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# What's Inside

- 4 **Watering the Seeds of Inner Peace**, by Mayah LaSol
- 5 **Life Matters**, Dr. Barry Bacon
- 5 **Dose of Vitamin P**, by Lynn Rigney Schott
- 6 **Random Acts of Community**, by Christine Wilson
- 8 **Monthly Muse**, by Loren Cruden
- 10 **In Nature**, by J. Foster Fanning
- 12 **This Great Big Life**, by Tina Tolliver Lago
- 14 **Being the Village**, by Joanie Christian
- 17 **Rotary Page**, by Adenea Thompson
- 18 **Listen Up**, Music Reviews by Michael Pickett
- 19 **A Good Read**, Book Reviews by Loren Cruden
- 20 **Mountain Meandering**, by Patricia Ediger
- 23 **Life's Stretch**, by Brenda St. John
- 24 **Deer Neighbors**, by Mary Masingale
- 25 **Madilane's Memories**, by Madilane Perry
- 26 **Down To Earth**, by Joe Barreca
- 28 **Green Medicine**, by Faye Stewart
- 29 **A Year On the Farm**, by Michelle Lancaster
- 31 **Family Ties**, by Becky Dubell

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## **JULY 2020 ISSUE**

**ARTICLE SUBMISSIONS &  
AD SPACE RESERVATIONS**

*Friday, June 19<sup>th</sup>*



**O**ur **P**ositive **T**hinking **I**s **M**agic **I**nside **S**ecret **M**edicine

- JOHN ODELL, [WordsOfWords.com](http://WordsOfWords.com)



# Watering the Seeds of Inner Peace

By *Mayah LaSol*

When this lockdown began, I was ready for some time off. I was actually quite delighted with the prospect of hunkering down in my room for a while. Although the lockdown has meant that certain things in my life were taken away, it also meant ample opportunity to do things like reading a book I've been meaning to read for a while and spending more time in my garden. Of course, there is certainly a sense of loss that I feel because events I looked forward to were canceled and I miss having in-person connections with all of my loved ones. However, I have begun to find that I am enjoying myself and all of the things that I find myself busy with immensely, despite the situation.

Some days, life feels almost like a dream, whereas others it feels very real. When it comes down to it, though, I have actually felt a definite shift in myself since this lockdown started, which is that I have begun to find a sense of inner peace.

Since I haven't been busy around town, going to school, meeting up with people, or even doing many errands, I have found that going outside has become a much more important part of my day. With everything I do now, I am asking myself if it is a project that I could do outside on my porch swing. I have even begun making up excuses to go outside more and more often!

A few days ago I got a tomato plant and a pepper plant and have committed to doing my best to keep them healthy and fruitful this year. I have never embarked on such a big (at least it seems big to me) gardening feat, but I find myself being called to spend time in my backyard and I feel certain that gardening is the best way to do it.

The inner peace that I mentioned is something that started to bloom within me as I have spent more and more time outside. It's



almost as if, as I nurture my plants, I also nurture myself.

However, it is a strange time to be feeling peaceful, because the world seems to be trying very hard to contradict me. The world outside my garden seems so very complicated, stressful, and uncertain. But here I am, still, breathing in the scent of lavender and watering my little pepper plant and thinking that maybe life isn't so complicated after all.

*Mayah is a teen reader, writer, blogger, and all-around arts enthusiast who geeks out over books and cats. She writes book reviews and poetry on her blog [www.libraryinmymind.com](http://www.libraryinmymind.com).*

  
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## Superheroes and Saving Lives

By Dr. Barry Bacon, MD

I'm studying a poster hanging on a wall in the emergency department at one of the rural hospitals where I work. Five superheroes standing side by side. Superman, Spiderman, Batman, and some other dude. In the middle of these four men stands another, her face covered with a mask. She is a nurse. Of all the superheroes in the lineup, she is my favorite. Perhaps because she looks the most like me.

There are a lot of opinions these days about how we should conduct ourselves in this whirlwind of a pandemic. I have heard some say that our freedoms are being stolen, and that the patriotic thing to do is to stand up for our rights. This got me thinking on how I often see people who willingly and gladly give up freedoms for the sake of something more important to them. Let me explain.

As a parent, I know what it is to give up my freedoms. When choosing to sit through endless saxophone or piano lessons, watching Little League ballgames or swimming lessons, or reading bedtime stories to my children, I give up my rights, my liberty, to do what I please, for the sake of loving someone. My children.

I do these things to bring them joy, build them as humans, give them life, give them confidence, open doors for their future. I do it without complaint. I do it without fanfare. I do it without thought. I am, in fact, giving up my liberty, my insistence to do my own thing so that I can love my children.

In this time of huge uncertainties, instead of insisting only on my own freedoms, my own rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, I am choosing to do something of greater importance to me: saving others. Respecting their fears. Being there when they need me. Keeping my clinic doors open. Responding to an emergency.

For me, our greatest memories as a nation are those times when we came together for a common cause, when we protected

each other, when we were superheroes to each other. I find value in remembering this history. Because our greatest moments, I believe, still lie ahead of us.

*Barry Bacon is a physician who has lived*

*and practiced family medicine in Colville for 28 years. He now works in small rural hospitals in Washington state, teaches family medicine, and works on health disparities in the U.S. and Africa.*

## DOSE OF VITAMIN P

### Words in the Presence of Their Objects

By Lynn Rigney Schott

*"...some worlds are made complete by single things."*

– Naomi Shihab Nye

I love the way the wooden spoons wander on the sudsy surface of the water when I do the dishes; they bob among the bowls and plates and cups like long lifeboats or Millay's "floating spar" for those "that rise and sink and rise and sink again."

There is the story of the brother and sister stranded at sea atop some wooden wreckage, blue days and starry nights, until they washed ashore somewhere – rescued, saved. Eventually they carved the piece of wood into spoons to sell in the village market – they grew famous for their spoons – smooth and beautiful, useful tools to feed people. They grew old, but a wooden spoon outlasts us all.

Of course, there is no such story, just my own wandering mind as I wash the dishes once again this morning, keeping the silverware and glasses from drowning, saving the wooden spoons for last in case we need them in the turbulent seas around us.

### A Note From the Publisher:

The "What's Happening" section is still on vacation and a handful of our regular contributors are taking a break this month and so this edition is a few pages shorter than usual. Despite the challenging times we are facing, however, ad sales are holding strong and distribution remains robust. Thank you to all who contribute to making this community publication what it is, and to all our readers. Be well and stay in touch! ~ Gabriel Cruden

# Going to Bat for Better Internet

By Christine Wilson

*Children who do not have a computer in their home will, in the near future, be considered deprived."*

*~ Shelden Wilson, my father, in about 1980.*

"Washington State understands that high-speed broadband is one of the most important economic development tools that we have. Broadband connects us to commerce, education, jobs and each other." - Washington State Department of Commerce, Statewide Broadband Office

When a large portion of your county's people are described as having "inconsistent or limited internet service," you know stay-at-home orders will make life even more difficult. That is obviously not the most troubling thing about our current situation, but it is definitely a frustrating part of life as we have come to know it this year. Work that can be done at home is challenging, schoolwork is difficult, and applying for a job or for financial help can seem nearly impossible.

An invisible, deadly enemy is first and foremost on many of our minds, of course. But loss of income and the ability to meet our basic human needs can be terrifying. Those two real struggles are taking up a large amount of brain bandwidth for some of us. However, since we are home and looking for ways to manage work, school, finances and entertainment, most of us want to count on decent internet access as a way to at least mitigate some of the problems. Even just a break to stream something entertaining can help reboot

our overwhelmed brains.

Debra Hansen, director of WSU's Stevens County Extension, has been paying attention to this high-speed-internet connection issue since the late 1990s. She got the attention of people who could help our area improve access and now there is a group of people known as BAT: the Stevens County and Spokane Tribe Broadband Action Team. Hansen says that this is a long-term problem and there is not an easy fix. The effort is facilitated by Hansen and includes the Spokane Tribe, the library system, the school system, and others. The movie *Julia* from 1977 shows the actress playing writer Lillian Hellman literally throwing her typewriter out the window. In these more modern times, while we work to resist doing the same with our computers, the Broadband Action Team is working to get us up to speed, so to speak. That might eliminate our need for computer flying lessons.

One of the offline ways our minds cope with difficulty is through dreams. Covid dreams are a definite thing now. I'd been hearing about them, but I fell asleep the other night thinking about the virus and it got intermingled with my plans for this column. That gave the dream-making part of my mind a chance to have my own wacky Covid dreamscape.

In my dream, I had a podcast about kids' coping skills. I was based in LA. I had moved to Stevens County to shelter in place with a group of relatives. I needed to get my podcast uploaded onto the internet and I was pressed for time. The home I lived in had limited internet service and no camera or speaker on the computer. I rummaged around the house and found a cassette recorder and a blank cassette. There was plenty of paper and pens, so I wrote out my podcast and read it into the cassette recorder. I then had a problem: how to get that onto the internet. I tried to get to a local school, but they were closed and couldn't help me. For some reason, somebody at the school knew I was hungry and gave me a hot dog for breakfast. Hey, what can I say; it was a dream. As I looked for a way to get the podcast onto the internet, I got more agitated and finally the lack of internet access got so distressing, it woke me up.

