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**C**ircle **O**f **L**ight **O**ur **R**ainbow **S**hines

- JOHN ODELL, WordsOfWords.com



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**AD SPACE RESERVATIONS:**  
*Friday, May 18<sup>th</sup>*  
**WHAT'S HAPPENING LISTINGS:**  
*Thursday, May 24<sup>th</sup>*





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# From the Publisher's Desk...

By Gabriel Cruden

He scans the storage shelves and piles in my shop and pulls out an old fan. Finds a grinder motor. Asks about car batteries. Wonders if the perfectly serviceable push mower can be disassembled. He casts an appraising eye over the ageing collection of bicycles. He doesn't care that they are all beat up, seats reduced to foam and metal, handles and pedals long gone. It's the tires, forks and sprockets he wants. For a go kart he longs to have.

He's optimistic. Determined. I can see him picturing the feel of whizzing down the driveway and throttling up the hill, his go kart flag streaming behind him. It's almost as if he's certain that with enough willpower (and parts), the mechanics of actual fabrication and assembly will be incidental and easily accomplished.

I've watched him grow and mature over the last year of being 10 and decided he might be ready for some higher-level skill development. I talked to a mechanic friend who happened to have the start of a go kart project that had been sitting in his back yard for a few years. It was from when his own son was first learning to weld and, although rough, it had much of



the frame built and the front and back wheel assemblies of an ATV attached. When I told my friend who it was for, he said we could have it. Because that's what we do here in our corner of the state.

The ecstatic, unfiltered joy and elation on my son's face upon seeing the metal hulk on wheels in our driveway was unforgettable. Thank you, Sam, for making a boy's wish come

true (turns out he wished for a go kart when he blew out his candles last year), and especially, for being one of the many people in our larger community who choose to make life better for everyone else by how you live your own life. The small things matter, and I'm glad for all those who care enough to attend to them.

Now I need to go fend off my son from cannibalizing my mower.

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# Lethal Loneliness

By Christine Wilson

*"Who would you call in the middle of the night if you were sick and worried?"*

~ Harvard Study of Adult Development

*"I was fast asleep at three in the morning when I got the payphone call. And she said, 'Did I wake you up?' I said, 'Hey, no, not at all.'"*

~ Dar Williams, *The Blessings*

Psychologists and social scientists were not originally interested in topics such as loneliness. At the beginning of "the talking cure" era, early in the 1900s, there was not much consideration at all about wellness; pathology was the focus. Even within contemplations on pathology, relationships were not of concern. It was all deep-seated neuroses and death wishes and random misery caused by fantasies within an individual brain.

Fortunately, a shift began in the 1930s. Abraham Maslow started wondering about what promotes positive mental health. In the late 1930s, a group of researchers at Harvard began a study of 724 men, partly at the request of a

business owner who was trying to predict who would make decent managers for his company. The assessment in this study included a wide variety of topics, ranging from some of the popular considerations of the time period, such as skull size, to a broader, more innovative look at human interactions.

Every two years, the researchers have contacted the men, some of whom were Harvard sophomores and some of whom were low-income men from the tenements of Boston.

The study continues today, with the remaining men being in their 90s. The results are in sync with findings from other research about loneli-

ness and connection. (The reason, by the way, that the study included only men was because all Harvard students were male at that point in history.)

We now know, thanks to these studies, that loneliness and a felt sense of isolation is as bad for your health as obesity and lack of exercise. As a therapist, I'm suggesting we accommodate this new information to expand our wellness efforts. In general, awareness of the toxicity of loneliness is increasing, and just at the right time, since I believe that isolation itself is on the rise.

Cholesterol levels recorded for the Harvard study men while in their 50s did not predict the quality of their lives once they were in their 80s. The men's satisfaction with relationships has been the better predictor. To be specific, these relationships aren't necessarily marriages. According to research, unhappy marriages are much more detrimental to a person's health than divorce and they create their own type of loneliness.

The number of friends is not of significance either. Feeling good about the friends you have is more important than collecting a large number of acquaintances. With solid friendships we live longer, maintain better cognitive functioning, and even reduce our level of physical discomfort. As we age and our bodies start to come up with various aches and pains, having friendships makes it more likely that a person can maintain an even level of happiness despite the inevitable

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# Random Acts of Community

discomforts of aging.

Loneliness increases pain and connection mitigates it. The group of older women I've sometimes walked with, who meet at 8 every morning in their little British Columbia town with their troop of dogs, have inoculated themselves from the negative effects of isolation. If one of them doesn't show up, the others track her down. If one of them is sick, one of the others picks up her dog for the group walk.

The researchers in the Harvard and other studies bluntly report that "loneliness kills." Ask yourself the question posited at the top of this column. We may have trouble answering it for a variety of reasons. Some of us were raised to never bother people, even our dearest friends. Some of us don't really have connected relationships with people we feel we could call. Some of us have been so betrayed within relationships that our broken hearts feel too fragile to risk the attempt.

I believe humans are wired for connection and loneliness restricts our life.

Somewhere along the line, North Americans got more isolated. Various theories are bandied about: social media, the descendants of the depression shifting their focus to money, people moving away from family. The reality is probably a mix of things, but the risk is clear.

Research is showing that close to 80% of millennials describe wealth as a major life goal. Around 40% of them want to be famous. Relationships are not that much of a factor as they make life choices and compete with their peers for that money and fame. The generations on either side of the millennials are reporting similar trends. As people shift toward material wealth, relationships can take a back seat. Generosity and community service can suffer. Isolation increases. A person can minimize the effects of that seclusion for a certain length of time, but evidence points to an inevitable cost.

There is a way out of all this and, in this information age, we have ready access to recommendations suited to our specific personalities. We can replace screen time with face-to-face time. In my experience, we all need to feel like someone understands us, and it is easier to feel genuinely understood when you are in the real-time presence of another person. As people age out of the work force, replacing coworkers with friends is important. Volunteer work takes people out of their insular world into an expanded sense of links with others.

As children get older and less dependent on parents, those parents need to develop nurturing friendships with their peers. Teaching children to value friendships and tolerate the ups and downs of inevitable conflict are important life lessons. There is research that shows that people

can overcome loneliness through connection to animals. Any betrayal wound that keeps a person feeling fragile and distrustful can be healed with therapy, studying emotional intelligence, and taking chances with other people.

Stepping out of loneliness takes conscious effort. It may require a special kind of courage, since making connections can be frightening. I think that because we are social creatures, connections are going to matter a lot, which means

they can trigger big feelings. Courageously facing those feelings and moving forward anyway is how we change. To quote Mark Twain, "There isn't time, so brief is life, for bickering, apologies, heart burnings, callings to account. There is only time for loving and but an instant, so to speak, for that." I'm rooting for us.

*Christine Wilson is a psychotherapist in private practice in Colville and can be reached at [christineallenewilson@gmail.com](mailto:christineallenewilson@gmail.com) or 509-690-0715.*



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## The Application

By Dr. Barry Bacon, MD

I was filling out an application, trying to get some financial support for the good things that we dream of accomplishing in our part of the world. I was struck by some of the questions on the grant form – two in particular – that made me stop and ponder how my answers might affect our ability to obtain funding.

“Please define what diversity means to your organization.” Not so bad. Gives us a chance to speak our minds about the topic.

“Please describe your organization’s commitment to advancing diversity, both within your community and your organization.” A little more prescriptive. What are we doing about it? Suggesting that diversity must become a front-burner issue for any organization looking for funding to help poor people.

This raised some important questions, such as, am I wrong to view all people, regardless of their skin color, intelligence, education, orientation, religion, creed or politics as human beings equally deserving of my concern and care?

I have come to believe, along with people who wrote on a parchment long ago, that ours would be a land where people consider that “all men (and women) are created equal, and that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights. ...”

If we value diversity, and I do, should we show preference to it, or should we rather move toward equality?

The application went on to ask how many of our board members, staff and the people whom we serve are diverse. I carefully answered the question, and I hope the readers of the application get the point. I explained that 100% of our board, staff and the people we serve are diverse. We’re all different. We are each a unique creation.

It may not be politically correct, but it seems to me that overly focusing on diversity puts a spotlight on the differences between us, rather than the things that unite us.

I love people of every stripe. I think we are beautiful, no matter our color. I’m pale and I work with some of the darkest-skinned people on the planet. I see how they are discriminated against, looked down on, and it pains me.

I was reminded of their deep pain as we were working very recently on the establishment of the Gambella Medical School with some Ethiopian and South Sudanese colleagues to address the bone-crushing, gut-wrenching, devastating realities of human suffering in their homeland. We dream of creating a medical school on their

turf, with their tools, their diseases, their people, their solutions. In so doing, we plan to recruit physicians who will stay, because they are invested in their region, and we will diminish the hemorrhage of brainpower from Africa to the West.

We would provide an opportunity for education to train competent, caring, compassionate physicians who will lead their countries in changing health outcomes. But when it came to signing the memorandum of understanding, the U.S. university partner backed out, almost at the last minute. It was devastating for my African colleagues.

It reminded me also of the trip that my wife Shelley and I made to South Africa in the late 1980s, back when apartheid was still alive. One of our South African friends of color showed me his passport. According to apartheid policy, there were eight classes of human being. At the top of the list was “white.” At the bottom was “black.” In between were various shades of humanity, some categories that I did not recognize, like “Malay” and “Cape Malay.” This was a redundant, expensive, brutal and divisive system.

I understand the need to support diversity. I have supported it with my personal life, and I have nothing to explain or be ashamed of. I have lived for years in countries where I was a minority, gawked at, children shouting after us, looking at us like we were animals at the zoo. It’s part of being human that we naturally notice the differences between us.

What bothers me is the notion that we should prefer those differences, or prefer some of those differences. I consider myself steeped in our heritage and the belief that we are creating a nation based on equality. I believe that our value as humans has nothing to do with the color of our skin.

So, with that lengthy preamble, here is how I answered the two questions.

“Diversity means that we embrace the needs of the entire community, no matter what the color, orientation, socioeconomic status, age, education or creed. We are all diverse. We see each human being as worthy of our respect and concern. In our organization, we consider it to be foolish and un-American to think or imagine that any human is more or less of value compared to anyone else. We do not label anyone as diverse unless we are all diverse. We are committed to a world with liberty and justice for all.”

“In our organization, we do not consider advancing diversity a goal worth pursuing, since

every one of us is a unique creation, and therefore every person is diverse and equally worthy of our respect and care. We do not see the color of a person’s skin or the race by which we label each other as barriers we should focus on, unless in so doing we recognize that all lives matter, black, white, yellow, red or otherwise. We resist the politically motivated pressures to lift up one class of people above another by pointing out our differences. We see people in need of our help, and our purpose is to help them, wherever and whoever they are. We do not label people for purposes of categorization. We serve anyone without regard to labels. Therefore, for us, advancing diversity simply means no longer recognizing that categories of difference between us are of any qualitative value.”

There you have it. I have no idea if this response disqualifies us from getting the grant money. I think that what makes this nation great is our kindness to the weakest of our kind, the generosity of our hearts, and the degree to which we truly become color blind.

*Barry Bacon is a physician who has lived and practiced family medicine in Colville for 27 years. He now works in small rural hospitals in Washington state, teaches family medicine, and works on health disparities in the U.S. and Africa.*

### EAVESDROPS

*What people have written about the north Columbia region*

*“Arden wanted a post office so they simply handed [Dave McMillan’s father, Colin] the papers to fill out so they could write to Washington D.C. and get a post office... They didn’t give him any name so, as he was a great reader of Shakespeare and he had just finished the one about Arden Forest, and he looked out his window and he thought the territory on the north side of the Pend Oreille River down there had lots of trees on it then, it’s bare now, and he thought it looked like the forest of Arden so he just wrote in Arden.”*

*~ A Glimpse Into The Past,  
edited by Janet Labrecque  
(Dave McMillan quoted)*



# Wild Comfort in Refuge

By Eileen Delehanty Pearkes

The word *refuge* suggests shelter from danger. It defines protection and comfort. We all have our own personal places of refuge: perhaps a favorite corner of a garden, beneath the spreading arms of a mature tree, or floating in a small boat with a fishing line dangled off the gunnel.

As a child, I best loved the grand oaks on the neglected ranchland across the street from my family's suburban California home. Second was the cave I made every night under the covers with a book. We all need refuge from time to time, and if we don't give ourselves that gift, well, we suffer the consequences.

