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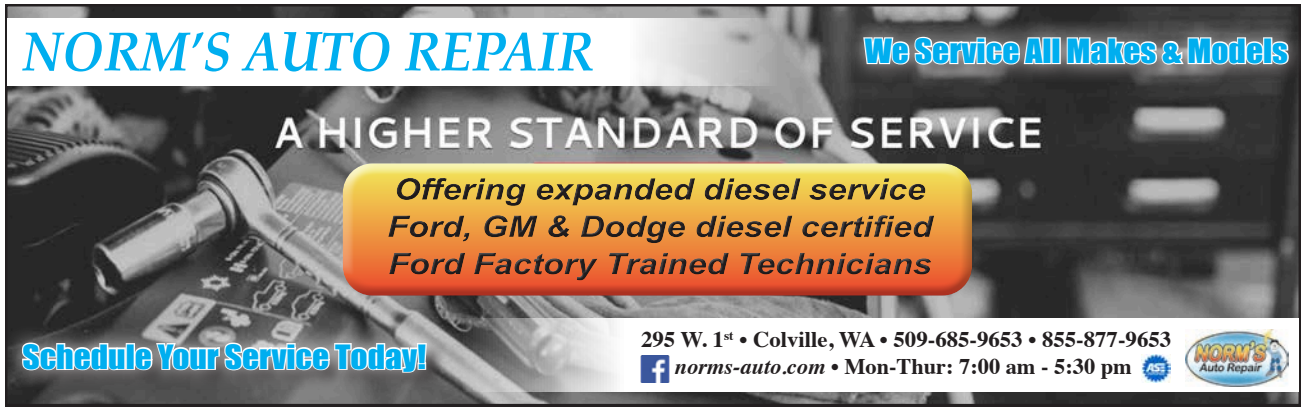
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Voice Of The Electorate

- 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 & ARTICLE DEADLINE
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Love Beyond Fragility

Gratitude for the secret sauce that defines 'family'

By Christine Wilson

"You do not know who they will be, the ones who open your eyes to life's wild magic, but when you find them, it will not be hard to tell."
~ StoryPeople

"Life's a long, long road that leads us somewhere. It's a heavy load when you're trying to get there. We all carry on through thick and thin. …
Sometimes life can turn around before you know it. Open your heart, open your mind and let it flow in. You know things will always change.
It's up to you to rearrange. Your life will never be the same."
~ Ringo Starr, "Long, Long Road"

"Anti-fragility is beyond resilience or robustness. The resilient resists shock and stays the same; the anti-fragile gets better." ~ Nassim Nicholas Taleb

"Be nice to your kids; some day they will pick your nursing home." ~ Bumper sticker

"Put down the weight of your aloneness and ease into the conversation. … Everything is waiting for you." ~ David Whyte

"Memories, they can't be boughten. They can't be won at carnivals for free." ~ John Prine

In the 1990s I married into a fabulous Sicilian/German family. They say what they think. They accept each other, warts and all. They eat well. Love is their default; it underlies their connections to each other. They exude unconditional love. They got that way from both their parents. I wish my father-in-law was still alive, so I could ask him how he was able to do that, since his own German background included a father who died when he was 7. I do know that he was absorbed into this extended family and he fit right in.

My mother-in-law is now 93 and has Parkinson's. She has big needs, which take a lot of time. We visited her in Illinois in early September, and we got pulled into that love before we even arrived, as we heard about the niece and nephews anticipating our arrival. You'd have to work pretty hard not to feel loved around that crowd.

Shortly after our return home, I heard an interview with Sir Richard Starkey, better known as Ringo Starr. He had just released a new album and the title song talked about the long, long road we all navigate in this world. My mother-in-law thinks she is close to the end of hers, and that was one of the things we talked about. She was in the hospital when we got there and then was switched to skilled nursing in the same complex as her apartment. Things were changing for her and, to borrow Ringo Starr's term, it was up to all of us to rearrange.

> *"I didn't know you could be mad at someone and love them at the same time."*

In my own family, we tried our best, but I grew up with a more fragile sense of relationships. I didn't know there even was such a thing as unconditional love. We operated with what I was told was the "civilized" notion that we didn't experience anger. I didn't know you could be mad at someone and love them at the same time. I didn't know that relationships could survive turmoil. I definitely didn't know how to speak directly to a person with whom I was in conflict.

Random Acts of Community

I am happy to report that my siblings and I have moved beyond those old notions. The big news, though, is that I now know that love makes a family, so you can create your own out of whole cloth. Pandemic bubble groups, book clubs, and communities of faith can all turn into real families.

I recently told a chiropractor about the scene in *The Long Kiss Goodnight* in which Geena Davis is trying to recover from amnesia. She doesn't know she had been a CIA assassin but in that scene, she is discovering she knows how to use a knife. She thinks maybe she was a chef. Then one of her previous targets finds her and as they fight she snaps his neck. She looks at her new husband and says: "Chefs do that." It's a line we use sometimes at our house and a reason I am afraid of getting my neck worked on, but a chiropractor has told me that it's very hard to actually break your neck that way. We are not as fragile as we think, he says.

I'm of the opinion that this point is also true of our emotional well-being. Things change; we rearrange. All that rearranging is much easier if you know you have people around you who love you. We can become anti-fragile. I saw the effects of that during our visit to Illinois.

As a young mother, my mother-in-law created a loving family. She managed what my husband calls the Kool-Aid house as he grew up. Everyone was welcomed. When my sister-in-law passed away in her early 20s, friends and family surrounded them with comfort and love, inoculating them from derailing their lives. My in-laws' marriage survived the grief, while marriages with similar circumstances did not.

In high school I babysat a family in which one of their children died. They had pictures of her around the house and the mom said they were not about to pretend like she had not existed. My husband's family is like that. There are pictures, stories, and even a tale about the haunting of the room she shared with one of her sisters. It is not that they are without heartbreak. They just seem to be an anti-fragile family.

When you are 93 and have Parkinson's, you need a lot of help. Her family was there for her with their fierce love in the way the poet David Whyte uses the word "fierce." It is a ferociously kind sort of power that moves people to act with love. I do not mean this in a sugary sweet kind of obligatory action. What I get to be around with this family is something deeper than that, a subterranean assurance that doesn't fall apart when exposed to stress. My mother-in-law told me several times she felt badly that everyone had to do so much for her. I kept reminding her that she had done a lot for them.

The last time we spoke about it, she said: "Well, I guess I did work a lot of my life around their schedules and needs." Yep, it's their turn, I said, and they are happy to do it.

The year we turned our basement into my office, a microburst came through town and took out 60 trees. The trees that went down, I was told, either had shallow roots or were in bad condition. The healthy trees were whipped around in high winds and pummeled with rain just like those unfortunate 60. They survived because they could withstand the force. I like a good storm in nature. In human interactions, I prefer calm these days. However, feeling the love of other people makes me feel like I could withstand a lot of emotional microbursts and come out OK on the other side. What I have learned from my clients and friends, our kids, and this family I married into is not that any of us get to be immune from heartbreak. It is that with a little help from our friends we can learn to be anti-fragile. We can learn to trust that we can handle the relational mayhem.

This is the month of Thanksgiving, and I am especially aware right now of how thankful I am for the family I have and the one I stumbled upon and for the memories that "can't be boughten." I enjoy feeling this gratitude year-round. My aspiration is that I can pass the anti-fragility lessons on to the rest of my family, friends, and our beloved *Monthly* readers. Maybe this month you can say thank you to someone who reminds you that you have that kind of anti-fragility.

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

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A Bum, a Doctor and an Addict

Different spheres of influence, aligned in kindness

By Dr. Barry Bacon

I'm waiting for a business partner. I'm sitting on the porch of an old church turned food co-op remade into a recovery house for men. The air is pungent with the scent of leaves at the end of their season, wilting, colored, falling. The sun is warm, but the breeze betrays the season's change. A friend approaches and greets me. She asks to sit down. She wants to talk to me, and I have a few minutes to spare. She has a story, something she has been carrying with her for many years. I listen.

"I was in a really dark place in my life," she began. "I had just been released from detox. I had nowhere to go, and I was desperate. Then I got sick." She cleared her throat. "I stood lost on a street corner in a big city where I knew no one, and everyone I knew would drag me back into my addiction."

She paused. "I remember thinking, I'm not going to make it. I can't call my mom. She's written me off. I can't call my dad. He's still in his addiction. I desperately wanted to change. I stood there weeping, crying out inside for someone, anyone to help."

She paused again and took a deep breath. "Then a bum walked up to me. He was an older man. Looked like he had been through the wringer himself. 'Looks like you are feeling pretty bad,' he said. I told him I didn't know what to do. 'Come with me,' he said. 'I'll go with you to the hospital. We'll get you help.'

"He walked with me several blocks to the rehab place, and stayed with me till I got checked in." Even now she can hardly tell the story without deep emotional response. She is shaking as she talks to me.

"Then I got sick and needed to see a surgeon. I remember how concerned he was. 'Don't worry,' he told me. 'We're going to help you through this.' He stayed with me through all the medical care I needed." She took another deep breath and, through her tears, she exhaled slowly. "I can't stop thanking that man. My doctor was a surgeon, Dr. Montgomery. Even now, whenever I have the chance, I stop by his office just to say thank you. I can never repay him."

I wanted to know more about the impact these two men had on her life, so different in their spheres but so aligned in their kindnesses. "They just saw me. There were a lot of bad men, a lot of men who took advantage of my situation. But … those two men. They are the ones who saved my life. They never asked me for anything. Those two men saved my life."

I asked her about how else she had survived. "Yeah," she said thoughtfully. "I was young and pretty, so guys would want to take care of me. But there was always a price…" her voice trailed off. Some things are better left unsaid. "But I had to survive. I had things to live for." She took another deep breath and, through her tears, she smiled.

I nod. I happen to know the surgeon. I know the caliber of expertise he brings. He teaches and brings his craft to colleagues in such out-of-the way locations as Burundi and Swaziland. The man she labeled a "bum" is someone I'll never know, but someone she will never forget.

I'm heading to the bank for our daily deposit. Thoughts are swirling in my mind. I swat my way through a swarm of small gnats which seem to hatch in huge eruptions this time of year in northeast Washington. As I step up to


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the desk, I ask the bank teller, "what's with the white flying bugs outside?"

"They are blue," she informs me. "They are called 'blue fluffy-butt aphids.'" She speaks with authority. She calls out to her colleague at the next window for confirmation. The other teller affirms her choice of labels. "They all hatch this time of year, then they swarm and mate, and then I guess they all die."

The two women shake their heads, lamenting the sad tale of the brief love life of these creatures. Then they shrug off the tragedy and hand me my change and receipt.

I have learned a lot from these women – just not the details of life I had expected. Some days we swap tales of medical significance. Sometimes we answer questions about another customer's symptoms. Sometimes I threaten to set up another clinic in the bank vault. They never seem to take me too seriously, and I trust that next time I see them, we'll have another opportunity to compare health notes or hear the sordid details of another invertebrate's short and tragic life.

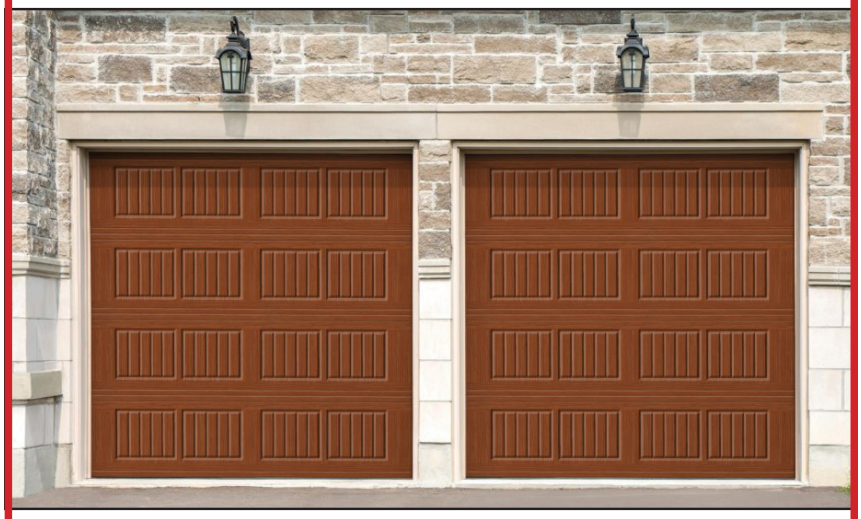
I head out of the bank with a smile on my face. The sun is warm, the breeze has lost its chill, the leaves on the trees are floating earthward, the traffic is light and careful. I sit for a moment, face to the sun, drinking in my thoughts, letting them marinate together. I think of our short and tragic lives, mixtures of joy and sorrow, addiction and redemption. I think of my friend whose memory cannot erase the kindnesses of two strangers who became dear and cherished because that is who they chose to be to her.

She cannot unsee them. She cannot forget them. Every time she despairs, she remembers what someone saw in her. Hope, a future, someone worth caring for, unexpected kindnesses given without price and without strings attached.

And I say to myself as I see the sun slide behind a distant white cloud, how beautiful our short tragic lives are because someone was kind, unexpectedly and beautifully. We find reason to believe because there are still such people in the world.

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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Time Travel

By Tina Wynecoop

In the funnies, Mooch the cat wizard boasts:
"Like Merlin and ALL great wizards, I can travel backwards in time."
Earl, his dog companion, is amazed; "You can!?!!"
"Yesh, on November 1st when we turn the clocks back!"