Which brings me back to real life here in rural America, where our internet is called, in polite company, "inconsistent or limited." Many computers here have no doubt heard less refined descriptions, especially now when we are all at home so much.

When my dad predicted the deprivation of non-computerized kids, he could not have possibly realized how understated his words were. He had worked at Hanford Nuclear Reservation, where computers were the size of a house with less capacity than a modern calculator. However, in 1959 his beloved and super nerdy Texas Instruments invented the microchip. At that point it cost what is now the equivalent of \$283.84. TI calculators were made largely inaccessible by their expense.

Now microchips are less than a nickel apiece, thanks to government funding of Minuteman II missiles and the efforts to put humans on the moon by the end of the 1960s. The expense of a computer is in most of our price ranges now. Still, even with my dad's exposure to information back then,



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# Random Acts of Community

this cyber world would have been hard to imagine.

However, owning a computer is just the beginning. I remember in my youth when I thought that owning a car would mean I could go anywhere. I was naïve. I had bald tires. My limited income kept me from keeping the tank full. A breakdown would sideline my car until I could find the money for repairs. Computers are a bit like that as well. Owning a computer is a great start. However, then you need a good technician to help you with troubleshooting, internet service, and a decent and reliable speed to that internet.

When school was closed due to the pandemic, superintendent Pete Lewis and his team at the Colville School District began distributing Chromebooks. These enabled students to keep up on homework in two different ways. Kids who have access to the internet at home can download their homework, get it done, and send it back. The kids who don't have access have to drive into town, find a hotspot like the school parking lot, and download/upload there. Either way, schoolwork can be done, and there are Chromebooks still available for those who need them. Decent internet in the comfort of a student's home would be so much handier.

The libraries of Stevens County are also part of the solution. They keep their internet on 24/7 and, although they are currently closed, their internet is accessible. What they can probably attest to more than most people is the issue of digital literacy. There are people who don't have email, don't know how to use a mouse, and get lost in the navigation of a search engine. I remember those days myself, when I tried to figure out how to turn on my first computer. It can be humiliating or at least annoying to be limited in your knowledge.

Almost anything we want to find out about we can learn online. We just need to have more accessible, county-wide access to decent internet in order to do that. In an effort to promote that accessibility (and to encourage our readers not to throw their computers out the window), the Broadband Action Team is working for us. Stevens County was picked to study the speed of our service. Baseline data is being used to

determine the details of the problem, which is the next step in fixing the situation. If you have a computer or a phone or an iPad or whatever, type in <https://expressoptimizer.net/public/> and you will be able to test your internet speed. Test it multiple times and the information gatherers will average out your internet speed score. The more of us who take this test, the more data they will

have to make a strong case for increased access and speed. Even though I live in town, I am looking forward to not seeing a swirling circle that says "loading." I bet you are too.

*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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# Wild Neighbors, *by Loren Cruden*

Last summer my garbage bin was assaulted by a bear. The newly-ventilated bin thereafter resided in the basement during warm months of the year. On his second visit that summer the bear ravaged my recycling bin which, vigorously perforated also, joined the garbage container in the basement. On his third foray to my house the bear was disappointed and went off huffy: no more bins to tackle. Plus, I took his picture.

I figured there would be no more visitations from my ursine forest neighbor but woke one morning this spring to find my metal garden pole bent almost double and the wooden feeder hanging from it gone.



Totally vanished except for one forlorn plastic side-panel!

I pictured the bear rushing home to hang the feeder outside his den; maybe pilfering someone's lawn ornaments and croquet set as well. Maybe he even found a recycling

bin of his own.

That first morning after the midnight feeder-heist the birds were in a major tizzy. So much incredulous fluttering and distraught-bird racket at the crime scene. It wasn't until I went around to the basement – still in my nightie – found a spare bird feeder, lugged my stepladder to the front of

the house, screwed a hook into the soffit and created a new feeding station that the mob of chickadees, nuthatches, juncos, siskins, finches, and towhees calmed down.

My cat, watching out the window, was disgusted that the birds got fed before he did.

Regardless of such inconveniences, I'm glad that bears and the rest of our wild neighbors remain part of the rural scene. It's not that much of a deal to adapt my habits (I now bring the bird feeder into the house each night) to what's needed to keep me and my visitors out of trouble. The continuing presence and diversity of wildlife native to this habitat gives me hope for the world; it is wildlife encounter, not built environment,



that comprises many of my best memories associated with place. The beautiful bigness of this landscape and what it holds is why many of us live here. And what it holds has been here a long time, maintaining healthy balances.

One July morning I was casually gazing across my field and abruptly realized ten vultures were sitting in one of the fir trees. They looked like very large, rather ominous out-of-season Christmas ornaments. As I gaped, one by one the vultures lifted off and spiraled over the Columbia. Years ago on the Olympic Peninsula I was thrilled when a bald eagle flew past where I stood beside the Grey Wolf River. A few moments later another flew past. Then another. I got more and more thrilled as, one at a time, twenty eagles flew past like river-highway commuters. The final pause stretched; as I started to turn away the twenty-first bald eagle flapped into sight as if trying to catch up after stopping to pee or check his messages.

Another encounter that stuck in my mind, though it happened on the other side of the Pond, was coming upon a young fox when driving home from work on a narrow Highland road in Scotland. The fox, standing smack in the middle of the road, was at first oblivious of the car's presence. I stopped about fifteen feet away – couldn't believe he didn't notice the car. But the junior fox was in his own world – or "awa' wi' the fairies," as they say in Scotland – sniffing the tarmac, frisking around in wee cavorts, scratching his ear. I'm sure his mother would've fainted if she'd witnessed





# Monthly Muse



this, but I was utterly beguiled.

Then he saw me. Whoa! The little fox hopped straight up in the air like a cartoon character, bumbled in a circle trying to figure out where to go, then skittered off into the heather.

I felt like both laughing and crying. (Hey little Dude; pay attention! Survive!) The unexpected nature of this encounter reminded me of a coyote I spotted up near Orient who, when I pulled my truck onto the shoulder to watch him, turned from trotting away and came back to within a few feet of the truck before stopping, looking at me as if to ask if I needed directions.

And I'm haunted, still, by the lynx glimpsed at the bottom of my driveway on Orient's First Thought Mountain, like a phantom, gleaming eyes caught in my headlights, there and gone.

All of us in eastern Washington have tales to tell of mysterious, hilarious, riveting or poignant encounters with wild neighbors. One thing I love about animals is how clearly their essential natures are expressed through their physicality – through how they look and move, an eloquent body language. Individual animals have distinct personalities but also a species consistency which

the human animal seems to have abandoned.

I try to imagine a field guide to humans that describes, for instance, our means of locomotion. It would have to include moving on foot, in vehicles, on horseback (and camelback and aboard elephants and caribou), in wheelchairs, on bicycles, in sleighs, airplanes and trains, and with the aid of prosthetics. Human family structures include nuclear, solitary, single-parented, same-sex, foster and group homes, and multi-generational living arrangements. We are everything from sedentary to marathon runners; small folk to towering; and the human diet? Too full of paramutations to list: consider genetic modification and Mountain Dew, for instance.

Pondering what complicated animals we are, I reflect on what physically might most convey – to me, at least – a human essence. I think of the basketball player's exhilarating leap for the lay-up; the rock climber's graceful dance above the

void; the precise surety of a woodworker's or medic's or musician's hands; the way a parent scoops up a child and tucks her close – and the headlong way a child runs. Or the eloquence that may speak in the eyes of someone whose body cannot move.

In the midst of our technologically complicated lives it seems a gift to have plentiful reminders of directly embodied essence: of bear-ness, fox-ness, coyote-ness, eagle-ness, humanness: the way each species literally steps up to life.

The other day, talking with my son on the phone, in the middle of a sentence he exclaimed, "Oh! A hummingbird just flew up to the window," and, in the middle of the next sentence, "Oh! It's back again!" Later that day, talking with a friend, she mentioned seeing a bear moving along the forest verge at her place. "It was a pretty big one," she said, having seen many bears in her years there, "and it was galloping or whatever you call it with bears. It was running. Just really, really beautiful."

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



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## Say's Phoebe: A Wanderer's Bird

Article & Photo By J. Foster Fanning

I tend to wander around quite a bit, usually with camera in hand or at least nearby. During childhood my immediate family was somewhat nomadic. With grandparents on both coasts we crossed the continent a dozen times before I left home and hitchhiked across much of the west.

So it was that I easily adapted to my career as a fire management officer when I settled into northeast Washington. It was a job that frequently had me driving up to 200 miles a day across the Highlands District, which spans over a million-and-a-half beautiful, rugged and oft-times remote acres. Much of that travel was on the roads lesser used. In fact, I'd repeatedly lay fresh tracks or boot prints in the mud, dust or snow.

No surprise, then, that in these later years, wandering is a natural state of my affairs. Such restlessness, along with a healthy dosage of natural curiosity, serves well when seeking out photographic subjects like this little bird my lens recently focused on. Have you ever noticed how fast small birds are? Sometime exceptionally fast. This Say's phoebe most certainly was. Darting from clusters of brush to a distant fence pole and all the while elusively evading my lens.

But if nothing else I am a student of nature, albeit at times a challenged one. Applying a technique I learned from the birds, I simply stopped for an extended few moments and then it happened – *Sayornis saya* landed on a mullein top not too distant and I captured this image.