Birds, mammals, turtles, frogs and wildflowers need refuge, too.

The Colville valley has one such refuge, a sprawling and gently mountainous area within which native species can feel protected from the rigors of modernity. In late March, I had the great pleasure of visiting the Little Pend Oreille National Wildlife Refuge, before its seasonal opening.

The reluctant spring weather meant that snow was still on the ground in many places, and that some roads and paths were not yet passable. The landscape was dominated by the cold, rusted-iron hue of tightly shut coniferous twigs, by last year's darkened seed-pods, by bleached summer grasses, and by the rough rub of bark. Yet the gentle beauty of this forested haven soothed me. It left me in awe of the power of refuge.

The 40,000-acre wildlife preserve has a wide range of habitat reflecting

its equally wide range of plant and animal types. There are mid-elevation evergreen forests of the sort more familiar north of the international boundary: cedar and spruce; larch and balsam (grand) fir; the feathery western

white pine (*Pinus monticola*). Once, before disease and logging, white pine was dominant at mid-elevation in the refuge, providing a great store of tree bark for tribal men intent on building another of the region's traditional pine-bark canoes.

The more arid ponderosa pine forest common to the Colville valley spreads across lower elevations in the refuge. Alders, cottonwoods, birches and many shrubs feather the horizon where there is moisture. Water seeps and pools freely, forming ponds, lakes, streams, springs and bogs. Ecologists call aquatic habitat shal-

low-water areas and wetlands. Farmers call them bogs and swamps. Moose and ducks call it *home*.

And so it is that the concept of protection and home co-mingle in this place, one of over 500 such wildlife refuges across North America. That seems like a large number, but when one considers the size and scope of a vast continent, the Little Pend Oreille refuge grows more precious. The residents of Eastern Washington are blessed to have it.

My local guides Dan and Laurie had to unlock a gate to enter the refuge. That got me thinking right away about gates, and fences and how they protect private property rights of individuals. This gate happens to protect



*Photos from last year's Friends of the Little Pend Oreille Wildlife Refuge annual photo contest, which is now open for submissions in the four categories of Animals, Plants, Human Use, and Scenic. For full details and to submit, contact Joel Anderson at [onionjoel@gmail.com](mailto:onionjoel@gmail.com). Deadline is August 15, 2018. Annual butterfly count photo by Steve Schubert. Young moose at dinner time photo by Bertha Kamstra.*



**Gretchen Cruden, Presenter**

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*Gretchen Cruden is a National Board Certified Teacher with a graduate certificate in Mind, Brain and Teaching from Johns Hopkins University.*

Anyone interested in the latest brain research about learning is strongly encouraged to attend. Clock hours available.



# North of the Border



something that belongs to the general public: a slice of the region's cultural past. Here exists a sense of what parts of northeastern Washington were like before logging, before farming, before asphalt roads and trips to the grocery store.

As the pickup bumped along through a forest clear-cut a century ago, my thoughts turned back the pages of time, as they often do. I imagined being a Kalispel or Skoyelpi tribal woman, on a side-trip to gather some cedar bark, or search out a specific mushroom. The Kalispel may have followed a foot path that more or less echoed Hwy. 20, connecting the Pend Oreille River to the Colville Valley along the Pend Oreille's sister river, the Little Pend Oreille.

This tributary river that defines the refuge begins just upstream of Frater Lake, near the east slope of the apex of Hwy. 20. The Little Pend Oreille flows more or less southwest, following Hwy. 20 until it empties into the Colville River near Arden. The Little Pend Oreille, and the many streams and lakes that emerge from its watershed, form a life-blood that nourishes rich habitats within the refuge. Over 200 species of bird, nearly 60 kinds of mammals and a cluster of amphibians and reptiles find protection here. Most important, perhaps, is the refuge offered to the lynx, grizzly, red-band trout and white-headed woodpecker. These four species are now rare in the bio-region. Here they have a chance.

On my tour, I spotted more woodpecker cavities than I thought possible in one small slice of forest. Blackened tree bark signaled the human management of pine forest with controlled burns, not unlike those once commonly performed by nature and the indigenous peoples. Selective logging is now gradually removing the influx of lodge pole pine, a species that dominates after disturbance from clear cuts or hot fires.

Wide swaths of red-stem ceanothus (also called buck brush) offer prolific browsing for deer. A trip to the refuge in May will reward anyone with the heady scent of the shrub's white flowers.

People are welcome here, with careful guideposts that encourage inter-relationship rather than dominance. Only non-commercial berry picking, mushrooming, hunting and fishing are allowed. Motorized vehicles are limited to certain roads. Camping is low-impact. Feet are the preferred method of transportation. In fact, anyone can hike anywhere in the vast acreage.

Some birders travel from far away to be able to spot the white-headed woodpecker. Snapping a photo of a lynx is cause for celebration.

When the refuge opened on a mid-April day this year, those who unlocked the gates were greeted by a human flock of turkey hunters. The annual season for turkeys (introduced to the region about half a century ago) invites hunters to participate in co-management. Scientists and foresters who oversee the refuge are forever mindful of the goal to sustain the region's wildlife heritage, those plants and animals that have been here a long time. This goal sometimes includes removal of species that don't have such deep roots. Enter the local hunting community, eager to assist with the turkeys.

*For more information, go to [refugefriends.com](http://refugefriends.com). With thanks for and to the local Friends organization, who offered this Canadian resident a warm welcome and tour, and reminded her of the power of loving stewardship.*

*Eileen Delehanty Pearkes lives in Nelson, B.C. Her recent book on the Columbia River Treaty, A River Captured, was recently released by Rocky Mountain Books. For more of her explorations of the western landscape, visit [www.edpearkes.com](http://www.edpearkes.com).*

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# Peter and Julia *Part III*

By Jack Nisbet

For most of the first decade after his marriage to Julia Rivet, Peter Skene Ogden led beaver-hunting expeditions into arid lands between the Rocky Mountains and the Cascades. She joined him on some of these forays, but often remained behind with their children, usually in the vicinity of a trade house like Fort Colville. Nothing is known about her everyday life beyond the generalized oral memories of the mixed-blood fur trade families that were so prevalent in the Inland Northwest during that era.

After the long series of Snake River Expeditions, Julia Rivet could not have known that her real journeys were only beginning. When Ogden was assigned to the Nass River in 1831, she accompanied him on a sailing vessel to the far north. They

spent the next three years near Dixon Entrance, right at the border between British Columbia and Alaska, vying against Russian and American fur companies for tribal trade.

Ogden was then named chief factor of the New Caledonia District, which included the entire Fraser River drainage. He was posted to Fort St. James on Stuart Lake, west of modern Prince George, BC, and the Ogdens spent ten full years there together. It was at Fort St. James that she gave birth to her last child, a boy they named Isaac, in 1839. By most accounts she was at least in her late forties by that time, and her husband had taken to calling her “The Old Lady”—presumably as a title of respect.

In 1844, Ogden was long overdue to go “down on rotation” for an extended company leave. He brought Rivet and the children who were still living with them south via the Thompson and Okanagan Rivers to the Columbia and on to Fort Vancouver, then left them there as he traveled back upstream past Kettle Falls. After crossing the Rocky Mountains and the Canadian Prairies, Ogden sailed for England from Hudson Bay, where he visited family members and Hudson’s Bay Company headquarters in London.

On his return trip Ogden traveled with company governor Sir George Simpson, who had become somewhat of a friend. As the pair made their way from Montreal to Red River near modern Winnipeg, Simpson engaged Ogden to accompany British Army officers Henry James Warre and Mervyn Vavasour west to the Columbia District. The pair, posing as gentlemen sportsmen, were actually on a secret

mission to assess the prospects of key Hudson’s Bay Company trading posts in the event of a confrontation with the United States over the impending international boundary settlement.

By the time this unlikely group reached Fort Edmonton, Lieutenant Warre had completed several field sketches and watercolors that depicted his jovial party leader. Warre had also formed a personal opinion about Ogden, which he expressed in a passage of his journal.

*M. Ogden, a fat jolly good fellow reminding me of Falstaff both in appearance & in wit always talking, always proving himself right. ... On the whole he is a very good & companionable fellow full of information about the country which we are about to visit, but most difficult to obtain such information from his partiality for joking and “selling” rendering it nearly impossible to know when he is earnest or not.*

For his part Ogden did not particularly enjoy traveling with two British dandies who insisted on carrying toothbrushes and top hats with them. “I had certainly two most disagreeable companions,” he later wrote, noting the officers’ “constant grumbling and complaining” about trail food and several other matters.

But in the end, Ogden not only guided the pair all the way back to Fort Vancouver, he made a personal jaunt downstream to Cape Disappointment on the north bank of the mouth of the Columbia. Acting under orders from his superiors, he negotiated to purchase the cape from an American squatter in hopes that the land would become deemed as permanent British soil.

The Boundary Treaty of 1846 ceded all of Washington Territory to the United States, but granted the Hudson’s Bay Company some years of grace to continue their operation. Peter Skene Ogden and James Douglas were appointed as joint masters of Fort Vancouver, to share responsibilities in transferring both the fading fur business and the growing community into US hands.

Ogden took to his new posting with a flair, writing letters to the American newspapers in the Willamette Valley, judging horse races, becoming a patron of the Vancouver Curling Club, and submitting acrostic poems to *Spectator* magazine. Once again, there is no record of what his wife thought about her husband’s new forms of entertainment.

On Dec. 6, 1847, word reached Fort Vancouver of the calamity at Marcus Whitman’s Waiilatpu Mission. An unknown number of people were dead, women and children were being held hostage, and a tribal coalition of unknown size was



A few of the Hudson’s Bay Company posts utilized by the Ogden family between 1818 and 1854. Map by Jack McMaster.



thought to be threatening all the white settlers in the territory. American officials knew nothing about dealing with the Plateau cultures, and turned to Hudson's Bay Company officials for advice.

The very next day Peter Skene Ogden set out with a strong party for the Walla Walla country. After his arrival, Ogden quickly assembled the local tribal headmen, many of whom he would have known from his Snake River Expeditions. He made a clear and uncompromising statement of his intentions to retrieve the American hostages, then sat down to wait.

In time, the tribes made a counter-offer, and Ogden listened to them. He eventually delivered a ransom of trade goods and seven oxen in exchange for all of the captives, then led the missionary group back to Fort Vancouver before the turn of the new year.

When Oregon's provisional governor showered him with praise for his negotiating tactics, Ogden, perhaps recalling his failures during a previous negotiation between Cowlitz and Iroquois parties, calmly reflected that "without the [Hudson's Bay Company's] powerful aid and influence nothing could have been effected."

Even so, his company's influence over the

region was fast diminishing. Ogden hung on as chief factor at Fort Vancouver for almost six more years, but with his health failing, Peter and Julia finally retired to live with their favorite daughter in Oregon City. That girl, Sarah Julia, had married Archibald McKinley, one of Oregon's first mercantile traders. It was in their house that Peter Skene Ogden passed away in 1854.

He died as a man of some renown, who had ramrodded crews across a wide spectrum of race and culture, served with the most influential shapers of fur trade and territorial policy, and met all the key early visitors to the Northwest, from botanist David Douglas to Jesuit missionary Pierre DeSmet to artist Paul Kane. He had also made several wise investments and left a sizable estate in the form of both land and liquid assets.

Yet for all his accomplishments, Ogden had never formalized his relationship with Julia Rivet, and soon after he died one of his lawyer brothers and a sister from eastern Canada laid a claim to disinherit all of Ogden's mixed-blood family. The case brought up a wellspring of inequalities concerning race, gender, and marriage rights that had swirled around the silent Julia Rivet for her entire life.

Sir George Simpson, ever on the scene, served as one of the executors of the estate, and followed the legal battle for several years before helping to procure a modest settlement for Rivet and her children.

When a succession of bad farming years drove Sarah and Archibald McKinley into bankruptcy, Rivet moved with them north, back across the international boundary, where she lived for another quarter century as a local figure. Firmly revered as The Old Lady, an elder among the early generation of mixed-blood Salish wives, 98-year-old Julia Rivet died in 1886 at Lac la Hache, British Columbia.

Her journeys circled the entire region, from the Spokane and Flathead Rivers to the Great Salt Lake to the wild fjords of northern British Columbia. Together with her difficult husband, she had managed to participate in most of the social upheavals that created the Pacific Northwest as we know it today.

