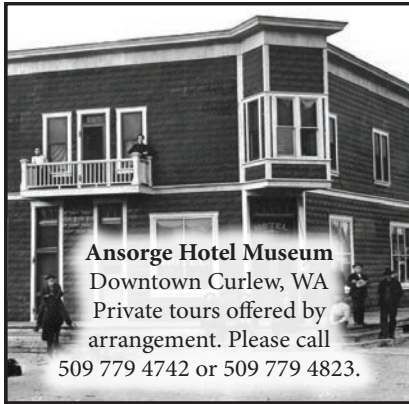




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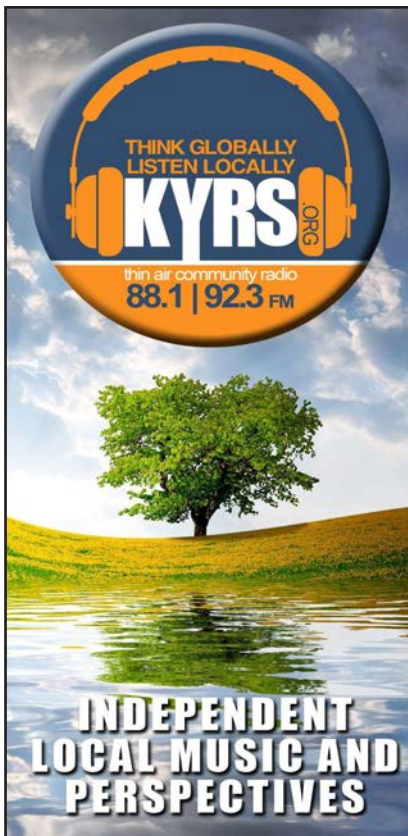
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For A Real Meal

- 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 Balance of Happiness——

By Christine Wilson

*“You know me, I take everything so seriously. If we wait for the time ‘til all souls get it right
Then at least I know there’ll be no nuclear annihilation in my lifetime.”*

~ “Galileo,” the Indigo Girls

“It is a serious thing just to be alive on this fresh morning in the broken world.”

~ Mary Oliver

*“This, my dear, is the greatest challenge of being alive: to witness the injustice of this world,
and not allow it to consume our light.”*

~ *The Oxherd Boy: Parables of Love, Compassion, and Community*, by Regina Linke

“Ve believes in nossing, Lebowski. Nossing.”

~ One of the nihilists in *The Big Lebowski*

“Live to the point of tears.” ~ Albert Camus

There were 44 of us in my graduate program in counseling at the University of Washington. That assured we would have 44 different personalities and aspirations. I shared classes with a rather severe woman who was planning on moving back to her home in the Midwest and working with the most severely, chronically mentally ill people in her town.

I applauded her career goals, since the laws had changed shortly before we were in the program. People were being released from mental institutions and laws were being set in place to provide community programs so the hospitalized people could integrate successfully. Master's level programs were invented at that point to provide the communities with therapists able to provide that work.

There was beginning to be funding available for these efforts and I was glad she was going to have the support to provide that service in her hometown. I got hired in Colville and got to see what she was talking about. I loved my time working with the chronically mentally ill.

The thing I kept bugging her about

was to make sure she balanced that out, both in her life and in her work, with finding joy. People with chronic mental illnesses need to find joy in their lives, as do we all. I think of those conversations now, as I work to find my own balance between the current state of seriousness in being alive, as Mary Oliver put it, and the need for joyful moments.

I just ran into some writing comparing nihilism and absurdism. I love to philosophize but was unfamiliar with the term “absurdism.” It turns out I am one. Nihilism is a dreary perspective on life, believing that there is no meaning. It fits with a piece of graffiti I saw spray painted on a wall in Germany that translated to: “The world. What is beautiful about the world?” Ick.

My take on absurdism is that a person can see the wild ride of life on this planet and not give up just because some of the fallout can be hard to deal with. We have plenty of choices. I don't think you have to be a therapist to see that we can rebel against the futility of the nihilists and make choices that help each other. It's good work.

So here I am, singing the praises of

a philosophy I only just heard about. I could be wrong, but I think it is why I don't suffer from depression. I recognize this wild ride for what it is, I am easily entertained, and as a result I am easily overjoyed.

It's why I can't use Marie Kondo's logic for decluttering. If it does not bring you joy, chuck it, she says. When you go around feeling overjoyed about so much, each article of clothing, knick-knack, book, and piece of furniture is impossible to discard.

I'm going with a “would I want this in my future assisted living apartment?” approach to getting rid of things. It might sound bleak, but it makes me laugh and establishes less grand parameters than I WANT TO KEEP EVERYTHING.

In the meantime, on this middle-of-summer month, I am thinking about how to live in this absurd world. I would never recommend people stop doing what they can to improve the lot of people around them and around the world. I don't think it's a good idea to completely ignore the news. I just think July is a great time to also flex our happy muscles and take a step back.

Random Acts of Community

Connie Kaldor wrote a song titled “Hills of Salvation.” She sings that she looks to the hills, which we have plenty of around here, and finds “strength in their quiet roll.” She adds, “When I feel myself troubled, I look to those hills and the quiet green quiets my soul.”

OK, so by July there might be a little less green on, for example, Colville Mountain, but the beauty of the views and the exertion of moving around in the woods is an amazing tonic. Just about any list of recommendations for whatever ails us includes getting out there. It even produces serotonin, which is one of our happy brain hormones.

Northeastern Washington ought to be listed as one of the serotonin capitals of the world, because there are so many wonderful opportunities to get outside and manufacture it.

Grover Cleveland, who was the 22nd and 24th president of the United States, was a big fan of being outdoors. In his 1906 book, *Fishing and Shooting Sketches*, he wrote, “Those who contribute most generously to the exhilaration and charm of social intercourse will be found among the disciples of outdoor recreation, who are in touch with nature, and have thus kept fresh and unperturbed a simple love of humanity’s best environment.” You’d think he was from here.

The 26th president, Theodore Roosevelt, is famous for his love of nature. He wrote about it, lived in it, and worked to make sure generations of travelers after him were able to experience its joys as well. He believed that “we have fallen heir to the most glorious heritage a people ever received.” Wow, did all these guys come from here?

I know that nature doesn’t stop when the leaves fall off the trees and ice forms on the roads and sidewalks. Mother Na-

ture will be out there, available for our enjoyment throughout the year. It just seems like July, with its green leaves and clear paths, is begging for us to soak it up.

It took me a long time to discover the thrill of reading books, another big source of joy for me. I read my first chapter book in fourth grade. My best friend was way ahead of me and by then was reading *Jane Eyre* so I decided not to tell her. I can confess now, though, that reading *The Secret Pencil* by Patricia Ward was such a delight that it expanded my reading repertoire from comics. I found that book online recently for \$145.39. Maybe I don’t remember it THAT fondly, but it got me started reading for fun.

There are a lot of rational reasons for summer reads. Reading in general has

been linked with serotonin production. Summer reads prevent the “summer slide” that kids can suffer from; they can improve empathy, they can give us examples of how to solve problems; and they can introduce us to other ways of life. But for July, I want to be heavy on the side of reading purely for fun.

I lost contact with the woman who headed back to the Midwest, but when I think of her, I hope she found ways to live in joy. For my part, I’m thinking on some particularly hot day, I might take a water bottle, a book, and a blanket out into nature, and work on a double dose of happy hormones.

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



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A Time for Remembering

By Dr. Barry Bacon, MD

There is a place of remembering just a little way from my home. A brown, hand-made rocking bench swing. Quiet ponderosa pines overhead. Dry grass and fallen branches underfoot. Green, rolling grass fields, hills and mountains beyond, with a still, clouded sky and the sun just emerging for the day.

A white-tailed deer starts from her hiding place, turkeys call, a dog barks, a pair of doves banter and fuss, a magpie scolds. Mainly it is quiet and beautiful. A wind chime stirs to life as a breeze whispers from the south. I can hardly approach this place without tears. It is the place I give myself permission just to sit and to remember.

The lines of the trees catch my eye and I remember two children who loved to climb them; a brick home in a far-off land; a girl in a dress waving goodbye as she walks down a rough stone path on her first day of school. A boy who loves to wear the same safari suit and baseball cap and knee-length stockings every day. Round face, blond hair, beautiful boy with an open and friendly personality, everyone's friend. How much I loved that boy. How much I still do. His

birthday today. A day for remembering. How much was given and how much was lost.

The air is chilly. The doe peeks from behind some distant new-growth pines in the field. She's not yet ready to show her newborn fawn. He's young and vulnerable and needs her protection. Life is calling me, but I'll linger a bit longer. A marmot has been weeding my lawn. His preference seems to be the broadleaf plants like dandelions, so I don't mind his presence, even if that means he has made his den under my shed in the pile of rocks that are its foundation.

Whatever happened? In his teen years, I remember that boy talking to me, saying, "Dad, I think I have ADHD." "Why do you think that?" I ask. "I can't get my brain to work right." "Son, you don't have ADHD. You could sit down and read a book cover to cover. You could concentrate on a project for hours. You were never hyper, you were always a pretty calm and creative kid."

He nods. I tuck the memory away. My son was telling me something was wrong, but I didn't know exactly what it was. I remember the terror of that day, realizing that my son's mind

might be broken.

A flicker flits from his hollowed tree home just above me, suspicious of my presence. He begins the day hunting for grubs to feed his brood.

I remember years of counselors, mental health evaluations, crazy times, troubled behaviors, devolving into criminal acts, more evaluations and interactions with the law. He told me of whole days in college curled up on the floor in a fetal position unable to make himself think or move. Being arrested for sitting in his car thinking; being thrown in jail singing, "I'm Proud to Be an American" at the top of his lungs while being handcuffed.

He had kept all of this from us because he loved us, wanted to protect us, wanted to be a man. But his mind was breaking. He was suffering from a mental illness variously diagnosed by the experts as schizoaffective disorder, bipolar disorder, paranoid schizophrenia, or just adolescent thinking. More than 20 years and many tears later, 17 years of which involved incarceration, I sit listening to the neighbor's rooster crow and a woodpecker tapping on trees and a quail call out its warning, and I miss

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him so much. I never stay here long, but to never come is unthinkable. Life carries on and it is still glorious and hard and good. But I must carve out time for remembering.

A warbler with white accents at the tip of its tail flits by through the lower branches of the pines, hunting for insects slowed by the cool morning. A quail sits on a nearby rock, eying me, indignant that I am occupying his territory. I watch the warbler scurry among the branches and I write a remembrance for my boy.

What I miss

I miss knowing your children.

I miss seeing them run to you, call you "Daddy," arms uplifted, listening to you read to them.

I miss seeing them coming to Nana's house, playing with cousins, baking cookies with aprons and baker's hats and flour on their faces.

I miss knowing the woman you fell in love with. Hearing her soft voice over your children, knowing that she loved you.

I miss seeing your work, seizing your future, understanding your calling, stepping into a beautiful life.

I miss seeing you in your own house with your own yard and your own dog.

Sometimes late at night when I

am returning from the airport, I remember, and as I drive Maple Street there is a place where I am compelled to turn and make a detour to Adams, and without seeming to be too creepy, I sit for a moment in my car outside a brown house with black trim. I look at its black steel railing and the repainted porch and the old-style windows and the steep roof lines and the welcome mat by the front door. and I remember.

I remember ripping out plumbing and putting up sheetrock and hauling in tile all for the sheer joy that this would be your place someday soon. I remember the joyous, beautiful day I spent with you there seeing you work on your place. You were a free man, and so was I. I would do it again. I wouldn't complain. I wouldn't grow tired. If I had another lifetime, I would do it. I would give it. I would be there.

It's a hard thing to give up our dreams. But it's nothing compared to giving up your children's dreams. Those dreams start almost as soon as they are conceived. A girl? A boy? Dainty? Strong? Like her mother? His father? What will he become? Who will she love? It's hard to package up those dreams if they are torn from us, hard to know what to do with them.

There is a place deep inside a parent's soul where we tuck them away; and once in a while, when life slows long enough to allow, we give ourselves permission to take them out of their hiding place and remember.

