strides.

I was feeling tipsy from the party libations, tired and getting cold, so I went back inside, figuring I'd deal with the mystery footprints after a night's rest. Doris asked me what the tracks were. "Probably just a deer," I said.

Come morning, we went out to look at the tracks. It had snowed through the night, filling them in some, though they were still very discernible. The critter had come down from the plowed road and traveled across our field to the edge of the bluff where the land fell away to a steep incline leading down several hundred feet to the Pend Oreille River.

Once on the incline, the visitor apparently sat or lay prone and slid down to the river several hundred feet below, plowing snow down to bare dirt in some places and laying over small trees and brush as it went.

I'd been entertaining the idea that this might be a hoax, yet I couldn't imagine

the perpetrator going to such lengths. And if a human slid down that incline, it had to be the largest human who ever lived.

I followed the track down. The visitor had slid to the bottom, walked a short distance to the river, then disappeared next to the water. I climbed back up to the meadow and followed the tracks back to the road, where they disappeared, then followed the road toward the border and the Pend Oreille Dam.

About a half-mile down the road from our homestead I struck the track again, coming up toward the road from the river, close to the dam, where it was fairly level and easy going. The tracks came straight from the river's edge, where there was a melt in the tracks, as if our visitor had emerged from the river and stood dripping before moving up to the road.

It was all puzzling, to say the least. Why would any critter, in winter, swim a wide river, walk a half-mile up a coun-

try road, then slide down a steep embankment and jump back into the river again? It didn't make sense.

Did a Sasquatch, for some ambiguous reason, walk across the meadow on Christmas Eve? I don't know. I've never seen a Sasquatch. I saw some strange tracks that looked exactly like what one might envision Sasquatch tracks to look like. That's all. Could it have been a hoax? Possibly.

Still...

Seek the mystery. Merry Christmas and all the best in the New Year.

Steven Bird is a lifelong flyfisher living beside the American reach of the Columbia River in northeast Washington, where he writes, guides and gardens with his best friend, Doris, his live-in caretaker and illustrator, and their two cats, Stinky and Sundown. Bird is the author of Trout Spey & the Art of the Swing, Upper Columbia Flyfisher, the online Soft-Hackle Journal and is an editor for Swing the Fly.

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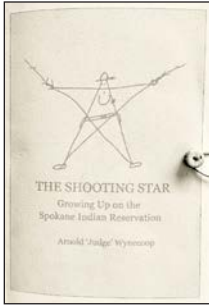


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The Shooting Star: Growing Up on the Spokane Indian Reservation

By Judge Wynecoop

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

RODEOS

Willys jeeps were the big thing when World War II ended, as were local rodeos. When the guys came home, they wanted to do two things out of many things they had missed out on during the war years (and probably lots more I wasn't aware of).

They played a lot of baseball during the spring and summer. We used to love to go to town-team practice. Joe Andrews was a favorite of mine; he could hit the baseball a mile high and a mile deep. If we could catch something Joe hit, we were really proud. Town-team baseball involved teams from all over the region: Springdale, Inchelium, Nespelem, Worley, and teams from out in the wheat country. The Indian teams really competed hard against each other. After all, there were relatives on those teams. I can remember some rough trips to Inchelium – there were some tough crowds there.

The rodeos were the same general set-up. Some towns had an arena and there would be a rodeo weekend after weekend. Our own local rodeos were fun events.

Saturday morning the local cowboys would get together and round up every horse they could find out at the Prairie and around Cayuse Mountain and put

them in a large corral at the racetrack or at the Flett place at the foot of Cayuse Mountain or maybe at Charley Flett's place. Then on Sunday afternoons they would have a rodeo.

There were some great times had there – lots of excitement. They did bareback

can't scratch his own head." (He was talking about Bobby Wynecoop.)

Watson Elijah was killed at one of those powwow rodeos when the horse he was riding turned over in mid-air and Watson stuck on him. The horse landed on its back and the saddle horn ruptured

Watson's spleen, killing him. That ended the rodeos for a quite a while.

There were also some funny things at these rodeos. One saddle bronc rider came out of the chute and the horse threw him on the first jump. The rider did a somersault and landed flat on his back. Smelly Peone, myself, and some others were watching from the area near the chutes. After that rider landed, there was a large and growing wet spot spreading

on the man's pants in the crotch area that was visible between his chaps. I thought my cousin Smelly would fall off the corral, he laughed so hard.

The Sunday rodeos were the most fun. These cowboys had just come home from very dangerous situations in World War II, so a bucking horse was a minor thing to face. A lot of times the riders had consumed a little too much "hoo-haw" and this added to the comedy rides. Bareback riding was the most fun because no one could get hung up in the stirrups.