Jack Nisbet's essay on Spokane House is in the new anthology *The Spokane River*. For more information, see <http://www.washington.edu/uwpress/search/books/LINSPO.html> or [www.jacknisbet.com](http://www.jacknisbet.com).

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# Just Interested

By Loren Cruden

Being a book reviewer is different from being a literary critic (as being a proofreader is different from being an editor). A reviewer's job is to describe and offer a taste – like those people you find in grocery store aisles with their tables of wee food samples on toothpicks. A critic, however, is a specialist in literary arcana, style lineages and methods of analyses. But there are intersections. Renowned critic A.O. Scott defines a critic as “a person whose interest can help activate the interest of others.” I think reviewers try to do this, too.

Interest, though, is generally considered a boring word. Why? Because of its neutrality. It neither loves nor hates. Mere ‘interest’ tends to be drowned out by fevered communications racing through the ethers these days, and the accompanying exhortation to click “like” or “dislike” in response to, well, everything. Emotion may then replace assessment, preconception may usurp observation, and plain old interest may get kicked to the curb.

Many years ago, a young friend wrote to me

from a city she was staying in while attending graduate school. Though having been a city girl all her life, she felt alienated by this one, and rode her bike around trying to find some smidgen of resonance or something she liked about it.

I wrote back suggesting exploration based on sheer interest instead, saying that the word may be boring but the attitude is one of openness, curiosity, whetted attention, and willingness to engage. Which worked for her.

Interest doesn't have to be tethered to habitual likes and dislikes. It can transcend the cramped confines of these, making space for new vantage points.

One of the things I appreciate about the writers group that meets around my kitchen table every couple of Sundays is how diverse yet equally concentrated we all are upon each other's work. Every project brought for input gets our focused, receptive attention. For two hours, twice a month, preference biases are suspended as we respectfully listen, debate, question and make suggestions.

Asked by someone, “What do you think of this?” from honest intention to make whatever it is – a dress, a house plan, a magazine article, whatever – the best it can be, reply needs to

put forth its best also. Answering “I like pants better than dresses” or “Poems aren't really my thing” just won't do. They're door closers. Stepping up is what's called for, taking a productively interested look. It's surprising how invigorating this can be.

Reviewing a book is like reporting on an encounter. Reading a book, the interested reviewer “meets” an author – maybe familiar, maybe not – and attends to what she/he conveys. Then reports on the “encounter.” As a reviewer who is also a writer, I can't help but be conscious of the construction process behind storytelling: what an author is up to and the particular techniques being used. Every so often, though, I get so deeply immersed in a story that I forget its underpinnings. These are the masterly authors whose writing is like the construction of bridges that seem to spontaneously arc across space.

A disconcerting number of people tell me that they regularly read my book reviews in the *Monthly* but don't read the books I recommend. The conclusion I come to is that interest in the reviews doesn't overcome differences in literary tastes. Which is fine. Once again, perhaps, likes and dislikes prevail.

But the wonderful thing is that people are

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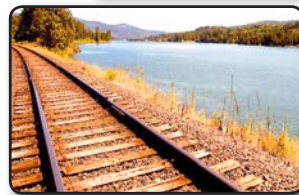
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willing to go ahead and read the reviews anyway. I, too, read a lot of articles about things I don't particularly like. It expands my horizons. I can spend twenty minutes in close contemplation of opera, for instance, without ever having to personally endure the experience of it.

In many ways, we live through one another's experiences. Writing (and reviewing) is one way experience is transmitted. Our own lives find extension and insight when we read about or listen to the stories of others, even fictional others. We are a communal species. Human young aren't built to immediately stand on their own; growing up takes a long time, full of input, effort and, one hopes, interest.

Our pairings and friendships often last decades, and we tend toward clustered lifestyles and organized activity. No formal line is drawn between what is individually figured out and what is absorbed from others – we co-depend on one another's expertise. Communally supportive attributes like empathy, sympathy and sharing are valued – mutuality, reciprocity, generosity and kindness. In stories we celebrate their presence and dramatize their lack.

The Chinese saying "May you live in interesting times" uses the great understatement

inherent in "interesting" to sinister effect, bellying its innocuous connotation, and implying that when things get "interesting" we are apt to open our eyes and wake up to what's going on around us. Perhaps such times are always upon us, but we don't always notice.

Recently the carbon monoxide alarm in my house went off in the middle of the night, while I was asleep. Never before having lived with such a device, I didn't know what was happening. The cat exploded out of bed and, adrenaline-revved, I was right behind him. Amid the insanely loud, high-pitched shriek a disembodied female voice

started saying something about danger. Shocked and disoriented, cardiac arrest seemed the immediate danger. But I rallied, bumbling around the house, opening outside doors, checking propane sources, turning a fan on, turning a light on, staring at my appliances.

The shrieking alarm and creepy voice ceased. I looked at the cat – crouched under the settee – and muttered, "That was interesting."

*Loren Cruden writes fiction, nonfiction, and poetry, available at Meyers Falls Market in Kettle Falls and [www.LorenBooks.com](http://www.LorenBooks.com), and provides Home Pet Care in the north Stevens County area.*

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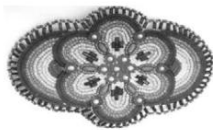
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# Plucky Beavers

Article & Photo By J. Foster Fanning

Back in '69 when I'd first moved north to this fine state from the Texas Panhandle I was living in one of the rainiest locations in the Pacific Northwest – Quinalt, Washington – where I was leasing a small farmhouse along the Quinalt River. On a very still twilight evening, under the maple trees that grow huge in that deep mountain valley with their thick leaves muting the light, I hiked along a backwater slough of the river. All of a sudden a big, loud splash happened within a few feet of my path. I still had the athletic prowess of high school track and I'm fairly certain a new high jump record was set that day. It startled the dickens out of me!

Of course you already know the answer to the riddle that launched me to new heights. It was *Castor Canadensis*, the largest living rodent in North America.

Now I live in close proximity with beavers and see them frequently as I travel the Northwest. But I must admit, when they catch me by surprise and slap that powerful tail with a 40-pound body thrust onto the surface of the water, I am still delightfully startled.

I've been told that if you find a beaver not working or eating (rare), listen closely, as you may get to hear it hum.

These furry mammals are semi-aquatic, and have webbed hind feet and a broad, flat tail. At 40 to 50 pounds and more than three feet in body length, this critter is big. Okay, not as big as its ancestor of the Ice Age who tipped the scales at approximately 200 pounds and measured eight feet long, but a large mammal nonetheless.

What the beaver could never perceive is that a fashionable demand for beaver skin hats arose in Europe in the 1600s. Before fashion changed over 200 years later, this widely dispersed mammal would be trapped to near the gates of extinction. And with that trapping much of the prime habitat the beaver had caused to be created in thousands of years of existence would be altered. As one 1900s beaver trapper wrote, "I was told that before the beaver hat boom ... beavers populated much of the great plains. The landscape was much wetter with beavers catching and holding water in what are now mostly dry washes. Along with the water, grew willows and other vegetation which shaded the creeks and also helped hold water."

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife states, "Once among the most widely distributed mammals in North America, beavers were eliminated from much of their range in the late 1800s because of unregulated trapping. With a decline in the demand for beaver pelts, and

with proper management, they became reestablished in much of their former range and are now common in many areas."

Beavers' dam creation also serves to produce habitat for many other animals and plants. It is not at all uncommon to observe otters, muskrats, weasels, raccoons and herons hunting amphibians and other prey along the marshy edges of beaver ponds. In wintertime, moose, deer and elk frequent beaver ponds to feed on shrubby plants that grow where beavers cut down trees. Migratory water birds use these ponds as nesting areas and resting stops during annual migrations. Ducks and geese often nest on top of beaver lodges since they offer warmth and security, particularly when lodges are formed in the middle of a pond. The tree mortality as a result of rising water levels in beaver pools attracts insects, which in turn feed woodpeckers, whose holes later provide homes for other wildlife.

And then there's the beaver itself, a most peculiar animal. Beavers have large, sharp, upper and lower incisors used in cutting trees and peeling bark while eating. These incisors are harder on the front surface than on the back, and so the back wears faster. This creates a sharp edge that enables a beaver to easily cut through wood. The incisors never stop growing, but also are worn down by grinding them together, tree cutting, and feeding.

Average lifespan in the wild is approximately 10 years. To identify a beaver, look for a stocky body with dense brown fur. They have a blunt head with black eyes and ears on either side. When a beaver swims normally the tail doesn't show.

Beavers are typically found where their preferred food sources are in good supply – along rivers, small streams, lakes and marshes. Beavers eat the leaves, inner bark and twigs of aspen (a favorite), alder, birch, cottonwood, willow and other deciduous trees. The variable diet of the beaver also includes shrubs, ferns, aquatic plants, grasses and crops, such as corn and beans. Fermentation by distinctive intestinal microorganisms allows beavers to digest 30 percent of the cellulose they ingest. And if you've ever seen beaver scat, it looks very much like rolled sawdust, especially when dry.

The wily beaver floods areas to defend against predators, for access to food supply, and to provide underwater entrances to their den. Flooded areas also wet the soil and promote the growth of foods favored by the beaver.

There are volumes more to write about the beaver, but it's time to head outside. So as you wander about in the wilds, listen closely. You may hear an unusual humming near the shoreline.

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



# WHAT'S



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# APPENZERS

## Events

**May 1:** Colville's Keller Heritage Park opens, featuring new exhibits and free programs, including the Panorama Gem and Mineral Club Show and talk **May 12**, 1 pm, and a Bootlegging talk by historian Barry McCombs, **May 26**, 2 pm.

**May 2:** Inland Northwest Blood Drive, 9-1, Colville High School Hall next to the Gym. Call 509-991-2418 for more info.

**May 4:** Chamber Open Golf Tournament at Dominion Meadows Golf Course, Colville.

**May 4-5:** Mental Health First Aid, a public education program to help people understand mental illness and substance abuse disorders, 8-5, Immaculate Conception Catholic Parish, 320 N. Maple St, Colville. Lunch and refreshments provided. \$20 per day. Sponsored by Community Partnerships of Mental Health and Passages Family Support. Call 509-732-8834 or email mhfa.cpmh@gmail.com to register and for info.

**May 4-6:** Mountain Mania Mudsports Mudbogs, 2869 Huffman Rd., Valley.

**May 5:** City-Wide Yard Sale, 8-3, Chewelah.

**May 6:** Northport Lions Club BINGO at the Northport School Cafeteria, Noon-4. Early Bird, Regular, Fast Pick and Blackout with a \$500 Jackpot. A portion of proceeds benefit Northport Dollars for Scholars. Refreshments available. Must be 18 or older to play. Call 509-690-2158 for more info.

**May 8:** Colville Community Blood Drive, noon-5:30 pm, Ag Trade Center, Colville. Call 509-991-2418 for more info.

**May 9, 23 & 30:** Using Skill-Based Volunteers, a free, interactive workshop on how to effectively engage skilled volunteers. Offered by Connections Consulting with support from Washington Nonprofits and in partnership with WSU Extension in Republic (May 9), Newport (May 23), and Colville (May 30), 12:30-4. For registration and info, visit [washingtonnonprofits.org/calendar](http://washingtonnonprofits.org/calendar). See ad on page 15 for details.

**May 11:** P.E.O. Scholarship Fundraiser Yard Sale, 7-5, St. Paul Lutheran Church, Colville. Proceeds benefit women's education.

**May 12:** Mud or Sun Super ATV Bucket Run, registration at 9 am, ride at 10 am, Beaver Lodge, 2430 Hwy 20 E, Colville. Call 509-684-5657 for more info.

**May 12:** Mother's Day Tea, 10-12, the HUB, Colville.

**May 12:** The Northport Lions Club is hosting its 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Northport Lions Club Golf Scramble at Dominion Meadows Golf Course, Colville. All proceeds to benefit community, youth and educational programs sponsored by the Northport Lions Club. Call 509-732-4191 for sponsorship and registration info.

**May 12:** NE WA Fair Dinner & Auction, Ag Trade Center, Colville. Doors open at 5 pm, dinner at 6 pm. Family \$25, adult \$10, kids/seniors \$5. Silent and Live Auction follows dinner. Proceeds help fund scholarships, prizes and fair needs.

**May 12:** Mother's Day Dance, 7-10 pm, Kettle River Grange (Barstow), \$5 each or \$20 per family. Dance to DJ music and enjoy pizza, popcorn, cookies, and drinks, available for purchase. Drawing for Mother's Day Basket.