~ Patrick McDonnell, the Mutts daily comic strip, 10/20/26

I agree with the Washington State Historical Society's motto, "Local history is never dull." Travel "backwards in time" with me through glimpses of Spokane Valley history, where cataclysms, artists, ferrymen, entrepreneurs, cantaloupes, tomatoes and the original inhabitants on the land left their story. I'm not a wizard, just someone who is intrigued by local history. Come along.

In 1860 the landscape artist for the Northwestern Boundary Survey, James Madison Alden, stood atop the basalt cliff towering over the Spokane River when he painted the remarkable scene of the forest-blanketed, Selkirk mountain-rimmed Spokane Valley.

There have been vast changes to that landscape. The forest hardly exists, and today an artist standing on the same 400-foot cliff (with its Arbor Crest Winery) would paint a very different scene.



James Madison Alden 1860. Plante's Crossing, Spokane River and Plains, Trail Runs N.N.E. National Archives.

When multiple floods swept through the valley thousands of years earlier and formed its contours, readied its soil for tall trees, deposited rounded cobblestones larger than pebbles and smaller than boulders, and flowed on westward, there were human witnesses too. Oral tradition confirms their presence.

Northwest nature writer Lynda Mapes notes, "The tree speaks without words of what and who was here before." The Spokane River streamed its wordless eloquence in Alden's painting.

In the 1850s, French-Canadian pioneer Antoine Plante established the river's first commercial ferry for travelers needing passage to the river's opposite shore. Alden's painting includes a tiny canoe in the river. One of the passengers could have been Sophie Edwards (- q^{w}ń q^{w}iń xń meaning Green Blanket Feet).

History tells that she crossed over, assisted by a ferryman, on her return to Kettle Falls. She had been on a perilous journey in pursuit of her abducted children, Robert (b. 1856) and Kitty (b. 1860). It was a long way to the Missouri River's Fort Benton, especially afoot. She had been betrayed by her soldier husband who was determined to raise their children in the "white culture." He left without informing her.

Sophie never saw her children again. How weary and despairing she must have been when she finally reached the Spokane River's bank, crossed over, and then, with miles to go on feet shod in shreds of a green blanket, she reached her Kettle Falls home. She is the subject of oral and written records. Her great-great grandchildren, siblings Marsha, Susan and David, the great grandchildren of Sophie's abducted son Robert Pelkey Jr., discovered the history of their intrepid ancestor several years ago in a historical article about her in the *North Columbia Monthly*.

In 1918 John D. Miller, the father of Mark Miller (the Tomato Guy), purchased Spokane Valley land in what is now Greenacres (so named because it was originally a community of truck garden tracts). He raised strawberries, tomatoes and other produce, including Hearts of Gold cantaloupes. Over 200 Native people from around the region helped with harvests through many growing seasons.

John Miller's son, Mark, has been

my informant about the valley's agricultural past. His father was the largest employer in Greenacres. The berries he grew supplied the Sunny Jim cannery, famous for its tins of strawberry jam.

Mark speaks with fondness of the Indians who camped and worked for his father, including Spokane tribal citizen Margaret Adams (1871-1973) who continued harvesting strawberries when she was over 100 years old. He also remembers the tragic demise of Ignatius Bighead, one of his father's reliable Indigenous foremen, who froze to death in a cardboard shelter along the Spokane River.

On a happier note, Mark recalls, "The workers all knew me – they called me Little Wheel and my father Big Wheel. … My boyhood bedroom was at ground level, and the harvesters would peer in my window to observe how I lived. During harvests they would sometimes come in one car, loaded with 10-12 of them. City buses also provided transportation to the truck farm – bringing the Indigenous harvesters in the morning and picking them up at the end of the workday. The workers were very much involved with our family; they would stop by during winter. We were given many gifts. My father was kind to them."

[A few years ago, Mark and I planned to visit the old farm to view the treasured gifts the Indians had made for his family. I regret that Mark's own tomato operation in Spokane kept him too busy to accomplish the visit.]

Another tribal member recalled when her mother Nancy Wynecoop, the niece of Green Blanket Feet, would travel from Wellpinit to Greenacres during harvest-time. Nancy would leave her youngest daughter, Nettie, and Nettie's friend Emily Phillips at nearby Camp Sweyolakan in Idaho while she camped and worked in the valley's fields and orchards.

Perhaps it was the melon variety, the Hearts of Gold cantaloupes grown on the Miller Farm that Selma Elbert (b. 1923) tasted and raved about for the rest of her earthly life. She remembered their sweet, juicy and fragrant deep-orange golden flesh. Selma's daughter was tantalized.



Spokane/Schitsu'umsh, Margaret Adams, sitting on the steps of St. Michaels. Photo by Richard T. Lewis, courtesy University of Washington.

Last month the *Spokesman-Review* featured a young Spokane Valley farm couple who have brought back the Hearts of Gold cantaloupe variety once so prevalent in the region. I read the article and sought out their farm store the next day. Others were of the same mind and pursuit. The previous day the seven-acre valley farm sold all its treasure trove of ripe cantaloupes within ten minutes of opening for business! They had read the same *S-R* article – and their salivary glands got the best of them just as mine did. When I arrived, there was a line of eager folks outside the little store. The owner opened the door and explained that there were only ten ripe cantaloupes available. I got one!

I exited, feeling smug and rich, when a fellow offered to buy my cantaloupe at double the price I paid. He was pleasant, not pushy, just desperate. I held onto my purchase a little tighter. Then I walked around the farm and took some photos. I knew I was standing on holy ground – on this rare wee remnant of a patch of valley soil that didn't have a housing development, strip mall, highway or industrial complex covering it.

The land's rich heritage has been keeping history. My story is just a glimpse of what was never dull. If I had a wizard's wand, and knew how to use it for travel back in time, I would wave it over the Spokane Valley.

Tina Wynecoop has said that western Washington, where she grew up, was the most interesting place in the world – until she moved 300 miles east in 1970 to teach on the Spokane Indian Reservation. She says the culture, geography, history, weather, people, and flora and fauna of this inland region have become her beloved "home ground."

For Every John ...

The challenges of dating while keeping hope alive

By Tina Tolliver Matney

One would think, I think, that if someone dates a man named John and is heartbroken by that same John who unceremoniously dumps her not long after her house burns to the ground, that one would never date a man named John again. And one would be right. For a while anyway. And yes, that woman is me. And that John is long gone.

When one is … OK, enough of that. When *I* was pouring my life, literally, into scraping myself up and putting myself back together, it didn't take me long to realize a relationship during that time was probably a really bad idea anyway, especially with someone who lived seven hours away. But this past summer, after over two years of flying solo, I decided it was time to throw myself back into the brutal world of online dating.

The first thing I did was update my photos to reflect my crow's feet and new family of chins. Then I rewrote my profile with the intention of weeding out anyone who couldn't tolerate a sassy, free-spirited, stubborn chick from the sticks who cusses like a sailor. I'm not sure you can put a "cute" spin on that and I didn't even try. I was over trying to lure in a man by saying all the right things. I had decided that if there was a man out there who could like me for just being me then I couldn't ask for anything more.

Well … in truth I could, and in hindsight I should have. Because, while my honesty was admired and accepted by a few promising men who turned out to be real specimens of the human race and not bots or low-life scammers, it was soon obvious that I needed to compile a list of questions to ask potential dates before we even got to the point of seeing each other's sagging chins in person.

I didn't give this much thought until I met a man who I felt finally "got me." He had his own quirks and humor that could turn dark and we hit it off after a couple of phone calls and a couple of dates that were full of fun and adventure. But a couple of experiences with him became the first questions on my list of what I needed to know about a potential date.

For instance, politics should be pretty straightforward and easy to learn about. But it's a slippery slope these days. And I knew this guy leaned more to the right politically than me and that's OK. Up to a point. And he jabbed me with that point when he broke our agreement not to talk politics while out enjoying the great outdoors. Even though I stayed quiet he got pretty worked up. That red flag practically knocked me off my bike.

But I let it go, then sent a clear reminder of our agreement and we moved on. And then, a week later, BOOM … he dropped a ball I couldn't pick up. I couldn't even roll it out of the way and pretend it wasn't there. And so we parted ways, wishing each other well and at least for me wishing things could be different but also knowing I was doing the right thing.

And then came John. A line of them, actually. Just imagine this vivid dream. I am a cashier at the local grocery. As I look up to see what's holding up my line, I see four carts piled high with skis, hiking boots, model trains, binoculars, a MAGA hat and so many red flags I can't count them all. Each guy is wearing a name tag that says "John." And they are all smiling.

First there was John from "somewhere NOT long distance." Nice guy. Great chats. We had potential … until we talked on the phone. I'm going to leave that right there.

Another local man named John I actually met at a music venue this past summer. He had that hat in his cart. He went missing for weeks and then reached out when he returned from taking care of his Dad. Awwww … he got my soft spot. We were both super busy but decided to finally meet for coffee one morning in September. I might as well make my public apology right here for anyone who was witness to his political rage that did not end until I got up and walked away. The end.

Then there was John from the west side. He has a toy sailboat and a fishing pole in his cart. And a really big dog named Baloo. And one red flag. I didn't know what his red flag was about until a couple days ago when he called me at stupid a.m. and said he was on the road and would be in Colville by early afternoon and would meet me for an early dinner. Seriously, right out of the blue.

If this were a movie the music would start and a smile would break out on her face (I pick Meg Ryan) as she realized this man was driving all the way across the state to meet HER! She would say, "Yes! I'll see you at 4!"

But this wasn't a movie. This was me before coffee. I had a runny nose and a sinus headache with a looming deadline (for which I'm still typing). In that moment I felt like a troll that needed chocolate and not a man backing me into a corner to meet him for dinner. But I wiped the frown off my face, OK, fine, the coffee wiped the frown off my

face. I showered and found something not ugly to wear. This took me literally all day.

While I arrived on time and smiling for dinner at 4, he was a half hour late. The red flag turned out to be the whole situation. He did not ask for communication or input on my part and the fact that he was late didn't help his cause. And then came the flagpole in my eye when he saw the little scratch on my hand that was put there by the current little owl that is in my care.

I don't expect anyone to really "get it" about the birds. I'm OK with that. But after I shared that side of my life, this guy said, "What's the matter? Can't think of better things to do with your time?" I actually laughed a little before I said, "Well I can sure think of better things to do right now." And out the door I went. I drove home and went straight to the owl house and told that cranky little ball of feathers and talons I was sorry about the people in this world that just don't appreciate wildlife.

So here I am. Still single. Still happy and living what I truly believe is my best life. I'm not lonely in the least, with all my friends and my family. And let's not forget Pip the cat who will be getting a puppy dog brother in a few short weeks.

Maybe someday there will be a man who wants to be part of this great big life that is already full of joy and gratitude. Maybe not. But in the meantime, there is much life to live, a growing family to celebrate and winter to prepare for. My wish for you in this season of gratitude is that you find your joy and your peace and keep it tucked into your own heart all year long.

And if you want to send up some good vibes for me, I have a date tomorrow night. In the big city. A fancy date with dinner (please, Lord, no shellfish or gluten) and a dress (yes, this freaks me out) and shoes that will be kicked under the seat in front of me while I try my very best to hold my eyelids open until the closing credits. Send good wishes for us … his name is John.

Tina Tolliver Matney 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.





November Random Thoughts

Perplexing clues, repeating names, carving made easy, target pracitce and oops-obits

By Bob Gregson

Crossword Puzzles

They're coming back in popularity! Or so it said in an online article.

I've always enjoyed the rudimentary kind of crossword puzzles and consider them an element of adult continuing education. They fit in nicely as the cold November choice between the fantasy of taking an adult education tour of Europe via canal boat costing ten thousand dollars apiece for two weeks versus sitting at home close to the radiant heat of the heavy cast iron gas fireplace, napping, reading, snacking, occasionally watching the Seahawks on TV, and doing crosswords. All you need for the latter is a pencil and good eraser and a ten-dollar crossword puzzle book which lasts for months. Is that a tough choice?

Lots of pencils have old-age hard dry erasers so it's important to have nice soft ones to correct that rare (ha ha) mistaken entry.

There is just one serious problem about crossword puzzles: really-far-out clues that defy logic and everything else. The varlets who make up some of the clues should be ashamed of themselves and get fined by a new sector of government called Justice Department Division of Misleading Writings. I'm confident those puzzle authors get together in annual meetings where they set aside hours to read unrelatable made-up clues to each other, laugh out loud dozens of times, and crown 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners of the Stumped-You-Dummies-by-Using-Fake-Clues Award.

Aside from that ugly truth, it's fun to do crosswords. And educational. Who knew "darb" was a word?

Names Within a Family

One wonders why some given names, mostly for males, are repeats, as in Andrew "Andy" Andrews, Andy "Andy" (ha ha) Anderson, William "Bill" Williams, and so on. I've known each of the above. A lack of imagination by the parents? A poke in society's eye? Whatever.

Some family groups use the same names over and over generationally. Some loftier families use roman numerals after a name, like "Thurwood E. Rockwell III" where probably the first Thurwood Rockwell made a fortune in plastics, followed in business by his son Thurwood II, and now Thurwood the 3rd is the latest head of the business and needs the prestige of carrying his grandfather's name.

The four recent generations of my family had a total of eleven males, including five who were Robert and four who were James. But they mostly had different middle names from prior generations because not one of the forebears started a business or required heirs of the same name to carry on at the country club.

On the female side almost 50% of the group were named Helen.

Electric Knives

Remember them? They've mostly faded into culinary history and that's a shame. They made carving a turkey or roast beef or chicken so much easier. Same for cutting corn off of a cob for freezing. Also, they were good for cutting

other household items like foam rubber and cardboard. Maybe the reason they are no longer prominent is that people tend to eat more prepared foods and pre-cut meat items. Hard to know why such a handy device no longer graces many kitchens or can be seen in late-night TV advertisements.