It was Charles Bonaparte, a nephew of the famous Napoleon, who named the Say's phoebe after American naturalist Thomas Say. Apparently Charles Bonaparte did not follow the militaristic path of his family. He chose, instead, to move to the United States to set about studying ornithology. He was with the scientist Say, who gave it its modern name, at a site near Cañon City, Colorado, in 1819. An interesting note is that, despite finding several new bird species in his career, Say is better known as the "father of American entomology."

According to the fossil record, Say's phoebes have been in North America for a long time. Its fossils, dating as far back as about 400,000 years ago, have been discovered in Arizona, California, New Mexico and Texas.

The Say's phoebe is a member of the tyrant flycatchers, which are a family of passerine birds occurring throughout North and South America. This group is considered the largest family of birds, with more than 400 species accounted for.

Our bird is a long-tailed flycatcher which, uncharacteristically, in comparison to other phoebes, is outwardly undeterred by people and developed landscapes. It often nests around buildings, under porches and in the eaves. Its preferred natural habitat is in open or semi-open terrain, often in dry country, avoiding forested areas. This widely-dispersed bird is found from prairies to the south, on upwards in latitude to dry upland tundra in the northern part of its range. The Say's phoebe demonstrates no attachment to a wetland environment, which, again, makes it unlike the other phoebes.

To identify a Say's phoebe, look for a medium-sized, gray-brown flycatcher with a hint of salmon-to-soft orange coloring on the belly and a solid black tail and bill. While in flight, very pale, lustrous, outer wing feathers are visible. The head often looks flat on top and sometimes just a bit too large for a bird of its size, but phoebes in general raise their head feathers into a small peak at the back, adding to the large-head appearance. The juvenile of this species displays salmon-colored wing-bars. The Say's often pumps its tail while



perched on a wire, fence post, or low bush – a characteristic movement it does share with all other phoebes.

Another identification clue for this bird is to watch the way it forages by perching on low shrubs or rocks and darting out to capture insects. A diverse hunter, the Say's phoebe may catch its food in mid-air or stalk it from low foliage or on the ground. Its diet is almost entirely insects, including wasps, winged ants, wild bees, beetles, moths, grasshoppers, crickets and dragonflies. It also eats spiders and millipedes, and an occasional cluster of berries.

These birds are rather vocal at times, which the keen observer can use to locate them, but at other times they are quiet and can easily go undetected. Listen for a thin, plaintive, whistled "pee-ee" while they are in the bush, or a fast whistled "pit-tsear" in flight. Keep your eyes low to the ground and watch for quick movements from low shrubs as they dash about out to snag insects. Look for them perched on top of low shrubs or fence posts. And remember, they may be found around buildings; watch for those nests under the eaves.

Cornell Lab of Ornithology tells us that the Say's phoebe breeds farther north than any other flycatcher and is "seemingly limited only by the lack of nest sites. Its breeding range extends from central Mexico all the way to the arctic tundra. It may be following the Alaska pipeline even farther north, nesting on the pipeline itself. When a Say's phoebe finds a good nesting site, it often uses the nest year after year." Researchers have reported them using nests built by American robins, other flycatchers, woodpeckers and swallows. In our rural environment you may find them nesting in old mailboxes, on idle farm machinery, and in old sheds, barns and outbuildings.

Interested in attracting Say's phoebes to your backyard? While these birds do not come to feeders, they might use your backyard as a place to hunt insects or even construct a nest under the eaves of your house or other structure. A well-placed shelf attached to a building may attract a pair. Learn more about where to place a nesting shelf and how to build one at NestWatch.org.

Many of our lives have been disrupted this year, but the great outdoors is still there, as rich as ever, beckoning the walker, hiker, paddler, cyclist. Get out there, take care, be safe and do good things....

*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>.*



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# It's Been a Good Ride

By Tina Tolliver Lago

Seventeen years ago a young man handed me the keys to my brand new, shiny red Dodge Durango. I remember what a long day it had been, between cell phone calls to my son while I asked his advice on several models as I wandered around the lot. Granted, I had my eye on that Durango the minute I pulled into the dealership, but felt it was not only too expensive but also way more car than I needed. The smaller trucks had substantially lower price tags and seemed more practical to me.

"No Mom, you need something you can feel safe in during the winter and something with more room inside. And I don't think those smaller trucks are all that reliable." That was my son's opinion and I was relying on it to get through that day because, frankly, going to a dealership alone was one

of the scariest things I had done thus far in my newly-single and slightly-wobbly life.

So, I passed up the little trucks and again my eyes went to that shiny red Durango. But common sense pulled me back to the task at hand. That task was to get myself a reliable vehicle that could hold a good amount of "stuff." I imagined loads of paving stones to landscape the yard. A girl needs to have a rig that can haul stuff ... and grandkids.

But then, several rows down from the trucks, I spied the shiniest little car on the lot and all my common sense and practicality flew right out into the sunny spring air.

It was all the things I loved in a car ... apple red, shiny, and sporty. I pulled my phone out of my pocket and again called my son. "Mom, NO! You just sold your Camaro a year ago for crying out loud!"

I had told the salespeople to just let me look and think, that I'd let them know

if I had questions. I didn't want anyone pressuring me. I had enough pressure to deal with as the voices in my head kept battling between shiny, pretty, and practical. It's obvious how this day ended. Yes, I bought the Dodge Durango. And yes, it was expensive, but the interest rate and my payment plan were comfortable enough that I knew I could do it.

When I left the dealership to make the 130-mile trip home, I felt good. Perhaps I knew all along that I needed more room than just a cramped little cargo area. While I didn't foresee all of the trips I would make over the years with every spare inch of that lovely leather interior packed to the hilt, there were more than a few times I mentally thanked my son for talking me out of a pickup. Covering everything I haul, from plants to kids, would have been impossible with a pickup. I can say with

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# This Great Big Life

confidence I have never, ever, wasted any space in that rig.

I didn't need a third-row seat at the time I bought it. But, after the countless times over the years that I buckled a grandchild into each available space, I was more than grateful to have it. And on the many raptor rescue missions when I carried not only a huge net but also a crate big enough for a bald eagle, I would quickly fold down seats to make the transition from "kid-mobile" to "bird-mobile." I certainly didn't need heated seats or a satellite radio either but grew to love those extra features.

This Durango has been like an old friend. It has served me well, driving me nearly 180,000 miles over the mountains and through the valleys of this great big life. It went quickly from 55 to 85 with the emergency flashers on down Hwy. 395 while I raced my daughter to the hospital with contractions 60 seconds apart. It was the one time in my life I desperately wanted to see a state patrol or a sheriff's rig to escort us but learned they are only easy to find when I choose to do 85 just because it's fun to cut loose down the freeway on my way to the big, big city across the state at 7 a.m., before the traffic picks up.

We have slid down a mountainside backwards after hitting a patch of ice in 4WD, scaring me so badly because I had my daughter, baby granddaughter and one of my grandsons in the back seat. That was a moment I never want to revisit. As always, my son had my back, literally, as he parked at the bottom in case he needed to stop our descent with his own truck. But I managed to keep us upright and on the road before we came to a halt about four feet in front of his truck.

This was the point at which my grandson got out and quickly climbed into his dad's truck because "Gramma is a scary driver and I don't want to ride with her anymore." I feared he meant "forever" but happily that was not the case. We revisit that story occasionally, especially when we all gather to go hunt for Christmas trees and no one wants me to drive.

This rig has been mired in mud, snow and sand and I'm proud to say I've never had to be pulled out of any situation. I

have, however, handed the keys to my son on occasion and said, "please get my rig pointed back home."

This rig has always driven me safely home. We've dodged hundreds of deer and an occasional bear, unintentionally run over skunks and squirrels, and clipped the hind end of an elk with the deer guard just last winter. Two of them literally flew off the hillside in a snowstorm and for a split second I thought they looked magical, like Santa's reindeer, while my life flashed before my eyes.

There are dents and dings because over the years I managed to back into my other son's car, a telephone pole, a pile of rocks and a bee's nest ... with the windows down.

Having a vehicle that can keep up with my kind of crazy is important. And now it's time for a change. Buying another car is not something I have considered lightly.

I initially chose to drive the Durango until either it or I could no longer drive. And

while I believe it still has a lot of miles left to carry someone else through life, I have chosen to let go and start a new journey with something a bit newer. Granted it's also shinier, pearly white, and has so many bells and whistles I don't even know how to start navigating all the navigation buttons. Those things are not really important to me. Safety for me and all of my passengers is my number one priority and this new rig feels rock solid.

Part of me feels like a traitor, like I'm letting go of an old friend. But I am grateful for the miles my old friend gave me and I hope that someone new can feel as safe and secure behind its wheel. It's been a good ride.

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



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# Being the Village

Article & Photo by Joanie Christian

After many years in college, our oldest son Ryan (pictured right) graduated last year from Washington State University with a doctorate in molecular plant sciences. There were some pretty big, life-changing bumps along the way, but through sheer grit, strength of character, and support from some incredibly loyal individuals, he persevered, which made his achievement even more remarkable.

Following graduation, a large group of family, friends and mentors gathered for dinner at Ryan's favorite Pullman restaurant. We were tucked into a private niche in the back of the restaurant, giving us the luxury of several hours to savor our meal and celebrate this momentous milestone, while enjoying the company of people who had been so pivotal in Ryan's life.