Mainly I miss you. I know you. I know your kindness and your humor, your gentleness, your intelligence. I know how you would treat your nieces and your nephews, and I know in my soul that you would be a good man. But that's all I can know. I wish to God that I could have seen it.

Dreams have gone. Memories fade, houses are sold, clothes are given away, life goes on. But what I see now is that there is one thing that never ends. I have loved you since before you were born and I love you still. That cannot be taken from me. Love transcends this life and continues to whatever lies beyond. I have many regrets, but I will always love you and I cannot apologize for that. It is one of the things that still makes life beautiful.

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

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Parenting Lesson from the Little

Article & Photo by Tina Wynecoop

“As we move outside the U.S. [or just outdoors] we’ll start to see the Western approach to parenting with fresh eyes. We’ll see how our culture often has things backward. ... The oldest cultures in the world [all species] have mastered the art of raising happy, well-adjusted children. What can we learn from them?”

~ Michaelleen Doucleff

The warm seasons beckon me outside, to walk, to garden, to cloud watch, to read. Every winter I long for these other seasonal opportunities. To sit on the porch with a good book is the epitome of heaven as the words on the page meld with the choir of birdsong and fresh breezes.

The voices of our three chickens, Connie, Bonnie and Shy Girl, also contribute to this well-being, and I am honored when they leave their foraging in the grasses and come join in the pleasantries on the porch. None of this happens in winter here in eastern Washington.

The other day, while reading, the insistent plaintive pleading of a baby bird drew my attention away from my book. There, a few feet from where I was sitting, a baby nuthatch was clinging precariously to the kitchen’s metal windowsill. I watched its parent bringing globs of suet and caterpillars which were too big to stuff in her baby’s gaping maw. Time after time, she returned to feed, yet the food would fall uneaten to the sill. Surely she knew better!

(I’m calling the parent she/her, not knowing if both parents of this species co-parent in the care and feeding of their fledgling the way bluebird par-

ents cooperate.)

My logger husband’s lunchtime interaction with red-breasted nuthatches in the woods came to mind. Seated at the base of a tree, he would be visited by “little upside-down birds”



who would walk down the tree trunk *headfirst* to ask for tidbits from his sandwich. And he would feed them.

Returning to the drama on the windowsill: The mamma continued this unsuccessful “feeding” for a half hour

and then disappeared. Were her actions cruel? Was her child ignorant or disobedient? The fledgling’s plaintive cries distracted me from my book.* Torn, I wanted to read *and* I couldn’t keep my eyes off the nuthatch.

I wanted to rescue it, and then it dawned on me that the parent knew what she was doing all along – she was luring her offspring to a safer and more comfortable perch in a nearby tree to feed it. She was saying, “When you are hungry enough you will learn to follow me!”

Anyone watching, except the fledgling, could see it already knew how to fly. How else did it get to the windowsill? Its nest box birthplace was on the far side of the house. It had already used its wings to propel itself this far.

Quiet now, it took a little nap in the corner of the window. Then the begging resumed. And then motherlove succeeded in teaching her child to follow her, to obey, to trust, *and* be rewarded with

food. She knew what she was doing all along! And I learned a parenting lesson from her.

I’m still learning how to be a parent, how to be a child. I’ve often wished our two sons would have been my

Upside-Down Bird — Home Ground

parents. They are family men and, as with the bluebirds, co-parenting with their spouses has proved very effective. I admire them for their innate kindness, wisdom, and skill in guiding their kids, who are truly blessed. I would like to have been a nestling under the shadow of their wings. I'm still willing. My childhood would have been easier to swallow.

Michaeleen Doucleff, correspondent for NPR's "Science Desk," recently published the exquisite parenting guidebook *Hunt, Gather, Parent: What Ancient Cultures Can Teach Us About the Lost Art of Raising Happy, Helpful Little Humans* and it goes hand-in-wing with the teaching of the red-breasted nuthatch.

As I began reading it, I asked myself why anyone would seek to learn the art of good parenting from an author who, in the book's opening pages, describes her own daughter as "the enemy"? With humble honesty she relates that if her infant, Rosy, "wasn't eating or sleeping, she was crying – and then, as a three-year-old, all the crying had morphed into tantrums and parental abuse. When she had a meltdown and I picked her up, she had the habit of slapping me across the face. Some mornings, I left the house with a red handprint across my cheek. Man, it hurt."

Michaeleen was ready for parenting lessons. Her new reporting assignment opened up unexpected opportunities, which *New York Times* reviewer Pamela Druckerman describes: "Douclevff set out with her three-year-old daughter Rosy in tow to learn and practice parenting strategies from families in three of the world's most venerable communities: Maya families in Mexico, Inuit families above the

Arctic Circle, and Hadzabe families in Tanzania. She sees that these cultures don't have the same problems with children that Western parents do.

"Most strikingly, parents build a relationship with young children that is vastly different from the one many Western parents develop—it's built on cooperation instead of control, trust instead of fear, and personalized needs instead of standardized development milestones.

"Maya parents are masters at raising cooperative children. Without resorting to bribes, threats, or chore charts, Maya parents rear loyal helpers by including kids in household tasks from the time they can walk. Inuit parents have developed a remarkably effective approach for teaching children emotional intelligence. When kids cry, hit, or act out, Inuit parents respond with a calm, gentle demeanor that teaches children how to settle themselves down and think before acting. Hadzabe parents are experts on raising confident, self-driven kids with a simple tool that protects children from stress and anxiety, so common now among American kids. Not only does Doucleff and Rosy live with families and observe their methods firsthand, but she also applies them with her own daughter, with striking results."

Douclevff's closing lines: "Rosy has changed so much. She grew by leaps and bounds, emotionally and physically – way more than I had expected. She went from being my 'enemy' to becoming one of my most favorite people in the world." Learning on the job, and putting into practice the lessons of other cultures, and sharing with her readers, make a fine reading experience.

My husband and I parent the afore-

mentioned three chicken girls who like to join us when we're eating lunch outside. We are teaching them skills garnered from *Hunt, Gather, Parent* because begging, stealing from our plates, and grabbing food from their sisters' beaks are unacceptable non-graces. We model better behaviors for them as they watch expectantly for tidbits from our plates to fall to the deck.

I brag to visitors that I could probably get the three girls to do the dishes by enticing them with Cheetos and meal worms. So far, there is no need for bribery since their "Dad" is the dishes-doer in our family. He'll work for Cheetos, too, but not meal worms. Go figure.

All told, a nuthatch, a spoiled child, three chickens and their lessons give us grander views of a world made right.

*The book (in case you're wondering) is, as I so often say, "one of my new all-time favorites," *Raising Hare: A Memoir* by Chloe Dalton and published in 2024. It's about an Englishwoman who adopted an abandoned newly born wild hare (called a leveret, not a bunny) whom she raised during the recent world pandemic. Her experience and way with words are compelling.

Kenyan author Ngugi Wa Thiong'o wrote in Minutes of Glory, a short story collection, that he appreciated what he called the "Nobel of the heart" when someone reads his work and tells him it impacted them. I know how he feels about the "Nobel" of the heart ... when someone out of the blue in the upper Columbia region has read my "Home Ground" columns and tells me they liked them.



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Mingo

Article & Photo by Tina Tolliver Matney

Do you ever ask yourself how much time you spend tied to the phone while you're on hold? And do you ever ask yourself why some companies' hold times are so much shorter than others? Ever tried to talk to a real person while dealing with your insurance company? Specifically, your health insurance?

OK ... I know, enough with the questions ... but good gravy! My grandmother used to say that a lot, so I feel it's fitting to throw a "good gravy" out there now and then. By my estimate I have been on hold for most of my adult life between mid-January of 2025 to now.

"We are experiencing high call volume. Please wait while our customer service team has lunch, takes a weekend and possibly goes on vacation before we get back to you and the 3,975 customers ahead of you. Thank you for your patience."

Fine, that's an exaggeration ... or is it? Currently, at this writing, I have been tied to my cell phone for nearly two hours on this dreary day. I'm grateful for the drear. A beautiful, sunny day outside would only add to the frustration. It's enough that my phone was dangerously close to the end of its battery life when I called. Now I'm literally tied to its short, little 18" cord because "speaker mode" is a dangerous game for me. I'll get so engrossed in doing something else that I block out the bad music loop coming through the speaker and before I know it, I'm out deadheading petunias or going for a bike ride to get the mail.

Staying tied to the phone is a safer option for me when the call is important. While I'm waiting, I don't just twiddle my thumbs. I wander over to Amazon where I find an impressive 15-foot phone cord and while I'm at it I figure I could use a new ream of paper and ink for

my printer. And I better order some doggy treats while I'm here ... more on that in a minute.

I am currently on important call number two today and there are 37 callers ahead of me in the queue. I am not making this up. I imagine them all waiting. Some patiently. Some not. And more than a few that have wandered off outside to deadhead their petunias if they're lucky enough to have good cell service and a charged battery. Maybe someday I'll have both of those things at the same time.

This test of my patience and ability to sit still for more than 30 minutes is so I can finally cancel my health insurance policy now that Medicare and Social Security have finally been approved. What a roller coaster ride this has been. I will be a happy old camper when it's finally all resolved and I get that lean little check each month that I hope will cover the vet bills and doggy treats and a new bed for my new friend ... more on that in a minute.

In the meantime, as I'm updated and taunted by the kind voice that tells me every 30 seconds how many callers are left in the queue, I manage to pay my bills after my little shopping spree, text the painters that were supposed to be here the 3rd week of May, coordinate the rescue of an osprey with a broken leg as well as a baby sparrow that wound up possibly miles from its nest in yesterday's windstorm.

I also braved a trip to the microwave to heat a bowl of soup. Butternut squash soup to be exact. It was delicious ... I tell myself that because I'm on week two of attempting to lose a little tonnage and eat "clean." I don't know who determined cheese isn't clean, but right now I don't like them very much.

Last week I was having a particularly rough day when



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every little thing reminded me of something I'd sworn off eating. And here's where I tell you I got a dog! I was waiting for the right segue, and her peanut butter doggy treats seems like a good one. They smell like real peanut butter, and she loves them so much I have to hide them from her. I was so tempted to taste one but instead treated myself to a teaspoon of real organic peanut butter that has no salt or sugar added.

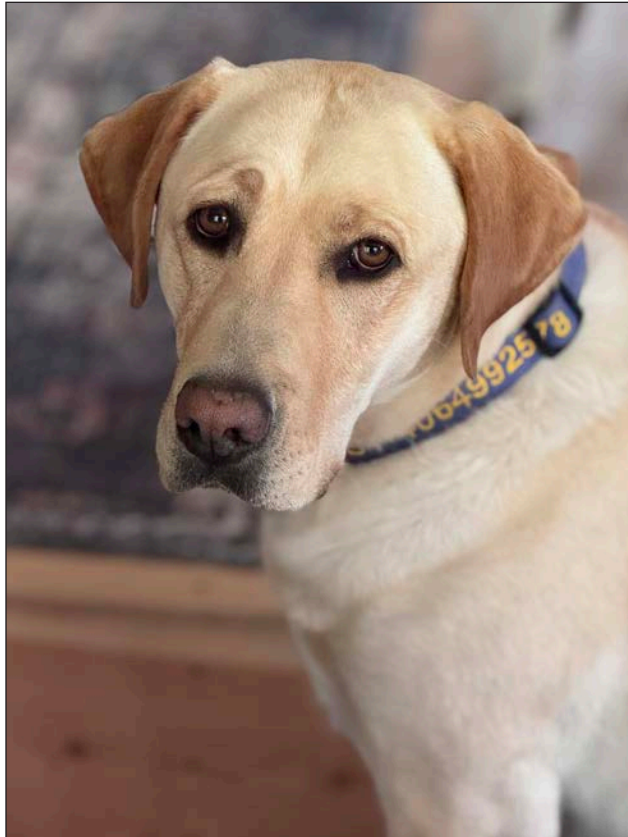
Weeks ago I had finally decided it was time to get a dog. My plan was to get a puppy so it would be house-trained by the time my house is done and the perfect camping companion by next spring. Then I woke up in the middle of the night recently when the cat yacked up yet one more hair ball, and I laid there and envisioned adding a young puppy to my life. Thank goodness I still have some sense left in me. That plan flew out the door along with the yacking cat.