Modern Target Practice

This is for those of you who have, or still do, practice shooting at targets with a long gun, usually a .22 rifle for most of us. Someone recently noted that Marines focus mostly on learning and continuing to qualify by shooting at known-distance targets, usually 100, 200 and 300 meters or more away. The Army, on the other hand, focuses on learning to shoot at pop-up targets 25 to 300 meters away. Those literally do pop up in your field of vision and you have ten seconds or less to spot the target, carefully aim, and shoot at it. Then another one will pop up left or right at some random distance. Again, you have to quickly spot it, adjust your muzzle elevation as you aim, then shoot.

Target shooting on a known-distance range is easier than at pop-ups. Standard military 5.56mm bullets drop quite a bit after about 200 meters, almost a foot at 300 meters and over eleven feet at 600 meters! That drop needs to be factored in immediately by the shooter.

Marine infantrymen do practice sometimes on pop-ups but that's not how they determine who is an expert rifleman and how they validate that skill on a yearly basis.

A plinker with a .22 will usually shoot at cans or bottles or at a circle target less than 50 meters away, where you can quickly figure out if you're shooting low or high.

I was a decent rifle marksman in the Army and had the opportunity to try a new military sniper rifle several years ago at a state-of-the-art Civilian Marksmanship Program range in Alabama. It had been many decades since I'd fired on a range but with that unbelievable weapon and its scope, from a bench rest, I got five out of six rounds inside a dinner-plate size target at 600 meters – four standard city blocks – which involved a bullet drop of around eight feet. The scope on that rifle makes things easy.

Obituary Writings

Somebody needs to double-check all obituaries before they can be printed in newspapers. At a certain stage in life, it becomes second nature to glance at the obituary page to see if any friends or neighbors are listed therein. I do that and add looking for men and women who are military veterans. I say their full name and thank them for the sacrifices they've made during their service lives, and especially thank them if they were combat vets.

But these days it's fairly common to find typos or worse. One, for instance, starkly jumped out at me. The entry said, "…Mr._____ drowned in the bay, surrounded by people he loved." The natural question there is, "Who were those people surrounding him and why didn't they try to save him?!"

Language miscues can certainly cause confusion, like that one, or mess things up. My dad, as the vice principal of a high school, received written notes every day from parents describing why the school should excuse the absence of their child the prior school day. One of his favorites came in as, "Please execute Peter because he was at the dentist."

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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Walnut Thief

Lost, Found, and Thanksgivings

Story and Photo by Juan Juan Moses

All summer long we heard them, the sounds coming from seemingly every tree, endless streams of harsh scolding and threat of war. "Tskk-kk…." The squirrel population exploded. Their young pleaded with unceasing cries, for food I presumed. Their parents darted around the garden and the nearby shrubs, their tails twitching nervously. The half-chewed apples began to litter the ground.

Then jackpot hit. By late summer, the walnut tree, which had been given a good trim earlier in the year, was festooned with nuts. I knew better than to think I was the only one coveting the sweetness of their fresh flesh. But surely there was enough for everybody. For once, the tree was loaded!

From August, before the nuts ripened, one squirrel started working the tree. Up and down the trunk it rustled and through the thickets of the branches, from dawn to dusk, dashing off with nuts in its jaw, always in the same direction. I was exasperated watching MY share disappear.

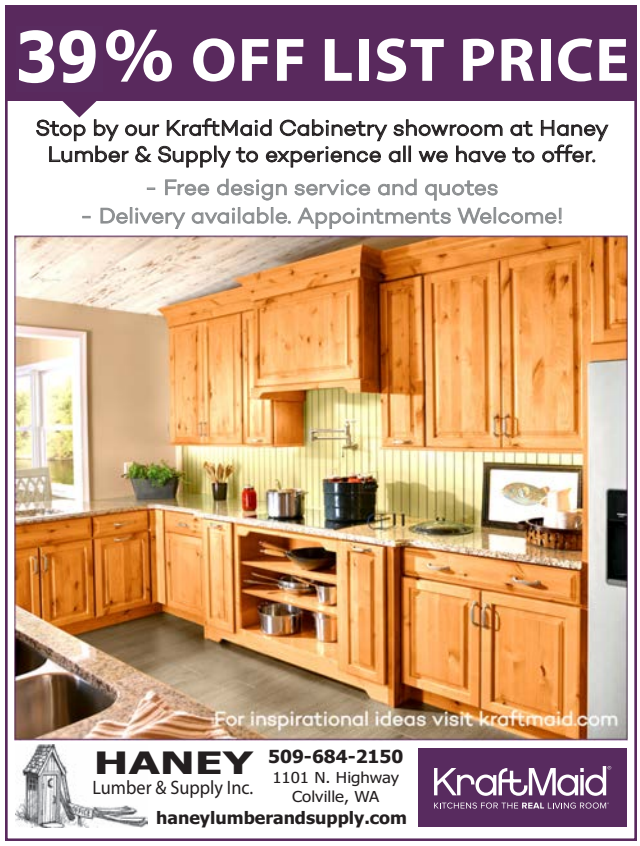
This guy apparently claimed the whole tree as its own. Other squirrels would tiptoe and sneak around the tree when its back was turned. But it had eyes in the back of its head. Fights broke out. I had battle fatigue just watching them. I thought the self-professed tree owner's granary might be the neighbor's shed. One winter, while cleaning his shed, the neighbor asked us if we wanted our walnuts returned. When we said yes, he drove over with a 20-gallon bin!

I couldn't help but admire the animal's industry, its foresight, its instinct and its survival. Above all, its thievery in broad daylight.

I was there once. I was a grain thief. Or, at least, I attempted to be one.

During the early 1970s in China, at the height of communism, hunger was a constant companion. My father had been demoted by the government to be a schoolteacher due to one po-





litical reason or another. Maybe he thought the wrong thought. His demotion, though, was a godsend to a lot of relatives and friends in villages who had boys whose education could not go on beyond 5th grade. Because my father taught at the only town in the entire county that had a middle and high school, these relatives and friends would send their sons to stay with us.

At night, they would pile into one big bed with my brothers in the big classroom that was converted into our living quarters. The school was responsible for providing housing. And because school was hardly functioning during that politically charged time, extra classrooms were converted into teachers' living space. Hence, it was no problem housing a cascade of rotating teenagers in one big classroom that also served as our kitchen and living room, with a back corner partitioned by a thin board serving as our family's bedrooms.

Food, on the other hand, was a constant challenge. Our meager government rations could barely keep the family fed, never mind all those extra mouths. So, our "cousins" would go home on weekends. On Sunday evenings they would return with their own bundles of the week's supply, usually sweet potatoes and pickles. The sweet potatoes were payment from the collectives for their parents' labor in the field. The pickles were made by their mothers with vegetables grown on the little plot of land allotted by the government for personal use.

One semester, a very polished city boy breezed through the door. My father's best friend had gone to jail. Just about everybody was guaranteed to go to jail at some point or another for political reasons. Hanging the communist leader's portrait slightly crooked in your living room to worship could land you in jail for blasphemy. No one bothered to ask why the man was in jail. The boy just joined our circus one day. He did not go home for the weekend because he had no home to go back to. And he did not come with his own sweet potatoes.

With so many hungry boys, my father decided to butcher the family dog. The problem was that the dog was my brother's pet. The dog fought. But the 13-year-old didn't. Something else died that day along with the little black dog. I have always thought that was the day my brother began his life-



long fatalism, which contributed to a mental breakdown in his midlife. But he never talks about it. I refuse to forget. Nothing can romance me into believing that day will not come again, no matter where we are.

I was about 7 or 8 then. Old enough to help. It was late August, harvest time. The workers of the village collective stored their threshed and husked wheat in the empty classrooms. The golden piles looked tempting. How could I funnel some of that to feed us? The piles had eyes on them. But I devised a clever scheme. I rolled up the cuffs of my pants, pretended like I was playing in the pile, and stepped onto it. I hoped the cuffs could scoop up some grains. I would go home, unroll them, and repeat. If I made enough trips, perhaps we could have enough for dinner.

"I see what you are doing!" One of the women there immediately caught on. Seemed like she knew the game. "Stop stealing and go play somewhere else!"

That was my thieving career, ended before it started. Had it been successful, I might have become a career thief.

Back to the present time: By fall, the walnut tree was completely relieved of its fruits. Then one day I happened to be rooting among the shrubs by the fence and discovered a stash of walnuts 10 feet long! The old abandoned whiskey half barrel there was piled to the brim with walnuts as well. I let out a yelp and couldn't stop laughing.

"I am taking them all back!" I announced to our sons, who were visiting. "You can't do that, Mama! You can't do that! The squirrel will starve!"

What to do now? Should I be a walnut thief myself? Would the squirrel really starve to death if I was? Would its heart be broken?

I went to the pantry, which held a stash of walnuts left over from last year's supply from a friend from her farm. I spread most of them in place of the fresh ones I scooped up, leaving some on the deck for the hard worker to have its own jolt of joy, making sure its share was bigger than mine.

It would be a lot of work, husking these recovered walnuts. But work I cherish: harvesting, preparing for the time of want. Better still, no one was robbed. No one will starve.

A good thanksgiving indeed.

Juan Juan Moses wakes up every morning and pinches herself with gratitude that she was reborn into this great country and lives in a bountiful place called the Pend Oreille River.

The Long Return Home

Wapupxn, a.k.a. Canada lynx, once again roaming the Kettle Range

Story and Photos by Joanie Christian

Across many Indigenous traditions, animals are understood as relatives and spiritual partners – connected to people and the land through kinship and mutual care. Not simply viewed as a resource, but revered. Respected. Not separate from us, but part of a living whole.

The land, the creatures, the people – all integral threads in a much larger tapestry of life. When a species disappears, its absence is more than a gap on a wildlife map. A member of the family is missing. The tapestry is incomplete, and the whole is changed.

In this spirit, the Colville Confederated Tribes bring culture, values, and science together to restore species to the landscape. Ecologically, returning a native species restores biodiversity and can strengthen the region's resilience. Culturally, it weaves a missing thread back into the tapestry, restoring balance and wholeness.



Wápupxn, or Canada lynx, are described by the Tribes as "one of our brothers." These elusive large cats once roamed the Kettle Range. By the 1980s, they had disappeared as a resident population. The species was not extinct; lynx still lived elsewhere, but not in our mountains.

In 2021, the Colville Tribes began a five-year effort with partners in British Columbia to return wápupxn to their ancestral lands – to restore balance to the landscape and bring a member of the family back home.

Tribal wildlife biologist Rose Piccinini, who has led the project, explained that hunting, trapping, and changes to habitat likely contributed to their local disappearance. A Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife report recorded 66 lynx trapped in Ferry County between 1970 and 1980, identifying heavy trapping and changes to forest habitat as likely contributors to their decline in Washington.

Lynx remain abundant across much of Canada. In Washington, they are classified as endangered; in the contiguous United States, federally threatened. Suitable habitat helps explain that difference, Rose said. Canada has vast expanses of snowy forest supporting abundant snowshoe hares, the lynx's primary food source. In Washington, that habitat is more limited.

Often confused with bobcats, lynx are generally slightly larger and are deep-snow specialists. Huge furry paws act like snowshoes; longer hind legs give them a slope from hip to shoulder. Their tail tips are entirely black, while bobcats' are black above and white underneath. Lynx have longer ear tufts and generally fainter coat markings. Bobcats adapt to varied habitats and prey; lynx specialize in snowshoe hares and thrive in the deep snow of boreal and subalpine forests.

The Colville project continues a longstanding tribal commitment to restoring native animals, including elk, sharp-tailed grouse, bighorn sheep, and bison. In 2023, the Kalispel Tribe gifted 33 bison to the Colville Tribes, helping reestablish a herd after an absence of more than a century. In November 2024, Zapata Ranch donated 10 more, with the Kalispel Tribe providing facilities for their processing. The number of calves born each year has grown – four in 2024, twelve in 2025 and seventeen in 2026 – a hopeful sign that the herd is taking hold.

In the five-year lynx project, up to 10 lynx were carefully captured annually in British Columbia and moved to the Colville reservation. Trapping and relocation took place each fall, with the final releases completed last year. Conservation Northwest, Upper Columbia United Tribes, and other conservation groups supported the effort. Grants from Conservation, Research and Education Opportunities International, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service helped fund it.

Before the first crossing from Canada, the team navigated customs paperwork, permits, health examinations, and certificates. They worked with foresters to develop a plan that would give the returning lynx the best chance of establishing themselves.

The source population needed to connect to the Kettle Range through the kind of natural travel corridors that lynx might have used to return on their own. The release site needed a forested area at an elevation of at least 4,000 feet, substantial winter snowfall, and abundant snowshoe hares. Surveys using pellet counts and browsing signs had confirmed the hare population.



"You can have rabbits without lynx, but you can't have lynx without rabbits," Rose quipped.

For the captures, Tribal biologists and experienced Canadian trappers set live traps near Big White, east of Kelowna. Rose described the trappers as phenomenal to work with and deeply invested in the project.

Traps were checked daily. Healthy lynx are lean, with little nutritional reserve, making prompt removal essential. Juveniles, lactating females, and animals not meeting relocation criteria were released. Candidates were tranquilized and processed overnight in a quiet, dark facility, where Kelowna veterinarian Dr. Ellen Nicklassen – "Dr. Ellen" – evaluated them.