There have been times when a scene or experience grips my heart in such a way that I know I will always remember that very moment. Looking around the table that night, that feeling surfaced. So many things had led to this evening of joy and celebration. Unconditional love and support. Genuine and loyal relationships. Teachers and mentors who shared their gifts and cared about who they were mentoring. Adversity and learning to get back up after falling. Patience and growth. A love of learning and hard work.

I've always believed that each of us is shaped one layer at a time by the many relationships and experiences we have

throughout our lives. We knew that, as parents, we had a very important and vital role in our sons' lives, but we knew there would be other people and experiences that would also play a part in shaping them into who they would become.

As I looked around the table, I realized that seated among us were five young men we had watched grow up together – our two sons and three friends. Just as this group had been a part of our son's "village," we also had been a part of THEIR

***"Just as this group had been a part of our son's 'village,' we also had been a part of THEIR village."***

village. I pray that our imprint has been and will continue to be impactful on their lives in positive ways. All five are well on their way. Ryan is working as a technical director in hops research for producers in Yakima, Willamette and Treasure Valley, a challenging and exciting field. His younger brother Drew is a mechanical engineer in Seattle working on virtual reality technologies, thriving in this high-tech job. Robert McKellar is a TSA agent with Homeland Security and did a detail with FEMA following Hurricane Irma. His younger brother Neil works for Horizon Air. Corey Knadler got his doctorate in molecular bioscience at WSU and is now teaching at Gonzaga. All those years of homework, taking kids to music lessons and swim meets, or hosting a game night in our basement for these young men were quickly becoming a distant memory. They

had catapulted forward into adulthood.

As I pondered the life trajectory of the five young men, I was reminded that Ryan and Drew's classmates and other former students in the Tri-County area are also making their mark on the world in unique ways. So many people and social media memes expound upon the shortcomings of millennials, but my experience is that this region has some incredible young people who are "adulting" quite successfully, working in diverse fields near and far.

They are contributing to the community and economy in construction, manufacturing, natural resources, education, the timber industry and social services. There are electrical, civil, mechanical and computer engineers. Many went into health care as medical assistants, aides, nurses, physician assistants, scientists, pharmacists and doctors, and are the frontline workers we are depending on during the COVID-19 pandemic. Some pursued science as biochemists, wildlife biologists, geneticists and veterinarians. There are bankers and accountants. Teachers and firefighters. An entrepreneur who co-founded a rapidly growing start-up that designs and builds pilotless electric airplanes for agricultural purposes. A software engineer working for Disney/ESPN. A graduate student updating the management plan for grizzlies in Yellowstone and Grand Teton national parks, sometimes being dropped off by helicopter and crawling 500 yards through five feet of fresh snow to get to a darted animal.

This is by no means an all-inclusive

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list – one does not have to have a fancy degree or high-powered urban job to be successful, contribute to society, or live a meaningful life. Each one of these young people started right here in this community, their “village,” a place that gave them what they needed to go out in life, reach for their dreams and thrive.

This month, our 2020 graduates will be crossing the bridge from high school student to the big world out there. Like those before them, every loved one, teacher, and experience added layers to them, and they will continue the tradition of contributing

to our communities and world.

COVID-19 has significantly changed what this milestone will look and feel like, and for now their transition to the next phase in life may not be what they envisioned. In true form, their village, our communities, are showing support for them in unique and creative ways amid the constantly changing landscape of 2020.

The older (and hopefully wiser) I get, the more I see the interconnectedness we have with one another. Isn't that what community is really all about? Believing in people. Letting others know they matter.

Supporting each other. Sharing your gifts with others. Helping our youth meet their potential.

At every point in our lives, we get to choose how we impact and add layers to the lives of others. It all matters. Today, tomorrow, and long after we are gone. I believe that we are each an integral part of a village for those around us

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

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## A Whole World of Fellowship Opportunities

By Adenea Thompson

***Fellowship: friendly association, especially with people who share one's interests.***

June is Rotary Fellowship Month and the timing couldn't be better. In this new world of masks and Zoom meetings, Rotary Fellowships allow Rotarians and their family members to expand their borders and make new friends, near and far. Rotary Fellowships are international, independently organized groups of individuals who share a common passion.

The first fellowship began in 1947 with the International Yachting Fellowship of Rotarians. Now, more than 3,300 members sail together in one of 109 Rotary fleets in 37 countries. And there are more than 100 other fellowships to choose from. They include Amateur Radio, Beer, Birdwatching, Genealogist, Jazz, Military Veterans, Motorcycling, Photographers, Public Health, Scouting, Shooting Sports, Triathlon, and Wine, to name a few.

Each fellowship operates in a different manner. Most have a webpage and Facebook community. Some organize opportunities for members to interact in person by planning excursions or get-togethers at seminars.

Increasing in popularity are vocationally-oriented fellowships where experiences and networking can occur in the same profession around the world. The fellowships often organize projects together. For example, the Fellowship of Canoeing Rotarians organizes cleanups of polluted rivers. The International Skiing Fellowship of Rotarians supports disabled athletes through establishing a volunteer network of individuals who are trained as adaptive guides to promote snow sports participation for those with disabilities.

In times like these, feel-

ings of isolation and detachment are easily propagated. Finding connections with like-minded individuals can be challenging, but Rotary Fellowships can help alleviate the challenge. As our Rotary International President Holger Knaack said, "Rotary isn't just a club to join, but rather an invitation to endless opportunities."

When you join Rotary, it is more than breakfast or lunch meetings. It is about becoming part of a community collaboration where individuals can join together to make local and international impacts. It is an opportunity to discover like-minded people who share and grow your passions.

Whether developing innovative fundraisers, promoting "buy local" programs, organizing volunteers, and more, Rotary gives its members a chance to collaborate with their community and make an impact to help and serve those in need. If you see an unmet need in the community we encourage you to reach out to your local Rotary club.



**JUNE DESIGNATION IS**

**ROTARY FELLOWSHIPS MONTH**

*Photo by Minda Lucchese © Rotary International*

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**Paul P. Harris, 1935**

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# LISTEN UP

Reviews by Michael Pickett

## David Foster's Key Return

Easily one of the greatest producers and composers of the 20th century, David Foster takes his magic touch that found its way onto albums by Chicago, the Bee Gees, Barbra Streisand, The Tubes and dozens more, and turns his signature piano sound inward, creating the fabulous, understated *Eleven Words*.

Without a major Foster solo release since 1994, fans of the pop composer's note-perfect arrangements exploded

online with news of the new album, and I was one of them.

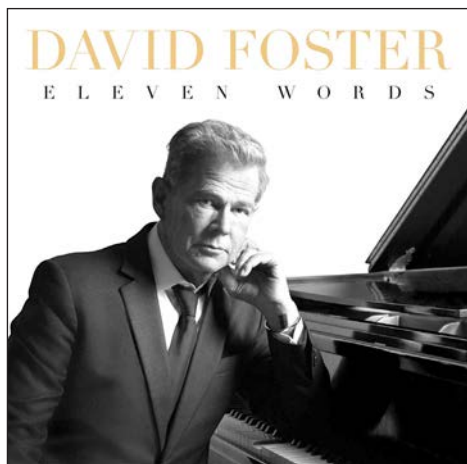
Having listened to Foster to the point where I could pick out his arranging and keyboard work on albums I hadn't previously known he worked on, I feel like he should be alongside giants such as Henry Mancini and Duke Ellington.

With cryptic titles cleverly arranged to have the first letters spell

positions feels inviting and warm. The lush "Victorious" feels like it could sit alongside his '80s work in *The Karate Kid* or *St. Elmo's Fire*, while "Elegant" has an exquisite, melancholy theme that once again establishes David Foster as someone who seems simply born to make great music.

While you may subconsciously wait for a Peter Cetera or Celine Dion vocal to come in on some of these compositions, that's just a testament to the impact Foster has had over the last 40 years in popular music.

Emotional, inspiring, understated and perfectly conceived, *Eleven Words* is a fantastic addition to the David Foster legacy. Please don't wait another 26 years to entertain us again, sir.



## Todd Sucherman's Last Flight Home

Having piloted the rhythms of Styx from the drum-throne for the last 25 years, Todd Sucherman is mostly known as one of the great rock drummers of the world. Every once in a while you would see him lean into a vocal mic onstage with the band, and for good reason.

With *Last Flight Home*, Sucherman's vocals and songwriting are put on display, and the results are fantastic. There is a clear Beatle-ish influence to the massive melodies and songwriting that

Sucherman layers at the mic on gems like "Sacred Book of Favorite Days" and "An Invitation."

Naturally, there's no reason to miss an opportunity to showcase some uber-drumming either, as with the jaw-jarring intro to "The Damage" – feeling like a Tommy Aldridge/Ozzy intro – or the tastefully heavy-handed percussion of "Ad Lib Everything" where the drummer's rock rhythms never overshadow the song's message and melody.



Singing drummers aren't unheard of in classic rock. You've got the timeless sounds of Don Henley, or the incredible sounds of Deen Castronovo with Journey and others. Still, it's a gift to see an album that opens up entirely new sides to artists you thought you knew.

While Styx could not have a better guy on the skins than Todd Sucherman, this album shows how he is such a musical drummer in so many different scenarios.

Check out Michael Pickett's music, free at [pickettmusic.com](http://pickettmusic.com).