Then fate took over. My aunt who raises labs in St. Regis, Montana, posted pictures and the story of a big, beautiful yellow lab on social media. She was from a breeder in Bozeman who was looking for a forever home for the lab because she didn't fit into the breeding program. I took one look at that girl and knew she would be my new dog.

It was a Wednesday afternoon when I first saw her photos and texted the breeder to learn more. On Friday morning they relayed her to my aunt in St. Regis who brought her to Spokane. I knew, even before we got home, that this girl was going to be my best friend, hopefully for a long time.

She is three years old, fully trained, extremely loyal and one of the most mellow dogs I've ever had the pleasure of sharing this great big life with. So ... we're all feeling pretty lucky to have each other.

The people who had her were calling her Missy. I wanted something a little more fitting for our life out here by the river. I settled on "Mingo." When I stand on my daughter's back deck overlooking the Colville River I am also looking at Mingo Mountain. When winter arrives, it seems like it always arrives on Mingo first, and then in spring it seems to hang on to the snow the longest.



I have friends on both sides of Mingo Mountain. Two very dear friends in particular, Tom and Patricia Ediger, who came to me late last summer and told me they wanted to help me build a house. Their timing was perfect ... just like finding Mingo. So, it just seemed like a good name for this gorgeous yellow lab who has come into my life at the perfect time when I can appreciate her calmness and feel her loyalty and love every time she looks at me with her big, soulful eyes.

No matter how much time I spend on hold or perhaps doing a chore I don't particularly want to do, I have these two furry friends to remind me that life is what I make it. And when my phone calls are out of the

way and business has been taken care of, we can go walk in peace and enjoy the sunshine that has beaten back the dreariness of this early summer day.

The rest of this day is mine ... ours ... and we will fill it with fresh air, exercise and sunshine. Later I will leave the phone in the house, pour a quart jar of iced mint tea and wander my little oasis and deadhead my petunias. Happy summer everyone.

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.

Bicycling the North Cascades

By J. Foster Fanning

My partner Catherine and I shared an interest in taking advantage of the annual “soft” opening of the North Cascade State Route 20. The North Cascades region is known for its challenging terrain, steep avalanche-prone slopes and high

altitudes. This portion of Highway 20 typically closes in late November or early December until the spring thaw, generally in April or May. The primary reason for the closure is to protect the safety of travelers and Washington State Department of Transportation

(WSDOT) crews from winter hazards, including heavy snow, ice and the threat of avalanches.

So, what do I mean by “soft” opening? It’s an annual ritual when hundreds of avid bicyclists flock to these mountains for the window of time in the spring after WSDOT crews have cleared the snow but before the highway officially reopens to cars and trucks.

The North Cascades Highway, also known as State Route 20, was a project spanning nearly 80 years from its conception, finally completed and dedicated on September 2, 1972. Construction began in 1959. The highway stretches across northern Washington from Skagit County to Okanogan County. I was not able to find the year that bicyclists began taking advantage of the spring soft opening, but some blogs mention making the cycle route in the 1990s.

Our ride took place on April 13, 2025. Driving up Highway 20 from the west side, starting at the Seattle City Light company town of Newhalem, we noted a number of cyclist groups gathering in the still-chilly morning sunlight. It is 57 miles from Newhalem to the highest point of the route, Washington Pass (5,477 feet). We chose to start from the parking area just down from John Pierce Falls bridge and above the Diablo Overlook area.

In the past WSDOT has sent out newsletters that addressed a “persistent myth of a special bike day” through the North Cascades. “The fact is,” the newsletter has stated, “there is no bike day. The road is closed.” However, the agency acknowledges that if cyclists must ride through the mountains without any cars nearby, this weekend is their best opportunity

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When Elyseé arrived in Spokane, he enrolled in Spokane Community College’s ESL program. Now he’s wrapping up his master’s degree at Whitworth University and works for the community college helping students stay engaged and finish their programs.

“I’ve always wanted to be in the medical field or in general, just help people,” says Elyseé Kazadi. “Then I said, ‘wait a minute’. I’ve been a refugee for a while and I know refugees don’t always know about policies made for them.”

Elyseé’s dream to use his education to help others has taken unexpected turns, but he got his start and put his dream to work at Spokane Community College.



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to do so.

“This is kind of the balance that we strike – trying to inform people when the conditions might be optimal and also help them appreciate that we need them to stay out during the week because it has sometimes slowed work down,” said WSDOT spokesperson Lauren Loeb sack.

There were approximately 1,000

cyclists and many roadside camps and gatherings on the western approach on the Sunday we chose to ride. And truthfully, it was a BLAST! Having such a beautiful route to ride on a cleared, well-paved roadway, sharing fantastic vistas with hundreds of other cyclists and no automobiles. It was fun.

Will we do it again? Yep. Plans are

under way for next year, this time starting from the Early Winter’s side in Okanogan County. 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.

Wheeled Helpers

By Bob Gregson

We have accumulated a trove of hand tools over the years. Some – including two or three marked “Property of GNRR” (that’s the former Great Northern Rail Road) – have now been handed down into the third generation. That’s me. And our sons will likely keep most of them going.

Above and beyond the typical hand tools, though, I’ve lately become ever more grateful for the bigger items with wheels that make work so much easier. The riding mower, for example, is a modern miracle!

I easily can visualize my sweaty grandpa, a kerchief around his neck, long-sleeve shirt buttoned at the sleeve and up to the neck, suspenders, work boots, and straw hat behind the old (even in the early 1950s it was OLD) all-steel push lawn mower on hot summer Spokane days. Same for me as a kid every summer Saturday in Pasco ... but I was just a tad cooler because I wore blue jeans, Keds, and a loose, white T-shirt. It was never clear to me why that grandpa wore so much clothing, though someone later said that older generations of railroad enginemen

got in the intense habit of always staying “buttoned up” clothes-wise while working. That was because in the days of shoveling coal on a steam engine, embers from the firebox and chimney could fly back and hit any exposed flesh of the fireman or engineer. Hence the need to cover all flesh. I have no idea if that’s the reason for my grandpa’s continual coverage, but that’s what he did.

In fact, no male in our family EVER wore shorts of any kind in hot weather, even after Bermuda shorts became socially acceptable for men to wear wherever. The dirty little secret no one in the family ever talked about? We males all had skinny legs and were ashamed to show them in public! I didn’t figure that out for a long time ... and eventually decided in my particular case, these legs got me through very difficult things like Army Airborne and Ranger schools and the terrain of Vietnam. So, it’s OK if anyone laughs or pokes fun; the legs and I can take it in stride, so to speak.

Back to wheeled helpers. Our current riding mower is our fourth. The preceding three lasted about 10 years

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each and did yeoman duty on the farm, regularly mowing an acre or two of grass and chopping the autumn leaves into their rear collection bags. The cut grass was invaluable on the farm as either a plant mulch – especially for young squash and melon plants – or as one of the main green elements in the giant compost heap.

Then there are some other major wheeled devices that have proven invaluable on our farm and then the Spokane minifarm.

First is the traditional wheelbarrow. No need to talk about that; everyone knows about the indispensable wheelbarrows. Old English is where the term “barrow” came from; it meant several things, including “basket.” Hence, we in 2025 have our wheeled baskets so important to many trades and homeowners. Ours is a 37-year-old steel one of six-cubic-foot capacity that looks mature and is still functionally as good as new.

To supplement that, we have a brand new, two-wheeled, plastic, eight-cubic-foot model that is great for three main reasons: first, it can haul a huge load of light, bulky materials like leaves, garden mulch, grape and berry prunings, chicken house litter, and straw in seemingly much greater quantities than the standard wheelbarrow; second, since it has two wheels it doesn't threaten to fall over or tweak your back muscles while pushing loads around. And third: you can either push it or tow it, unlike a single-wheel model. Thus, a person can push or pull it with one hand and use the other hand to pull or push some other type of multi-wheel cart. One in front, one behind the puller.

Another piece of versatile transport equipment is a lightweight, foldable cart with fairly tall wheels, capable of hauling heavy loads and then being folded up and carried more or less flat on a boat or RV or wherever.

Last in priority order of haulers comes the green, four-wheel wagon with fold-down sides, small pneumatic tires, and a handle to pull it by. Its type is often used at garden centers to carry heavy loads. It's been crucial here for transporting retaining wall concrete blocks and similar heavy-heavy loads, including large potted plants from outdoors into the garage for winter, and the reverse in late spring.

As I was thinking about this article, I looked around our several outbuildings and covered spaces and realized what a lot of wheels we have. Besides the car and bicycle.

There is the big snowblower – just a bulky space-tak-



er, until you desperately need it! – and the same for the wheeled generator. Then there's a small electric shredder/chipper and a large gas-powered one, an electric push mower for small jobs, an electric power edger, a heavy duty DR string trimmer, a wheeled wooden cart with the orchard sprayer mounted on it, a lawn fertilizer spreader, a wheeled, portable lift to jack up the riding mower for blade maintenance, a heavy duty – and extremely useful – hand truck, and a homemade utility trailer that has hauled lumber, appliances, soil, bark, etc., and needs a lot of TLC. Sometime soon. Probably. Maybe.

Back at the farm on Vashon Island, we had most of the items listed above plus an invaluable, small Kubota tractor with front loader and other attachments, and an Italian BCS 10-horsepower rototiller that had all kinds of attachments available. Nowadays, that new, large BCS machine costs as much as a good used car.

The invention of the wheel certainly must be up there in the pantheon of inventions alongside chocolate ice cream, nautical sails, innerspring mattresses, electric lights, synthetic fabrics, and a few others.

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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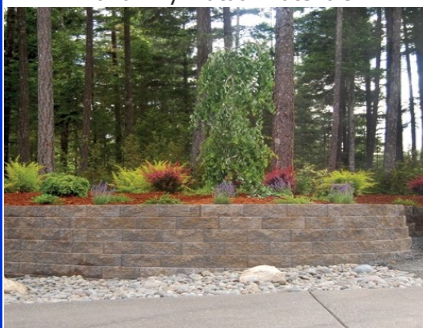
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Seven Leaders Share Their Goals

By Lynn O'Connor

A new Rotary year starts on July 1. It's always fun to see what our club leaders are up to, so let me introduce you to a few from the Colville club.

Sarah Groves is the new president: "I am so excited to be the incoming president! I was a kid whose family needed extra help growing up. Being able to give back in those same ways now and lead such a caring and impactful club is such an honor. This year I'd like to focus on two things: growing our membership so we can achieve even greater impact, and to have a larger presence in our community. I'd love to tell you about our wonderful programs or invite you to join our great club. I am looking forward to a great year with a great team of leaders beside me!"

Dave Bales is our Service Projects chair and Youth Protection officer: "I wanted to connect with my new home community. My goal for next year is to build on what we started with Epic Day of Service by improving our existing Rotary community facilities, like Rotary Field and the Rotary Pavilion."

Rosemary Shaw is our treasurer: "I joined Rotary after being invited by my father-in-law, Jon Shaw. One of my goals is to keep our finances organized and transparent. Rotary has a long history in our community."

Liselotte Butterfield is our Vocational Service chair: "I was introduced to Rotary through my dad, who got me involved in volunteering. I fell in love with the values and mission of Rotary

and knew I wanted to serve my community. One of my goals for this year is to work closely with the local high school to transform our traditional career fair into a more hands-on, interactive Career Day—giving students opportunities to engage in real-world projects."

Michelle Lee is our International Service chair: "I joined Rotary to help us grow our business, but I stayed because it's actually a way to make the world better. My goal will be to bring a friendship exchange to Colville, which is an amazing opportunity for our community and for our club. I will also look for events to help our club embrace Rotary International's presence in our world."

Scott Thompson is co-chairing our Membership Committee: "I'm a returning Rotarian. I believe in Rotary's power to serve both locally and globally. My goal is to grow our club by 20 members this year and reignite the energy. I'm committed to helping make our club stronger, more vibrant, and even better than before."