Every year, Rose recalled, a lynx was captured on Canadian Thanksgiving. Every year as part of her deep commitment to the project, Dr. Ellen left her family's celebration to evaluate the newest "Thanksgiving cat."

The team took measurements and collected genetic, hair, and fecal samples. Each lynx received a tracking collar and ear tags. The following morning came the several-hour journey across the border for release.

Border officials became familiar with the paperwork and invested in the project's success. "The support has been incredible," said Rose.

The work became more about relationships than she had anticipated. Initially inclined to keep it quiet, Rose saw that the more people learned, the more they cared. They felt connected to the effort and proud of its progress. In a sense, the team grew.

I attended two releases, joining project staff, Tribal members, agency representatives, and others drawn to the effort. We gathered at a pullout and caravanned up a primitive road. There was camaraderie. Excitement. Determination. A shared purpose. Enormous respect for the animal before us. And a solemnity conveying the importance of what was happening.

At some releases, Tribal members offered prayers. A wildlife technician named two lynx "Grandfather" and "Grandmother" out of respect, Rose told the *Inlander*.

Some lynx took time to get their bearings before leaving their crates. Others snarled and bolted, disappearing within seconds. Each release brought a sense of accomplishment. And hope.

My second release unfolded in a snowstorm. The road was too slippery to reach the usual site, so we stopped partway up. Thick, heavy flakes fell so quickly that we seemed to be inside a snow globe. Astonishingly beautiful. Trees and branches snapped and crashed around us under the weight of wet snow.

The lynx bounded silently and effortlessly through it,

Continued on page 20...

...continued from page 19

kicking up snow with those giant paws. Up a hillside and out of sight into its new home. Watching an animal so perfectly suited to these conditions disappear into the landscape made its return feel natural.

We seemed to share an understanding that we were witnessing something significant. Something sacred. A return that would help restore the living whole of the Tribes' ancestral lands.

In all, 46 lynx were relocated. GPS satellite collars followed their daily and seasonal movements, habitat use, and home range establishment. Alongside field observations, the data provided vital information about breeding success and survival.

The collars are designed to fall off after roughly two years, near the end of battery life. A stationary collar can transmit a "mortality signal." Sometimes, sadly, the lynx has died. Other times, the collar has fallen off while the animal continued.

These were wild animals, free to choose their paths. There was never an expectation that all would remain near their release sites. The hope was that enough would settle and reproduce to reestablish a population in the Kettle Range. Some stayed nearby; others traveled hundreds of miles back to the Canadian areas where they had been trapped – a remarkable feat of navigation. A few were caught along the same trap lines. Some that crossed back into Canada died through legal trapping.

One journey especially excited Rose. From the Kettle Range, a lynx crossed the Okanogan River, traveled into the North Cascades, and continued into southern Canada. Models had suggested these population areas were connected. Collar data confirmed one animal had traveled through all three. A possibility on a map became a documented route through the landscape.

Three lynx that returned to Canada later came south again on their own. One returning female had at least two, and probably three, litters in the Kettle Range, with two kittens each.

At least three relocated females have had litters – among the most hopeful findings. Clustered collar locations suggested denning; kittens were visually confirmed. Two females denned in previously burned areas. The team's working hypothesis is that tangles of downed trees provide sheltered sites with good cover.

Other litters may have gone unconfirmed. After about 10 days, Rose explained, kittens scatter quickly, leaving a small window for observation. Lynx begin reproducing soon after leaving their mother. Some kittens born here





may already be reproducing, something the team hopes to confirm.

Not every lynx will survive. The team will compare kitten and adult mortality with established populations, where kitten mortality is estimated at roughly 50 percent. Conditions matter, too: Animals remaining in Washington are protected from legal trapping. Those differences and known mortality rates help the team evaluate success.

As lynx reestablish themselves on the reservation and beyond, their future becomes part of a wider conversation about living and working alongside protected wildlife.

Some property owners worry about lynx establishing on their land. Though snowshoe hares are the lynx's primary prey, some people are concerned about smaller livestock, and about their homes, land and livelihoods – and the Tribes recognize that.



Lynx kits. Photo courtesy Colville Confederated Tribes.

Protections are changing, too. The U.S. Endangered Species Act prohibits killing, trapping, or harming animals covered by its protections. For decades, the act's regulatory definition of "harm" included significant habitat modification that led to the death or injury of protected wildlife by disrupting feeding, breeding, or sheltering. Effective September 14, 2026, a federal rule removed that definition. The Colville Tribes remain committed to manage wildlife habitats on the Reservation to provide the most benefit for the most species, while also considering the health and economics of forest management. How the regulatory change will affect lynx survival beyond its boundaries remains uncertain.

The five-year relocation effort is done, but for Rose and the team, the work is far from over. A new chapter is beginning – building on what they have learned and supporting the project's long-term success.

The team plans to recapture lynx whose collars have fallen off and fit them with new ones to continue monitoring their movements and survival. Ear tags can identify earlier captures. They also hope to collar kittens born here, following a new generation as it grows and establishes home ranges. Genetic samples still await analysis, which will help establish relationships and identify descendants. Returning lynx may also draw others into the area. Monitoring and genetics could reveal newcomers unrelated to the relocated cats or their offspring.

Together, this work will help determine whether a self-sustaining population is taking hold.

The return of wápupxn began long before the first release with years of planning, grant applications, and relationships built across borders. Now that work is taking root. Lynx establishing home ranges. Kittens born once more on the Tribes' ancestral lands. A new generation beginning life in the Kettle Range.

There is more to learn, and much work ahead. But a missing thread has been woven back into the tapestry.

Their brother has returned home.

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

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SILVER SCREENING

Movie Reviews by Sophia Mattice-Aldous

Now Playing: *Practical Magic 2*

Maybe the wrong incantations or not enough of them were uttered over this script, because *Practical Magic 2* is like the cinematic equivalent of a Starbucks pumpkin spice latte: meant to evoke the spirit of the season via warmth, coziness and spice, but is actually a bland impostor.

I'm not a huge fan of the 1998 film starring Nicole Kidman and Sandra Bullock as sister witches living with their eccentric aunts (Dianne Wiest and Stockard Channing) and fighting dark forces, but I'd be a liar if I said I didn't enjoy it. Its aesthetic and soundtrack left a favorable impression, the latter of which I own. When the mood takes me, I'll turn the movie on for some nostalgic warmth.

However, I can't see anyone beyond the most ardent *Practical Magic* fans being into the sequel. Bullock and Kidman still have good rapport with each other, but beyond that *Practical Magic 2* doesn't offer much despite all of the plotting it packs into its runtime. The male leads, Lee Pace and Xolo Maridueña, are both game but their love stories don't make the heart pitter-patter like they should.

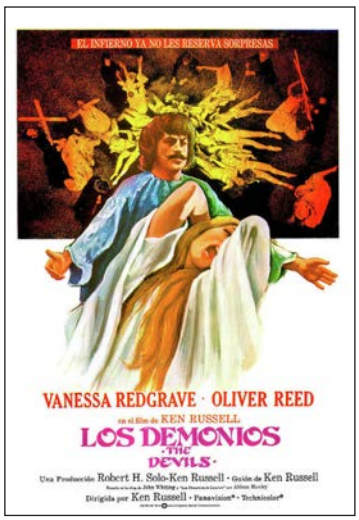


And it's weird to me that the filmmakers changed the timeline to make Bullock's character's children be college-age as opposed to the full-grown adults they would actually be. For some reason, one of the original actresses, Rachel Evan Wood, was deemed too old to reprise her role as one of the daughters. She didn't miss out on anything but a paycheck, though. If you're feeling wistful and want the coziness and glow of *Practical Magic,* that's what the first one is for.

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

Classics Corner: *The Devils*

Ken Russell's controversial 1971 movie, based on the historical witchcraft trial of Catholic priest Urbain Grandier (portrayed by Oliver Reed) after the supposed demonic possession of Ursuline nuns in 17th century Loudun, France, is back in theaters for a limited run after its restoration and it looks terrific on the big screen. Equal parts beautiful and grotesque, enthralling and appalling, its story of politics masquerading as religious righteousness is still pertinent.



Vanessa Redgrave is crisp, off-putting, pitiable and horrifying as the sexually repressed Mother Superior Sister Jeanne des Anges who is obsessed with Grandier, a man she's never met. Reed plays Grandier as a flawed libertine who loves Loudun and is not afraid to push back against the barbarism of medieval medicine and the hypocrisy of the powerful. He's not a saint, but he is a convenient sinner when the church authorities go looking for one. The supporting cast do their due diligence and deserve their flowers.

The Devils is definitely not for everybody, but I was into its sprinkles of dark humor, engaging visuals and the meditative moments in the madness.

***Rated NC-17. Runtime 1 hr., 43 min.**

Sophia Mattice-Aldous is a longtime movie buff and community newspaper reporter born in Colville and raised in the boonies. Please email questions, comments and suggestions for film reviews to sophiamatticealdous@gmail.com.

From Colville to Global, The Rotary Foundation Inspires

Story and Photos by Lynn O'Connor

"According to the World Health Organization, increasing the number of midwives worldwide by just 10% could save up to 1.3 million lives each year."

This is the opening line of The Rotary Foundation Annual Report for 2024-25. It goes on to talk about Rotary clubs in Papua New Guinea working to help midwives develop their skills, highlighting a grant they used to do this from The Rotary Foundation (TRF).

Throughout the report, stories of the projects Rotary clubs do with funds from TRF are interwoven with statistics one usually shares in an annual financial report.

Stories such as: the Gates Foundation committing $450 million per year to end polio; the brand-new Peace Center in Istanbul, Tűrkiye, welcoming its first cohort of Rotary Peace Fellows to learn about peace building in the Middle East and North Africa; a Rotary Club in Taiwan partnering with one in Korea using a TRF grant to found Digital Waste to Digital Hope, leading to a significant reduction in electronic equipment waste and saving around 53,000 pounds of carbon; and a club in Mexico partnering with a club in Arizona to create artificial reefs as habitats for corals and marine life.

Statistics such as: 1,423 global grants ($30 million to $400 million each) and awarding $88.2 million in 109 countries; and 468 district grants with $29 million in funding, and more. This report is available to anyone by going to rotary.org/en/who-we-are/our-finances.





In the Rotary community I often hear complaints about how difficult Rotary grants are to manage. I'd rather use the term "detailed" than "difficult." TRF has earned Charity Navigator's top score for 15 years running because they are such careful stewards of people's money.

For several years now the Colville club has partnered with TRF to purchase food directly from local farmers and deliver it to the Hunger Coalition for distribution to the 18 area food pantries. This year we again spent $10,000 ($5,000 from the club and $5,000 from the district) to purchase 6 tons of food(!) for our hungry neighbors. The Kettle Falls club partnered with TRF to resurface the tennis/pickleball courts, encouraging physical activity in all age groups.

Ripple effects resound from the projects Rotarians do the world over. Locally, the partnership we have with the Hunger Coalition led to a decision by our Rotary district to give them another $5,000 to help feed people displaced by fire.

The effectiveness of The Rotary Foundation to build a better world has enabled me to make it my charity of choice.

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



Elmiene: Golden Stripped-Down Soul

There are timeless elements to vintage soul that never seem to wear listeners out. British-Sudanese crooner Elmiene definitely brings subtle-but-modern twists to '90s-era soul on *Sounds for Someone* but the heart of what makes this album beautiful throws all the way back to the 1970s gospel-tinged classics that fueled Motown and Stax Records.

The album-opener, "Moment," is probably the perfect production-touch for the piano-vocal pairing, showcasing Elmiene's gorgeous voice in the short space of 1:28. While production on other tracks can be a little more brash and brittle at times, his vocals are the standout star on cuts like the Allen Stone-ish "Time Doesn't Heal" and "Special."

Following on the heels of hugely popular EP releases, this full album is a solid – if at times uneven – upgrade for the visionary artist. The subtly-soaring "Light by the Window" (with Raphael Saadiq producing and playing a boatload of instruments) feels like it could have been a 1996 radio staple in the best possible way, while "Lonely People" feels channeled from decades further back.

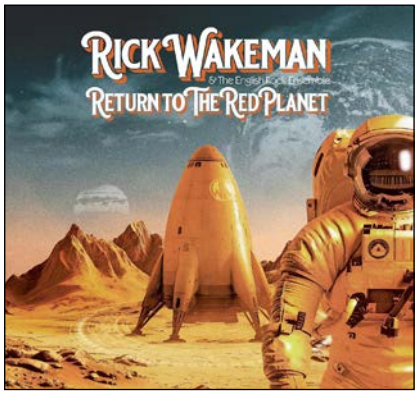
As a collection, the tracks here sometimes feel like an artist still finding his footing in terms of songwriting and engineering choices, but



that's throwing no shade on this full debut, as Elmiene is one of those singers who could croon through a random stack of words and still sound phenomenal. *Sounds for Someone* is a great next step forward.

Rick Wakeman Returns to Mars

Perhaps one of the most adventurous musicians of the last 50 years, synthesizer-deity Rick Wakeman has helped power the likes of Yes, ABWH, Elton John, Black Sabbath and multiple extravagant solo ex-



cursions. In 2020, he presented *The Red Planet* ... and just before tackling an intense brain-surgery ordeal last year he recorded *Return to the Red Planet*.

Expanding from the first instrumental visit to Mars, stately vocals adorning tracks such as "The Jezero Crater" are absolutely grand, with neoclassical tinges laying the groundwork for Mollie Marriott's turns at the mic. The off-kilter groove of "St. Paul's Bay" moves through time-signatures and passages, finally opening up into a vintage Wakeman organ solo. And the David Bowie tribute of "Bowie's Vision" is about as epic as anything Wakeman has created, resolving with massive choirs and Marriot back at the mic.