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# A Good Read

Reviews by Loren Cruden

## *The Dream of Perpetual Motion*, by Dexter Palmer

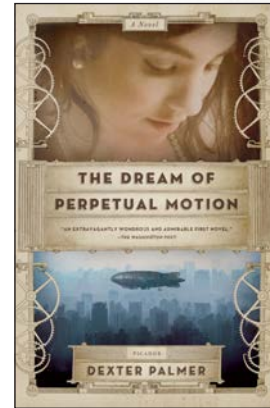
Dexter Palmer's *The Dream of Perpetual Motion* is indeed dreamlike in its discontinuities and non-ordinary parameters. The novel's brief chapters portray a reality like and unlike the one we know.

Harold Winslow, the main character, lives in early-mid twentieth century London and works for a greeting-card corporation. He sometimes travels to work in a "shrinkcab" – a mobile psychotherapy session. The ruling technology of the time is mechanical, more than a little steampunkish but not altogether Victorian. In schools, for instance, "Teaching helmets hang from cables over each desk of the classroom, ready to descend and dispense their knowledge. The desks themselves are barren."

The narration's emphasis on dreams provides an appropriately surreal atmosphere, aided by Palmer's startling details and satiric humor. It reminded me of Neil Gaiman's writing: not my usual fare but admirably clever and imaginative. The story moves back and forth between Harold's imprisonment aboard a

perpetual-motion zeppelin and his earlier life, from childhood to greeting-card creator. In Harold's world greeting cards dominate social discourse and mechanical men and other machines are always on the job, humming, rattling, tapping, roaring, growling, thumping, hissing ... never silent.

Inside the zeppelin, along with Harold and the mechanical men, abides the frozen genius who created the airship and his unseen, mad daughter. Harold is sure the zeppelin is gradually sinking to earth. As our protagonist notes, "It is this way in dreams: when decisions are being made, they have already been made." Thus goes the world.



## *The Human Stain*, by Philip Roth

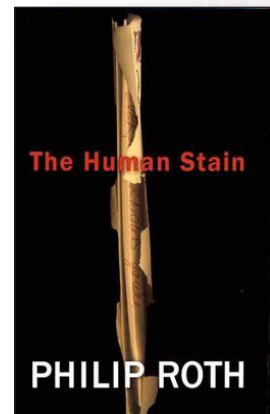
Philip Roth's acclaimed postwar trilogy of novels – each book a stand-alone – starts with *American Pastoral*, which won the Pulitzer (and was made into a movie), continues with *I Married a Communist*, also prize-winning, and ends with *The Human Stain*, which was published in 2000. This third novel is set in a small New England college town during the contentious latter days of the Clinton presidency. ("...the many horrors that can ensue when the highest degree of indignation is achieved....")

Like Joyce Carol Oates and Jonathan Franzen, Roth slices open a cross-section of American life, prods its characters into motion and records – with forensic literary attention – what they do to one another and themselves. ("There's something fascinating about what moral suffering can do to someone who is in no way a weak or feeble person.") Roth intimately knows but (also like Oates and Franzen) doesn't appear to particularly like his characters.

The story's narrator (Nathan) is a reclusive writer drawn to a disgraced former college dean (Coleman). Neither are spring chickens but Coleman's life is far more exciting than Nathan's – such is a narrator's fate. "...because of a magnetism in Coleman, an allure that I could never quite specify, I found no efficient way

of putting it down." This allure emanates, not from Coleman's recent scandals, but from a much more radical, long-term secret.

Roth writes provocatively; the story's psychological tension generates further plots and subplots, people "blinded by the terrifyingly provisional nature of everything." Like how Nabokov might've sounded if he'd (metaphorically) switched from acoustic to electric. And, as with reading Nabokov's books, aspects of Roth's characterizations may be troubling but there's no doubt the man's a literary landmark.



Another recommendation from the R shelves:

Arundhati Roy – *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*

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

# The Fascinating World of Hummingbirds

Article & Photos by Patricia Ediger

With the forward march of spring comes the return of the hummingbirds. Many species of hummingbirds migrate north from as far away as Mexico and the West Indies. According to Audubon research, there is a notable rate of discovery of new species in this family of birds, making it the second largest of the western hemisphere. There may be as many 339 species with a remarkable diversity of plumage, bill length and shape.

Among these many species, 21 enter the United States, of which only 8 penetrate far above the Mexican border. Of these 8 only 3 typically migrate as far north as Washington state: the rufous, the calliope and the black-chinned, a close relative of the ruby-throated hummingbird.

The rufous, *Selasphorus rufus*, (pictured below) meaning reddish, flies the farthest, as the only hummingbird that travels as far north as Alaska and the Yukon. It is 3.5-4 inches long with a wingspan of 4.25 inches. The male has reddish brown on his back and the base of his crown and most

all of his tail. His brilliantly scarlet gorget (throat patch) shines like burnished gold in certain light. In researching the dynamics of these feathers, I came across a 2004 article in the *Spokesman-Review* titled "Bird with Attitude" by Stephan Lindsay, describing these special feathers. Here are some excerpts:

To scientists, these feathers are a wonder of biology and physics combined. Most feathers appear a certain color due

to pigments that reflect only that color. ... Gorget feathers in most light appear a dull

brown due to granules in the feather cells that contain the brown pigment melanin. Cells in these feathers, however, have an extra outer transparent layer and the granules contain microscopic air bubbles. When light hits a gorget cell at just the right angle, it creates a mirror effect with refracted light being reflected outward. As with a rainbow, refraction separates the light into bands of its separate colors. In the case of the rufous hummer's gorget, light is refracted into bands of scarlet (seen when light hits the feathers straight on), coppery-orange (adjacent to the scarlet, where the feathers are tipped sideways just a bit), and lemon-yellow (at the outer edge of the refracted light, where the feathers are tipped the most).

Rufous hummingbirds are indeed attracted to red. An observer in Alaska noted that a male rufous investigated a red towel, a red fruit box, a red label on an empty salmon can, even a red bandanna.

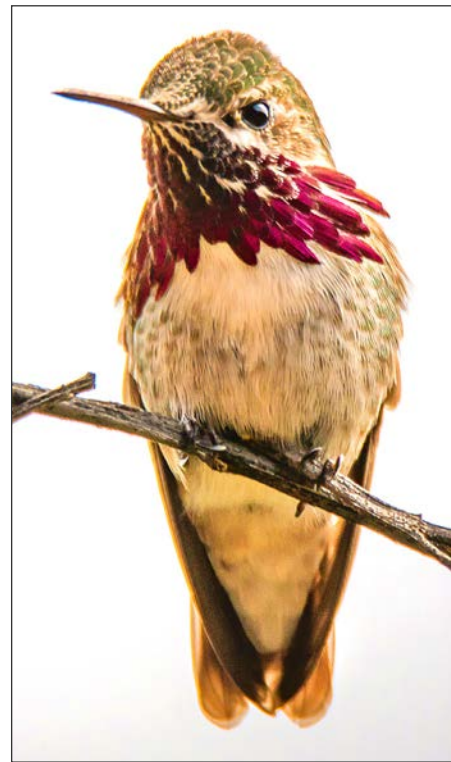
Both male and female rufous hummingbirds are very aggressive defenders of territory. They fight constantly around

my feeders, chasing off all other hummingbirds. Consequently, I place several feeders around my house so all will have access to the liquid food.

The second-farthest-reaching is the calliope, genus *Stellula Calliope*, (pronounced cal-EYE-oh-pee - pictured above) which is Latin for Little Star. The calliope is the smallest bird nesting on the North American continent north of Mexico. This little bird is only 2.75 to 3.5

inches long, with metallic green above and white below and a needle-like bill.

The male calliope has long metallic-purple feathers under his chin, overlying a white throat, which gives him a pepper-



mint-candy look. It is the only hummingbird that has these markings. The female's throat is speckled, with a white breast, and is almost indistinguishable from the female rufous hummingbird, which has rust colored feathers in the center of its rump.

The male calliope is also very aggressive. I have watched the male intimidate other hummingbirds by spreading forward the metallic-purple feathers into a star shape while making loud buzzing sounds. He also makes lightning-quick movements in a confrontation, at the feeder, as well as in his territorial pendulum-like flights.

According to the *Audubon Society Encyclopedia of North American Birds*, all male hummingbirds guard their territories by spectacular, swinging, U-shaped flights or intimidation displays. This flight is also used in courtship display by the male when a female enters the male's territory in breeding condition. Hummingbird males will mate with more than one female during the breeding season. Sometimes in the air, of all things.







# Mountain Meandering

On one occasion, while reading on my porch, I kept hearing a buzz, similar to a bee inside a flower getting pollen. I couldn't figure out where it was coming from until I finally observed the calliope male zooming up and back in the pendulum motion overhead. The buzz was just what I could hear for a split second at the bottom of his swinging flight.

Our last species that regularly visits our region – the black-chinned hummingbird (pictured right) – is *Archilochus alexandri*, “archi” meaning chief, first in importance, and “lochos,” meaning an ambush. This species name was given in 1846 in France by Bourcier and Masant in honor of a medical doctor who collected birds in Mexico.

The black-chinned summers all the way from British Columbia south along the Pacific coast and west to the Rocky Mountains and south into Mexico and Texas. A close relative to the ruby-throated hummingbird, it is 3.5-3.75 inches long. The male is bright metallic green above and distinguished by a black throat and white collar below it. It will reveal a very small iridescent blue-violet patch on its gorget in certain light.