Lynn Ross is our secretary: "I joined Rotary in San Diego, CA. The Colville club is a great group of community-minded people that have the desire to put service above self. I stepped up to be a leader because I have the time. I love the fellowship and the community projects. My goals for the coming year would be to increase membership, have a few successful fundraisers so we can do the community projects, and have local impact. We are always looking for great people with a variety of interests and talents. ... Come join us."



Rotarians at the Rotary International Convention in Calgary, AB in June 2025.

*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*

Creative Being in Stevens County

Keeping Our Cool

Article & Illustrations
by Marci Bravo

I love the intensity of our four seasons in northeastern Washington. Autumn arrives with a crispness in the air and a tangible shift of light, an abundance of apples and pears twisted easily from their stems in yards and orchards all across our region. When it snows, it *really* snows – blanketing the landscape and allowing for neighborhood cross-country skiing and a sweet feeling of victory at the surrounding ski hills. Spring thaws lead to an ornate blooming of color and fragrance and a crescendo of birdsong. Bright yellow balsam arrowroot carpets wooded hill-sides, and stone fruit, apple and pear trees bejewel themselves with coquettish pink and white blossoms as we



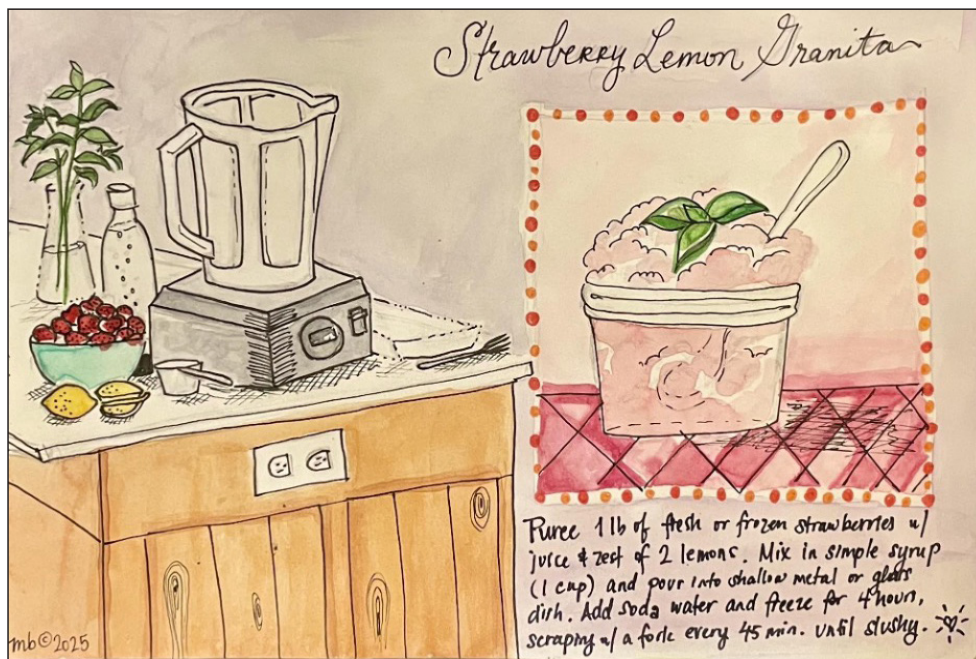
march toward April.

And then there's summer, which tangles honeysuckle and clematis vines

up arbors and trellises, coaxing crowds of pink woods roses to bloom along forest trails, the rich scents of mock

orange and vanilla wafting across sun-warmed lawns and craggy pine stands.

The buzzing in fields and gardens attests to determined pollinators busy at their tasks. Strawberries the size of ladybugs push out of spent blossoms along the forest floor, along with wildflowers like purple lupine, blanket flowers, Indian paintbrush and delicate Ice lilies. Cherries make their debut, rolling out the red carpet of stone fruit season, while in the mountains, huckleberries swell and sweeten, beckoning to bears and bucket-bearing





locals in equal measure.

When the heat of summer intensifies, it seems like the world is our oyster. Depending on my level of energy and adventure, finding ways to stay cool in the summer can be as easy and as creative as we can imagine.

Our backyard and neighborhood are great places for water balloon and Super Soaker battles, shady Slip 'n' Slide courses, and sprinkler ninja training grounds. Homemade iced teas and frozen treats like light and tangy granitas, smoothies or popsicles offer icy delight. Splash pads at local parks are easy relief to all ages.

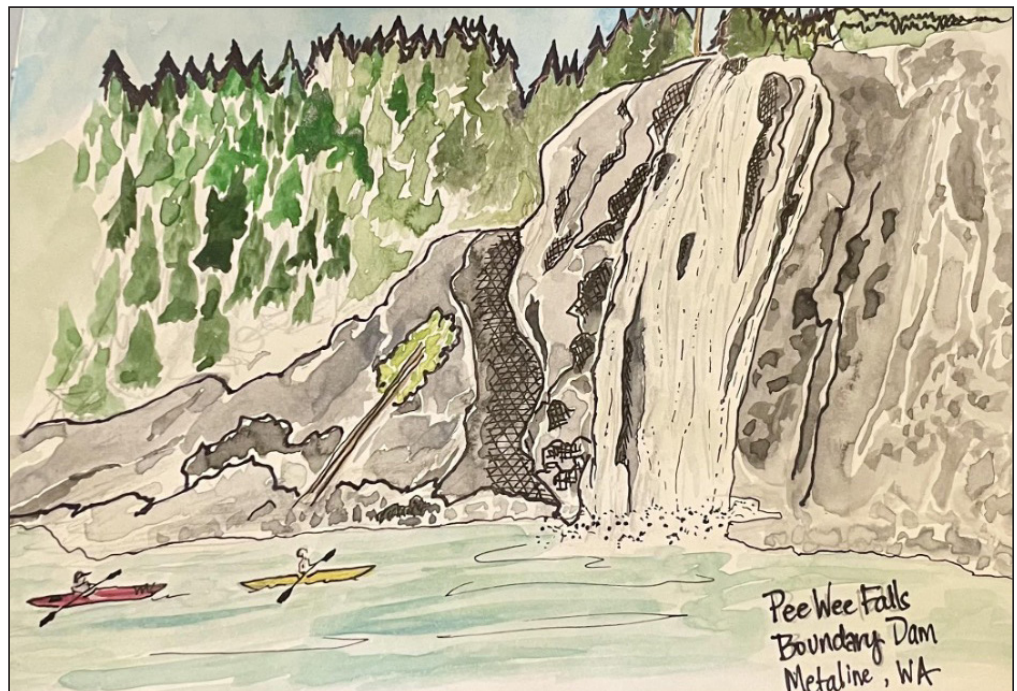
Down south, in artsy Chewelah, its namesake creek runs right through the city park where bare feet wade, chasing floating stick races – a big bonus when we make it to the Friday Farmers Market, a festive and shady oasis in and of itself.

When my son and I are

hankering for an excursion, day trips to our nearby rivers or more remote lakes are just the ticket. The sandy beaches along the Kettle and Columbia Rivers and Lake Roosevelt promise a variety of spots for shade, shallows, and cold, deep swimming holes. And with friends, inner tubes, water, snacks and sunscreen, floating the Kettle River is a dreamy way to spend a hot day (don't

the desire to escape to higher altitudes or cooler climes, I know our neck of the woods won't disappoint. I just need a little creative inspiration (and maybe a half tank of gas) to find a refreshing slice of paradise.

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



forget your hat, and stop for post-float ice cream cones at Sandy's). At higher, cooler elevations but still within a half-hour to 45 minutes from home, Trout Lake, the Channel Lakes and Pierre Lake are great examples for kayaking, fishing and swimming and are fun overnight destinations, too. Pee wee Falls near Metaline is a breezy, moderate paddle from the Boundary Dam Campground, and is a great spot for an idyllic summer swim and spectacle.

Whether I'm feeling the lazy lethargy of blazing summer heat, or I'm lit by

LISTEN UP

Reviews by Michael Pickett

Larkin Poe: At Home Where Genres Meet

When it comes to vocal harmonies, you have Boston, Queen, Eagles, Wilson Phillips, Bee Gees (obviously) ... and certainly Larkin Poe.

With “Mockingbird,” the opening track from their latest album, *Bloom*, Larkin Poe perfectly builds folksy two-part harmonies into rocking, anthemic glory, as Rebecca and Megan Lovell navigate their bluegrass roots into rock-n-roll territory.

“Bluephoria” is a phenomenal Motown-soul-meets-Sabbath groove-fest that rocks underneath the sisters’ front-porch, family-vocal sound. The crunchy country of “Little Bit” recalls Larkin Poe’s roots, with just enough guitar edge to supercharge the track

without overpowering the note-perfect vocals on top.

The heavy blues of “If God Is a Woman” really takes Larkin Poe into a deeper musical groove, as the four-on-the-floor pulse opens up into all the things that make this band (and album) such a must-have. Are they breaking radical new ground in some fashionable way? Not at all, but they’re mining everything they are good at for depth, instead of glitz or gimmickry.

While some groups can wear out their welcome by not branching out, LP could easily put out three more albums in this vein and never fatigue their audience. While it is mostly



about the two voices, the deep blues and country rock tracks that make up this collection could easily just be scratching the surface of Larkin Poe greatness.

Bootsy Collins: Beyond Funkadelic

“It’s all about the 1.” That’s the first thing you learn in Funk School. And it’s the most important thing. You can do whatever you want after the “1” (as in the first beat of a 4/4 funk

pattern) but if that “1” is not where and how it needs to be ... you ain’t got the funk.

As funk-monks go, Bootsy Collins is as venerated in the funk world as Yoda is to Jedis, and he’s just as adept.

Over five decades later, the Goggled One is still laying down grooves that push the bounds of funk to new depths. With *Album of the Year #1 Funkateer*, Bootsy shows no signs of wear and tear (he’s 73 now). The title track alone could easily stand alongside nearly any Bootzilla classic. The impossibly deep groove, lush ‘70s backing vocals and wah-bass are unmistakable. “Bootdullivan Is Soopafly,” “Alien Flytrap” and the

finger-lickin’ goodness of “Chicken & Fries” are just so fun, even if you don’t like funk, you will (and must).

Honestly, if you don’t like this album, counselors are standing by. There’s just something so energized but laid-back about Collins’ take on this storied genre, it’s impossible not to be caught up in it. This music, while super-grounded in the 1970s, has a timeless feel-good vibe that transcends time & space. Bootsy still has the funk, and *Album of the Year #1 Funkateer* might just be good enough to bring the world peace we’ve been looking for. Solid.

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



A Good Read

***When Daisy Mae Came to Stay*, By Janet Breuer; illustrations by Kelly Caswell**

Reviewed by Meghan Schroeder

Have you ever wondered how your pets truly feel about a new puppy joining the family?

Local author Janet Breuer explores this delightful dilemma in her latest children's book, *When Daisy Mae Came to Stay*. This charming story imagines the trials and tribulations of training a new puppy through the eyes of her two trustworthy "good boys," Tucker and Ridge, and her surly cat, aptly named Trouble.

This is the third book in Breuer's popular series, which chronicles her personal adventures in pet ownership, all told from the pets' perspectives. Her previous books, *Here Comes Trouble* and *Trouble's Defense*, notably have a loyal following with Storytime listeners at the Kettle Falls Library. *When Daisy Mae Came to Stay* continues this tradition with bright, detailed illustrations that are both colorful and playful enough to engage pre-readers and detailed and hilarious enough to entertain older readers.

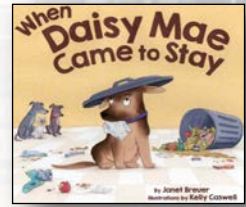
We follow Daisy Mae's journey from frequently hearing

"No, Daisy Mae, no!" to eventually becoming a "Good girl, Daisy Mae," all while laughing at her playful mischief and her dog brothers' patient training – and occasional exasperation. It's a wonderful reminder of how much a puppy needs to learn to fit into our households and how much of their "naughty" behavior is innocent exploration.