While Wakeman continues to build back up after the surgery and rumblings of Yes reunions and Trevor Rabin team-ups make the rounds on the internet, this album should satisfy prog rock and RW fans alike.

Is it the very best thing Wakeman ever created? Perhaps not, but his vision never fails to inspire and entertain, and as a keyboard wizard he remains in a league all his own. If there is a trilogy wired into this Red Planet series, this visit to Mars is an absolutely satisfying second trip.

Check out Michael Pickett's audio and visual work at: mpcreator.com.

A Good Read

Upper Columbia Flyfisher: Notes, Stories & Secrets from the Shining Reach

by Steven Bird

Reviewed by Terry Cunningham

You may recognize Steven Bird as a contributing writer for the *North Columbia Monthly*. His short story "Silly Sally and the Yellow Apple" appeared in the October issue. Steven's book, *Upper Columbia Flyfisher: Notes, Stories & Secrets from the Shining Reach*, published in 2010, will introduce you to the northwest corner of Stevens County and the once thriving town of Northport.

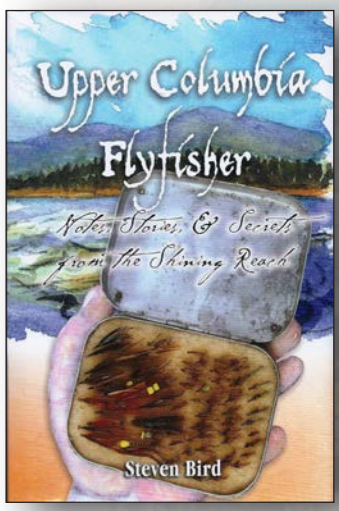
Steven tells the history of the region, good or bad, and the flora and fauna. He has spent many years studying the river and he does a great job of sharing, including expert fly-tying tips and how to catch big trout on the upper Columbia.

Like many before him, Steven fell under the spell of the body of water now known as the Columbia River. For thousands of years the abundance of life in this river has attracted people for many reasons. Before the eight major dams and hundreds of smaller ones were built, the Columbia River drainage hosted what might have been the greatest fishery on the planet. People could have had both electricity and the bounty of a healthy river. Locally, we have Lake Roosevelt.

Steven's arrival in the early 1970s was good timing for the scarce population along this little inland sea. Fishing has changed. The huge, free-running salmon known as hogs are no longer plentiful and do not jump right into your net any longer. These days it takes someone like Steven Bird to find the methods through acute observations and a scientific mind.

His experience differed from my childhood fishing with my father and three siblings at West Medical Lake using marshmallows and corn (Jolly Green Giant, of course). Out in the boat we would have a cooler with pop, chips and a mix of baloney, onions and pickles put through a meat grinder – Dad's sandwich spread. Dad spent his time baiting, untangling and repairing fishing lines. Sitting still was a greater challenge than catching the fish. Thanks, Dad, for your incredible patience, and those sunrises really were beautiful.

At 10 years old, Steven Bird got a fly-tying kit and so began his love of aquatic hunting. So much to consider when hunting for specific species – the entire environment is at play. Upstream, downstream, mid-stream, the river bottom, up the banks, down the banks, time of day, temperature, the season, and finally what the fish are eating. Have to catch one and cut it open to find out. All of these considerations are taken in before Steven even leaves home. His collection of home-tied flies is vast and was well researched before he tied them.



I appreciate his minimalist approach and respect for the environment. It didn't take Steven long to get tangled in the planet's web of life surrounding the Columbia River. With him, it is easy to see the connections among the vegetation, the insects and the creatures.

I understand Steven's passion of wanting to see if his creations are working. It has to be very satisfying to catch a fish with a fly that you tied yourself. Like a mechanic when the motor he has been working on starts and runs perfectly or the chef whose recipe tastes great. The master and the masterpiece.

In the book, Steven includes 31 of his favorite flies, how to make them and when and where to use them. If you are serious about being a fly-fisher on the upper Columbia, this is an essential companion.

The pictures of his flies are very well done. You can see his artistry and get his detailed advice. When visiting the American or Canadian Reach for flyfishing, please leave the noisy motorboats home.

Terry Cunnigham, who calls himself "a lifelong Earthling," has been a Stevens County resident for more than four decades. Now retired after 30 years as an arborist, he says he's constantly "stunned and amazed by our world," much of which comes to life in books.

South Dakota Wings

By Brenda St. John

I want creation to penetrate you with so much admiration that everywhere, wherever you may be, the least plant may bring to you the clear remembrance of the Creator." ~ St. Basil the Great

Once again, I find myself in South Dakota during hunting season. I flew in to visit my dad, who used to be a hunter. The oldest of my three younger brothers was regularly included in the bird hunting parties over the course of many years, but I only got to go a couple times. Dad did, however, take my sisters and me target shooting. Perhaps we would have been invited on the hunting trips more often if we had been better shots.

Hunting season is very prominent in Aberdeen, SD. It permeates the entire culture. The local airport offers three round trips per day during hunting season instead of the usual two. Some restaurant menus include specialty fare such as various pheasant dishes. My stepbrothers, who are doctors, see their fair share of hunting-related accidents (many accompanied by alcohol). It's a distinct and exciting season.

My cousin, Dan Parsons, also used to be a big hunter. We met for coffee yesterday to catch up. He still goes out to the backcountry to find birds, but these days he brings his camera rather than a shotgun. He is a well-known local artist and his goal is to capture photographs of subjects to paint.

The most majestic of the birds of the Midwest, in my opinion, are the great blue herons, which are protected migratory birds in the United States. With their broad wingspan, long legs, long neck, and long beak, they command attention, but not by their prey. They stand very still in shallow water until a small fish swims within reach, and then the heron strikes in an instant.

There is something almost meditative about this bird. It is still and it is alert and it is patient. The heron seems to know when to wait and when to act.

Perhaps this is part of what makes the yoga posture known as *Krounchasana*, or Heron Pose, such a fitting subject for reflection. The Sanskrit name refers to a heron, and the pose calls for concentration, patience, and a willingness to remain steady while the body is challenged. It stretches the legs and engages the torso, inviting the practitioner to balance effort with ease.

Heron Pose is generally considered an intermediate-to-advanced seated posture, particularly because of the flexibility it demands in the hamstrings and knees. Like the bird that inspired its name, it asks us to find stillness without becoming rigid, to pay attention without straining, and to meet a challenge with patience. For all of its physical demands, the pose can also become an opportunity to cultivate calm, clarity, and a quieter mind.

To assume Heron Pose, begin by sitting on a yoga mat with both legs extended forward (*Dandasana*). Bend the left leg such that the knee points straight ahead and the left foot is next to the left hip, toes pointing back. Bend the right knee and place the right foot on the floor, just in front of the right sitting bone. Place the right arm against the inside of the right leg so the shoulder presses against the inner knee. Reach across the ankle to grasp the outside of the right foot.

Then grasp the inside of the right foot with the left hand. Lean back slightly, but keep the front torso long and the chest lifted. Inhale and raise the leg diagonally to the floor, angled about 45 degrees or higher. Hold the position for 30 to 60 seconds. Then exhale and release the raised leg. Carefully unbend and straighten the left leg. Repeat with the legs reversed for the same amount of time.

The pose can be modified by sitting on the front edge of a folded blanket and looping a strap around the sole of the raised foot before straightening the leg. Keep elbows fully extended and keep the chest lifted. Another option is to bend the bottom leg in an alternate position so the knee points out to the side instead of straight ahead, foot near the midline of the body.

Being back in my hometown, I see God's creation all around me. The pheasant reminds me to notice beauty, the geese remind me of the need to travel together, and the heron reminds me to be still. My world expands the more I pay attention to the things around me.

Namaste.

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

SPOKANE
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What Tamaracks Can Teach Us

Adult education and the power of a new story

By Dr. Katie Kleinhesselink



After a summer passing as average evergreens, northeastern Washington's tamaracks have turned brilliant gold, a breathtaking reminder that what we think we know isn't the whole story.

I see similar transformations in Spokane Community College's High School+ program. Adults complete their diploma through a mix of prior coursework, demonstrated knowledge, life and work experience, and targeted classes to fill the gaps. Learners gain more than a credential; they gain the chance to tell a new story about who they are.

In rural communities where memory runs long, stories stick. We remember who left school, who fell into addiction, who had a run-in with the law. It's hard to tell a new story about yourself when your community thinks it already knows yours.

John Dewey, one of my favorite education philosophers, believed that not every experience helps us grow. Some teach us habits that make it harder to learn or to try something new. An undiagnosed learning disability can convince a student she isn't smart. A family that never saw education as an option can convince a child it's not for people like them. These stories often outlast the circumstances that created them.

Even educators aren't immune to old stories. Last week, I attended a planning retreat for YouthBuild Stevens County, a new LaunchNW program that helps people ages 16 to 24 achieve a high school credential while gaining construction skills and building affordable housing. As we worked through student case studies, we considered how the students might be perceived by others. I was struck, and a little embarrassed, at how quickly I defaulted to a deficit narrative.

High School+ rejects the deficit lens. It asks adults to reflect on their experiences and often gives them credit for what they have already learned. What did raising children, caring for aging parents, or solving problems on the job require? Even without credit, the process encourages students to see their lives as a story of learning rather than a list of interruptions. Someone who has long said, "I never finished school," can instead meaningfully say, "I've been learning all along."

Tamaracks are among our most resilient trees. They survive fire that destroys other trees and are often the first to grow back in burned ground. High School+ helps people do the same, to look honestly at the past, keep what it truly taught them, and grow.

Through our partnership, YouthBuild participants can enroll in High School+ and earn up to 10 college credits for free. For young folks still close to early lessons, it's a chance to rewrite their stories sooner.

Like the tamaracks, people can surprise us when we take a second look. High School+ doesn't ask people to forget their story. It asks them to take that second look and write the next chapter.

This page made possible by the Spokane Community College – Colville Center. Learn more about our programs and certificates at scc.spokane.edu/Colville or call 509-276-8040.



A Life Well Ridden: Remembering Ozzie

A tribute to a man who showed us what it means to keep moving, keep connecting, and keep living

By Rob Sumner

In August, I received some news that genuinely caught me off guard. Ozzie Wilkinson (pictured above) had passed away. It was one of those moments when you stop what you're doing and reflect on the person you've lost. For me, Ozzie wasn't just another familiar face around Colville. He was someone I had come to know over the past 15 to 20 years, someone I admired, and someone I frequently referenced when talking about what it means to live a long, active, and meaningful life.

My first encounter with Ozzie was a little unusual, and it's a memory that still makes me smile.

I was riding my bicycle around Colville, pulling my two children in a trailer behind me. My daughter was about six years old, and my son was two. I had stopped along the road to readjust my helmet when a gentleman pulled up beside me in his car. He rolled down his window, held out his phone, and asked if he could take my picture.

Now, keep in mind, I had never met this man before. Here I was, standing alongside the road with two little kids in a bike trailer, and some stranger wanted my photograph. I remember thinking it was a little odd.

But that stranger was Ozzie Wilkinson.

He explained that he was involved with a local cycling club and enjoyed recognizing people in the community who were out riding bicycles. He wanted to promote cycling and encourage others to get involved. Once he explained himself, I happily agreed, and we struck up a conversation.

That was my introduction to Ozzie – a man who could turn a chance encounter alongside the road into a genuine human connection.

Over the years, I would run into Ozzie at different community events, activities, and gatherings. He always seemed to have a story to tell, and he certainly knew how to carry on a conversation. He had a natural curiosity about people and a genuine enthusiasm for life. And if there were children around, there was a good chance Ozzie would entertain them with his Donald Duck voice. It was just one of those little things that made him memorable.

As the years passed, our relationship developed. Ozzie became a patient of mine, coming in periodically for help with different musculoskeletal problems. It was during those visits that I really began to appreciate just how remarkable he was.

Throughout my career as a physical therapist, my professional interests have increasingly focused on longevity, strength, fitness, and helping people maintain their independence as they age. Much of our work today focuses on individuals over the age of 40, with an emphasis on helping them remain active, mobile, strong, and functional throughout their lives.

One of the messages I consistently share is that we shouldn't simply accept losing our strength, balance, mobility, and physical capacity as inevitable consequences of getting older. We have far more influence over how we age than many people realize. And Ozzie was living proof of that principle.

I remember him telling me about something he had done for his 80th birthday. To celebrate turning 80, Ozzie decided to ride his bicycle 80 miles.

Let that sink in for a moment.

Eighty years old. Eighty miles. On a regular pedal bicycle.

Not an electric bike. Not something that provided assistance when the hills became difficult. Just Ozzie, his bicycle, and 80 miles of road.

Now, I don't know about you, but that is an incredible accomplishment. At the time, I was roughly half his age, and I wasn't convinced my own legs would hold up to that kind of ride.

When Ozzie told me that story, I immediately believed every word of it. Why? Because I had seen his legs.

Even well into his 80s, Ozzie had remarkably strong, muscular legs. His upper thighs, in particular, demonstrated a level of muscular development that you simply don't see very often in someone his age. As a physical therapist, I couldn't help but notice.

Those legs told a story.

They represented decades of movement, consistency, effort, and a commitment to staying physically active. Ozzie hadn't suddenly decided at age 80 that he wanted to become a cyclist. He had spent years riding, challenging his cardiovascular system, strengthening his muscles, and maintaining his physical capacity.

And that's the lesson I want people to take from his example.

We often think about exercise as something we do to improve how we look or feel today. But the real value of consistent physical activity is what it allows us to continue doing tomorrow, next year, and decades into the future.