Only by watching for extended periods as a male landed in a nearby shrub or darted in and out at the feeder was I able to briefly see this patch. To me it looked like a brilliant purple. It is much smaller than the neck full of brilliant color on the rufous or the long red gorget feathers of the calliope.

During courtship the male will sing soft, high-pitched warbles. When chasing

another bird, he will utter a loud, chirping call.

All hummingbirds need nectar and pollen, but also hunt insects, including spiders for protein. Because of their small size, hummingbirds have the highest metabolism, or fastest rate of burning or oxidation of their fuel, of any warm-blooded vertebrate in the world. They must feed almost continuously on many days to remain alive. Also, due to the long distances they travel for migration, they require lots of fuel.

Hummingbirds have unusually large flight muscles, the pectorals, which have more myoglobin and oxidized cytochrome than non-migratory birds. They have a richer supply of blood capillaries and oxygen in their muscles for those long, sustained migration flights. Their large flight muscles are 22-34% of their total body weight and their smaller pectoral muscles are remarkably large, enabling their return wing strokes while hovering, and other unique modes of flying. They can

fly backwards, shift sideways, fly straight up and down. When hovering, the hummingbird rotates the shoulder joint completely over on the backstroke as well as on the forestroke, checking the tendency to move forward or backward, allowing the bird to hang poised in the air, like a helicopter. Credit to the Audubon Society for the helpful information.

If putting out a feeder, mix one cup pure cane sugar to one gallon of fresh water. No red dye needed. They will find your feeder amazingly fast. Hopefully you will have some hummingbird babies raised close by who will also come to partake of your food. Nothing quite as

delightful as little humming babies hovering around and getting their “drink of life” by your hand. Enjoy!

Patricia Ediger is a freelance photographer specializing in wildlife, nature, and landscape photography. See her work at the Old Apple Warehouse, Kettle Falls, WA and at [patriciaedigerphotography.com](http://patriciaedigerphotography.com).



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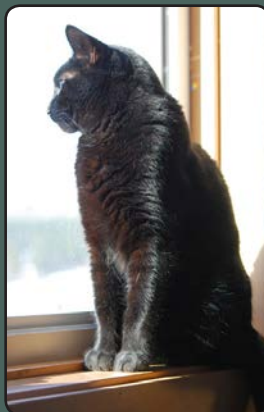
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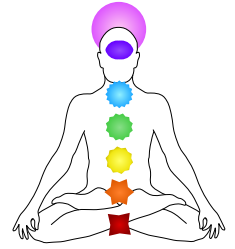
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## Yoga in the Garden

By Brenda St. John



*You didn't come into this world. You came out of it, like a wave from the ocean.  
You are not a stranger here." ~ Alan Watts*

One thing about being a COVID-19-unemployed yoga instructor, my garden is way ahead of where it usually is this time of year! I always love the hopefulness of planting a garden in the spring, envisioning the beauty of the flowers and the bounty of the vegetables, as I turn the earth and prepare the soil to accept the seeds and starts. Working with the dirt reminds me of the first chakra, Muladhara (MOO-la-DAR-uh), which is also called the Root Chakra. It is associated with the earth element, and I believe we can correlate the roots of our garden flora with our own energetic roots.

Muladhara Chakra is the name of the neuro-endocrine center located at the base of the spine, near the pelvic floor. It, like all the chakras, facilitates the subtle flow of energy throughout our being. The seven main chakras are located along the spine and the crown of the head, although we are said to have many more.

Muladhara has to do with our roots, or our foundation. When our Root Chakra is open and balanced, we are grounded in the world. We have a strong sense of safety, security, and stability.

Many of the physical yoga asana which help ground us are standing poses. Tadasana, or Mountain Pose, comes immediately to mind, although I also like the idea of Vrksasana (Tree Pose) because trees really do have roots. To do Vrksasana (VRICK-sha-sa-nah), stand with your feet together, big toes touching, and heels about a half-inch apart. Press down with the four corners of each foot and let the rebound energy travel all the way up your legs and spine. Draw the navel slightly in to engage the core muscles. Open your heart. Gradually shift your weight to your left foot. On an inhalation, lift your right knee to the height of the hip, and then circle the bent knee out to the right and place the sole of the right foot on the inner left leg, either above or below the left knee. Press the foot against the leg and the leg against the foot. Make sure the foot is oriented so the toes point straight down rather than angle down. Now raise your arms straight up overhead with the elbows straight. The palms can either face each other or touch in the prayer position. If you have shoulder issues, extend the arms out to the sides in the T position or Cactus. Don't worry about being a bit wobbly. Trees move and sway. Hold the position for about five cycles of breath. Lower the right foot to the floor and repeat on the other side.

Mula Bandha (MOO-luh BUN-duh) is a key component of activating our first chakra. We do this by contracting the muscles which make up the floor of the pelvis. This includes

everything between the pubic bone and the tip of the tailbone (front to back) and between the two sit bones (side to side). We naturally engage Mula Bandha during much of our asana practice, or we can practice Mula Bandha on its own. In yoga classes, I introduce this concept from the Constructive Rest Position (lying on back, knees bent with feet on floor, hands at sides). Breathe in, and then, on an exhale, gently contract all the muscles of the pelvic floor. Pause for a moment, and then release the contraction throughout the next inhalation. The breath rate is slow so the effects can be more easily noticed. Keep up the cycle of contracting and releasing for a few minutes, and be aware of how you feel.

Earthing, although not technically a yoga practice, also connects us with our first chakra. If you have

never heard of the term *earthing*, you might find it interesting to look up on the internet, since a wealth of information is available. Earthing connects our body to the energy of the planet through our bare feet. When we walk barefoot on dirt, sand or grass, the natural supply of free electrons in the earth neutralizes the buildup of excess free radicals in our body. Purported health benefits include decreasing inflammation, reducing

chronic pain, improving sleep quality, and increasing vitality. At least 15 minutes but preferably a half-hour of earthing is recommended to reap benefits. Walking barefoot in a house does not provide the same effect as walking barefoot outdoors.

A practice to focus on our Root Chakra, Muladhara, which combines the three methods I've described, could be to step away from our weeding and planting, kick off our shoes, and do a few yoga poses in the grass. Alan Finger is my guru for anything to do with chakras, and his recommendation includes Mountain Pose, High Lunge, Chair Pose, Tree Pose, and Warrior III. Make sure the pelvic floor is engaged in each asana.

Regular yoga practice keeps all my chakras open and balanced on an ongoing basis. As yoga is incorporated in my life, I find myself practicing on and off the mat. I carry my practice with me wherever I go. With self-awareness, I recognize signs of imbalance and then carry out what needs to be done to regain balance. It might be as simple as taking a few minutes to practice gratitude.

Namaste.

*Brenda St. John has been teaching yoga classes in Chewelah since 2010 through the Community Colleges of Spokane's Act 2 program.*

***"When our Root Chakra is open and balanced, we are grounded in the world. We have a strong sense of safety, security, and stability. "***

# Deer Neighbors

By Mary Masingale

Dealing with a town herd of deer can be challenging. As one who has a little two-point buck staring through my office window every day, I can understand the temptation to feed the poor thing. But then I remind myself that our local wildlife have been enduring winters and the rest of nature's brutalities for longer than we have been around.

This thought inspired me to check into some facts regarding the diet of the Rocky Mountain Mule Deer – our town species.

I learned that a deer's diet changes throughout the year to adapt to available food sources through the different seasons. Deer, including mule deer, are not engineered to eat a big meal at one stop. Instead, they browse on a variety of growth as they meander throughout their range.

During the spring and into the summer, they enjoy the green shoots and grasses emerging from winter's sleep. As the growth begins to dry, the deer adapt to dried grasses and fallen fruits. During late winter and early spring, they browse on grass, sagebrush, serviceberry, wild rose, snowbush, lichen, Douglas fir, willows and snowberries, to name a few.

Like cattle, deer are ruminants. Deer initially chew their food only well enough to swallow it. This food is stored in a stomach called the "rumen." From there it is regurgitated, then re-chewed and swallowed again, entering a second stomach where digestion begins. Next, it is passed into a third and

then a fourth stomach, finally entering the intestine.

Mule deer use bacteria in their rumen to aid in the digestion. Specific types of bacteria are required for specific types of food. Therefore, the deer cannot quickly switch from one kind of food to another. For example, winter feed for mule deer is highly limited, very specific, and must be properly formulated. Because the digestive

these sites, sharing their behavior with each year's offspring. As each generation becomes more reliant on artificial food sources, they become less familiar with natural foraging sites and activities, and eventually can fail to recognize the need for migration.

So, the deer that visit me in winter will not be so welcome if they return to eat my plants and flowers this summer!

I reflected on how starvation of wild animals is part of nature. All wild animal groups experience significant population fluctuations. If I feed mule deer, I am violating this basic principle of population control within a species.

Another side effect of feeding deer, I realized, is that they can lose their natural, healthy fear of humans. They may not wait for permission to see what goodies I am packing in from my car. Or my little dog may appear to be a threat and will be treated as one – possibly ending in a tragedy.

In the end, while I have the best intentions when it comes to interacting with wildlife, I've come to the conclusion that the only benefit to feeding deer is that I feel good thinking I'm helping them. But since I love them, I won't.