This book would be a valuable training tool for families with young children who are considering pet ownership. Breuer's lens of kindness and gift for making puppy's mistakes funny may help soften the blow of a young one's favorite toy being nibbled on, or worse.

The final pages are dedicated to puppy training tips, tricks, and helping readers find training resources and information.

With a lifelong love of reading and a heart for children, Meghan Schroeder is a joyful presence in the Kettle Falls Library, bringing stories to life with energy and warmth.



Eve: How the Female Body Drove 200 Million Years of Human Evolution

Reviewed by Terry Cunningham

By Cat Bohannon

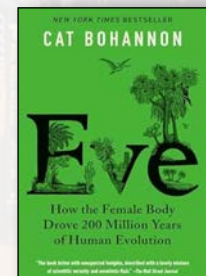
Cat Bohannon has done an incredible job of tracing evolution of mammals from the beginning to present. It seems she may have covered every development it took to become a modern woman. Her book *Eve: How the Female Body Drove 200 Million Years of Human Evolution* is a very entertaining and informative read. Eve, as a character in Bohannon's scientific research, represents female mammals from the beginning to present day. Our bodies read like a road map of evolution and Bohannon does an excellent job of pointing out where the road has important interchanges. Readers will enjoy her sense of humor on the journey from a simple, tiny, undeveloped creature that lays eggs and secretes milk from its skin to the complex female human that risks her life to keep humans viable.

Bohannon has a PhD from Columbia University in Evolution and Cognition, making her qualified for the task. Maybe the most important thing Bohannon has done is point out a shortcoming of research into the female sex. Not just in evolution, but in very important medical research. Most medical studies are done with male subjects, from fruit flies to primates, with little of the results actually benefiting women. Due to the patriarchal nature of this science, much of women's health is

still a mystery. The author may surprise you with her explanation of menopause or why women live longer than men.

Mammals come in many forms, and the human body is a masterpiece of complexity. With Bohannon's ability to tie the times and places of certain events, the book reads much like a novel in places, in anticipation of Eve's next human developments regarding such topics as midwifery, language, food, diet, medicine, and why men and women differ in some ways but not others. She traces how the human race became successful enough to populate the planet with nearly 8 billion people, including through some major cataclysmic global events, each developed inside a woman's womb. To ponder this alone makes this a wonder-filled read.

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."



An Overlooked Key to Aging Well

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.

Previously I shared a hard truth from *Outlive* by Dr. Peter Attia: Strength is the single most important tool we have to protect our independence and longevity as we age.

But there's a second – less obvious – pillar that most people over 55 don't talk about enough.

It's not your cholesterol.

It's not your blood pressure.

It's your VO₂ Max. What's that? VO₂ Max stands for *maximum oxygen consumption*. In simple terms, it's your body's ability to deliver and use oxygen efficiently during exercise. It's a reflection of how well your heart, lungs, muscles and blood vessels all work together under stress.

It's not just for runners or triathletes. Dr. Attia calls it the single most powerful predictor of future lifespan, across all categories. And yet ... most people have never even heard of it.

The Two Gears of Longevity

Most of my clients intuitively understand strength. They know if their legs are weak, stairs are harder. They can feel their grip get softer, or their knees get wobbly. They *see* and *feel* strength loss.

Now, here's how low VO₂ Max shows up:

- You're winded walking up one flight of stairs.
- You avoid hikes because you "don't have the energy."
- You have to pause halfway through carrying groceries.
- You struggle to keep up with your grandkids.
- You feel "tired all the time" but can't pinpoint why.

Sound familiar?

These aren't just signs of aging. They're red flags of dete-



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riorating cardiovascular capacity.

And the scary part? VO₂ Max naturally declines 1% per year after age 30 – unless you train it.

From Winded to Walking Tall

Let me tell you about my patient Bill. He came into our clinic not because he was in pain, but because he was *frustrated*. He had retired early to enjoy time with his wife and grandkids, but he was finding it hard to keep up. “I used to be active,” he told me. “But lately I get winded walking out to the mailbox.”

Bill was strong enough. He could leg press, do light weight training, even balance fairly well. But when we did a simple cardiovascular stress test, the truth was clear: His VO₂ Max was very low.

His heart and lungs had deconditioned. Not because of disease. Because of disuse. So, we got to work.

How We Improved His VO₂ Max

We didn’t throw Bill on a treadmill for 30 minutes a day. That’s not how this works. We built a progressive plan, tailored to his baseline. Here’s what it looked like:

- Zone 2 training: We started walking at a pace that kept his heart rate just under threshold – where he could talk but not sing. He did this 4-5 times a week, starting with 20 minutes and building to 45.
- Intervals: Once his baseline built up, we introduced short bursts of higher intensity – 30 seconds of faster effort followed by 90 seconds of slow recovery. This trained his heart to adapt.
- Functional cardio: Bill carried light weights across the room, getting up from the floor multiple times in a row, and walking up slight inclines.

After 12 weeks, Bill’s energy was up, his heart rate at rest was down and, as he said, “I can finally walk with my grandson again without pretending I have to tie my shoe just to catch my breath.”

VO₂ Max is about having enough energy to:

- Get off the floor after playing with your grandkids
- Walk with confidence on vacation
- Climb the stairs without feeling your chest thump
- Recover quickly when life throws stress your way

- Live fully, not cautiously

How to Improve Your VO₂ Max

Here’s how to get started safely and effectively:

- Get assessed: Know your baseline. A good physical therapist or wellness coach can help test your cardiovascular fitness.
- Train Zone 2: This is your “all-day pace.” Walking, light cycling, swimming, or rowing at a conversational intensity – 4 to 6 days per week, 30-45 minutes each time.
- Add intervals once a base is built. These don’t need to be all-out sprints. Just a little discomfort followed by recovery.
- Use a heart rate monitor to stay knowledgeable and to track your progress. Many people think they’re training hard enough – they aren’t.

You can’t out-supplement or out-medicate a declining VO₂ Max. But you can add longevity through every step you take, every walk you complete, every round of intervals you finish.

Your future self will thank you for it.

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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The Yoga of Yogurt Life's Stretch

By Brenda St. John

“Do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough troubles of its own.” ~ Matthew 6:34

When it comes to cats and country life, I have learned it's best not to get too attached. We have had too many cats to count over the years, but a few have stood out.

There was the beautiful calico I had when my husband and I were dating. She was a spoiled “only child” until I got married and moved to the country where she not only became an outside cat but also had to adapt to horses and dogs. She did okay for the first few years, but eventually we moved again and she disappeared within a week or two, never to be seen by us again.

Another memorable cat was the orange rescue we got from the Colville Valley Animal Sanctuary in 2016. We took in 10 cats that summer and were given a couple pens to keep them in for two months. Supposedly, when they were released, they would stay nearby and hunt mice. That did not turn out to be the case.

Only one stuck around and she was always aloof and slightly hostile. Many mornings she would be waiting near the door for someone to come outside and put a little food in her dish, only to run and hide when the door opened.

As soon as she heard the sound of food pouring into her bowl, she would come out and hiss at me, just to make sure I knew my place. Eventually she started looking beat-up, like she had been involved in cat fights, and a few months ago she quit showing up. We assume she found herself a quiet place to die.

The most heartbreaking loss was Bagheera, a small, sleek, black kitten that showed up out of nowhere two years ago. We figured out later that she had clandestinely hitch-hiked in on the car undercarriage of relatives who had come to visit that day.

I say that because, a few days after her arrival, I had to drop the dog off for boarding, and soon after I got to the kennel, which was about 12 miles away, the kitten crawled out from underneath my car. If that wasn't bizarre enough, a few days later, my husband and I drove about 40 miles in the pickup to a farm sale, and again, as soon as we got out of the vehicle, this feisty feline crawled out from under the truck.

Bagheera had a very playful personality and loved people. She taunted the dog and batted the tail of

the older rescue cat, trying to get it to play with her. It was a sad day when we realized she was gone. She was a good hunter, and a probable scenario is that she became the hunted on one of her nocturnal expeditions.

And now, here I am, after half a year of being catless, with kittens again. A man I never met found five kittens abandoned in the woods and rescued them. I don't know the whole story because there were two other links in the chain of people between the kind man who I do not know and my receipt of two kittens. All I know is that they have beautiful, sapphire blue eyes, are tiny, and love human interaction. They have no choice but to surrender to their circumstances. Ideally, they should still be with their mother, but it seems like they are lapping milk out of a bowl satisfactorily and I can only hope that they will survive and thrive.

Surrender is an admirable quality in the yoga realm. It relates to the concept of “*vairagya*,” which is non-attachment. In Sutra 1.15, *Patanjali* defines *vairagya* as “the absence of craving for objects seen or heard about.” *Vairagya*, however, applies to much



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more than physical possessions. It also refers to thoughts. For instance, when I change my mind, I am practicing non-attachment to a previous way of thinking. Long-held beliefs can become restrictive chains in the presence of illuminating information, and I must be mentally flexible to follow heart and mind to the authentic truth of my being.

My kittens are living in the present moment, just playing, eating, growing and learning. They aren't dwelling on the unfortunate circumstances which landed them in a pen under a tree, separated from their mama and siblings, and exposed to the howling of coyotes every night. They are just taking life as it comes.

Yogis, too, practice living in the present moment. At the beginning of each class, we mentally set any worries or concerns aside and bring our attention to the present moment for the duration of the class. Because of this, the people leaving at the end of class are happier, more radiant, and lighter of step than the people who trudged into class 90 minutes prior.

The yoga pose *Marjaryasana-Bitilasana*, commonly called Cat-Cow Pose, is considered to be a gold-standard in the yoga spine warmup category. It is a dynamic sequence consisting of two poses repeated numerous times. The cat portion mimics the natural spinal movements of a cat, embodying their grace and flexibility, as the spine is stretched into an arch, and the cow portion reflects the swayback shape of a cow's spine at rest. Basically, the spine alternates between flexion (cat) and extension (cow).

To begin the pose, come to all fours, with hands and knees on the mat. The

alignment calls for the wrists to be below the shoulders, the knees to be below the hips, and the head to be in neutral, meaning neither lifted nor dropped. To begin, round the spine toward the ceiling, tucking chin toward chest and drawing the belly in, like a cat arching its back. Then drop the belly toward the floor, lift the chest and tailbone, and gaze slightly upward, creating a gentle backbend.

Flow smoothly between these two poses, syncing the movements with the breath, for 5 to 10 rounds.

The fluid transition between Cat and Cow encourages letting go of tension and surrendering to the rhythm of the breath, as it is in the present moment. 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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The Tradition of Salmon Ceremony

By Coleestah Finley

The Columbia River – and the salmon in it – play a big role in the overall survival of its surrounding tribes, determining how we live our lives, what we eat, and much more. The river and its determinants also impacted our historical settlement patterns and cultural events that happen to this day. One of the most special events for tribes along the Columbia River is our Salmon Ceremony, most recently held this last June 20th.

Some tribes, including sn̓ɬay̓čkstx (Sinixt) and sp̓q̓ni? (Spokan), moved up and down the river, depending on the season, for hunting and gathering. Sn̓ɬay̓čkstx settled in many places, from Kettle Falls all the way up to what is now Canada along the Columbia, north of Revelstoke, B.C. Today, we still travel to these places in caravans of canoes, continuing our tradition before the Salmon Ceremony. It brings us back to our roots and continues to raise awareness of sn̓ɬay̓čkstx presence in Canada.

Salmon Ceremony is held at Kettle

Falls in June, around the time of summer solstice. Before the construction of Grand Coulee Dam, Kettle Falls was a great fishery with many salmon, perhaps the greatest fishery in the Pacific Northwest. It has been said that there were so many that you could walk along the water on the backs of the salmon.

Many tribes, including sn̓ɬay̓čkstx, sp̓q̓ni?, Schitsu'umsh (Coeur d'Alene) and Q̓lispé (Kalispel), and other s̓éliš (Salish) speaking peoples, all met up at this great fishery. In fact, sn̓ɬay̓čkstx, who camped on Hayes Island above the falls, and s̓x̓w̓y̓?lp (Swee-ithp), who camped on both sides of the falls year round, organized and held this event.