(To be continued...)



Image courtesy the George Flett family.

riding and saddle bronc riding, but no roping or bulldogging that I remember. These Sunday rodeos were for practice and fun in preparation for the "big" rodeos at powwow time.

Some of our local cowboys were very good riders. Cousin Bobby Wynecoop rode broncs, and he was seldom thrown. He was a well-built young man with a big grin and big muscles. Once I overheard my friend Banjo Wynne having a discussion with some outsider who had been bragging about one of his heroes who had big muscles. Banjo said, "We have a guy whose muscles are so big he

It's Getting Cold Outside

By Becky Dubell

I'm thinking that is part of a line in a song. I can hear music in my head with that phrase. It must be getting close to wintertime. My car has had a skim of frost on it for the last couple of days, it's getting dark around 4:00, and I'm hoping I smelled my

last skunk of the season on the way home today. I'm thinking those might be pretty definite indications that Mr. Winter is just around the corner. Get out the heavier coats, boots, hats and gloves, snow brushes, snow shovels and ice melt. Be

like the Boy Scouts – be prepared!

This time of the year always brings up memories of family, friends and traditions. I spent some time asking people if they would share their traditions and, you know, every one of them was more than willing to share. So here goes:

Leah: She is on her own and decided to spend Thanksgiving cooking her version of the turkey dinner. She said if I was interested in joining her, I would need to be prepared to be met at the door with her in her jammies!

Susan: For the first 55 years she always knew what the menu was for the family dinner on Christmas Eve. Mom and Grandma always had the family over and everyone brought their traditional dish. Susan's was green bean salad. The loss of this tradition, now that Mom and Grandma are gone and Susan has moved to Kettle Falls, is pretty hard, but new traditions are being developed – she is Christmas Day Grandma.

Claire: Paint-brush cookies with kids and grandkids. Take home-made sugar cookies and paint them. No, not with paint, dingbat. With egg yolks and food coloring.

Sandy: Mom's house for every holiday celebration. Now the larger family all gets together in August for a potluck. Her mom made fruitcake at Thanksgiving and spent the next month or more basting the cakes with brandy once a week. Unwrap the cheesecloth, baste, wrap the cake back up and store it. Ready for Christmas!

Cathy: Years back she, along with her mom and grandma, found a version of *The Night Before Christ-*

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mas book that could record voices reading the story. She got one for each kid and now mom, grandma and great grandma get to read the story to the kids on Christmas Eve. (Made me tear up.)

Twilla: While reading *The Night Before Christmas*, a present is involved. Every time the story has the words “right” or “left” the package gets passed to the right or the left. The keeper of the present is the last right or left pass. Also makes a huge batch of a German dessert – apple cobilems (spelled wrong, I’m sure, but they’re fried donut holes). I have to add that, another tradition Twilla does is make ammonia cookies with me. Has for about 30 years. Yep, ammonia powder is used. They are addicting.

Cheryl: Saran-wrapped present. Started it with her kids and those kids are now doing it with their kids. Wrap a present in Saran wrap. Add a present onto that present. Wrap together with Saran. Keep adding presents, wrapping them with the Saran wrap. Set a timer for each person. No knives can be used – that’s cheating!!

Leah E.: Eat lunch on Christmas at 1:00 and then again at supper

time. An accidental tradition keeps popping up – heat the rolls back up that got forgotten in the oven the first time around. Oops!

Kyra: On Saturday after Thanksgiving, go Christmas tree hunting in the Frater Lake area. Complete with sledding, snow on the ground, warming fire and food. Get a tall and skinny one, which will fit under an 18-foot ceiling. Sometimes a “Charlie Brown tree” will make it home.

Logan: On Saturday after Thanksgiving, put up Christmas lights with Mom, no matter the temperature. Mom does the bushes and Logan does the house. Lots of music going. Mom and son time.

Shelly: Dinner at Mom and Dad’s with all the family. Addition to the tradition this year – a set of one-year-old twins!!

James: For over 40 years, Dad has come down the stairs in a red smoking jacket, white polyester pants, white shoes and a real beard, with interesting gifts purchased at the gas station. He’s a last-minute shopper. One year James received a pink jump rope. Dad also gave scratch-off tickets, complete with a quarter for scratching. The tradition is con-

tinued by James.

Wanda: Pilgrimage turkey fry-up in the woods with a potluck dinner, hot buttered rums and sledding.

Dagmar: As in the Bayern region of Germany, on Christmas Eve the Christ Child rings a bell after the tree and presents have been delivered.