Mary Masingale is a lifelong Republic-area resident, an office manager and photographer for the Ferry County View, and active in community organizations such as the Republic Regional Visitors and Convention Bureau. She can be reached at [mmasingale75@gmail.com](mailto:mmasingale75@gmail.com).



system can't adapt quickly, improperly fed mule deer may die with full stomachs.

Deer that are fed by humans, I learned, become dependent. Foraging and migration are both critical to the mule deer population. As deer learn the locations of human-operated "feed stations," they continue to visit

since I love them, I won't.

Mary Masingale is a lifelong Republic-area resident, an office manager and photographer for the Ferry County View, and active in community organizations such as the Republic Regional Visitors and Convention Bureau. She can be reached at [mmasingale75@gmail.com](mailto:mmasingale75@gmail.com).

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# Madilane's Memories

## Dad Names the Kittens

By Madilane Perry

Never let a lawyer name a litter of kittens. Fortunately, the litter that Mother persuaded Dad to name, in an effort to get him involved in my interests, was a small one. Instead of getting lots of little cats with legal Latin handles we ended up with three kittens named Mortgage, Foreclosure and Bankruptcy. Mortgage (a male) and Foreclosure (female) were solid black; Dad considered both of these items undesirable. Bankruptcy, another female, was mottled black and white, which Dad considered to be a state with mixed qualities.

I really don't remember what eventually happened to Foreclosure and Bankruptcy. Considering our coyote-rich rural environment, they probably didn't last very

long. Mortgage, however, stayed with us for several years in the early 1950s.

Being an intact tomcat, Mortgage tended to roam in spring. In fact, he roamed for the entire summer all the years we had him. He would disappear sometime in April or May and reappear after the first hard frost. Most of his autumn returns involved evidence of his summer's activities. One year he came home missing half an ear. Once, the skin on his back displayed a handful of bird shot.

Every year brought new scars. His most eloquent souvenir was a weasel tail, evidence of an epic battle.

Of course, one year fall came and Mortgage did not. We knew it would happen



eventually and mourned him briefly as country cats are mourned but I'll never forget Mortgage and his sisters, the cats that Dad named.

*Madilane Perry, a retired archaeologist, was raised on a family-owned hunting and fishing resort on Curlew Lake. She is married to local author Ray Bilderback. They are both managed by a small brown dog.*

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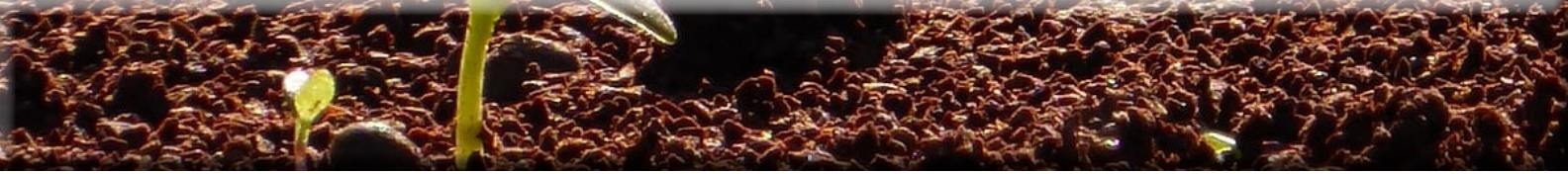
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# Staying Small and Staying Alive

By Joe Barreca

Every day I become more aware and thankful for essential workers. And I reflect on how none may be more essential than farmers. But, every year, there are fewer of them. Farmers and ranchers make up just 1.3% of the employed US population, totaling around 2.6 million people. Today, there are about 2 million farms in operation in the United States, a steep decline from 7 million in 1935. (businessinsider.com)

Only 5% of current farms are family-owned and less than 1% are organic. (Wikipedia) So, a third-generation farmer who has been certified organic for the last

25 years is a rare person indeed. Ron McLean (pictured below) is that person.

His family has owned sub-irrigated bottomland along the Colville River north of Addy for all of his life. His grandfather had a dairy herd there when dairy was good money. His father farmed grain as agribusiness went through the “green revolution” and McLean learned the trade growing up.

The farm is just as big as it was 45 years ago, around 620 acres – almost a square mile. He farms 280 acres of it. Holding on to land that keeps increasing in value while the value of your crops keeps de-

creasing is tough.

It was helpful that the family invested in buildings and equipment when they could. Having silos for his crops allows McLean to sometimes wait a couple of years until the price is right for his crops. Along with infrastructure, staying in business means having capital, so he could wait out the price fluctuations. Being able to raise his own food and repair his own equipment helps too.

Besides the cost of doing business going up, competition from around the world for bulk commodities has been driving the value of crops down steadily since the





# Down to Earth

year 2000. That is not just true of conventional crops but also – and maybe especially – of organic crops. ([www.fooddemocracynow.org](http://www.fooddemocracynow.org))

McLean had just planted his organic peas (pictured) when I talked to him. According to McLean, last year's average price for conventional dry peas grown in Washington was \$1.20 per pound to the farmer. Organic peas are worth over twice that, when there's a buyer. If it is that profitable to sell organic crops, why are only 1% of our crops grown organically?

In talking to McLean, it's clear that farmers need to pay attention to a lot of factors. One of those factors is yield. Success with conventional crops is usually measured in yield. But growing more on the same amount of land no longer necessarily means making more money. While the cost of chemicals and equipment keeps going up and the value of crops competing in a worldwide market keeps going down, the solution seems most often to be "get big or get out." But once the soil adjusts to more minerals and chemicals, McLean says it tends not to yield without them. He views it as a kind of addiction that takes 3-5 years for withdrawal.

Recently McLean has been able to sell his crops to Red Bridge Farm Livestock Feed, owned and operated by Brad Murphy and his family, in Kettle Falls. Other organic farmers raising livestock are wary of the risks in quality and supply when depending on foreign suppliers for feed. Red Bridge offers a secure domestic source for organic feed. Business keeps growing as word gets out. Murphy has been able to rejuvenate the grain silos and railroad connection in Kettle Falls and now stores, grinds, mixes, sells and ships organic feeds all from this one location.

McLean says that staying small means paying attention to your soil, the market, your equipment, the weather and your own health. He developed a dislike for the chemicals his father was using when he was young. The mix of hard work dust and dirt is hard enough on your health without breathing fertilizer, pesticides, and herbicides.

The health of your soil underlies the whole enterprise. To keep his land pro-

ducing McLean rotates winter wheat, peas, wheat again and then fallow ground. The fallow ground allows him to control weeds like yellow thistle and replenish organic matter. The peas build nitrogen in their root nodules. The rotation discourages pests from accumulating year after year.

For McLean, staying small means looking at his net profits and not just his yield per acre. The bottomland is his bottom

line. He can't just buy his way out of every problem that the farm throws at him. He has to keep trying new things and learning from experience. Part of his experience is that the soil needs to be worked in order to get anything out of it. Soil quality does not just improve on its own if left alone. As he says, "Do nothing, get nothing."

*Joe Barreca makes maps, grows grapes, makes wine and posts blogs on [BarrecaVineyards.com](http://BarrecaVineyards.com).*

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## Cardiovascular Herbs

By Faye Stewart

*The information presented in these articles is based on tradition and personal experience and is not meant to be in any way prescriptive or a substitute for consultation with licensed healthcare providers.*

My favorite cardiac tonics are hawthorn berries and night-blooming cereus.

Hawthorn (*Crataegus oxyacantha*) is a heart specific and promotes normal blood pressure. Its leaves and flowers are sometimes added into the remedy but the berries best concentrate hawthorn's potential to help prevent and heal angina, hardening of the arteries, and coronary insufficiency. Hawthorn may even make a positive difference during early stages of congestive heart disease but should not be combined with digitalis. Hawthorn's tonic action simultaneously dilates blood vessels and strengthens the heart's contraction, encouraging normal blood pressure. It takes about three months of use before hawthorn's effect begins to kick in. Use 1 cup of infusion 3 times daily or a half to one teaspoon of tincture.

Night-blooming cereus (*Selenicereus grandiflorus cactaceae*) is tonic also, good for reversing cardiac debility, but is not an herb easily found. The stem is the part used (fortunately not

the flower, as each blooms for only a single night). Part of cereus' tonic effect is on the nervous system. Cereus is good for palpitations and "tobacco heart" (as is passionflower, for the latter).

Motherwort, too, is nervine and strengthens heart action. (Do not use with blood-thinners.) Bugleweed, another relaxant, strengthens heart action while slowing its rate, and kava-kava has a sedative effect. Reishi mushrooms are a specific for stress-induced arrhythmia.

Stress-related cardiac problems in general may safely benefit from lemon balm, wild oats, skullcap, or hops. Motherwort and valerian rt. ease nervous tachycardia. A mix of hawthorn and motherwort, used over time, may reduce angina. A mix of hawthorn, cereus, and a little yarrow is good for gradually reducing high blood pressure. European mistletoe is another remedy for this, as is periwinkle.

For reducing edema caused by weak circulation, diuretics such as dandelion and yarrow are specific, particularly dandelion with its beneficial potassium content.

Ginkgo encourages cardiac efficiency and tones blood vessels, helping prevent and treat angina, and is antioxidant. Alfalfa can decrease cholesterol levels and reduce plaque; take 15-30 drops of tincture 4 times daily for this. Bilberry, used long-term, inhibits atherosclerosis and strengthens arterial walls. Burdock rt., Siberian or American ginseng, Virginia snakeroot, and ginkgo may have some effect on atherosclerosis as well.