Ozzie demonstrated what can happen when movement becomes part of your identity rather than simply something you occasionally do.

I referenced him many times during my educational talks, workshops, and conversations with patients. When someone questioned whether it was possible to maintain strength and fitness into their 70s or 80s, I had a wonderful example living right here in Colville.

His name was Ozzie Wilkinson.

But as impressive as his physical abilities were, I don't want that to overshadow what I believe was even more important about him. Ozzie was a good man who made the people around him better.

He was generous with his time, willing to help, and genuinely interested in connecting with others. He had an enthusiasm for life that was contagious. Whether he was promoting cycling, participating in community activities, sharing a story, or entertaining children with his Donald Duck voice, he brought something positive to the people around him.

I think there's an important lesson in that, particularly for younger generations.

We spend a lot of time talking about success, accomplishments, and what we want to achieve in life. But sometimes we overlook the qualities that make someone truly valuable to a community: integrity, generosity, kindness, initiative, and a willingness to contribute to something bigger than themselves.

Ozzie demonstrated those qualities.

He didn't need a special occasion to connect with someone. He didn't need recognition to promote something he believed in. And he certainly didn't seem interested in allowing his age to dictate what he could or couldn't accomplish.

Looking back, I find it fitting that my first interaction with Ozzie happened because he took the initiative to stop his car and introduce himself to a complete stranger. That's a pretty remarkable thing when you think about it.

We never really know how the small interactions we have with others might influence their lives. A kind word, an encouraging conversation, a willingness to help, or simply taking the time to acknowledge someone can leave an impression that lasts far longer than we realize.

Ozzie certainly left that impression on me.

His passing was a reminder that even people who seem full of energy, vitality, and enthusiasm won't be with us forever. But the influence they have on others can continue long after they're gone.

For me, Ozzie leaves behind two powerful reminders.

First, never underestimate what your body is capable of when you consistently invest in your health. Your age doesn't have to define your limitations. Keep moving, keep challenging yourself, and keep building the physical capacity that allows you to enjoy life.

Second, never underestimate the impact you can have on another person. Take the time to connect. Be generous with your attention. Encourage others. Share your enthusiasm. Make the community around you a little better because you're part of it.

Ozzie did both.

And while I will always remember those remarkable legs and the story of his 80-mile birthday ride, I think what I'll remember most is the person behind them.

The man who stopped to take a picture of a young father riding his bicycle with his children.

The man who always had a story.

The man who could make kids laugh with his Donald Duck voice.

And the man who quietly demonstrated that growing older doesn't mean we have to stop living fully.

Thank you, Ozzie, for your friendship, your example, and the positive influence you had on our community.

You inspired me more than you probably ever realized.

And I hope that by sharing a little of your story, you'll continue inspiring others.

Rest easy, Ozzie. You've earned 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.

Throwin' Down

By Marci Bravo

Clay ball spinning,
Hands sludgy, slippery (if not, dip em quick) –
Click, click, clicking, my noisy wheel.
Fingertips, palms, heels of hands
Pushing, cradling, poking, pulling,
cajoling, coaxing,
Searching for consistency,
Worrying the lumps,
Gentling the wobble into still certainty.

Invite the clay to straighten from a slouch,
Grow tall and proud on the wheel
Then bend and condense,
Calming towards balance,
A smooth and centered dome,
Ready to become.
—M.B.

Welcome to the First Chewelah Pottery Throw Down, lovingly conceived by Nondis Taylor. Today she is the chair of the Spotlight Gallery Exhibition Committee, and since October's spotlight is on local pottery, she has invited Red Burnell of Chewelah, Angela Stober of Colville, and me to show our work, and to participate in a friendly, real-time pottery competition.

Before I set up my wheel I pause to calm my nerves. I have, for years now, thrown only in the Mud Hut, my personal Fortress of Solitude. There I spend hours hunched happily over my wheel, standing at my worktable carving, waxing, painting, wet sanding or mixing glazes in my garage. My audience up to this point has included my son and just a handful of kiddos. In June a rapt audience of four sweet, wide-eyed siblings, ages 2-7, obediently sat still on their perches, and asked me questions about what I was doing while I threw a mug and then a bowl in front of them. (I miss you Merricks!) Low stakes, indeed.



Photo by Jamie Thompson

Now I shake off my nerves, and start setting up my vendor table, easing into the casual and playful banter that surrounds me.

Eventually the witching hour approaches. I duck out to change into my studio wear, a clay-smeared dark blue denim set of Dickies overalls, and then sit down at my wheel. Angela sits calm and ready at the end of our row, making funny side comments, bespectacled with her brown wavy hair tied back. Red returns to the room wearing a flamboyant polyester red patchwork set of overalls from another era that has everyone doing a double-take and then laughing and calling out in true delight. She sits down at the center wheel, our big-hearted sage, with neck tats and inked knuckles and her signature long copper ponytail replete with a couple of errant beaded dreadlocks.

Chuck Ritchie from local radio station KCHW is our MC of the night, and Nondis co-hosts, explaining the challenges and rules and later narrating the process as we throw pots on our wheels. The first challenge will be to make the tallest cylinder, with walls of the most uniform thickness possible, in 7 minutes. Our second challenge will be to throw a bowl in 7 minutes, a bowl with the smallest foot and the widest rim.

I am in the company of a production potter who can whip out a mug in a minute or two, and a clay goddess who seems to whisper the clay into being with her sentient connection to Mama Earth. In front of us is an inquisitive audience, and my articulate son has parked himself at my right, offering real-time commentary.

Well, the first challenge has a rocky beginning. My wheel won't start. We plug it into a different cord, but nothing. We try a separate outlet, and still nothing. My life's happiness as a potter flashes through my head and I start to imagine the emptiness of not being able to make pottery again. (My silent downward spiral has obscured the fact that I could probably fix or replace a faulty wheel.) My heart sinks.

Creative Being in Stevens County

And then someone says, "Are you sure your reverse/forward switch is set correctly?"

Hmmm, of course … not. Whoops. A hand flips the switch from Neutral to Forward. Sheepishly, I grin, and exhale.

The throwdown begins. While my two mud sisters cone their clay, center and then start to form their cylinders, I am still wrestling my lump into the middle of my wheel. I drag my attention away from the peanut gallery around me and focus on the task at hand. I finally center the clay into an unwavering dome and then concentrate on the rest of the journey. Slow and steady, I slip into the familiar movements of opening the clay and pulling it into a tall cylinder.

I feel relieved when I hear someone say, "Well, there she goes." I think I hear their relief too.

Others murmur their agreement. The 7 minutes are almost up, but I keep my head down and continue the rhythmic process patiently, finishing when the time is called.

The three judges come around with their rulers. We potters take our wire tool and split our cylinders up the middle, enabling cross-section views of our forms. Surprise hits me when the convening judges give me the win. My cylinder measures tallest and my walls are aptly uniform, they say. Holy smokes, I feel just like the tortoise in Aesop's *Tortoise and the Hare!*



Photo by Madaleine Peterson

Now that we've broken the seal, I feel a bit more comfortable during the second challenge. I'm obviously still the slowest but now I'm having more fun. Time's up! My bowl is definitely the least impressive, Angela makes a good showing (she's so swift), and Red makes a comically wide rim that eventually folds over with its own weight.

The last challenge is the wildest. Nondis, smiling in a beautiful orange monarch butterfly sweater, pulls out blindfolds in the shape of the top half of kitten faces, with big shining eyes. We are to don them and in 15 minutes blindly attempt to make a vessel that is both pleasing to the eye and functional.

Being blindfolded takes me to another dimension. Without sight, I realize I have a very hard time judging depth and force in the clay, so I shift and sink into the sensation of the clay spinning between my hands. Attempting to make a bowl, I concentrate on the conversation my skin has with the wet clay. Already I want to try this at home, alone and without any time pressure.

Halfway through the challenge, with the room silent and the audience intent on our progress, I hear Nondis say with faint surprise, "Some of these pots are looking close to finished."

I groan internally. Silence settles back in, and then after a beat my son's voice calmly replies, "SOME of them." Laughter and murmurs. I totally agree.

When we take the blindfolds off, I admire the mug that Angela has created, with pot belly and flared rim, and Red's pie dish, its perfect shape and rim truly impressive.

The tally at the end of Throw Down bestows Red with the well-deserved blue ribbon. Congratulations and goodbyes make their way around the room and the crowd disperses. We have come to the end of our evening. In a short amount of time, the Spotlight gallery is once again a dance studio, and my pottery wheel and leftover pottery are nestled and shored up in the back of my truck.

I am feeling the afterglow of having survived something that at first felt terrifying and difficult, and so unapologetically public. As I drive north on 395 toward Colville in mostly darkness, I feel valiant, revitalized and proud of myself. I am stronger, braver, and more *comfortable* about my imperfections than I was just hours ago. And, even more so, I am grateful of being reminded how gentle and encouraging our public really is. I can't wait till we Throw Down again.

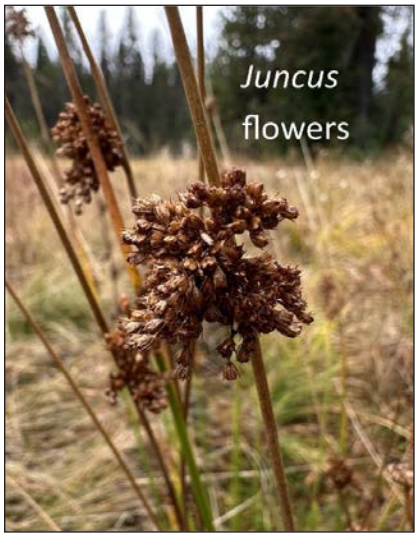
Marci Bravo is a multi-media artist, wife, mother, teacher, friend and yogi residing in Colville. Follow her on Instagram @marci_bravo_makes.

What's the Rush?

With graminoids, the chase can be as sweet as the discovery

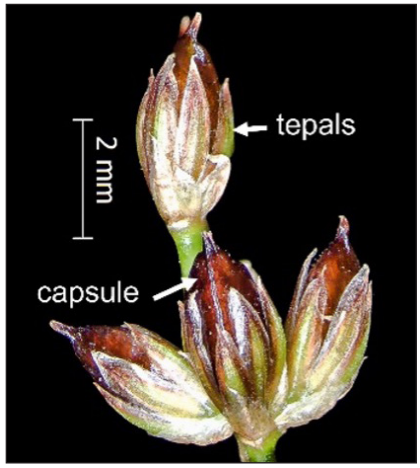
Story & Photos by Cindy Talbott Roché

Like many words with multiple meanings in the English language, *rush* can be an adjective, verb, or noun. As an adjective: rush hour, rush order. As a verb, it means to move quickly, act hastily, or attack. In football, there are rushing yards and rushing the quarterback; at colleges, sororities and fraternities recruit members during rush. As a noun, rush can be the need to move quickly or work fast, a sudden surge (adrenaline rush), or a mass migration (the gold rush). I'm not talking about any of these meanings. Scroll all the way to the bottom of the Cambridge Dictionary list of definitions, and you'll find my subject: "a type of tall, grass-like marsh plant with hollow stems used for making baskets or mats (genus *Juncus*)."



I took my first botany class at WSU in the spring of 1976. At the end of the semester, we keyed (identified) one grass. No sedges, no rushes, no spikerushes, no bulrushes. About 30 years ago, I landed a job illustrating grasses and got really interested in them. In the process of doing a field guide to identifying grasses, I met folks who were deep into sedges (*Carex* species) and I learned to identify those, too.

Long story short, I managed to avoid rushes (*Juncus* species) for a good 50 years. I wasn't alone in my avoidance of *Juncus.* Relatively few professional botanists and hardly any amateur botanists can identify them. What makes them so difficult? *Juncus* flowers are small, nondescript, green or brown, and many of them look frustratingly similar. In *Juncus* flowers, the petals and sepals that surround the seed-filled capsules look alike, so they are called tepals. Seeds

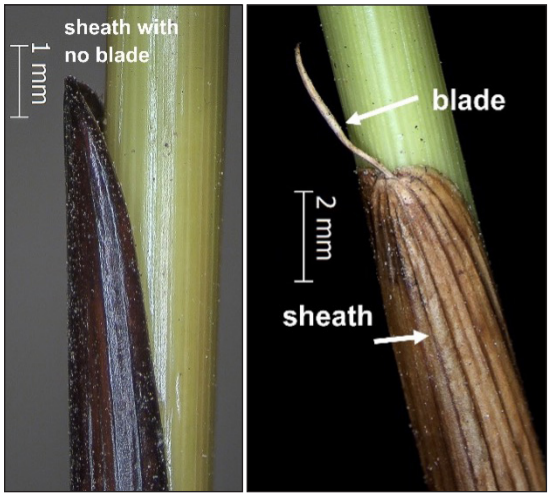


are extremely tiny, as in fractions of a millimeter, and may or may not have little tails on one or both ends. Plants may have leaves, or not. Leaf blades may be reduced to a tiny bristle, or the blades are completely absent and there is just a sheath at the base of the stem. Sometimes the leaves are flattened tubes that are "septate;" those leaves can be recognized by pulling the leaf between two fingertips and feeling for "bumps." One group has iris-like leaves that are arranged sidewise to the stem. Other species have leaves that look like grass leaves and those fall into two groups: the ones with flat blades more than 2 milli-

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meters wide and those with narrow (<1.3mm) wiry leaves. (Are you clamoring for a rush identification class yet?)