**May 13:** Mother's Day.

**May 14:** Sasquatch: Man-Ape or Myth? 6-7 pm, Colville Public Library. Learn about this mysterious and iconic Northwest creature, and weigh the evidence both for and against its existence.

**May 18:** National Ride Your Bike to Work Day.

**May 18:** Golf Tournament sponsored by the NE WA Assoc. of Realtors, 1-5 pm, Chewelah Golf & Country Club.

**May 19:** Libraries of Stevens County surplus computer equipment sale, 10-2, Colville Public Library Meeting Room (use Astor St. entrance). Prices and specs available at [www.thelosc.org](http://www.thelosc.org) and at all libraries the week of the sale.

**May 19:** Kettle Falls Historical Center season opening celebration, 11-5, just off Hwy 395, St. Paul's Mission Rd. See ad on page 16 for details.

**May 19:** Public Policy Forum: Respecting Student School Walkouts, supporting youth leadership, and locally defining Democratic reforms. In association with Stal-sql-xw and ACLU People Power, Kettle Falls Public Library, Noon-3 pm; lunch and snacks offered, bring non-alcohol beverages of choice. More info at [info@stalsqlxw.org](mailto:info@stalsqlxw.org).

**May 26-28:** North Pend Oreille Lions Club RailRiders. Enjoy pedaling a four-seated RailRider along the North Pend Oreille River. See ad on page 15 for reservations and details.

**May 26-28:** Memorial Weekend Wine Barrel Tasting Event, China Bend Winery, Noon-5. Explore the cellars, sample wines and food, and enjoy live music, all free. See ad on page 7 for details.

**May 28:** Memorial Day.

**May 28-June 2:** Between the Rivers Gathering, primitive skills for self-sufficiency, near Valley. Visit [betweentheiversgathering.com](http://betweentheiversgathering.com) for more info.

## Music, Dance, Theater & Film

**May 5:** Wine tasting and music fundraiser, 5 pm, Pend Oreille Playhouse, 236 S. Union, Newport.

**May 5-6:** Northern Dance Theatre presents *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Other Delights*, Sat., 7 pm and Sun, 2 pm at the Colville High School auditorium, featuring lyrical, tap, jazz, folk and classical ballet. Tickets are \$10, 8 and under are \$5.

**May 12:** Simple Rhythm, Simple Living: Free Drumming Play-shop, 1-3 pm, at the Meyers Falls Market Community Room, Kettle Falls. Bring a hand drum and learn afro-cuban beats while you de-stress and come alive through drumming. Donations accepted.

**May 13:** Coffee House Concert, featuring Donivan Johnson, 2-5 pm, Cutter Theatre, 302 Park Street, Metaline Falls. \$5 cover charge. Wine, beer, coffee and snacks will be available for a nominal fee. Call 509-446-4108 for more info.

**May 20:** Dances of Universal Peace, simple, meditative, joyous, multi-cultural dances, 2-5 pm at the Colville Library basement. Donations appreciated. Potluck following. Call 509-684-1590 for more info.

**Trail & District Arts Council** calendar of events. Details available at [trail-arts.com](http://trail-arts.com).

**19<sup>th</sup>:** A Tribute to Kenny Rogers, 8-10 pm

**26<sup>th</sup>:** "Dancing Divas & Dads" fundraiser, Noon

**27<sup>th</sup>:** Year-End Steps Dance Performance, 3-5:30 pm

**Colville Pour House**, 202 S Main, Colville, [colvillepourhouse.com](http://colvillepourhouse.com):

**4<sup>th</sup>:** Borderland Blues Band, 7-9 pm

**11<sup>th</sup>:** Pickett "Glitchpop", 6:30-8:30 pm

**12<sup>th</sup>:** Local Talent Night, 6-9 pm

**26<sup>th</sup>:** Local Talent Night, 6-9 pm

**Music at Northern Ales**, 325 W. 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave., Kettle Falls, [northernales.com](http://northernales.com), 509-738-7382:

**3<sup>rd</sup>:** Sara Brown, 6-8 pm

**4<sup>th</sup>:** Cross Current, 7-10 pm

**10<sup>th</sup>:** Justin Johnson, 6-8 pm

**11<sup>th</sup>:** Northern Aliens, 7-10 pm

**17<sup>th</sup>:** Patty O'Farrell, 6-8 pm

**18<sup>th</sup>:** Open Mic, 7-10 pm

**24<sup>th</sup>:** Chip & Robbie, unplugged, 6-8 pm

**25<sup>th</sup>:** Checkmate Reality, 7-10 pm

**31<sup>st</sup>:** TBD, 6-8 pm

**Music at Republic Brewing Company**, 26 Clark Ave., Republic, [republicbrew.com](http://republicbrew.com), 509-775-2700.

**10<sup>th</sup>:** Jason Hawk Harris, 7 pm

**17<sup>th</sup>:** The Black Lillies (ticketed event), 7 pm

**19<sup>th</sup>:** Massy Ferguson, 7 pm

**31<sup>st</sup>:** Claude Bourbon, 7 pm

## Arts & Crafts

**May 2:** Art talk with Janel Dudley, Suzanne Fanto, and Alva Kiesbuy, 6:30-8 pm, Quartzite Brewing in Chewelah.

**May 3:** First Thursday Art Walk, 5:30-8 pm, downtown Chewelah. Six Brushes Watercolor exhibit at Trails End Gallery, Margo Sety at ChewVino, and Chris Lehwalder at Jean Bean's Coffee.

**May 4:** Reception for featured artist Allan Ferguson, 4-6 pm, Gold Mountains Gallery, 600 S. Clark, Republic. Allan turns wooden bowls as well as a variety of other objects. Refreshments will be served.

**May 26:** 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Quilt Show, Jenkins High School, Chewelah, presented by Chewelah Arts Guild.

**Sandy Dotts, featured artist** at the Meyers Falls Market gallery in Kettle Falls, recently started creating "quilts" using a non-traditional medium - reclaimed wood. Sandy gets her inspiration from quilt patterns, barn stars, Navajo rugs, Pendleton blankets, and geometric shapes.

## Literature & Writing

**May 11:** Poetry and Prose Reading, 3-4:30 pm, Community Colleges of Spokane, Colville Campus.

**May 14:** Kettle Falls Library Book Club, 2 pm. Topic this month is any prize-winning book. Newcomers encouraged. Call 509-680-6701 for more info.

**May 26:** Colville Library Improvement Club Book Sale, 10-1, library basement, featuring items for all ages. Hardbacks \$0.50, paperbacks \$0.25, CD's and videos \$0.25, many children's books \$0.10. Also books by well-known authors, \$1, and free items.

## Farm, Field & Forest

**May 5:** Pet Vaccination Clinic, 9-3, St. Paul Lutheran Church, 202 N. 2<sup>nd</sup> St. E, Chewelah.

**Northeast Washington Farmers Market**, Wed. and Sat., 9-1, Main and Astor in Colville. See ad on page 13 for details.

**North East Back Country Horsemen events:**

**May 1**, Board Meeting, 6-8 pm. Pizza Factory, 619 S. Fir, Deer Park, open to all. **May 19**, General Meeting

with potluck, 6-8:30 pm, Clayton Grange. Visit [NEBCHW.com](http://NEBCHW.com) or call 509-598-0333 for more info.

## Miscellany

**May 8, 22, 29:** Wellness Naturally Group, 9-10 am, Meyers Falls Market Community Room. Inspiring people to improve the quality of their life with natural solutions, to make their own healthy lifestyle choices that transform the lives of themselves, their families and those they love with the truth about health. Call Laurie at 509-930-0953 for more info.

**May 9:** Northeast Washington Genealogy Society meeting, 1 pm, basement of the LDS Church on Juniper Street in Colville, entry at the back of the building. The May program will be the first in our Online Library Series, featuring the Allen County Public Library in Fort Wayne, Indiana, a unique resource for the entire genealogical community where the staff specializes in genealogy and has assembled one of the largest research collections available, incorporating records from around the globe. Visit <https://newgs.org> for more info. All visitors are welcome.

**LEGO Mindstorms kits** will be available at each of the Libraries of Stevens County for a limited time during May. Visit [www.losc.org](http://www.losc.org) for details.

**Mondays Learn & Jam with Dib Earl**, ages 10 and up, Northport New Hope, 200 8<sup>th</sup> St., Northport. Workshop at 5 pm, jam session from 6-8 pm. Free.

**Free Movie Night**, 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of every month, 6 pm, Northport New Hope, 200 8<sup>th</sup> St., Northport. Family friendly movies, cocoa, coffee and popcorn. Call 509-732-6640 for more info.

**Colville Valley Fiber Friends**, (CVFF) meet every Monday at the Ag Trade Center, 317 W. Aster, Colville, noon - 3 pm. All interested in spinning, weaving and other fiber arts are welcome. For more information, contact Sue Gower at 509-685-1582.

**Cross Borders Weaving Guild** meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of each month at the VFW Hall, 135 Hwy 20, Colville. Email [woodtick50@aol.com](mailto:woodtick50@aol.com) for more info.

**Colville Piecemakers Quilt Guild** meets on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month at the Colville Community Center (HUB), 231 W. Elep, Colville at 6:30 pm. Visit [colvillepiecemakers.webs.com](http://colvillepiecemakers.webs.com).

**Celebrate Recovery**, a 12-step program, meets Fridays, 6:30 pm, 138 E Cedar Loop in Colville (enter from downstairs parking lot). A light meal is served. Call 509-935-0780 for a ride or more info.

**MORE LISTINGS & DETAILS  
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CALL HOSTING PARTIES TO CONFIRM LISTING INFO. THE NORTH COLUMBIA MONTHLY WILL NOT BE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR ERRORS OR SCHEDULE CHANGES. VISIT [NCMONTHLY.COM](http://NCMONTHLY.COM) FOR DAILY LISTING UPDATES OR TO SUBMIT A "WHAT'S HAPPENING" LISTING.



# LISTEN UP

## Elizabeth Stack's Stage and Cinematic Pop

Reviewed by Michael Pickett

It's amazing who you meet out in this rural area. Just a few days ago, I was eating and making music at the Little Gallea in Kettle Falls – as is my custom – when I struck up a conversation with another local musician. It isn't every day that someone tells you they sang a duet with Robert Guillaume on the "The Phantom of the Opera" soundtrack, so I was immediately interested in her story and musical journey from the southern



California scene to our part of the world.

After a great conversation with (now local) recording artist Elizabeth Stack, I got online to listen to her superb songs samples. Beautifully executed and produced, these selections run the gamut from cinematic pop to full-on modern stage soundtrack classics, with Stack soaring in an easy soprano over the eight-song set.

Naturally, the standout here is absolutely "The

Phantom of the Opera" duet with Guillaume, followed closely by the gorgeous "Embraceable You." While these samples represent a cross-section of Stack's work while she is in pre-production on an upcoming album, they are a fantastic listen, and a great glimpse into things to come.

As genres break down and become hybridized with the fall of the traditional music industry, it's great to find classically trained artists going the cottage industry route and finding their audience online. Do check out [elizabethstack.com](http://elizabethstack.com) and stay tuned for her releases. ... I am confident it will absolutely be worth the wait.

## Joe Satriani: What Happens Next

Reviewed by Michael Pickett

Back in 1987, when Satch's *Surfing With the Alien* took over the guitar world, no one was thinking about where things would stand 30 years down the line. So, to recap ... no hover cars or food replicators, but a much freer music "industry" and Joe Satriani having slung his axe with the likes of Deep Purple, Mick Jagger and the mighty Chickenfoot.

Through it all, though, Satriani was a guitar hero who had soul. He could shred with the best of them, to be sure, but never managed to lose his sense of tone, his timing and the feel that makes him so respected among his peers. The obvious title of *What Happens Next* not only answers some questions about where Satch's head is at, but involves former bandmate and drummer Chad Smith and uber-vocalist/bassist

Glenn Hughes (though Hughes does not sing a note on this album, sadly).

While there aren't a ton of radical departures from the Satch canon (album-opener "Energy" sounds like the same guy who recorded "Friends" way back in 1991, because it is the same guy),

"Catbot" sounds more like a cut from former Satch guitar student Steve Vai. Yet the liquid fire of "Thunder High on the Mountain," "Righteous" and "Invisible" rank up there with some of his best work.