People didn't come just to fish the salmon, they came to pray for the

salmon. These fish are critical to tribes around the Columbia River for both



dietary and cultural reasons. During the Salmon Ceremony, the practice was to allow fish to pass for the first couple of days, with the exception of a single fisherman to take a certain number of fish for ceremonial use.

“Once the ceremonies were complete, then the Salmon Chief would open a general fishery, which was conducted by men with nets, basket





Scenes from the 2025 Salmon Ceremony. Photos by Steven Apple.

traps and fishing spears. All of the fish caught on a given day were divided by the Salmon Chief and his designees among all of the people and families present at the fishery.” (Seymour, 2023, p. 3)

Today, with many dams having been built, it is difficult for salmon to travel the Columbia River, and they are not as numerous. However, the Salmon Ceremony is still held to pray for the salmon, to release them into the water, and to maintain awareness about our historical practices and the importance of salmon.

We pray that one day the salmon can run through the water like they once did.

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.



Living My Best Senior Years —

By Karen Giebel

My goal is not to live the highest number of years. My goal is to be as physically and mentally functional as possible for as many years as possible, no matter how many years I have left. That takes work. It actually takes lifelong work, but having said that, it's never a bad idea to start where you are now and make small, positive changes that will improve your health. Changes such as cutting back on sugar, salt, highly processed foods such as frozen microwaveable meals and lunch meats full of preservatives, and avoiding smoking and alcohol.

I don't claim to be a physical or mental acuity fitness expert, but my research shows I'm doing a bit of all right in my efforts. Some of those efforts take determination, and some happen just because of who I am.

Take walking, for example. I am a lifelong lover of walking. Even as a young child I would walk for miles down our country roads watching trees, flowers, cows and horses, counting cars, and admiring gardens. So busy was I looking at things that the miles just slipped away. It's no different today as I walk every day looking at birds, barns, animals,

mountains, lakes, fields and pastures.

Time passes as I enjoy being outdoors in every season (some seasons a bit more than others), and miles accumulate by just going for a walk. Taking deep breaths and filling my lungs with fresh air clears cobwebs and worries from my brain, and I return home refreshed and revitalized with energy to spare.

I've never been much of an athlete. Being somewhat ambidextrous meant I never knew which arm or leg to use to throw or kick a ball, so I gravitated toward sports that didn't require a specific limb, such as swimming, riding a bike, ice skating and skiing. Those activities have served me well as I entered that ... ahem ... mature adult phase of my life. I enjoy non-contact sports and exercise that I can put as much effort into as I like without hurting myself.

Plus, I focus on activities that I enjoy instead of participating in activities that other people want me to do because "they're good for me." What I find most important is that I just keep moving – what my early yoga guru Lillias Folan called "oiling the joints." Prolonged sitting seems to make



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Reflections on Life's Journey

all those achy joints stiffen up and freeze, much like a piece of equipment left outdoors to rust and seize up.

There are days when I do think I am rusting. It's the same way with stretching, as unused muscles tend to shorten and tighten, so to keep them flexible I routinely do a series of stretches for my arms, legs and back. Sitting at my laptop writing, I find myself starting to slouch over, and my shoulders start to ache. Just reaching back and grasping the back of my chair, then leaning forward stretches and relaxes my shoulders and back. Plus, it really feels good!

Maintaining muscle mass as I age is important. I hope to never become a "Help, I've fallen and can't get up" person. It may happen, but I'm determined to do my best to avoid it, mainly due to the embarrassment factor. I have plenty of other ways to embarrass myself other than a trip and fall putting my undies on.

Harvard Health notes that after the age of 30 we lose 3% to 5% of our muscle mass each decade. If that's so, then I have lost 20% or so of my youthful muscle mass. Yikes! I'm certainly not into body building, but I have 2.5-pound hand-held weights that I use daily to perform a series of upper body exercises. Some days I go hog wild and use five-pound weights, but not often, as I try to avoid pain, not cause it. I do the same thing for my legs using weights that Velcro around my ankles. All this takes no more than 15-20 minutes a day and you can do these exercises while watching TV (if you wish).

Now, about that mental acuity ... let me refer back to my long walks where, every day, I spy something new or interesting that piques my interest and that I want to know and understand more about. In other words, curiosity sparks a light that says, "Hmmm ... you have to look this up." Whether I saw an unfamiliar bird or a wildflower or a tree or even, most recently, the tons of chokecherries that are so abundant this year, I come home and do some research and learn something new.

Yes indeed, learning something new keeps my brain fired up and functioning. Rather than growing stagnant,

I find that ongoing curiosity and learning keeps my brain cells charged and my memory strong ... most of the time. For example, while on my walk with our dog I thought of something I needed to research: compression stockings. Seriously? Compression stockings? All I can say is that I am a retired RN, and this stuff still grabs my attention.

Fifty years ago, as a new RN, I was among staff who were asked if we thought our education prepared us for our work today. I was stunned when many of the older nurses said "Yes, it certainly did." Then there was me jumping up and down saying "No, I need to know more! Teach me more!" I have that same curiosity today, and hope I never lose it.

Harvard Health says mental acuity relies on staying physically active, socially engaged, getting enough sleep, following a Mediterranean diet, plus avoiding smoking and alcohol. I'm on board with five out of six, but dang, I like wine. Nobody is perfect, but we try.

About that diet ... fortunately, I do not have a sweet tooth. I also have an aversion to fat of any kind. Remember when pork was just full of fat? My mother would roast pork

for a Sunday supper and I just could not eat it without picking out every visible piece of fat. Nothing has changed. My husband is just the opposite, searching out all the fat that I won't touch. One of us has high cholesterol and I'll leave you to decide who that is. However, we both love vegetables and fruit. In the last decade or so, I found myself less interested in meat of any kind. Unless its BBQ ribs. I will always crave those ribs! Mostly I enjoy chicken and fish.

The average life expectancy has increased dramatically over the past 50 years, and potentially I have another 20 years ahead of me. I'd like those years to be as healthy as possible and avoid illnesses that happen because of poor lifestyle choices. My goal is to live my best years as I plunge headfirst into my 72nd year on earth. I wish you all nothing but health and happiness. Be well.

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



Rainwater

Article & Photo by Joe Barreca

It was a dry winter and June was a dry month. A lot of us farmers are worried about the lack of water. Still more folks are worried about fire danger.

With water in mind, this spring I started collecting rainwater off the metal roof of my office building. We have been using it to water indoor house plants ever since one that I put outside under a drip from the roof did much better than it did when given tap water. We also use rainwater as drinking water for our pets and in the pot on the woodstove that humidifies the house.

Our well water is pretty hard. It picks up a lot of calcium carbonate and iron percolating through the native limestone. Water from the sprinkler will stain the sides of a building orange. The cats prefer drinking rainwater caught outside in a bucket to water from a faucet. Our dog is not very fussy about that. Typical dog.

So, what is it about rainwater that the plants and animals like so much? Right off, there is the fact that rainwater is soft. There are no mineral

contaminants to taste or build up in the water heater. Soft water also works better with shampoo and surfactants that make foliar spray stick

moved in, and now every open container has its own black water beetle or two. Not exactly something you want to drink.

I have a funnel with a fine sieve to clean most of that up. The pets and plants don't mind and the sprayer is okay, but I'm not drinking our rainwater any time soon.

In Australia we saw houses with 5,000-gallon cisterns at each corner. It was illegal to use city water or even well water for washing your car or watering the lawn. A house would typically have two sets of pipes, one for groundwater and another for rainwater. Where we live, it is illegal to build a home without an outside water source.

A local family lives in an Earthship. They do have a source of well water, but they prefer rainwater from their 7,000-gallon cistern. Their roof is designed to collect water, and all the surfaces are approved for potable water. The first step in cleaning up the water is to have it run through a scupper of loose gravel that removes larger debris.

Like the rest of the Earthship, the cistern is made of tires filled with rammed earth which are held in place by concrete. The inside is coated with a non-toxic sealant. The rainwater enters at the bottom of the cistern where dust, etc., settles and is cleaned out occasionally. It does not amount to much. Coming out of the cistern, water goes through a module that filters out bacteria and contaminants, making it suitable for drinking. The WOM consists of fil-



to leaves. But there is a lot more to rain than not having minerals.

Rainwater from the roof isn't necessarily pure. In later winter when the roof had been scrubbed by ice and snow, the water was clear. But as spring busted out, it turned yellow with pine pollen. Then as the ground dried out, it had dust. With warmer weather, mosquitoes

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ters and a DC-pump. Water is then pushed into a conventional pressure tank to create common household water pressure, according to Wikipedia.

Drinking water is filtered to a higher standard and flows through a separate spigot at the sinks. The first use of the clean water, besides drinking, is for bathing and washing dishes and clothes. The “greywater” from those operations goes to interior plants and flushing toilets and to outside plants.

Systems may vary but some things about water always need attention. Water is the universal solvent. It picks up particles and chemicals from anything it touches. A friend of mine used to say, “Having a smoking end of a restaurant is like

having a peeing end of a swimming pool.”

Over the past few weeks, I could smell smoke one morning and a skunk the next. I’m sure my nose was picking up concentrations of parts per million if not parts per billion. Our noses are that sensitive because dangers and opportunities can affect us in very small quantities. Personally, I won’t even drink water shipped in plastic bottles. Collecting rainwater from rubber, asphalt or painted surfaces can negate its value. Storing it in plastic cisterns is convenient and inexpensive, but I am reluctant to recommend that for human consumption.

A friend of ours, Larry, collects rainwater much more efficiently than I do. He ducts it directly from

the gutter on his metal roof into several 250-gallon tanks. From there it continues its gravity-fed way to his garden and vineyard. Plants like water with a PH of 6 to 7. Groundwater in some forest conditions may be too acidic, 6 or lower. Rainwater is almost always neutral, with a PH of around 7. The plants receiving rainwater from Larry’s tanks are happy and healthy. His system is simple, inexpensive and easy to maintain. Since it does not need to be used for human consumption, there is no danger to people. Listen to the rhythm of the falling rain and save it for a non-rainy day.

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

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Electric Point

By Steven Bird

The old logging road passes over the high shoulder of Hooknose at a place called Electric Point. Containing rare earths, the mountain attracts clouds to itself, producing intense electric storms in summer.

On a lonesome ride I was caught there once, crossing over on a trip to the Pend Oreille country. Had to replace a shoe on my horse so got a late start and was too heavily packed to make good time.

Clouds gathered throughout the day, eventually suffocating the sun. The muffled drum of distant thunder, warning.

Hoped to be up and over the mountain before nightfall yet only made it to the top of the pass, near timberline at Electric Point, in falling dark.

Then the rain came, so hard that it was like no other rain, and constant thunder shook the mountain. And the wind hit with the rain, and thunder bowing the forest in the canyon below with a sound like ten thousand hands clapping in a hall forever solitary.

Strange ball lightning manifested from thunder, flashing below in the canyon and all around the horse and me – shimmering spheres suspended for a moment then popping like giant flashbulbs to immerse the storming void in menacing blue light.

By the time we'd hustled down the trail far enough to lose some elevation and get into the shelter of timber, we couldn't go any farther. My flashlight penetrated no more than a few feet in the slanted blast of rain. The side of the mountain dropped off dangerously steep beside the narrow track. I hobbled the horse in the center of the trail, and pulled the saddle, panniers and gear off and stowed them beneath a stunted white fir.

Nothing to do but roll out the soaked sleeping bag on the sidehill and get in with my wet clothes and boots on,

hoping for the best.

Entertaining dark and humbling thoughts, I lay there shivering and sleepless through the raging night, water running through my unzipped sleeping bag like a creek, thunder hammering the mountain and lightning strobing the broken bones of Gaia, illuminating the forest below with a malevolent radiance.

At first light the rain had stopped. The loyal and patient young gelding stood sampling brush beside the trail. He raised his head and snorted as I emerged from the soaked bag. I went to him and removed the hobbles. He stretched, then shook like a dog, gifting me with a morning shower. I rigged him in the wet tack and mounted. He put his ears back and took a step to get his footing, then stood, ribs kinetic and loaded beneath my soaked and muddied jeans.