Rosemary (in small amounts) and peppermint are heart stimulants, and blue malva is tonic for the heart valve. Garlic is a cardiac ally as well, but any herbal remedy for heart and blood vessels needs to be accompanied by addressing root issues in lifestyle, diet, exercise, tobacco/alcohol/drug use, stress, and underlying health conditions.

Low blood pressure may be countered using red clover fl., dandelion rt., rosemary, red ginseng, hawthorn, and gotu kola.

Poor circulation and varicose veins benefit from ginger rt., hawthorn, white oak bk., and prickly ash bk. (don't use prickly ash in the presence of inflammation). Repeated compresses or fomentations of calendula fl. and witch hazel ease inflammation pain in varicosities. Elevate the feet and legs while administering. Horse chestnut extract – *not* something to concoct at home; the raw herb is toxic! – is very effective for varicose veins and can be used in infusion, tincture, or lotion. Gotu kola, ocotillo, wood betony, and ginkgo are helpful also.

If you experience cardiac problems, have symptoms promptly checked out by your healthcare provider and discuss with them whatever home remedies you are using.

*Faye Stewart has gathered, gardened and enjoyed working with herbs for decades. She ran a medicinal herb business for 15 years.*

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## Thankful for Small Farm and Large Servings

By Michelle Lancaster

National Dairy Month in this unusual year is one to remember. Large dairies in parts of the United States are having to throw away milk due to supply line issues. Meanwhile, folks are home more, cooking and enjoying milk products more than ever! Animal sales are also way up from last year – I could have sold our heifer calf 10 times over, easily, in the past couple months (a welcome change).

On our farm, we have reason to celebrate – Briar Rose calved with a beautiful little heifer calf that we named Braveheart Rona (after the heart on her forehead + co-Rona-virus; my brother and dad thought of the name). Our calves are given names starting with the first letter of their mother's name, so Rona fit. She has white stockings on her legs, a white tail, and a heart on her forehead – unusual coloring for a Jersey, but acceptable in our case because Rona takes after her great-grandmother, Devine.

I love feeding the calf and playing with her. Visitors to the farm enjoy petting her and watching her run and frolic. The cows finally able to pasture in the fields after a cold dry spring is a sight to enjoy as well.

This is a first birth for Rona's mother, Briar, so we have had to be patient with her as she learns to be comfortable around the milking equipment. Briar milks out really fast – in just a couple of minutes she fills the bucket with around one-and-a-half gallons of milk, twice a day. That is considered low production for a cow of today, but her butterfat content more than makes up for what she lacks in pounds or gallons of milk production.

We are so thankful to not have a large

dairy anymore, where a large corporation can write us a letter and say, "Sorry, we do not want your milk because the restaurants and schools are not buying much milk right now." A large farm cannot switch gears within a day or two to find alternative options for thousands of pounds of milk produced every day.

Our "two-cow" farm, on the other hand, was grateful to have a cow freshen, so we could dry off our other cow, Rosita (due in August). In addition to her calf, Briar feeds many people. When a cow calves, her fresh milk early in her lactation makes really good butter. The fat is literally a larger size,

rella, mint chocolate chip ice cream with local mint essential oil, chicken and rice in a cream sauce, and several batches of a favorite recipe: tapioca pudding.

### Tapioca Pudding – Serves 8

Ingredients:

- 1 cup medium or small pearl tapioca
- 4 cups whole milk
- 2 whole eggs
- ½ tsp sea salt
- ¼ cup maple sugar
- 1 tsp lemon juice
- ¼ tsp grated nutmeg

Place tapioca in a double boiler pan, pour milk over the tapioca, cover with lid. Soak overnight in the refrigerator.

The next day, cook tapioca for 30-45 minutes in the double boiler over medium heat.

In a separate bowl, whisk eggs, salt, sugar, nutmeg, and lemon juice together.

As the tapioca thickens to the consistency you like, pour a little of the hot mixture into the bowl with the egg mixture and stir rapidly to blend. Return to double boiler and stir constantly for a few minutes, then pour into

a glass container with lid. Serve fresh (our favorite) or cool and store in fridge. We like to enjoy the tapioca as a topping for chocolate pumpkin bread.

\*For a fluffier tapioca, separate the yolks and whites. Blend only the yolks with the sugar, etc. Reserve the egg whites for the end – whip the egg whites to a soft peak and then gently fold into the rest of the tapioca mixture before placing in fridge.

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



so it churns easier! I am skimming a lot of milk to freeze for future butter making. The cream is so unusually thick (because of her genetics and what we feed her) that I have to use a spoon to scoop the thickest cream off before being able to pour out the light cream and milk. We called Briar's mother the Queen of Cream, so we are glad to see the next generation has similar qualities.

As we continue staying home for the most part, we get to do so with fresh, creamy milk and all the products we can make from milk. In addition to butter and cream for coffee, we enjoy making mozza-



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## Bonkers Yet? Nope. Smiling!

By Becky Dubell

This has been a tough couple of months for a lot of people. ALL the workers out there keeping our world on an even keel – you are so very much appreciated! I happen to be one of those that has been told to stay at home.

I am not quite bonkers yet – give me a bit more time to get there. Shouldn't be too much longer. I figured out that I have not been to work for more than two months now (at the time I'm writing this). I usually see over 300 people in the two days a week I work. If I am figuring correctly that comes out to 4,800 smiling faces that I have not seen. Might be getting really close to the "totally bonkers edge" that I need to stay away from!

Was in downtown Colville to do banking and the stuff that only I could do – my fifth trip out of the house so far. Saw lots of people, some in masks and gloves like me and some without. I am "suited up" because I cannot lie to my granddaughter, JJ, when she asks, "Granny BB, did you wear your mask?" So, for her, I am one of those that wears the gear – plus she helped her mommy make my mask.

Everyone is following the social distancing suggestion and I have a hard time with that 'cuz I am one of those that counts hugs as a really good way to say hello. Have warned JJ that she is gonna have to sit on my lap for about an hour so I can catch up. A big thank you to all out there for doing your part to help keep our loved ones and friends safer at this time.

My mom sent me an email about wanting to spread our infectious smiles worldwide. Sounds like a great idea to me. How cool would it be if we would take time each day passing smiles – our neighbors across the fence, the waitress bringing our order to the curb, the walker truckin' up Tiger Highway hill full bore, the bank teller, our family and friends at the window, the clerks, the gas station attendant that fills your tank (very old school and way cool – a "remember when" moment), the stranger in the supermarket, the delivery person, and don't forget the people in the car next to you at the stop light so they can drive that smile further down the road and continue spreading the infection.

I think smiles would be really cool to start spreading around, even if it's just with your eyes above the mask. What a special way to infect our world.

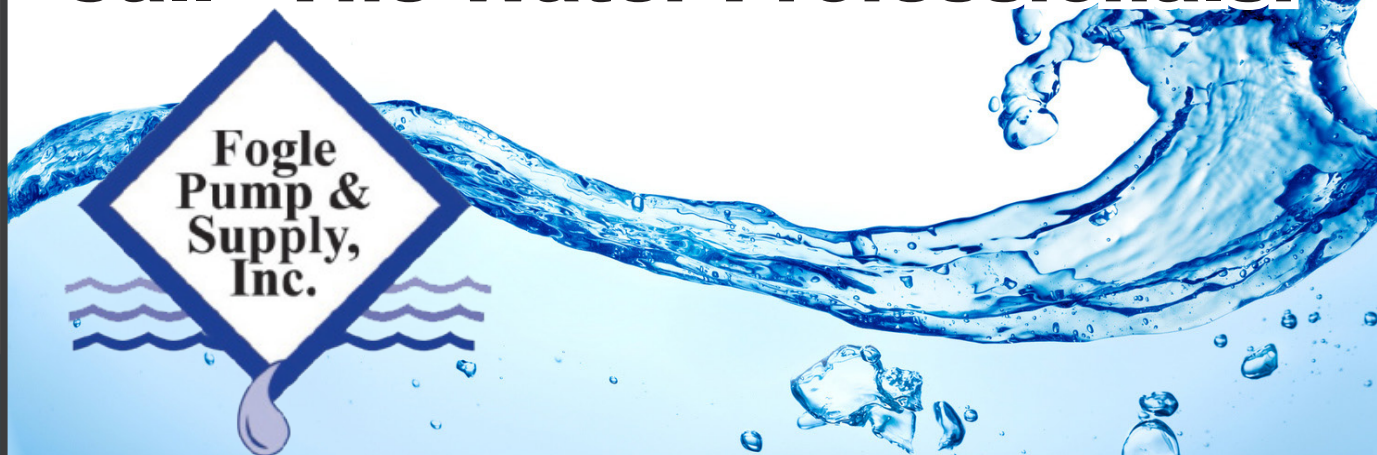
I know that when I give a smile away and it comes back at me, I feel a bunch better instantly. So, let's not do the "woulda coulda shoulda" routine with the smiles. Smiles are infectious (plus lots of facial muscles are getting exercised).

Thank you for letting me ramble on during this time spent at home, and remember, it costs nothing to smile, and your returns can be out of this world!



*Smiling, great grandson Jameson, named in honor of great granpa Jim.*

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