In actual fact, the rhythm section of Hughes

& Smith gives this album a depth of groove on cuts like "Super Funky Badass" and "Smooth

Soul" almost unmatched on other Satriani releases, a testament to Joe's overall musicality as he rides this to grand effect.

Will Joe still be playing this well when he turns 90, like his friend Les Paul? Hard to say, but for now Satch shows no signs of making anything less than stellar guitar album everyone can enjoy.

Stream Pickett music free on Apple Music, Spotify, Rhapsody and Beats. Just search "Pickett magnetic feedback" and enjoy a whole album's worth of music!



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# A Good Read

## *The Ninth Hour*, by Alice McDermott

Reviewed by Loren Cruden

Alice McDermott's newest novel, *The Ninth Hour*, made me consider how, when a part of us – be it part of one's self or of community's wholeness – is banished, consequences propagate from absence just as inevitably as from presence.

In the case of the early-twentieth-century Brooklyn community of *The Ninth Hour*, what is initially erased is a young Irish immigrant's legacy after he commits suicide. Imposed silence closes over his life and death like a pond's smoothed surface over a dropped stone.

McDermott – a National Book Award winner and three-time finalist for the Pulitzer Prize – has a considered style, no slapdash. But the tone of *The Ninth Hour* is street-level human: Sister St. Saviour “was now on her way back to the convent, her bladder full, her ankles swollen, her round glasses turned toward the lamplight and the terrible scent of doused fire on the winter air.”

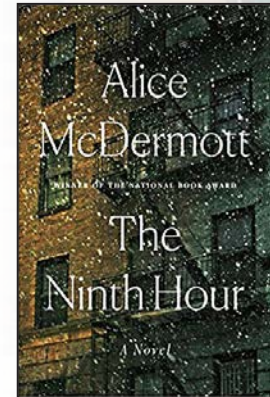
Sister St. Saviour is on hand to recognize the suicide's first ripples of consequence: a pregnant young woman has been left widowed. As the story

moves on, this sister dies and other nuns step to the fore. The widow's baby is born, grows, and decides that she, too, will become a “bride of Christ.” Is she suited for a vocation devoted to nursing the tenement poor in all their squalid suffering? We find out.

The story's flock of nuns is varied and memorable, as are the many peripheral characters in McDermott's very Catholic Brooklyn of that era. As a grandchild of the story's time says, “We marveled to think of it: how much went unspoken in those days. How much they believed was at stake.”

One character, Mrs. Tierney, the widow's best friend, provides relief from high stakes. Though committed to her religion, holiness bores her. “She liked chaos, busyness, bustling. She liked a household strewn with clothes and dust and magazines and books, jump ropes, baseball bats, milk bottles. She liked the sight and the smell of overflowing ashtrays, of a man who's had a few drinks, of tabletops crowded with cloudy glasses.”

*The Ninth Hour's* characters amply demonstrate that there are all kinds of ways to be devout.



## *Gap Creek*, by Robert Morgan

Reviewed by Loren Cruden

The heroine of Robert Morgan's *Gap Creek* is a far step back from today's American woman. Julie Harmon grows up in the Appalachian high country at the turn of the nineteenth century. She works a crosscut saw, hoes corn and carries it to the mill for grinding. Morgan is foremost a poet, so Julie's voice in this novel falls musically on the ear. But Julie's is a hardscrabble life ever on the precipice of disaster, though beauty, too, is ever present in the classic Appalachian landscape.

When her brother dies on the mountainside in beautiful forested moonlight, “It was the first time I ever noticed how the way the world looks don't have a thing to do with what's going on with people.” Building up the fire in the hearth to warm her ailing father, Julie “watched the green flame prance and strut and spread its wings. The fire twisted and beckoned as if it meant for me to follow. The fire spread on the wood like fingers on a keyboard. ... And the wood began to moan, like somebody that was grieved.” Characters' lives and moods and perceptions are inescapably infused by the landscape, despite its seeming oblivion to the human drama. The story is full of flames and waters and winds.

Before long, Julie has a husband (the book

is subtitled *The Story of a Marriage*). Hank and Julie, teenagers still, move to the valley. They share a rental house with its landlord; Julie cooks and cleans and launders in lieu of rent. It's a big change from the outdoor work at which she is at ease – and of course marriage is a big change for her, too. “If I let Hank criticize me it would make him feel better and then he wouldn't be so mad at himself. Nobody likes to be criticized, and I hated to be criticized, but I seen it was easier to let him blame me than to live with a man who was enraged at himself.”

*Gap Creek* deals with life's fundamentals. Its strength as a novel comes from its heroine Julie's stubbornly honest, innately lyrical way of telling her tale. You forget the words were written by a modern guy named Bob. There's just your young long-ago friend Julie talking.

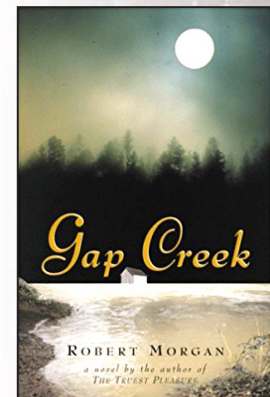
Other recommendations from the M shelves:

Thomas Maltman – *Little Wolves*

Thomas Mullen – *Lightning Men*

Wangari Maathai – *Unbowed*

Loren Cruden writes fiction, nonfiction, and poetry, available at Meyers Falls Market in Kettle Falls and [www.LorenBooks.com](http://www.LorenBooks.com), and provides Home Pet Care in the north Stevens County area.





# The Subject of Powerful Pictures

By Joanie Christian

Composition, subject and lighting are all critical elements for creating a good image. In photography, the subject is like the leading character in a movie. As the photographer, you get to decide how everyone sees that leading character. When I am behind the lens, my goal is to go beyond simply getting a beautiful shot. I strive to engage the viewer. Tell a story. Elicit an emotional reaction: love, friendship, sadness, humor, wonder, peace, etc. Show something, or show it in a way the viewer hasn't seen before.

I consider myself very fortunate to live in the Tri-County area where there is an endless supply of amazing subject matter. This region is a feast for the senses and I delight in being able to capture that through my lens. The four seasons; abundant and diverse wildlife; beautiful scenery; streams, lakes and waterfalls; cultural events and scenes from everyday rural life.

I am also blessed with the ability to share these experiences with others. I see it as an opportunity to help others see things in a brand-new way, and perhaps help them along the path toward a reverence for the incredible natural world just out the front door.

Since my teens, I've been composing photographs visually in my head. I began paying attention to details that most people walk by or don't notice. Patterns, textures, color combinations, lighting and subjects that, together, were unusual, interesting or appealing. Raindrops on leaves. A spider web bejeweled with dew. The backside of a peacock (rather than the very colorful and popular FRONT of a peacock). A lone oak leaf floating on the glassy surface of a puddle. A toddler's feet next to the parents' feet. Even

things that are less pleasant and evoke a negative emotion are compelling subjects, such as the incredible talons of a dead bald eagle frozen in a creek bed.

Many of my best images are ones that I did not plan to take. I love photographing wildlife, but when I set out in search of a particular critter, I usually find something else instead. When life gives you lemons, I'm all about making lemonade. I seize the moment. Allow myself to be open to whatever comes along and indulge my sense of curiosity. I put aside the worries of the day, the mental to-do lists, the cell phone. Look up, look in front, look down ... soak it all in and begin to see things with fresh eyes.

I suggest photographing subjects that speak to you. Your passion about those subjects will come out in your work. Successful photography, I think, often starts with an

emotional connection to what you are photographing. It doesn't matter whether you are vacationing in a far-away place, exploring in the forest, or just out in your backyard.

Once you find a subject, first zoom in close and fill the frame with that subject. This way nothing is competing with it. Distracting background elements can detract from a photo or even confuse the viewer about what the subject of the photo is. When composing a photo, seek to eliminate phone wires, road signs, hands or other body parts of another person before taking the shot.

Not quite satisfied with what you have framed with your camera? Zoom partway back out, knowingly. Consider highlighting and enhancing your

***"Look and think before opening the shutter. The heart and mind are the true lens of the camera."***

***~ Yousuf Karsh***



*Catching an action shot with really sharp focus and backlighting makes for a dramatic moment. Note also the use of the Rule of Thirds.*





*With a shallow depth-of-field, everything but the subject is in soft focus, allowing the subject to stand out in clear detail. The story of berry picking and an offering to share in the mouth-watering treat is also highlighted.*

subject against the background or environment. A sea stack at the ocean can be much more striking when the ocean and waves are included in at least a portion of the photo. It gives the image context and dimension.

Good general composition can help highlight your subject well. Place your subject off-center in the photo. Use the rule of thirds and properly place your subject to emphasize it (see previous month's article for details). Make sure your subject is in sharp focus. If taking photos of people or animals, it is important that the facial features are sharp – most especially the eyes.

I encourage you to practice *not* shooting in automatic mode. If you have a camera that allows you to adjust your *f* stop or aperture, take advantage of that feature to achieve selective focus in your photo.

Every camera is different regarding how many different *f* stops you can choose from. In general, the lower the *f* stop number, the smaller the depth of field – meaning how much is in focus from near to far. At the highest *f* stop number, almost everything in the viewfinder will be in focus (depending on how powerful the magnification of your lens is). At the lowest *f* stop number, most of your photo, with the exception of what you focused on, will be out of focus. While this may not sound desirable, it can create amazing photos. It simplifies the photo and emphasizes your subject by making the foreground and background a soft blur of color. This soft look is beautiful with flowers and foliage, creating a dreamy effect, and really makes your subject pop.

I will talk about lighting more extensively in another article, but I

would be remiss if I didn't mention the importance of lighting in reference to the subject. Lighting is one of the most effective tools to make the subject the main attraction of the image.

When the sun or other light source is behind a subject and creates a glow or highlight of your subject, this is called backlighting. It is sometimes referred to as rim lighting because of the thin rim of light around the subject. Backlighting can create exquisite photos. It can be a bit tricky, but is worth attempting. Be careful to avoid the sunlight coming directly into your lens, as that can create all kinds of unwanted effects.

Pay attention to the angle and direction of the lighting. Shadows on your subject can be a curse or blessing. Reposition your subject if the shadows detract from the photo. High contrast lighting can compliment your subject by creating a silhouette of the subject.

Sunset or dawn, or even very bright days, can all create this effect when the image is taken from just the right angle.

I believe that a photographer's ability to successfully convey his or her vision of a photograph is key to a compelling image. The camera is just a tool to bring that vision to life. Experiment in training yourself to discover new subjects you hadn't considered before. Then, using the techniques I mentioned, you will see the quality of your images evolve. And while all that is happening, remember to take time to live in and appreciate the moment.

*Joanie Christian, a freelance nature photographer, has lived in NE WA for 40+ years. View her work at [joaniechristianphotography.com](http://joaniechristianphotography.com) and follow her paddling adventures at [stillwaterpaddling.com](http://stillwaterpaddling.com).*



*Using maximum depth-of-field to bring everything from near to far into focus, while getting in close to the subject in the foreground, and then using backlighting to cause the sunflowers to glow, results in a visually compelling image.*



# North Columbia Monthly Poet in Residence

## Our Poet

Lynn Rigney Schott is a retired English teacher. She lives near Kettle Falls, below Mingo Mountain, with views in all directions. Her poetry collection, *Light Years*, is available at Meyers Falls Market in Kettle Falls and Auntie's Bookstore in Spokane.

## Our Residency

The *North Columbia Monthly* Poet in Residence is a page presence position that passes from poet to poet in lyric celebration of where we live.

## Submissions

To be considered for the Poet in Residence position, send at least four sample poems to [nmonthly@gmail.com](mailto:nmonthly@gmail.com) or to NCM, P.O. Box 541, Colville, WA 99114. All Poet in Residence submissions will be acknowledged; none returned. No other poetry submissions are being solicited at this time.

## Against Confusion

by Lynn Rigney Schott

Sticks of almond in a tall glass vase  
against the kitchen bricks  
where the old cookstove was

In time they will burst  
like rain hitting a window  
a blur of pale bloom you can't see through

So we force beauty from life  
the smooth bronze bark studded with buds  
part of the branch drinking underwater

If only bread and hunger could find each other  
the part of the day that drowns  
might surface through some simple rift in air

Something unexpected would flow as from sleep  
like lines of music disguised as a path  
or better, blossoms littering a well-drawn map

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## Along the Mountain Path: Springing

By Sarah Kilpatrick, E.R.Y.T.