I held him there and sat looking out toward the serrate ranges of the Shed Roof Divide to the East, naked and pink as newborn giants while the sun broke from behind Mt. Abercrombie. I looked out for a long time. The dualities of the world juxtaposed, then coalesced to one. And it was lovely beyond thought.

A redtail hawk rose and circled above the slope, head tilting.

I spoke softly to the horse and he sprang with a touch, glad to be moving on. And I was glad listening to the clop-clop of the sorrel's hooves down the rocky trail, birdsong riffing from the canyon. He was good to go. I pressed him to a slow lope, and the hoofbeat cadence changed to goodluck-goodluck-goodluck.

We passed down the mountain trail in full sun, horse and rider, the fleeing ghost warriors of a reckless cause, the night's rain steaming up from us like the smoke of an ancient battle dissipating toward the hopeful blue arc of sky.

Hypothetical Bears & One Embarrassed Cowboy

By Madilane Perry

My first cousin and I used to pick huckleberries with our grandparents in the hills above the Pend Oreille River, where our grandfather had his hunting camp. I don't recall that we ever worried about bears then. We knew they were there but never thought that they constituted a problem. Grampa had told us that they usually weren't and we believed him. After the cousin and her children had lived for quite a few years in the urban parts of western Washington, things changed a bit.

A decade or two ago, I was picking huckleberries on Vulcan Mountain, near Curlew, with the cousin, her daughter and her grandson. Every time something crackled or thumped in the brush, they interpreted it as a probable bear. This appeared to upset them.

This fear was alleviated a little when some of the more aggressive crashes were followed by a series of agitated moos. Those sounds were obviously made by cows. This conclusion was confirmed when several cows in a hurry came jogging up the overgrown logging road where we had parked.

The crashes and hoof beats that followed were not made by cows. They were made by a horse, one with a man aboard in local cowboy gear, not fancy, but functional, and definitely "Western." He was speaking to the lagging cows using language not usually found in family magazines. He seemed surprised when he broke out onto the Forest Service road and saw three women and a boy picking berries. He was more embarrassed than surprised when he realized that we had heard his whole address to the cows.

He apologized profusely and fol-

lowed the cows briskly down the road. The cousins looked rather blank and I struggled to suppress a fit of giggles.

Madilane Perry, a retired archae-

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

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The Gloaming

Article & Photo by D.L. Kreft

There is a time when twilight becomes a shade darker, and the last light by which we can discern shape and form begins to disappear. The artist's palette turns to blues and violet, enveloping forest and sky in muted tones, not quite dark but no longer dusk. This is the gloaming, where the sun has slipped further below the horizon and the first stars appear, tiny points of brightness defying the retreating light that during the day hides them.

"The grand show is eternal. It is always sunrise somewhere; the dew is never all dried at once; a shower is forever falling; vapor is ever rising. Eternal sunrise, eternal sunset, eternal dawn and gloaming, on sea and continents and islands, each in turn, as the round earth rolls." – John Muir

One of my favorite nature writers is the inimitable John Muir. Muir marveled at the continual display of mountain and sky, stream and meadow. In this sample of his prose we note he did not praise the day or revere the night. He rested in the sunrise and the sunset, and the gloaming. These cycles of lightness and darkness are ever present, somewhere in the world. As the earth turns and tilts through each day in every season, year after year, century upon century, the gloaming first envelops and then relents and our cycle of sleeping and waking is marked by its passing.

I will admit to a tendency toward melancholy. I'm a sucker for blue hour artistry and photography. I am drawn to images that capture the essence of a

scene that looks so familiar, yet I know I have never been to the place where it existed. Just as a stray fragrance of freshly mown hay can take my mind to a time and place in my past, the gloaming bends the mind to quiet evenings, stillness and the hushed anticipation of the night. It may have been by a river, or the bare alpine ridge of a mountain. It may be the memory of looking up through a space between tall trees, following the curl of rising campfire smoke, seeing the pinpoint outlines of the constellations emerge in the darkening sky. This is the gloaming.

The evening light of winter is special. The eerie light is reflected off the pillows of snow covering trees and clumps of brush and grass. The diminished light is not absorbed in the thick bows of dark evergreens. It continues to illuminate until it can no longer keep back the true dark of night. The gloaming of summer is my favorite, though. Summer is full of life and sound, all creatures striving to expand and to live their fullest, strengthening for the coming test of winter. The only thing that brings it to a pause is the night and its harbinger, the gloaming.

Of course, even then there are summer creatures that thrive in the twilight. The common nighthawk will fly



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overhead uttering its plaintive “peent” call. Its flight is rapid, seemingly erratic, as it snags hapless flying insects in its extra wide mouth, designed for just such a purpose. If you are lucky and the moon is bright and full, you might hear the quiet and forlorn “poor-will” of the eponymous common poorwill. Perhaps in the gathering cloak of dark you suddenly realize a doe and fawn have appeared in the meadow or by the stream, beginning their evening rounds. If you are lucky, it might be a moose or tight grouping of cow elk and calves, led by an experienced matriarch.

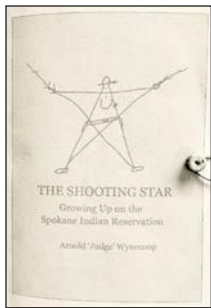
The half-light of the gloaming trans-

forms the stretch of the Kettle River before me. Distant ridgelines, blotted out by the brightness of the day, now begin to emerge and become known. New shadows add texture and depth to the wall of forest around me. The surface of the river in late summer is broken by boulders and cobbles, scattered by ripples and then gathered back into pools. Willows hug the shoreline, and shaggy pines rise tall, framing the scene. And then, in the foreground, the lights of a home appear, its inhabitants pushing back the coming night. They are safe, together, and basking in the fellowship of light and conversation.

The glow from the cabin is warm, and its intensity strengthens as more lights are added, and they replace the vanishing sunlight. Soon, its glow blends with that of the blue from the evening sky and their reflection marks the course of the quiet river. It is then, for a moment, the world is hushed, labors are ceased, and memories of the day are replaced by memories of summer evenings gone by.

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.





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.

HORSE STORIES

As with most young and inexperienced ranch people, I had some misadventures with horses. In the winter when the snow was deep, we had a constant problem with horses coming in to mooch hay from our haystacks or barn. Every day or so we would have to get up early to chase them away from our own horses' feed.

One time Wig, Dad, Chick and I were chasing horses behind our big old hay barn. Dad always told us to "get in front of them, they won't run over you." Well, one horse – a white and bluish one, not quite an Appaloosa but close – had just one working eye. It came at me full bore while I'm jumping up and down yelling "Hyah-ha! Hyah-hah!" and the horse ran right over me. All I saw was white belly and hundreds of hooves. I was not touched at all by hooves, but I was flattened by his chest and front legs.

After my recovery, Dad told me, with that kind of shitty Wynecoop grin he had, that his theory of a horse not running over a person didn't take into account "one-eyed horses."

THE SPANKING

We did a lot of roaming around the area of our home. Once a group of us, I think it was me, brothers Wig, Chick and maybe Dick and Dave, or neighbor kids that lived down across the meadow, were doing that. It was a

cool day, so since we happened to be natural hay "tunnel-ers" and there was a nearby haystack, we decided to dig holes in the stack and warm up.

On our way home from the meadow, the haystack owner saw us and he headed right for our house and reported on us to Dad and Mom.

Brother Chick wrote his recollection of what happened in his book, which was published before mine, so I'll let him tell it:

"One cloudy, dreary Saturday we decided to check out a neighbor's hay-

them. Now water would leak into the damaged stacks and ruin the hay. He knew we were guilty. Dad and he agreed spankings would be fair and just.

"Dad stood up and said, 'Wig, follow me.' They went around the corner out of sight into the hallway. After a short time, we could hear *Whop! Whop! Whop!* Then Wig made a crying sound. That's when the rest of us knew we were dead meat.

"Dad came around the corner and said, 'Next.' Judge got up and followed him into the hallway. Again, the now familiar *Whop! Whop!* followed by a whimper. Then Judge followed Wig upstairs. Dad came around the corner and I knew it was my turn. Dad could spank really hard, and I was getting ready for the whack when I heard him say, 'I will hit my leg, and you cry.' I was so surprised! As he hit his leg, I gave it my best effort, but I couldn't do a very good job of crying.

When he let me go, I was up the stairs like a shot."

Well, that's his version. Let me tell you that with me and older brother Wig, Dad didn't hit his leg – he hit us right on the butt real hard! It doesn't pay to be in the lead at times.

Even though we clearly did something wrong, it was a long time before I could feel good toward the haystack owner.

MORE HORSE STORIES



Judge milking the cow.

stacks down by the trees. The snow was pretty deep, especially to us short-legged kids. We burrowed into the stacks, we played, slid ... then headed for home, happy with our new adventure. Sunday morning, we could hear two men talking loudly about something important. The man was complaining about how some kids had ruined his haystacks. He said they had dug holes into the stacks, been up on top of them, and generally wrecked



The seven geese in the lead represent the Wynecoop sons, Wade, Steve, twins Dick and Dave, Chick, Judge, and Wig, with their parents, Phoebe and Clair following them. Painting by Steve Wynecoop.

Wig rode a beautiful sorrel mare named April and I rode a gelding named Champ. Champ was a coal black horse with a white blaze on his forehead. My Dad had traded for Champ. One evening he was riding his horse, Cricket, on the road that circles the meadow (Sherwood Loop) and met Little Dan Sherwood riding the opposite way on Champ. Dad says, "Is that horse gentle? This one is fast. Want to trade?" Dan says, "Sure." So, they took their saddles off and traded horses and went about their separate journeys.

Brother Wig and I had a lot of rides checking our cattle, which generally grazed in the Chamokane Creek area

or surrounding breaks. On one of these rides, Leonard Cox was with us, and it was very hot that day, so the three of us decided to take a swim in Chamokane Creek. So we got off, loosed the cinches on the saddles so the horses could cool off too, and jumped in for a swim. All at once all hell broke loose.

Leonard's horse had shied to the side for some reason and the saddle swung underneath the horse, causing it to go completely crazy. The horse started bucking and running into the creek right where we were swimming. The water was fairly deep right there so Wig was able to get a-hold of the bridle and get the poor horse calmed down. It took him quite a bit longer to get

Leonard and me calmed down!

Not long after that we were chasing cattle again, on another very hot day. We came to a small stream and decided to get a drink and cool off a little. Wig got down on his hands and knees, to get a drink from the stream, and suddenly froze. About a foot from his face was a rattler coiled up in a horse footprint right beside the stream. Wig backed up very slowly and then killed the snake. We generally didn't carry guns then so he must have used a rock.

Wig and brother Dick were the only ones in our family that turned out to be "cowboys." Dick ran the family ranch – still does.

(To be continued ...)

Hello Colville

By Becky Dubell

Did everybody survive without me? I'm more than ready for my Colville people fix! It seems surreal to be on my way home. Right now, I'm writing this on the ferry from Skagway to Bellingham. Be in Washington state tomorrow morning. Since I've been gone for over six months, I'm planning on sliding into Colville in the middle of the night and start working on getting my house straightened up before saying hello to Colville itself. Surprise! Maybe? Unless things have changed a bunch, it won't be a surprise for very long.

I am sooo excited about being home. Get to hug my grand-kids, great-grandkids and son-in-laws for the first time in over six months. The daughters? I did see them for Mom's celebration of life in Skagway for a week of shopping and visiting and more shopping the first part of May. But chya know what? I might even hug them! I've read somewhere that a person needs at least five hugs a day to survive. Thinking I might settle for about 10. Can you tell that I'm excited??

Becky, Bonny and Bambi, the Bundy sisters, were in the same house for about a month and no blood was drawn. That was the first time since we left home in the '70s that all three of us girls have been under the same roof for a real stretch. Bambi is from 30 miles "up chain" from Key West, Florida. I'm in Washington State. Bonny is in Anchorage. Not many chances in our lives to get together.