I have a half dozen botany friends who are either really sharp on *Juncus* or at least reasonably good at it. But all of them live more than three hours away and none have the time to teach me or even lead a workshop. Last year I realized that I already had all the tools I needed to teach myself: a microscope, two regional floras, and experience using botanical keys. I read the introduction to *Juncus* keys by Peter Zika in the *Oregon Flora* and learned that I had been unwittingly handicapping myself by collecting plants too early in the year: "…flowering material is generally worthless for identification purposes and never makes an acceptable herbarium voucher … only material with ripe capsules and mature seeds should be used in the keys."

I learned what other characteristics are important for identification and made sure that I collected the entire plant from rhizomes under the ground to capsules at the top. I started carrying a serrated knife to saw the rhizomes out of the soil because pulling doesn't work. It damages the leaves and stems when the stalks break off at the base. Some sedges are so robust that yanking on them is likely to damage your back as well! Those mighty rhizomes are one reason rushes are so important in wetland restoration and holding streambanks in place.

I decided that 2026 was a good year to challenge my brain with a new endeavor, so starting in July, I launched myself into rushes. Every road trip became a "Juncus Junket" and I'm fortunate that my husband was patient and supportive. On his "memory lane" circuit in the Blue Mountains where he worked, hunted, and did his research decades ago, I filled a plant press with species from a wide range of environments, making notes in my collecting book and posting photos of living plants as observations on iNaturalist. I was delighted to find that a kayaking trip to the Oregon coast was a perfect opportunity to find more species. This fall I followed a trail of Peter Zika's collections along the Little Pend Oreille to Tiger Meadows and added another eight species to my repertoire. There are 60 species of *Juncus* in Oregon and Washington, so next summer I'm looking forward to building on what I've learned.

A favorite quote among botanists interested in graminoids is from Annie Dillard's book *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*: "I would like to know grasses and sedges – and care. Then my least journey into the world would be a field trip, a series of happy recognitions." She died at the age of 81 on September 15 this year, and after reading her obituary, I concluded that she never learned the grasses and sedges. I did, so I can tell you what happens after you learn the grasses and sedges. Life *is* a series of happy recognitions and I want to keep learning and expanding my horizons with more graminoids. It's a good life.

Cindy Talbott Roché, a 1973 graduate of Jenkins High School, has written for the Field Guide to Grasses of Oregon and Washington*, and provided grass illustrations to* Flora of North America *and botanical articles to* Kalmiopsis. *She's presently working to restore wetland habitats for wildlife on her family farm, and can be reached at grassesandmore@gmail.com or on grassesandmore.wixsite.com/grasses.*



Just a Country Kid

Autumn isn't just about colors; it's also about the aromas

By Karen Giebel

Every autumn I am mentally transported back to my little hometown of Fredonia, NY, where I grew up in the 1950s and '60s on the shores of Great Lake Erie. Our family lived in a big old five-bedroom farmhouse built in 1847 that at some point had a one-bedroom apartment added on to the back where my maternal grandparents lived. I was blessed to have Gramps and Grandma Burchett in my life every day.

The cellar was built of stone and the ceiling beams were massive, peeled tree trunks. There was an outside cellar entrance also built of stone with a solid wooden door that was too heavy for me as a child to open. The root cellar stored all the potatoes, onions, carrots and winter squash my dad grew.

We lived out in the country on four acres amid seemingly endless fields, trees, gardens full of tomatoes and row after row of Concord grapes. It's those tomatoes and grapes that have me nostalgic because they were an integral part of my growing years.

The fertile soil, humidity and climate in general were perfect for growing those two crops. It seemed every household outside the village grew tomatoes and grapes. Our property was surrounded by grape vineyards. My dad grew a single row of grapes, which mom strained into juice to can and made jar after jar of grape jelly, but our neighbors and everyone else on Berry Road grew acres and acres of grapes.

In town was the Red Wing canning factory and from mid-August to mid-September the entire town smelled of tomatoes being canned or made into ketchup. I remember that aroma so well; it was just an amazing aroma. My hometown friends on Facebook all have fond recollections of that tomato smell throughout Fredonia, but then it gets even better.

From mid-September to the end of October was when the grapes were and still are harvested and the smell of Concord grape jelly being processed at Red Wing was mouth-wateringly delicious. I mean the entire town smelled of grapes. Twenty miles from Fredonia is the village of Westfield



and there was a Welch's grape juice and jelly factory there. Chautauqua County was, and still is, grape country.

Grapes were a source of income for us kids back then. The grapes were picked by hand and, trust me, many hands were needed! No matter the weather, be it rain, heat, cold or humidity, when the sugar count of the grapes was just right, those grapes had to come off the vines.

I would come home from school, change clothes and walk across the road to start picking. Equipped with grapes snips and a wheeled cart topped with a wooden crate, anyone from the age of 12 on up was out picking grapes. We were paid a whopping 25 cents per crate and boy, did we ever earn that money. It was hard work, but we talked, laughed, and ate grapes while picking. Some of us had transistor radios and we listened to the World Series and WDOE, the local radio station, for some music.

Grapes also grew wild. Vines snaked their way up into the canopy of the maple trees and the vines grew inches thick. Thick enough to hold a child to swing across the creek or the old polliwog pond, which I did on many fall days.

It was a good childhood; in fact it was a great childhood. We had plenty of freedom to run through the fields, play hide and seek in the corn patch or vineyards, and climb the maple trees. We built forts out of grape posts in the acre of pine trees on our land. We played tetherball at our house. Across the street, a neighbor had a baseball diamond and another neighbor had a basketball hoop set up. All our neighborhood families had four or five kids, so there was never a lack of activities or friends to enjoy them with.

Our road was lined with huge, old maple trees that provided fall colors to rival anything New England has to offer. Red, orange, yellow and gold were the glorious colors of fall. During autumn the leaves would float silently to the ground and the rakes would come out. We raked those leaves into big piles, then jumped in them, rolled around and hid; there was always a lot of laughter and general silliness involved.

Back then we still burned all those piles of leaves and, yes, the smell of burning leaves was a rite of passage each year. It was a good smell and, yes, I am still nostalgic for that memory. Our high school football team played their games at night under the lights. Walking the mile home in the dark after a game, kicking leaves and breathing in all the aromas of fall are memories I will carry with me until I no longer have need for memories. It was good to grow up as just a country kid.

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

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Resilience

What can be found in community, living close to the land

Story & Photo by Joe Barreca

I was driving south on Highway 25 toward Gifford. Spokane Public Radio was broadcasting an interview with a child psychologist about children's declining mental health in America. He admitted that there are issues with too much time on computer and cell phone screens. But the biggest cause of anxiety and depression he sees is the more recent decline in play time outdoors with other kids. Thinking about all the time my brothers and I spent playing in woods behind our house as a kid, I had to admit that things have changed.

I was on my way to visit friends at a monthly crafting get-together. Along the way I passed the Quillisascut Farm School where Rick and Lora Lea Misterly have been living the Slow Life and growing Quillisascut Farm. They started out with a bare piece of ground and gradually built a home, a farmstead, a cheese business and a school to share their love for all things farm to table (quillisascut.com).

They also host gatherings of Slow Food Upper Columbia (slowfooduppercolumbia.wordpress.com) where we share great, homemade and homegrown food and discuss gardening and other skills for country living.

I passed near Gifford's Stranger Creek Grange where the Huckleberry Range Community Collective (HRCC) swaps seeds and plants in the spring. They also share equipment and pass along contacts and information on a host of topics having to do with growing food, farming, and getting along. They recently hosted a fundraiser for folks who lost homes in the Bradeen Fire. (We were both in evacuation zones for that fire but at different levels.) (facebook.com/groups/huckleberryrangecommunitycollective.org)

Farther south, the Uhuru Community hosted the Inland Northwest Permaculture Convergence with topics such as companion planting, mushrooms and mycelial networks, and worms and vermiculture.

Finally arriving at my friends' get-together, I joined a group of crafters all working on different things to do with wool and fiber arts. There were some people spinning wool with spinning wheels of different kinds, one was carding wool to line up the strands, another was felting to make some slippers. Talking with each one I learned new things and, maybe more importantly, that there are many more things to learn.

I watched as an assortment of children ran around playing, asking questions of the crafters, roasting apples for themselves and probably learning more than I was.

Thinking back on the psychologist recommending that children learn and live best when given time to play outdoors, I could see his ideas in action. It was not just kids playing by themselves, but they were interacting with adults. I can't think of a time in my childhood being raised in a nuclear family where so many adults and so much learning was going on.

Also, it was not an authoritarian classroom-like situation. The children were learning by watching and asking questions on activities they were curious about.

Many of the crafts that these folks practice arise from the necessity of doing the most with a herd of sheep. They preserve and eat lamb, make really tasty sheep



cheese, tan hides, and sew their own clothes. Humans have survived in close association with animals for thousands of years. Although many of the skills were new to me, they are about as direct and straightforward as you can get.



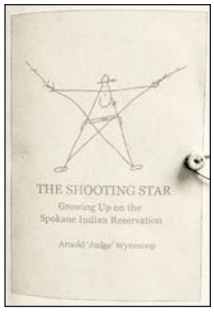
Many such "primitive" skills can be learned at the Between the Rivers Gathering in Valley Washington (betweentheriversgathering.com). The annual gathering has been popular and productive for our lands between the Pend Oreille and Columbia Rivers for many years. It teaches skills such as atlatl and dart, archery and bow making, basketry, blacksmithing, buckskin tanning, campcraft, clothing and decoration, fibers, cordage and weaving, friction fire, flintknapping, footwear, brain tanning, hunting, tracking and trapping, stone tools, navigation, pottery, shelters, survival skills, tin smithing, tracking, watercraft, weapons, wild edibles and medicinals, woodworking, and more. The interest in these ancient ways of life stands in sharp contrast to the mechanized and computerized world most of us live in.

I also reflected on how there are advantages and disadvantages to living close to your friends. When you can trust to leave your children with each other, to help each other build homes and cultivate gardens, life is less expensive and often more fun. Also, there can be long meetings and legal questions, feuds and failures in any community. This is not a path for everyone. Large families, civic and religious groups and just plain neighbors all support each other when the going gets tough. Our resilience here in northeast Washington gives us a leg up on surviving and thriving in harmony with the earth.

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

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The Shooting Star: Growing Up on the Spokane Indian Reservation

By Judge Wynecoop

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



SLEEPWALKING TRIPS I HAVE TAKEN

These stories have been told to me by others since I was asleep at the time:

Once, when I was about 12, I was sleeping in the little room at the top of the stairs commonly known as "Chick's Room." I had gotten up and had crowded myself into a tight corner between the chimney and the outer room wall and was very well trapped and trying to find a door that wasn't there. Wig and Chick found me and they thought I was just hilarious and the more they laughed the madder I got because they wouldn't help me find the door.

Another night (this was told to me by Chick and Dick), I was wandering around upstairs with a hunting knife in my hand and looking like a wild man asking, "Where's Dick?! Where's Dick?!" And Dick, since he was trapped between the bed and the wall in the room we shared, finally gave up and said, "H-h-here I am." And I said, "Oh," and put down the knife and went to bed – much to Dick's relief.

MERRITT GALBRAITH

When I logged with my Mom's brother, Merritt Galbraith, sometimes at lunch he would tell things if I would get him started. Once he told me about fights they would have at school. They had a bully, as usual, and he was always picking on Merritt. Uncle Ed Wynecoop told Merritt how to take care of him. The bully was taller than Merritt so the way to take care of him was to get in really close. The next time the bully picked on Merritt he got him in a large closet where the bully couldn't get a good swing. Merritt, being a strong, stocky kid, was able to pound the p--- out of the guy, hitting him in the belly and chest. After that the bully never bothered him again.

I asked Merritt who was the toughest guy he ever knew. Without hesitating a second, he said, "Baz Peone." He also recognized Milo Abrahamson, who my Dad always called "the bull of the woods." Milo was ruggedly built and a kind and gentle man, to my recollection.

A story my Dad told me about Milo occurred in about 1947. There was a strike at Deer Park Pine Lumber Company. This was where logs from the Reservation were being sold at that time, so this strike was going to shut down the logging. The mill workers (union) were picketing and trying to shut down the mill by stopping the trains from being loaded with lumber. Walter Leuthold (the head of Deer Park Pine) asked Dad if his loggers would be the "strikebreakers."

So, Dad and his crew went to the mill and rode the trains. They did not mess around. They took their .30-.30s just in case. Milo A. was one of the crew members that helped out. There was a person there who caused all kinds of trouble. This guy was big and loud and would harass people near the locomotive, generally trying to shut things down and disrupt. Dad asked Milo if he would just go stand by this troublemaker and be his shadow. So, Milo did that. The guy shut up and things smoothed out real well. The strike didn't amount to much when they couldn't stop the loaded trains and so it ended fairly soon.

Another of Merritt's stories was about a hunting trip he and my Dad took. They were hunting out between Kelly Road and Cottonwood Road. It was cloudy and kind of foggy. Merritt said he was sort of turned around the way a person can get under those conditions. He said he finally came out on Cottonwood Road but could see that he was way off from where he should have come out and was feeling embarrassed. Then he looked down the road and there was Dad too!



Artisan

By Michelle Lancaster



When I first started training to become a cheesemaker, many decades ago, the word "artisan" kept popping up. What is an artisan? My definition of an artisan is any skilled craftsman making high-quality items for sale by hand using traditional methods. My teacher, Joyce, was an artisan cheesemaker: She made small batches of cheese using family recipes passed down to her from her ancestors with milk produced by one herd of cows milked by her son. A special artisan cheese was called Nokkelost, a Dutch cheese made with cumin, caraway, and clove.