*"The temple bell stops ringing but the sound keeps coming, out of the flowers"*  
~ Basho

It's been a long winter, but the grass is green, sprouts are poking through the beds, birds are singing, and the brave early flowers are blooming. It's spring! To me, the coming of spring shows us the resilience of nature, the cycle of continuance, and it also brings many of us out into the yard and garden to work. The joy and freedom that bloom in our heart may be accompanied by pain in our muscles. Time to get to work strengthening and opening the body to meet the work ahead.

After my first week of trimming and weeding, I could already tell that specific areas of my body needed a little compassionate, aware attention. My sacral issues re-emerged, and my chest and upper arms rebelled. And so, to the mat with increased vigor!

Many spring and summer activities tax the low back with lifting, bending in awkward positions, pulling and digging, not to mention paddling and pedaling. Regular practice of lower back-stabilizing exercises and asanas can help prevent "the pain to come."

I teach four basic back care practices: a sacral balancing technique, "strap press" to strengthen and awaken the transverse abdominal wall, adductor strengthening, and abductor strengthening to keep the pelvis balanced. Prone backbends safely strengthen the back muscles and help keep the chest open.

Bending over and lifting can often tighten the big pectoral muscles on the upper chest. A reclining pectoral stretch can help keep the chest open and avoid upper back strain and neck problems. Try lying with a firm blanket

roll lengthwise under your spine. Make sure both your sacrum and head are on the roll, and that you have a natural curve in your neck. Bend your knees and put your feet firmly on the floor to ease your low back. Take your arms straight out to the sides (90 degrees) in external rotation, and bend your elbows 90 degrees. This will stretch the pectoral muscles, which attach onto your breast bone, and reach over to your upper arm bones.

This may be intense, and your arms may not rest on the floor. Try to relax with your exhalations, and let gravity aid you in relaxing these big muscles. This should be practiced for two minutes, daily or several days a week.

Another day, another dog pose! Downward Facing Dog is such a good overall stretch, working your arms, opening the hamstrings, opening the chest and stretching the back. And don't forget Sun Salutations. If you don't practice them regularly, get some back into your life.

If your arms are weak, try 1/2 Chatranga Dandasana from a 1/2 plank position. With regular practice, you will become stronger quickly. If you are a regular practitioner, you already know which asanas will serve you well. The issue may be that they won't help if you don't practice them.

If you haven't done yoga, this may be a wonderful time to learn. The techniques and asanas you learn in class will support you in all activities. That said, remember that yoga is not just a class. Practice makes us stronger and more aware. When we take that awareness into all of the things that we do, life becomes more

comfortable. Yoga is for life!

Balance is a big part of yoga. Not just the act of standing on one leg, but the awareness of the balance of effort and ease in life. Enjoy the work and play of spring, but remember to allow yourself breaks and rest. A recuperative may be just the thing to counter all of that activity, and Viparita Karani (legs up the wall) for 5-10 minutes daily is good for everyone.

As you follow the mountain path, may the beauty of spring inspire you to appreciate the beauty that we all bring into the world when we are happily just who we are, working toward balance and harmony.

Namaste.

*Sarah practices and teaches at Mt. Path Yoga studio, 818 E. Columbia Ave., Colville.*

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## Stevens County Stew

By Louanne Atherley

Those of us who have lived in Stevens County for any length of time know that we have an interesting mix of people with diverse backgrounds, interests, skills and talents. Some grew up here and some chose to live here. Some were brought here by jobs and many came here to retire. However the ingredients happened to arrive, like any good stew, once they had a chance to simmer together and blend, they created the unique and tasty mixture that is our community.

I was reflecting on this and some of the interesting conversations I have been part of recently, having to do with ecology, music, theater, science and history.

The Kettle Falls Historical Center is working with a young man who specializes in reproducing traditional Salish cultural items. He is planning to build a sturgeon-nosed canoe that can be exhibited as part of the story of Kettle Falls told at the center. At a recent visit he talked to us about needing to find a bark from the bitter cherry, *prunus emarginata*, which he referred to as "nature's rubber band," to use in the construction of the canoe. A call to a local botanist friend confirmed there was a reasonable chance of finding some here. She said she would keep an eye out.

Earlier I met with the Woodland Productions grant funding committee and a representative of a funding organization about proposed improvements to the Woodland Theatre in Kettle Falls. We were asked about the origins of the theatre and backgrounds of the members. We began telling the funding representative about some of the exceptional talent we have been privileged to host at the theater over the years. Most of the long-term members brought their love of music and theater and their skills with them when they arrived here decades ago and have shared

those talents with the community, providing not only entertainment, but also role models for the younger generations growing up here.

Later in the week, at my Friday morning yoga class, there was a discussion of the finer points of pizza crust and travel to Italy by several members who had been there. Most of the women in this class can be described as mature but they all lead active lives that include lots of outdoor sports and travel.

The week wound up at Northern Ales in Kettle Falls where I found myself at a table with two former geologists who were discussing geomorphology over a couple of pints of locally brewed Scottish Highland Ale while we listened to some excellent live music, also provided by local musicians.

Although what I have described is a metaphorical stew, I do have an actual stew recipe to offer. My book club has been reading books lately having to do with slavery and issues around immigration and prejudice. This group of women are also excellent cooks and gardeners, so our gatherings tend to be almost as much about food as about the book we are reading, and we often try to go with a theme suggested by the book in our choice of food for the potluck that starts our evening gatherings.

Our most recent book selection was *The Warmth of Other Suns* by Isabel Wilkerson, about the migration of black people to the north in the early twentieth century. That reading inspired this stew, which has roots in African culture. There are many variations and this recipe was adapted from a combination of several recipes I found. The essential ingredients are ginger, peanuts, sweet potato and greens. It can be made with chicken or beef, if you prefer, but it is also a very tasty and satisfying vegetarian meal.

### African Peanut Stew

- 1 Tbsp vegetable oil
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1-inch fresh ginger, peeled and grated
- 1 medium sweet potato (about 1 lb.), diced
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 1 tsp cumin
- 1/4 tsp crushed red pepper
- 6 oz can tomato paste
- 1/2 cup natural style chunky peanut butter
- 6 cups vegetable broth (substitute beef or chicken broth for meat versions)
- 1/2 bunch (2-3 cups) kale, stemmed and chopped; can also use collard or other hearty greens

1. Sauté the ginger and garlic in vegetable oil over medium heat for 1-2 minutes, or until the garlic becomes soft and fragrant.

2. Add onion and sweet potato and sauté until the onion is soft and the sweet potato takes on a darker, slightly translucent appearance. Season with cumin and red pepper flakes.

3. Add the tomato paste and peanut butter and stir until everything is evenly mixed, then gradually add the broth and bring to a boil and add greens.

4. Turn the heat down to low and allow it to simmer without a lid for about 15 minutes, or until the sweet potatoes are very soft. Then smash about half of the sweet potatoes with the back of a wooden spoon to help thicken the soup. Taste the soup and adjust seasoning. Depending on the type of broth you use, you may need to add salt.

5. Serve the stew hot with chopped peanuts and millet or brown rice to sprinkle on top and offer Sriracha for those who prefer a little more heat.

*Although born into a farming family and raised on a meat and potatoes diet, Louanne Atherley has made exploring the diversity of foods from other cultures a lifelong passion.*



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# A Year On the Farm

## Highs and Lows of Weather Tracking

By Michelle Lancaster

Recently, I enjoyed reading a book borrowed from the library called *Practical Permaculture*. In the section on permaculture design processes, the authors explain how to chart different aspects of weather to help plan or develop a home site – from creating a climatogram to measuring slope to drawing maps tracking sun and wind on the property throughout the seasons.

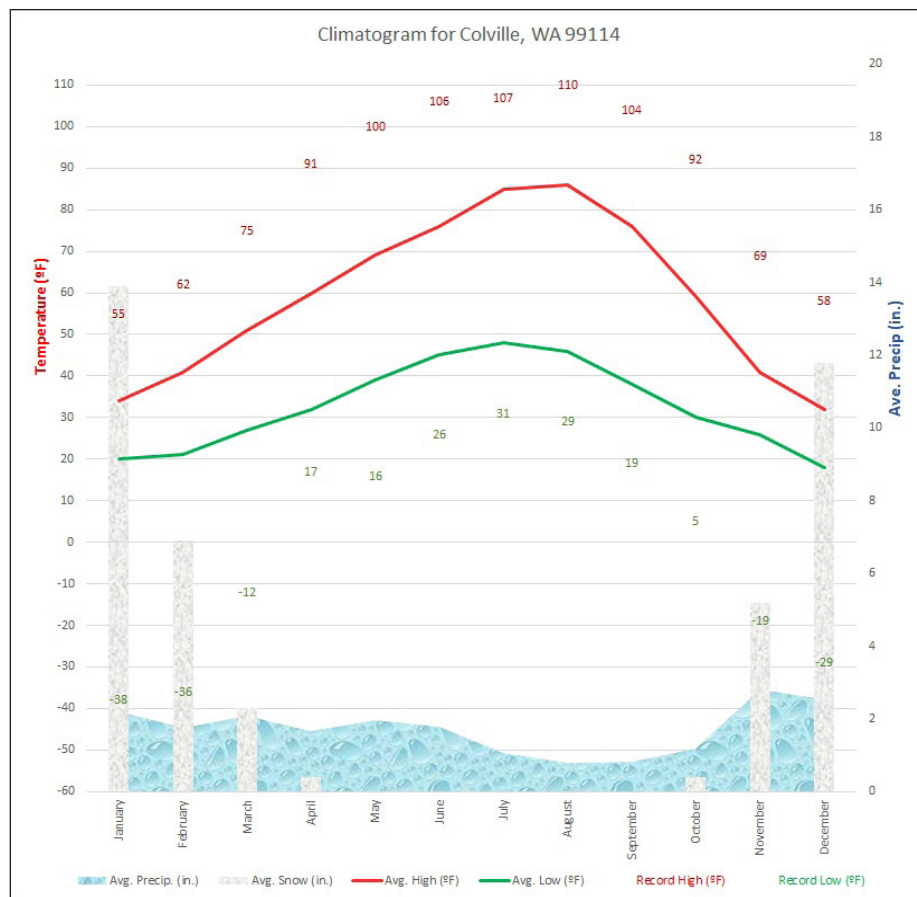
The climatogram, in particular, caught my interest. A climatogram is one chart that shows 30 or more years of data for a specific location using yearly averages for temperature and precipitation. I decided to create one for Colville and found the chart to be an accurate representation of the averages in our climate, and thought it would be helpful to folks new to the area or those attempting to understand the local weather.

I grew up in Colville, but spent a few years on each coast (Washington and Maryland) with drastically different climates. I find the differences interesting and still find myself adapting to the local climate in many regards. Living in NE Washington, we have a climate significantly different, even from nearby Spokane, so a lot of online statistics are not accurate to our region. Compared to climatograms for other areas in the United States, Colville experiences more extreme weather – which is why we have “all four seasons” here.

Keep in mind that this climate chart's averages are not guarantees. My husband and I learned this the hard way when frost hit on Sept. 10-11, 2014 (according to my notes), and killed all of our squash and tomato plants. Notice the record low temperatures by month on the climatogram? Each month of the year has a record low below 32°F. Snow in July is possible.

An easy way to track your home's weather is to log events in a journal or on a calendar. I purchased a handy spiral-bound workbook called *Week-by-Week Vegetable Gardener's Handbook*. This book has reference materials plus lined spaces for writing down entries by year. I will keep the climatogram in mind for general weather, and record unusual weather events (like 7 inches of rain in June of 2012). I am often reminded to expect the unexpected and flow with it as best possible, hoping to learn and improve from our successes and mistakes.

Monitoring local weather to better understand seasonal changes also helps improve garden and farm decisions. For example, building up the soil has increased water capacity, reducing spring mud and runoff. Transitioning



to an early February lamb crop ensures that our lambs are a robust size by the time wet April weather rolls in. Row covers now protect our young and delicate crops from unexpected frost or wind. Drip tape provides a consistent flow of water during the peak summer months when I expect little to no rain.

While our homestead of six years is fairly established, I still found many uses for the

information in *Practical Permaculture* to help improve our farming and gardening practices. I highly recommend reading this book and developing charts specific to your home location to assist in practical application of land improvement.