But. Do you know what needs to happen? Get together

when you can. Keep in touch when you can. Snail mail letter or card. Phone call. Email. Text. Facebook. FaceTime is even better. (Bonny's face lit up when a FaceTime call came in from her grandkids.)

The snail mail route can be really interesting, down the line. Example: My grandma, Mom's mom, kept all the cards and letters that Mom sent to her from Alaska back in the '60s when you wrote on thin paper so the cost was only \$.04. Going through the letters brought back a lot of memories. Corrected timelines. Corrected "quotes" that have become verbal family history. Oops. Like "Get dat ting off my wap!" when Bonny was given Bambi to hold for the first time. I can't remember what the correct words actually were cuz this one has been family history for over 65 years!

Keep in touch any way you can. I would get home from work on Sundays, fix my taco salad and call Mom. Since Mom is gone now, Daddy will be the one I call on Sunday evenings after work now.

OK, now I'm writing this from home. So. Finally. Here I am after cleaning out my car and making room in my house to make a path to get to the important parts. Also taking care of a few personal things.

It was very different getting off the boat at Bellingham after being gone for over six months and a three-night trip on the Alaska Marine Highway. This is the ferry system that serves Alaska by water. I have run across people

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who thought you could drive to Juneau and Skagway on the Alaska Marine Highway. Sorry, but I had to laugh. You know “marine” means water. But evidently there is a map somewhere in the computer system that shows you can drive to these cities on the Alaska Marine Highway!

Anyway, the first big difference between Bellingham and Skagway is the traffic, of course, and the abundance of undergrowth. Skagway is lacking in dirt and sunshine which, if I have been taught correctly, is essential for growth. Oh, don’t get me wrong. There are the big trees scattered around but you can see into the forest, whereas in the Bellingham area I got a little claustrophobic.

Lost that feeling quickly when I had to speed up to 60 m.p.h. and then 70 m.p.h. on the freeway. That is quite a bit faster than the 25-35 m.p.h. in Skagway.

I started feeling like I was home while driving over Hwy. 20 down to Grand Coulee to see my dad for my first hug with him in over six months. The drivable mountain roads. Curvy roads – would be a cool motorcycle ride. National forests. Rest stops with ground level toilets that flush.

The best part of the trip was seeing my family. Saw Darcy’s family on the way through Spokane. Got to hug my daughter and her husband. My grandson with his wife and the two littles were visiting Nana and Papa so had to get more hugs – oh darn! Then headed north to Colville. Stayed off Division most of the way to the north end. Saw my favorite tree – the Pineapple Tree. Had to slow to 25 m.p.h., but since the car grew up in Skagway it was up to the task.

Once I was on Hwy. 395 I had a hard time keeping my foot out of the carburetor. I’m only 65 miles away from my home. We had told granddaughter JJ that I was not due back from Skagway until September. Well did she get a surprise or what?!? It was great! What hugs she gives.

The whole family has a lot more hugs coming and going because it had been 6 months and 17 days since the



last ones, but who is counting? Hey. Did I happened to mention that I was gone for over six months and am excited about being home??

HUGS

HUGS

HUGS

IT’S GOOD TO BE HOME

(I even smelled a skunk!)

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.”

My Trip to Bear Lake

By Rich Leon

After being closed all last summer and most of this spring, a renovated Bear Lake County Park was finally open to the public. Join me as I take you on a guided tour of this wonderful area off highway 2 north of Chattaroy.

I had a little excitement even before getting out of Spokane. As I headed north on one of the city streets, going the speed limit at 30, a big, black SUV with Montana plates flew past me going at least 50, if not more.

If he had seen what I saw parked a few blocks up ahead, he probably would have quickly slowed. Instead, a cop pulled out, turned on his lights and the chase was on.

When the cop finally pulled over the SUV, I could see two other cop cars with their lights on coming from a different direction to join the party. It was pretty exciting stuff for so early in the morning. I slowly drove around all the cop cars and could see they had handcuffs on the SUV guy. Welcome to Spokane. I would find out later that he was wanted in two other states for selling illegal drugs.

I was glad that the rest of the drive

to Bear Lake was uneventful. By the way, the park has about 200 parking spaces, and there is no fee.

I started my tour by going around the left side of the lake using the paved trail. Along the way I saw plenty of wild roses in bloom along with some honeysuckle.

The lake now has three new fishing docks, all handicap accessible. The lake has long carried a special designation from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife in which only people younger than 15, people with a disability and seniors are allowed to fish.

There's a playground for the younger visitors, with nearby picnic tables, a restroom, a beach and an area for swimming. When you are done swimming, you can use one of the new showers. That way you won't be taking home any creepy crawlies.

I saw a couple of seniors trying their luck on a fishing pier. Me being the curious type, I had to go over and say hello and find out if they had caught any fish. The lady I spoke to said they had caught a couple of small trout but not worth keeping. I wished them luck and

was on my way.

As I took the paved trail to the next beach area, I noticed that it had been repaved as part of the upgrade to the park. This part of the trail had been in bad shape due to years of spring flooding.

The house near the lake has been replaced with a picnic shelter. I was glad to see that they kept the bear statue.

Everyone I talked to that day was glad the park was finally open after being closed for such a long time. They all thought the upgrades and renovation were worth the cost and the time of being closed.

If you visit Bear Lake and are hungry, I recommend the Backroads restaurant just south of the Bear Lake exit. Say hello to Tina, the owner, who is a good friend of mine. We used to work together at Safeway. She will be happy to fix you up with a good meal or a cold beverage.

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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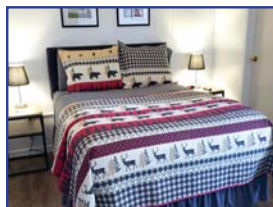


Chewelah

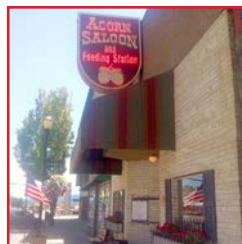
RUSTY PUTTER BAR & GRILLE - CHEWELAH GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB: A great place for friends, a frosty beer with a great burger, and the largest TV in Chewelah. Enjoy breakfast, lunch, or dinner, and relax on the patio (also the largest in Chewelah) overlooking the 9th Green and Pond of the 9 Hole Course, and the firepit on cool evenings. Public is always welcome. 2537 Sand Canyon Rd., 509-935-6807, chewelahgolf.com.



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



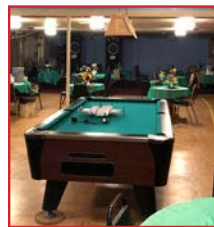
Colville



ACORN SALOON & FEEDING STATION: Breakfast, lunch & dinner 7 days a week with daily specials. Cocktails and cold beer, pool tables and pull tabs. Mon-Thur: 7am-9pm, Fri-Sat: 7am-10pm, Sun: 8am-9pm. 262 S Main., 509-684-3337, find us on Facebook!

Get your business listed today!

CAFE ITALIANO: Family dining featuring authentic Mediterranean cuisine. Ask about our specials. 151 W. 1st. Call for hours open: 509-684-5268.



COLVILLE EAGLE'S 2797: Serving Colville for 76 years. Open to the public for lunch Tue-Fri, 11am-2pm, with a great menu and salad bar. Fri dinner & salad bar, 5-7pm, with line dancing & karaoke. Sun breakfast, 9am-Noon. Bingo, Wed, 5:30 & 1st & 3rd Sun, 1:30. Pool-Darts-Poker. New members welcome. 608 N Wynne. 509-684-4534.

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



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



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



POUR HOUSE: A fun, family-oriented craft beer tap house and restaurant offering burgers, paninis, salads and wraps, 30+ taps, wine, and fun atmosphere. Banquet / event center / conference room for private parties and meetings. Mon-Thur, 11am-8pm, Fri & Sat, 11am-9pm. 202 S. Main. 509-685-7325. Facebook.com/PourHouseColville.

RONNIE D'S DRIVE-IN:

Locally owned restaurant serving the community for over 30 years. Enjoy hamburgers, salads, hot sandwiches, fish, chicken and more! Huge variety of ice cream flavors, banana splits & homemade waffle cones. Mon-Fri 9am-8pm, Sat 10am-8pm. 505 N. Lincoln on Hwy 395 Colville. 509-684-2642, ronnieds.com.



WESTSIDE PIZZA:

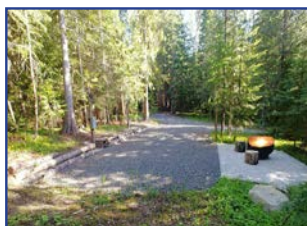


It's all about the pizza! Eat in or sit back and enjoy our delivery service! Combo, specialty, build your own pizzas, plus dessert stix, appetizers, and salads. 555 S. Main, Sun-Thur 11am-9pm, Fri-Sat 11am-10pm. 509-684-8254.

BENNY'S COLVILLE INN: With 106 guest rooms, suites, spa and largest local indoor pool, Benny's has big city accommodations with that small town charm and friendliness. Simple breakfast 5-9am. Check out our fish museum lobby. 915 S Main. 800-680-2517 or 509-684-2517.



THE WILDS RV CAMPING:



The unicorn of RV camping – SINGLE-PARTY FULL HOOKUP wilderness RV campsite in the forest. Quiet, private, no other RVs, just you. Easy access. Satisfaction guaranteed. 10 miles east of Colville. Weekly rates available. Info and video at www.thewilds.camp. 509-640-4220. Families, hermits,

hikers, bikers and urban refugees welcome.

Kettle Falls

TJ'S HOMETOWN BAR

& GRILL: Established in 1976 in historic Kettle Falls Washington, the gateway to the Upper Columbia River waterway. We serve up home-style bar & grill food in a warm and family-friendly environment. Open 7 days a week for lunch & dinner, Saturday and Sunday breakfast 7 am - 11 am., 305 E 3rd Ave., 509-738-2623.



Please stop by any of these businesses and thank them for being locally owned and operated, and a part of our community.

CHINA BEND B&B:

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



Ione

CEDAR RV PARK:



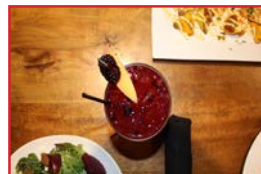
Come enjoy the beautiful Pend Oreille River and make Cedar RV Park your base-camp for year-round outdoor activities. Full RV hookups, fully furnished cabin, tent camping, laundry, showers, dump station, VERY fast Wi-Fi/

broadband internet, car & RV wash, and more! 4404 North Hwy 31, Ione. 509-442-2144. cedarrvpark.com.

Loon Lake

THE LAKEHOUSE BAR & GRILL:

A locally-sourced kitchen focused on comfort food with more adventurous specials. Mon-Fri, 4pm-close, Sat-Sun, 9am-9pm. 3998 Hwy 292, Loon Lake, Reservations at 509-644-0077 or at theloonlakehouse.com.



LOON LAKE MOTEL:

Comfortable and super clean rooms with all the amenities at affordable prices, featuring themed and thoughtfully-selected decor. Pet friendly and close to picturesque Loon Lake and acres of wilderness. 3945 Hwy 292, 509-233-2916, www.loonlakeinn.com.

Orient

BEARDSLEE FAMILY

RESTAURANT:

Where everyone is family. Serving home cooking and prime rib on Fri. Spirits, beer, wine and hard ice cream.

Karaoke every Sat. Open Wed-Sat, 8am-8pm, Sun, 8am-5pm. Hwy. 395 in Orient. 509-684-2564.



Experience our family fun event in Curlew, WA



AUGUST 1st - 3rd, 2025
STOTTS FESTIVAL GROUNDS

MUSIC, CAMPING, CAR SHOW, & LOCAL VENDORS
for more info visit kettlerivermusicfestival.org

We are more than a music festival.

We are a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting, developing, and nurturing a cultural interest in music for the benefit of our rural communities of the Inland Northwest. We joyfully create opportunities for the public musical growth, enjoyment, education, and entertainment through performance-oriented musical enterprises and festival program so we can help provide music scholarships for youth, music lessons, and workshops.

There is onsite camping at Stott's RV Park. Our area also has other fantastic places to stay and delicious restaurants to dine in.

For more information visit:

republicwa.com



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