I wondered why some people described themselves as artisans. Why emphasize the art or craft of production over basic science and skill? Cheese is all just cheese. Milk is all just milk. Wool is all just wool. Wood is all just wood. Yes?

Anyone who knows these topics knows that's not true. Burn two different types of wood in your stove to quickly learn they are different fuels. Drink raw milk from cows on fresh pasture and compare that to ultra-pasteurized homogenized milk in the store – they are two completely separate things. Artisans like to emphasize their preferences from within their own trade category. Joyce did not just make cheese, she proudly made Nokkelost from a herd of Brown Swiss cows.

As I learned how to turn milk into cheese, I quickly realized that this was not a hobby you learn in a day. My mentors had all been making milk for ages, yet they still had some failures! Sometimes Joyce's milk culture went bad or Mother Therese's mozzarella did not stretch well or Holly's cows were fed a different diet making the curd set time change. I loved learning from various people in various situations. Each time I learned something new from them – maybe how *not* to do something or how to do something better.

To further improve my understanding, I took courses and read textbooks related to cheesemaking. Science is a valuable tool for learning how to work with variabilities in nature. I can take things into account, like the type of forage being fed (dry or wet feed, time of year, long forage or chop), the stage of lactation of the animal (early, mid, or late), the species (cow or sheep) and breed (Jersey or Holstein). But science only goes so far. A great deal of skill is still involved to "read" the natural product during processing. I can hone my craft, building on successes and failures, and improve by comprehending the science.

Natural products vary greatly. This aspect can be both very frustrating and very rewarding. I like to learn something new every day and try new ideas. But at the same time, I want to learn some skills in depth, to the point that I could teach others and help troubleshoot issues. An artisan is a person who has taken the time to learn their craft to the point that they can work around natural variation or even use that knowledge to create something superior. You can ask an artisan a question and they can reply with a well-informed answer (how refreshing!).

Now that I have sheep, I feel like I am starting over with cheesemaking, as the milk is so different. I have gone from teacher-level to frustrated student. I am having a hard time sourcing any sheep's milk cheese mentors. I am reading and watching seminars from a few experts in the dairy sheep world (often through translation, as there is not much sheep's milk production in English-speaking regions).

Whenever possible, I try to buy samples of various types of sheep's milk cheese – Ewenique was a rare, excellent artisan-style American-made sheep's milk cheese. Mostly, I am practicing with my own milk and past knowledge to make feta, halloumi, and other sheep-friendly recipes. I would not say I am an artisan of sheep's cheese yet, but I sure enjoy eating what I am practicing with!

As a final note, I acknowledge that not everything this day and age can be practically made by artisans. Artisans are rare in our modern world, but this holiday season I tempt you to find one artisan-made product. Try an indoor farmer's market or Christmas craft fair. Ask questions, learn something new from an expert in their field. Help keep artisan trades alive for the next generation. Maybe even learn a new trade yourself – as a hobby or future business.

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

Island Adventure

A more exciting Girl Scout outing than most

By Madilane Perry

Sometime in the 1970s, when we were both working for the Tri County Health Department, my late mother and I bought an island. I think the owners, good friends of our family, offered us the island because they were tired of fending off unsolicited offers for it. The last straw was the would-be buyer who wanted to build a marina on it.

The island really isn't well suited for anything except being an island. It's located in Curlew Lake, a body of water already experiencing overwhelming weed growth. The island is .94 acres of extremely well drained glacially deposited gravel and any "development" involving liquid waste would add to the lake's problems.

Mostly it's used by nesting geese and other wildlife but occasionally select groups of humans use it. At least one wedding has been conducted there, but the most exciting use was a Girl Scout troop's camping adventure in 1992. It turned out to be a little more exciting than anyone connected with it had anticipated.

The Scouts (I think there were about 10 of them), two canoe instructors, a mom or two and I launched several canoes and a couple of other boats from my place across from Tiffany's resort and paddled and rowed south to the island.

Soon after landing, the first paddlers were approached by one of the watchful neighbors who keep an eye on the island. They were informed that it was "sort of a wildlife refuge" and was owned by Madilane Perry. On being informed that "Madiline's in the next canoe," the helpful neighbor retreated and the rest of our party came ashore, unloaded our gear and set up camp.

The things I remember most clearly are the debate on where to put the small, self-contained toilet and the weed pulling contest. For the toilet, we finally settled on the densest fir tree available to shield it from the lake in most directions; not very effective, but it was what was available. The weed







pulling contest was my idea. On my first visits to the island as a child there were very few invasive weeds. Since then, mullein stalks, knapweed and a few others started to take over. The Scouts cleared out enough knapweed to slow its spread considerably.

The first day and night went well. The weather was good, so was the food, and the canoe instructors and Scouts worked diligently on canoeing merit badges. The next day, the wind began to come up and we had company.

The company consisted of a Girl Guide leader from Canada and her teenage daughter. The woman had seen a group of girls camping on an island and concluded that they must be Girl Scouts – the U.S. equivalent of the U.K. and Canada's Girl Guides – and came ashore to "talk shop" with the Scout leaders. Her two sons dropped them off and continued their fishing trip in a small open boat with a small outboard motor.

The talk went on, the wind continued to rise, and we invited the two Canadians to stay for dinner, in hopes that the wind would go down. The wind picked up and we invited them to spend the night in the extra sleeping bags a couple of the leaders had brought along.

Our offers of food and lodging were refused, the wind continued to rise, and the Girl Guide leader whistled her boys in from the lake and she and her daughter climbed into the boat. By this time the waves were forming whitecaps and the wind continued to rise.

I honestly don't remember if there were life jackets involved in these events or not. We probably had them. No Scout leader would take a group of other people's kids out on the water without them. I just don't recall if the Canadian family group in the boat had them. I did note that the woman was a good-sized person and the two sons and daughter were almost adult size and there was also fishing gear, the motor and the gas can in the boat.



Looking roughly north up Curlew Lake toward Mt. Elizabeth from just above the airstrip. Island to left of center. Photo courtesy Madilane Perry.

With the waves so high and the boat overloaded and with very little freeboard, we were all concerned for the safety of the Canadian party. It was only a few hundred yards from the island to the resort where our visitors were staying, but I was worried enough to get up on the little rise on the east end of the island to watch their progress.

They made it almost halfway. Then the boat swung broadside on to the waves and went down like a pie plate sliding under dishwater. I bolted down to our camp and must have looked pretty stricken. One of the canoeing instructors told me later that they knew exactly what had happened by the look on my face. The instructors responded by getting two canoes on their shoulders and heading for the water. I don't know what they could have done in wind and waves that high, but they were going to try.

They were saved from a probably futile rescue mission by a motorboat from the resort that must have started out as soon as our visitors left the island. It picked up all four Canadians and headed back to the resort. I heard later that the sunken boat was salvaged.

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

Poetry of Place

Deciduous Syllables

By Susanne Griepp

Because the day was rushed
I was scattered like wind

In my pocket
fall leaves: maple, ash, burning bush

I want to be like colors, deepening, vibrant
burgundy, flame, a parting golden glow over dusk

Cut loose, fly
into light embracing sky

Imagining buds tucked away,
do we quake into renewal like trees?

Bubo Virginianus

By Susanne Griepp

A slip of air becomes a dotted trill,
The first syllable in the depth of night's
Rhythmic call connected with the dark.

My ears measure stillness, awaiting
That resonance, sometimes four beats
Spaced, the last two even: whoo whoo.

Often, it's two voices, one near, another distant.
I imagine these Great Horned Owls, each grasping a limb
Near the thick trunk of a tall bull pine, feathers patterned
like bark.

It's simply earth's heartbeat I hear when this
Nocturnal voice enters my open window, the walls, my
dream
Awakened late or very early by staccato and legato beats.

Their territory includes mine. We are neighbors.
Their voices, a favorite sound, remind me not everything
Is gone wrong. This corner of the world still sustains us.

Of Course

By Lynn Rigney Schott

For Louis & Chloe

Have you noticed lately how polite
young people are? Especially the gen-Zers,
like our grandchildren. Always opening doors
or moving aside for my grocery cart, or just
being generally friendly? The bagger at Super One,
the kid who checks my tires at Les Schwab.
And it's not because I'm old and helpless (well, not
helpless). I think they just want to be kind
& do their part.

One morning at the gas station a young man
let me go first to pay for my gas because he
had a six-pack & a burrito (there's no
hurry; it's too early for beer anyway).
And when I say "thank you" he doesn't say
you're welcome or no problem or no biggie:
he says "of course."

In Spanish one says de nada, in French de rien—
it's nothing. But the kids say it's not nothing,
it's the natural thing, the thing one does as
a matter of course, like the flow of a river.

Maybe they sense there's a lack of good vibes
in the world these days or maybe I look
older than I feel—lucky me.

So tonight I say "thank you" for coming out
for poetry, thank you for listening,
& you say "of course."

I Would Follow

By Loren Cruden

Reprinted with permission from ***The Dogs of Rockcut Road***

Fresh snow, single line of tracks –
I would follow where they vanish
into deep teal beneath the cedars.
Not in ubiquitous human form,
but in somthing light, intent,
neat-pawed through the snow and tangle,
something whose fur
smells of resin and stone,
who won't care
if dark comes before trail's end.

A Learning Journey, Shared

By Kendall Nissen, ICRC Summer Youth Employee

November is Native American Heritage month, a time where Indigenous peoples show pride and celebration in honor of our beautiful cultures and the fact that they prevailed despite the tribulations endured. Being a Native American youth, a lot of my cultural experiences have to do with learning and practicing my culture to keep it alive.

This learning journey has been aided by the efforts of many local eastern Washington groups, including the Inchelium school, the Inchelium Language and Culture Association (ILCA), and the Inchelium Cultural Research Center (ICRC]). I have had the opportunity to go salmon fishing with tribal peers, travel around our traditional territories, attend ceremonies and cultural gatherings, and learn the *nselxcin* language in the classroom.



Traditional territories of the Sinixt near Castlegar, B.C. Photos by Bonnie Boyd, Sinixt photographer.



Stevey Seymour (with microphone), ILCA Executive Director, daughters and fellow Sinixt women at the symposium.

Recently I attended the Sinixt Symposium in Nelson, B.C. – an annual gathering of Sinixt peoples from both sides of the Canadian-U.S. border. Following an ethnohistoric report given by Shelly Boyd (Sinixt Confederacy facilitator), I met many Sinixt relatives and activists, listened to elders share stories, and heard the history of our Sinixt people, thinking of both the many difficulties and accomplishments of my people.

One thing I can hope for in the future is regaining rights in both the United States and Canada for our culture and people. I am grateful for such a supportive cultural community, and believe these efforts are important for my identity and wellbeing.

They Rest Here

By Donna Potter Phillips

Drawing upon the stories of those laid to rest in the many cemeteries in our area, this column delves into the pieced-together tales of those who came before.

Anna Bakken Madison has a kneeling, praying, angel watching over her gravesite in the very rural Mica Peak Cemetery. Did her grieving husband commission the angel? Or perhaps one of her children?

This picturesque out-of-the-way cemetery is on Elder Road east from Highway 95 south on the way to Rockford. I've seen many cemetery stone markers but never before an angel quite like this one. Was the angel praying or singing?



Anna Bakken was born on February 28, 1862, in Norway and sailed into New York City harbor in 1890 (age 28), she stated for the 1900 census. She soon met and married in 1894 Nels Peter (or Peder) Madison, ten years her junior and born in Denmark. He came to America at age 7 with his parents.

(Note: We tend to think immigrants to America all came through Ellis Island, but that facility did not open until 1892. Previously Castle Garden, on the tip of Manhattan, was the biggest immigrant arrival point.)

In the 1865 census for Norway, I found Alvine Bakken, female, age 2, born in Christiansund to Johan Henrick Bakken, age 35, and Junette Laurine, age 36. Was this our Anna?

So many questions! Did Anna emigrate alone from Norway to America? At age 28, did the prospects for her seem brighter in America than to remain in Norway (unmarried)? But come to America she did. How did she meet Nels Peter Madison? What were the arrangements and the pull of the Pacific Northwest to this couple?

The U.S. Census taken June 22, 1900, in Mica Precinct, Spokane County, lists Nels P. Madison, born 1871 in Denmark, married six years, a farmer, came to America in 1879. With him was his wife, Annie, born in 1861 in Norway.

Note: Came to America in 1879 married in 1874? Even official records do have inconsistencies.

Ten years later, on May 6, the Census for McIntosh Township, Spokane County, listed N. Peter Madison, age 38, born in Denmark, married 16 years; wife Annie, age 48, born in Norway; they'd had six children (Alma, Christine, Henry, Nellie, Katherine, and Peter) and five were living.

Besides Anna and her husband Peter/Peder, their children Henry, Nellie, Katherine, and Peter are also buried in Mica Peak Cemetery – along with other Madisons: Ralph Madison (1923-1995), Evelyn Marie Smith Madison (1927-1973), Frances Bernice Madison (1922-1992), Minnie Madison (1876-1946), and Nancy Lafleur Madison (1900-1991). Think they're all related?

The geography surrounding the Mica Peak Cemetery is called "Little Norway" and was said by Norwegian immigrants to resemble their homeland. Happily, they found their beloved food, salmon, here, according to Richard Sola's tour, because this was before the dams and salmon could swim clear up to Spokane.

Anna Bakken Madison was 66 when she died. I could not find a death certificate to learn why she died but I did find that "in late January 1928, a major wave of flu-pneumonia swept the region … widespread enough to be monitored closely as a near-epidemic." Did dear Anna die from this flu-pneumonia? Nels Peter survived his wife by 27 years, passing in 1955.

Do any of you, dear readers, remember or know the Madison family?

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

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