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

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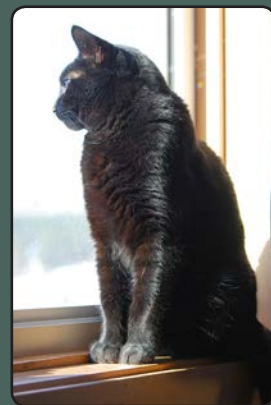
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## A Sound Case For Silence

By Linda Bond

I am currently reading *Silence: In the Age of Noise* by Erling Kagge, a Norwegian who is envied by many for his experiences in nature. He begins his small narrative by describing a trek he made across Antarctica, on his own, pulling a sled loaded with all of his supplies. He describes his need for periods of "silence" in which to get away from the hustle, bustle and noise of modern living in the city; a time to refresh himself; to rebuild his strength so he may begin again the life he leads with others.

According to Kagge, we all need an opportunity to experience such silence – if not trekking across the Antarctic ice, at least closing off the noise and clatter of civilization, so we can think and gain new perspectives.

### What Is Silence?

Reading his book got me to thinking about silence, its value and desirability, and whether we can actually find silence in our daily lives. Exactly what is silence, that we may come to

know it and perhaps have an abundance in our own lives? Here are some definitions from as early as the 11<sup>th</sup> Century:

- Silence: "muteness, state of being silent," from Old French; "absence of sound," from Latin *silentium*.
- Silent: "without speech . . . not speaking," from Latin *silentium*; "still, calm, quiet," present participle of *silere*, "be quiet or still"; "free from noise or sound," from the 1580s.

To learn more about the etymology of these terms, visit a helpful online website here: <https://www.etymonline.com/word/silence>.

### Wisdom of Silence

The adage "Silence is golden" is well known, but its origin is hidden in the past, with examples being reported as far back as early Egyptian lore. The Scottish essayist, satirist, translator, historian, and mathematician Thomas Carlyle first wrote about it in 1831 when he translated a phrase from German, a simple, if uncomfortable, admonishment to "keep our mouths shut" instead of babbling on about a topic, or a secret.

The great Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu is reported to have said "Silence is a source of great strength." American writer Susan Sontag offered "Silence remains, inescapably, a form of speech." And a novelist like Isak Dinesen understood its power when she said "Who tells a finer tale than any of us. Silence does." Even Abraham Lincoln, one of our most revered presidents, once said, perhaps surprisingly, "I am rather inclined to silence."

Paul Simon, one of the greatest songwriters of this generation, in my opinion, lauded silence

in his album *The Sound of Silence*, where he and Art Garfunkel sang:

"The words of the prophets are written on the subway walls and tenement halls' and whispered in the sounds of silence."

### Escaping the Noise

Is it truly possible to find silence in our lives? Science tells us there is no such thing as the total absence of sound, except in a vacuum like we might find in space. Sound waves travel through anything of material substance, including gas molecules. But most of us do not need complete, absolute silence to enjoy its gifts. What we're really talking about is the relative absence of sound.

That's one of the great benefits of living in the North Columbia environment. With nature all around, we have ample opportunity to venture out into very quiet areas. Actor Devon Werkheiser made just that point when he said:

"I like to sit in my backyard. I go out on the hammock and sit in silence and kind of meditate. Nature is calming, and it's nice to go out there and clear my head."

That's what it's really about – clearing our heads; turning off the phones, TVs, radios and other technology long enough to think about who we are and where we're going. Or to just be. Even in cities, we can experience a personal silence that will heal our psychic wounds and help us renew so we have more to offer ourselves and others. But moments of silence are best here in our own backyard.

Linda Bond is cofounder and leader of the Inland Northwest Writers Guild and Outreach Coordinator at Auntie's Bookstore in Spokane, WA. Write to her at [lindathewriter@gmail.com](mailto:lindathewriter@gmail.com).

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# Mountain Meandering

*Photos & Text by Patricia Ediger*

Traveling along the country roads that wind through the farmlands, one is likely to hear rather than spot the western meadowlark (pictured right). The meadowlark's song is a lovely flute-like melody and rings out loud and clear, brightening the soul when I hear it. A colorful member of the blackbird family, the meadowlark has a flashy yellow breast, accented by a distinctive, black, V-shaped band. They are ground foragers that feed mainly on insects, but also eat seeds and berries. They build their nests in the grass, preferring to use the long dead grass from the previous year, and may have an entrance tunnel several feet long.

The mountain bluebird (pictured below) is another spring treat. These brilliant blue thrushes hang out along the fences posts and power lines, hovering over the ground to find seeds or insects below. Mountain bluebirds are cavity nesters and will take advantage of bluebird boxes provided in open habitats or empty cavities in aspen trees. Considered an arctic bird, their breeding range reaches into the northern regions of Alaska and down to the northern U.S. What a delight to see their blue feathers flashing over the farmlands, heralding the arrival of another welcomed spring.



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# From the Inside Out

## Free Yourself Through Acceptance

By Daisy Pongrakthai

I love being out in nature and the time is finally here to escape to the woods, lakes and mountain streams to muse, write and soak up nature's ambiance.

There are a number of books written on the benefits and healing power of nature. Plus, inventor Nikola Tesla discovered that earth's natural forces carry free energy everywhere. We're seeing some results of this with the internet, wi-fi, anti-gravity machines, quantum health technologies and more. Additionally, the Aura Borealis gives a beautiful visual of the natural photonic energy emission. And Native American traditions practice reverence to Mother Earth as she is our providence and sustenance for living – food, shelter and healing vibrations.

With all this healing energy, I know nature has a lot to teach me. Oftentimes when I go outdoors and sit under a tree or by water, I drift into an inner adventure. As I ponder nature's spaciousness and freedom to be, I wonder how to replicate that beauty in my life with others, especially when there is friction. This then leads to reflecting on some recent instances of dislike and downright impoliteness.

Historically, when I encountered someone who did not like me, I would avoid the situation or run away. I could relate to a recent movie I watched called *Runaway Bride*. She gets scared at the last minute during the wedding and finds (pre-plans!) an escape route to free herself. In the end she realizes that it was the big crowds that made her feel twitchy. There's a clue: what makes us twitchy.

I found avoiding such situations only brought more to contend with, so now when I come across such experiences, I take them to heart and think, "What should I do with this stuff? Is there something to do or not? How can I help the situation be the highest and best for all?"

Coming back to learning from nature, I see the flowers in the field dancing and bobbing with the wind. As I gaze upon the mélange of trees, I am thankful for the variety and uniqueness versus seeing all the same foliage. Looking down at some stones, I see their own personalities and varying shapes with interesting silhouettes. Then I have an "aha" moment ... the natural world just *is as it is*, yet exists interdependently.

I delve a bit deeper and the earth's strata surface into my inner vision: *The layers support each other yet each is a different layer running on a different timeline with a whole different reality.* Similarly, I realize that with all the differences between people, there are as many stratum as there are individual realities, but they can group like the layers in their pathways.

So, if someone doesn't like me for some reason, then that is the path

s/he freely chooses. I say the best way to be more satisfied with one's self is to go within and figure out where it's coming from.

Recently, someone told me I used a term incorrectly and he made a big hoop-dee-do about it, going out of his way to correct me. I was talking about a teaching I loved so it bothered me a bit. I wondered how to respond best. I also knew that his reality was true for him and wanted to respect that.

I simply responded (as with my inside-out philosophy) that whatever battle he is having is also within him. It's not me personally. It's something he's unhappy about in him. Same with me. Anything that bothers me, I know there is a trigger from the past or from some experience that makes me feel that way.

If the non-acceptance becomes more inhibiting, such as continuous bad feelings, then I look inside myself and ask, where in the world is this coming from? What is it in me that brings this out? Sometimes I just need to stand up and be inwardly strong, confident, and love myself. Sometimes I see that there is something in that person I don't accept either. With this situation, I've noticed it goes around and around like a merry-go-round until I decide to jump off.

In jumping off, I let go and let that feeling just *be what it is*. I call a spade a spade or a heart a heart and move on knowing energy focus is energy spent. Another option I give myself by hopping off the merry-go-round is the ability to send love to that individual, inner feeling or situation.

In getting off the merry-go-round of right or wrong and coming to acceptance of letting people be as they want to be, I felt free. I'm not there to say what they can or cannot do or be. And I also accepted that I am where I am and meet everyone I am to meet for a reason.

So, when it feels like a threat or it bothers me, this is pointing to something within to look at, heal, mend, make whole, understand, etc. This is the path I choose.

There is beauty in difference, and after I've let all the comparison programs fall off and the fear troops die down, I sink into the ground of allowing and receiving greater positive energy flowing in me.

Somehow I feel we're all helping each other, whether the situations come out in differences or delight. Just like the stones roll around in the riverbed rubbing up against each other, it can be uncomfortable, but in the end, they come out round, and even shiny.

See more From the Inside Out on Daisy's blog at [www.thepartyinside.com](http://www.thepartyinside.com).

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## It Isn't What It Is ... Anymore

By Gabriele von Trapp

The popular and overused term “it is what it is” has never found any validity or relevance in my personal philosophy or thinking. “What is” is always in a state of becoming. Each moment gives birth to something other than what is defined by the present.

My active participation in each moment has a significant impact, unfathomably, for all time to come. I strive to be present not only in each moment but also within myself. I rely on that presence to design the circumstances of my life and future.

My thoughts are powerful. They shape my future in subtle and very profound ways. My thinking attracts conditions and outcomes in every situation. I take my thinking as a great responsibility, knowing that my thoughts can manifest in the darnedest of places, in unanticipated ways and at any moment.

The tools that I use to craft my future moments are positivity and enthusiasm, peppered with a pinch of intuition. Welcoming the moments that are coming to meet me with positive thoughts holds sway. It is amazing what can manifest in a moment when using this technique.

While driving around my new digs in Deer Park, I noticed many businesses and buildings I had never really seen before. Heading down Main Street I took notice of a particularly attractive building. It was the A.R. Hegre Administrative Building and as I slowed my car I realized it is where the Deer Park School District business office is located.

Without limiting my thoughts with “it is what it is” I found myself thinking of how much I would enjoy working in that building, picturing myself there. Being experienced in a public school business office setting, I was not discouraged by the fact that such openings were few and far between. I held tight to my thought, positively and with enthusiasm for the time to come, without setting an intention.

Lo and behold, two months later, a position opened up, identical to my former situation in a school district. An interview was granted. Was it a coincidence? I believe not. It only took one positive thought, in a single moment, laced with positivity, enthusiasm and a hint of intuition to create a new circumstance and outcome. I wasn't intentionally looking for this opportunity, but I believe I created it by positively thinking. Believing only that “it is what it is” would not have lent itself to opening this door.

I'm not the only one in my family who understands this approach, but from a different point of view and perspective. My son Eric tells me that, in his opinion, he has bad luck. His life has consistently shown itself to be the epitome of Murphy's Law – “Whatever can go wrong, will go wrong” – and sometimes in very significant ways. I know because I have seen it.

Believing in his bad luck, he is always strategically cautious and thoughtful in his approach to his life and it is to his benefit; he is always ready. This view has prepared him to look carefully at every situation and evaluate his place and influence in it, but with an overtone of negativity or what he believes is his bad luck.

In my alternatively positive opinion it is a testament to “when preparation meets opportunity,” which I find to be the best definition of good luck. He continues to believe he is hexed by Murphy's Law. I tell him that I believe in Smith's Law: “Murphy was an optimist!” He laughs at that notion.

My family is in the middle of a project. We are removing an old and fractured concrete floor from a large barn to replace it with a new concrete floor. Eric is doing the work, which he has done professionally. He arranged to have a bobcat and mini-excavator delivered to break up the concrete and remove it. He began the work feeling a bit pressed by a tight schedule.

With time being of essence, I couldn't believe his luck! With the doorway not being tall enough by just a few inches, he had to take the time to dig a ramp down through the concrete footing so the excavator could be driven into the barn. It was just his luck.

With the excavator and bobcat finally in the barn he began breaking up and removing the old concrete. All seemed to be going well and then something changed in a moment. Without anticipation, a torrential downpour hit and the barn began to rapidly flood through the ramp he had just created, turning the exposed dirt to a deep sludge.

Thinking on his feet, my son masterfully shoved a large mound of dirt into the doorway to block the in-rushing water. He was prepared to meet the next moment and did so in a flash. The response was a complete success. I think he was lucky to avoid a disaster, but I have to wonder if his thinking changed the coming moment. The forecast predicts that it will rain for the next week. I hope his luck doesn't run out.