Shelby: Parents and grandparents took turns hosting the holidays. Now meets up with his son and family to catch up.

As for me ... my girls LOVED to wake us up with speakers right outside the bedroom door, turned up full, of course, to Joan Jett’s “Little Drummer Boy.” Don’t know if you’ve heard it. It starts off with a LOUD drum roll. Makes you sit straight up in bed. While I was in Alaska with Mom the last four Christmas seasons, Darcy and Jamie would call and play it over the phone to me.

WARM HUGS TO ALL HAVE A SAFE & HAPPY HOLIDAY

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

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It's Been Quite a Hike

By Rich Leon

Last month I had my annual checkup. I got to the doctor's office early because I knew there would be paperwork to fill out. There wasn't that much and it didn't take very long. That gave me plenty of time to sit in the waiting room and look out the window at Mt. Spokane, wishing I were up there hiking and mushroom hunting.

My mind started to wander, which, in my case, can be dangerous. I don't know why, but I started to think about the drive over to my appointment. It seemed like everyone had a yard sign of some kind. Most were political but some of the other ones were "Neighbors drive 25" and "Slow down, children at play."

Spokane is a long way from having the best drivers in the country, in my opinion. Many treat the neighborhood streets like they are

racetracks. I think they drive way too fast and a lot of them don't really seem to care to stop at stop signs. Taking all that into consideration, I think we should have some new signs, such as "Slow down, old people walking dogs" or "Slow down, squirrels at play" or "Look out for teenagers on cell phones."

Anyway, my checkup was almost perfect except for one thing I will have to keep an eye on. My doctor wanted to know how I stayed in such good shape. I told him it must be all the time I spend wandering around in the woods looking for mushrooms. I have a step tracker on my smartphone that keeps track of how much I walk in a day, a week and a month. When I checked it the end of last month, I was a little surprised at the totals. I knew I had done a lot of hiking, but still, I was a little shocked. My grand total for the

month was ... well, I'll get to that. First a related thought.

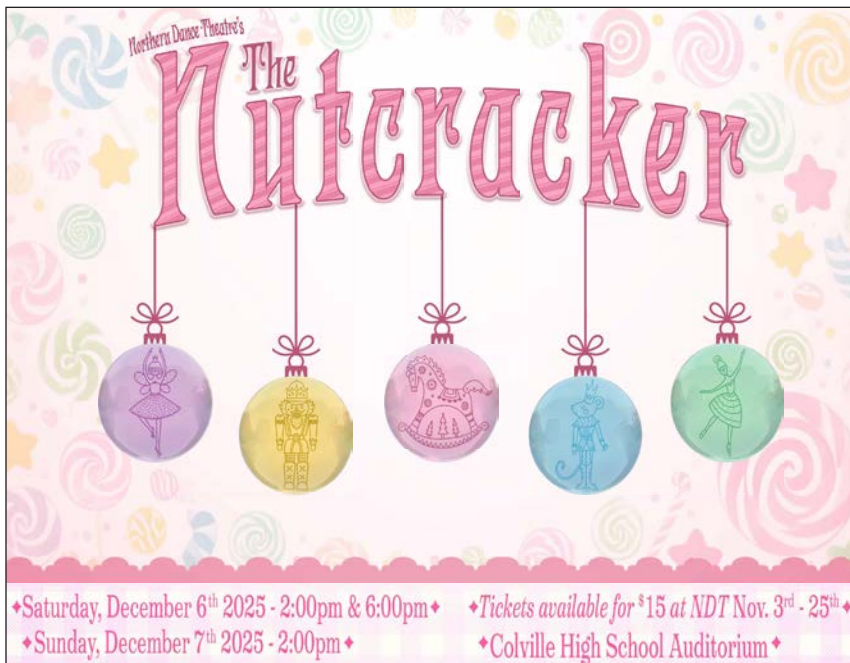
The baseball season is over. The Mariners came oh-so-close to making it to the World Series. Now it is time for thinking about football. I saw where a small college on the East Coast has someone who is 58 and wants to play on the football team. If that doesn't work out, he might help start a new league, the OGFL (Old Geezer Football League). AARP could help sponsor the league. I can see the winners celebrating mildly with bottles of Geritol.

So ... the results from my step tracker. Drum roll please. For the month, the number of steps was 208,213 and the miles were 88.72. That is not a misprint. I think it might be time for a nap.

Now, for some more serious news. There comes a time in each of our lives when we realize it is time for a change. If you are a pro baseball player and you can no longer hit a fastball or maybe a pro football tackler who has become too slow to get to the quarterback, you know it is time to retire. In my clumsy way, I am trying to say that it is time for me to make a change.