Setting intention is a completely different

idea and I believe it defies the laws of providence. In my opinion it interferes with the natural process of “moment to moment” and opens the door to disappointment. Several people I know use this strategy and technique but that is not for me. I prefer to flow spontaneously from moment to moment and positively influence the outcome, opening a door to something new. I have come to realize that the potential is in not falling for “it is what it is,” which for me has been a roadblock.

Several years ago, I needed to find a new doctor to help me manage my health. I was hoping to find a doctor who adhered to the medical philosophy that I had embraced through the years. The leading thoughts were the same wellspring that my educational philosophy had sprung from.

Eventuality led me to a doctor in Colville. In our first meeting and conversation, we realized we embraced the same educational philosophy. The doors flung wide open in that instant and I ran with the moment enthusiastically in my mind.

I had always desired to have this type of education for my own children but the opportunities had never presented themselves. And I had never considered to set my intention to develop a school with this educational approach because who am I to take on such a task? But in that moment I realized the need and potential, and my positivity and enthusiasm were on fire.

The next thing I knew, through this doctor, I began meeting people of like mind. The intention had not been set by any one person involved, but one moment changed it all. Our collective passion, enthusiasm and positivity created the opportunity for a school to be developed. Riverwood Community School stands as a testament to how one moment can change everything. The limitations that were, are not anymore.

There have been people who say that I have good fortune, but I disagree. I have had many unfortunate and dire situations with devastating circumstances, perhaps more than most in my life. I could look at each new day and say “it is what it is,” but I know better. Each new day is like the next moment, waiting for the content that beckons my participation. It isn't what it is ... anymore.

*Gabriele von Trapp lives by Deer Park where her memories, dreams and reflections fuel her vigorous engagement with the present as she forges an ever-evolving future.*



# Living in NE WA: Lessons Learned

## Knowledgeable Neighbors

By J. Merrill Baker

Seemingly we get the credit for being “The Knowledgeable Neighbors.” We think our new neighbors know we have lived longer than they have, and that we are willing to share anything we think we may have learned, even if it doesn’t seem relevant. They are young and polite, so far.

We like that, but are not sure if we actually deserve the acclaim, because we, too, have our version of knowledgeable neighbors, and their families have lived in the area over a hundred years. We are newbies compared to them, and even after twenty years we certainly may be experienced, but only in things we ourselves have faced, or heard about from *our* knowledgeable neighbors.

After a couple of years living here, you realize things like weather, gardens, wildlife, will still be different next year, right? Our learning curve included trying things differently or new. Such as soil test kits, and asking our own neighbors about their snowfalls, frost dates, what else grows best at our altitude. And what about those two wandering alpacas we nicknamed “Sweater” and “Blanket”? Where do they belong? (We learned that they were “free-ranging” but belonged to neighbors.)

Once, when I was driving our little tractor to clear our road (while our general manager and my husband were “building”) I reached the top of our road and there stood five mule deer. They just looked at me while chewing. I turned off the loud, orange, scary thing to watch them chew. Were we so far out in the country that the deer didn’t know enough to fear loud, orange, scary things? They simply grazed and slowly moved on.

I was mesmerized, by their trust. Or maybe their ignorance, something I was sure would shift with our arrival and encroachment in their feeding area. Maybe they were here because of the “bear wallow,” a pond that we later nicknamed “the green pond” because “algae pond” or “scum pond” don’t sound as nice. It was called a bear wallow, by one of our knowledgeable neighbors, for a reason. In the hot months, bears will wallow in the pond, and you will notice them running up the road dripping if you drive up too fast while you are trying to turn on your phone camera in a bouncing truck, for that shot through the front window, and why didn’t you wash your windshield?

We discovered we tended to name places as a point of reference, so if you need to repair or work or do anything to said place, you know that you are talking about the same place. It works. For instance, “Tim’s corner” is where the man (Tim) delivering a “truck and a pup” of gravel had to leave his trailer (the pup) behind because it didn’t make the corner. He had to go back and retrieve it separately in order to deliver it. It’s “Tim’s corner” to us and now maybe a few new(er) neighbors. (Tim, however, does not know he is famous.)

Now we also have what is called the Bone Yard, thanks to another knowledgeable neighbor. It was suggested we find an accessible out-of-the-way place to put scraps, and other maybe use-later items. However, this never evolved much past a place for scraps and interesting items, but you have to put your old eight-foot satellite dish somewhere before it becomes painted yard art, right?

We are still learning. And we are flexible, and open to suggestions. If we had big egos, we would probably not be open to suggestions, so we remain cheerful and opportunistic. Which you must be in the rural areas, as firewood may show up anytime lying across your access road, and you get to keep the wood if you do the work. Be cheerful when you are opportunistic!

Caution here. “Opportunistic” does not mean loading up someone else’s stacked firewood, just because it is next to the road. Maybe he had to go home for something and when he brought me with him the next morning to load the truck and discovered that it was “opportunistically” gone, well, we hope it was keeping someone warm!

Nor does “opportunistic” mean cattle rustling (that is still a big no-no). While we live in an area where free range for cattle is still happening, we were specifically told we had the responsibility to fence them out while building, so no cow prints in our concrete! I was casually wondering about fresh milk, but told that we needed to look like a baby cow to get any. Cow mamas tend to be a bit more wild when they range free.

By the way, they do respond to those silent dog-training whistles to move them off the road!

Issues with cow owners and rural residents remain. We have healthy, organically fed free-range cattle around these parts. One grazed my raised beds next to my front patio (we were out of town and had taken the dog). I was promised roasts, because they got all of my broccoli and brussel sprouts and kale.

Yes, we have the cow owner’s number on speed dial. Occasionally they get outside their fences and discover greener pasture. OR, my kale and broccoli! John, we’d still appreciate a roast or two, but not off the highway the hard way! And no, I didn’t keep the fence up; it was barbed wire and injured a dog once. Lesson learned. Some dogs have a natural knack for herding, and that is a lesson too.

Our scientists speak about DNA memory and I am willing to think that “The Knowledgeable Neighbors” have inherited something from their ancestors. That leaves me hoping that some of that knowledge may activate in us too. Anytime. We’re ready... Onward!

J. Merrill Baker is a self-described reformed suburbanite, avid rural resident, simple living advocate (attemptee).



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## Spring Has Sprung...Kinda' *Part II*

By Becky Dubell

I'll try not to change tracks again, but you never can tell where my mind is gonna go!

What have we been doing to get ready for the spring that is coming up on us sooner than we realize? To recap, before I changed tracks last month:

Gabriel: Digging in to the garden prep, fruit tree care, and repairing horse fences, just to get the juices flowing for the rest of the spring projects.

Becky: Prepping for fruit trees to be planted, getting the mower ready, and raking gopher/mole hills; I swear that when I rake a community of hills they are right there building a new one as soon as my back is turned. Where's my snow?

Todd and CHS students: Getting ready for the international competition at the University of Massachusetts Underwater Tech School with their robotics.

Back on track (even though it's much more fun to keep you on your toes):

Jim: Older pickup project, fitting doors and truck bed, bench seat, repairing 4-wheel drive, thinking of painting her but then her name would have to change – you go Fern!

Constance: "Absolutely nothing." "Oh?" says her daughter. "Except losing 35 pounds!" she suddenly remembers.

Cindy: Full time with her dream – Chateau Vin – and getting ready for the summer rush.

Geoff: RV hunting so grandson and family will have a place to stay while spending the summer in Colville working with grandpa.

Steve: Boat tuned up and ready to get wet for play time. Work time? Getting ready to trim trees.

Pam: Getting lots of computer time. Have to vacation – oh darn! Plans for Alaska, Colorado



and Germany by way of Iceland. (Do you think they need someone to carry their bags?)

Theresa: Cleaning closets. Collecting old furniture to learn how to repair and refinish.

Dawn: With a 39th wedding anniversary coming up, she has put out about 39 hints over the last few months. Something about a Sea-Do ... Well, hubby: Did you catch any of those hints?

Darcy & Raym: Polishing the little red Miata for those weekend runs – already have been out with the top down.

Beth: Bathroom remodel inside during the winter and now out prepping the raised bed

garden area – looks really good. She has this really cool red chair in the middle of the garden but I have never seen her sitting back in it to watch things grow.

Whatever you have in mind for the spring that is coming (even though Dominion Mountain still has lots of snow on it), I am hoping that you have a ball. I will work at enjoying cutting that dumb green stuff. I'll just keep saying my mantra, "It is what it is and it will become what I make it." Maybe I'll mow in a pattern of a maze or I'll clear a spot for a spaceship to land and abduct that pesky squirrel that steals my walnuts.



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**CHEWVINO:** Come enjoy our delicious tapas, weekly specials, deli, and our expanding selections of wine, whiskey, craft beer and cigars. Open Tue-Sat 3-8pm. N 101 Fourth Street E. 509-935-8444. [www.chewvino.com](http://www.chewvino.com).

**JEAN BEAN'S COFFEE:** Come experience our array of daily specials, pastries and breakfast options in a warm & cozy environment. Hours: M-F, 7:30am-2pm, Sat., 8:30am-2pm. 211 E. Main Ave. 509-936-9033.

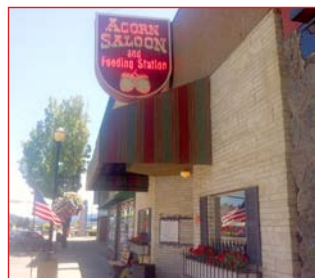


**QUARTZITE BREWING COMPANY:** Serving up craft beers of all varieties. All ages and pet friendly. Open Thur 3-8pm, Fri 3-9pm, Sat 2-9pm at 105 W Main Ave. Check us out on Facebook or call 509-936-3686 for more info.

**CHEWELAH CREEK INN:** Clean, quiet, comfortable lodging on the banks of Chewelah Creek. Free wifi, cable TV, queen-sized beds, full-sized bath, excellent rates. 414 N. Park Street. Please call 509-935-8166 for reservations.

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**ACORN SALOON & FEEDING STATION:** Breakfast, lunch & dinner 7 days a week. Daily specials, cold beer and cocktails, pool tables & pull tabs. M-Sat: 7am-midnight. Sun: 8am-10pm. Happy Hour M-F 2-5pm. 262 S Main., 509-684-3337, find us on Facebook!



**BROWN BOYZ OHANA EATERY:** The "best hidden treasure in Colville" offering a unique dining experience, fresh ingredients cut daily, and homemade sauces to give you a "Hillbilly Hawaiian" taste sensation. Ya gotta try it! M-F 11am-7pm. 576 N Wynne St. 509-684-2888.

**CHATEAU VIN:** Artisan-prepared salads, chef-inspired tapas, gourmet sandwiches, and delicious entrées paired with a great selection of wine, beer and wine-based martinis at 161 E 3rd Suite F. Wed-Sat 11:30am-8pm. Sunday Brunch 9am-2pm. Orders to go: 509-675-6243.

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

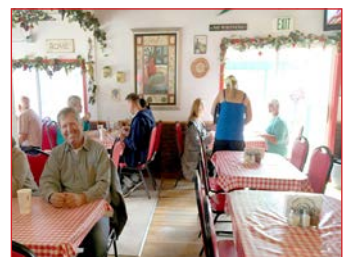


**MR. SUB:** Fresh baked bread daily. Hot and cold subs, wraps, salads, fresh baked cookies, U-bake pizza, party Subs, daily specials. Gluten free available. Event catering and phone orders welcome. M-F 9am-8pm. Sat 10am-6pm. 825 S. Main. 509-684-5887.

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# Lodging Guide

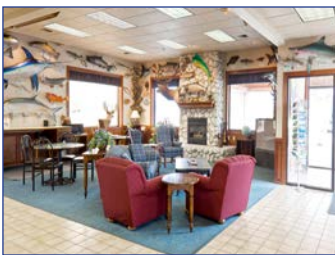
Look for more communities and listings in upcoming editions of the *North Columbia Monthly*!

To have your business listed, please email us at [ncmonthly@gmail.com](mailto:ncmonthly@gmail.com) or call 509-675-3791.



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

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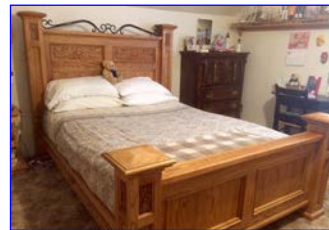
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