This will be my last article. I have really enjoyed writing for this publication and I hope that most of you have enjoyed reading my articles. I have my reasons for leaving at this time which I cannot share. All I can do now is to say goodbye.

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



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There's a Story Behind That Photograph

Article & Photos by J. Foster Fanning

Within this article I'm going to delve into a look behind the scenes at a few photographic images and tell the story on how they came to be. This, I hope, will be the fruit from the seeds of people often asking how I capture or create the images I share through various media.

I'll tell you this right up front: While some of these shots are sought-after or planned for months, sometimes years in advance, it can be a timely matter of awaiting the right environmental or meteorological alignment to get the photo. On the other hand, there are times when it is a slam-on-the-brakes moment and I shoot as fast as one can to capture a spontaneous instant of subject and light meshed into a passing composition.

Then there are all the other photos, images and pictures which fall somewhere in between. As the photographer I'm sometimes caught off guard when the moment arrives. So, before we dive into the images, let's talk preparation.

I have a camera bag, well actually several. And a camera backpack, which is generally my go-to bag. In it I have an extra charged battery for each camera, extra storage cards, a lens cleaning kit, and spare lens caps, which I've proved capable of losing occasionally. There is generally a small folding tripod along with a medium-body Nikon camera with a 600mm telephoto lens attached. I also have a Nikon P-900 camera which features a unique 83x

optical zoom lens with a focal length equivalent of 24-2000mm in a 35mm format. And, of course, I have my cell phone somewhere on my person (well charged, I hope).

You might think I know a lot about creating good photos. Well,

a photograph, you make it." And, to tell the truth, I am constantly working to perfect my photographic eye.

So let's look at specific photographs. One here is titled "Lone Pine." The subject is a single ponderosa pine that stands prominently alongside the Kettle River Road, toward the river, just upstream of Curlew. Over many years people asked me if I had a good photo of that tree. My answer was always no. I'd tried, but the physical location of that pine in relationship to the valley and nearby slopes simply didn't line up in any of the images I created. I had tried morning, noon and evening. Bright lights and mists. I drove by this pine frequently and thought about how to truly capture its essence.

And then one overcast afternoon, after a passing thunder cell, when the air was rich and damp, the clouds parted and I happened to be there and got *the shot* after years of trying.

Another behind-the-scenes story is much more impromptu. I, like many wildlife photographers, am



a near-expert in butt shots. Yep. Butt shots. I have managed to capture moose butts, eagle butts, deer butts, coyote butts, too-numerous-to-count bird butts, and even bear butts. Yep, a doggone butt shot expert. Because, believe it or not, most animals are very cautious creatures. It's how they survive. By the time I lug the camera out of the pack, turn it on, and get focused, often all I catch

technically I don't know very much. In fact, with the rapidly changing technologies, there's almost too much to know and much more to learn. Which can be truly daunting. In contrast, the process of "seeing photographically" hasn't changed in over a hundred years. Remember, it's not the camera that takes the picture; it's you, the photographer. Ansel Adams famously stated, "You don't take



is a furry or feathery butt exiting the scene.

So, in the case of the little apple-eating bear pictured here, a friend of mine called and informed me of a young bear in his apple tree. And when I got there ... it was gone (not unusual). If you don't try, you probably won't succeed.

He called again the next day, and this time when I arrived the young bear was happily feasting on the apples. I quickly sized up the scene, judged the bear's temperament, set up the camera and began a rapid-fire succession of images. In mere moments I had bracketed through at least a hundred frames of this critter (I love digital!) but I could tell the prolonged presence of humans was triggering the flight mode. As I backed off, the bear came down out of the tree. Just as an obligatory gesture I took a butt shot or two.

Image #3 is a planned shot. I was at the CSKT Bison Range (Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes) in

western Montana. This 18,766-acre range is dedicated to the preservation of bison, bighorn sheep, mule deer, whitetails and pronghorns. While I was game to photograph all the wildlife that Catherine and I came across, my target species was the bison.

I knew what camera I wanted to

use, I knew how close I'd need to be, the best angle for light exposure and a vantage point where I could evaluate several clusters of free-range bison. We picked a well-traveled game trail adjacent to the loop road where it appeared the bison crossed frequently. Planning and patience paid off and I captured this shot.

So, if you have an interest in photography, next time you're driving along one of our country roads, or hiking your favorite trail, take a moment to look at things closely and critically. See how the various features interact, how the light shines at different times of day. Relax, breathe deep and be patient. Sooner or later you will create a great photograph.

See you out there!

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





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