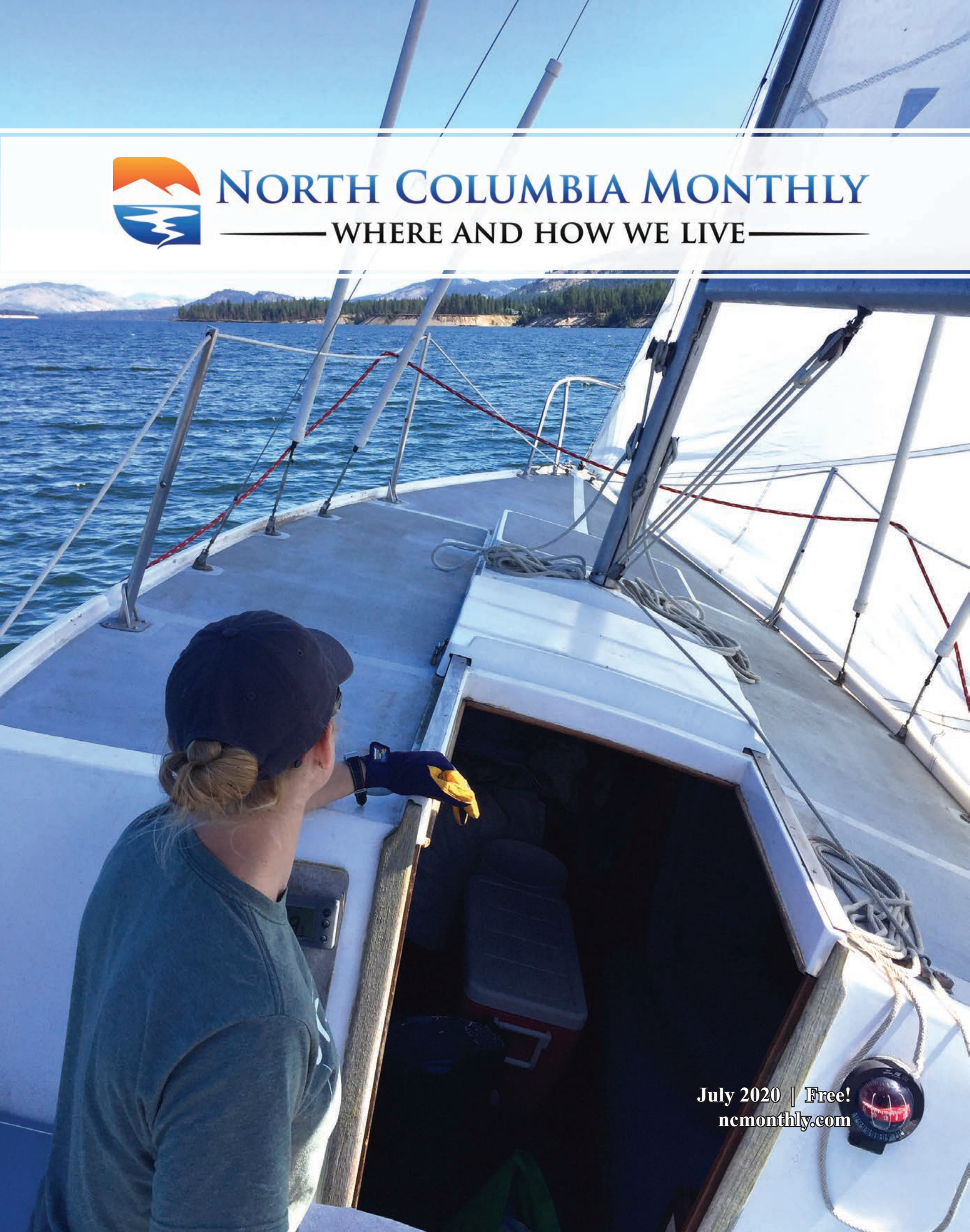




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- JOHN ODELL, WordsOfWords.com



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Nessa Bates sailing on Runrig in the annual Lake Roosevelt Regatta (scheduled for July 25-26, 2020 this year). Publisher photo.

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AUGUST 2020 ISSUE

**ARTICLE SUBMISSIONS &
AD SPACE RESERVATIONS**

Friday, July 17th

Holding Hope Despite Uncertainty

By *Mayah LaSol*

I sat at my laptop staring at a blank page and feeling very uncertain about writing this article. The world as I am writing this is absolutely crazy.

Where I live, we are in Phase Two of the COVID-19 lockdown, which means that some businesses are back open. I no longer have split ends and I am able to attend my dance classes, which makes me happy, but at the same time, the world is not a happy place.

Protests are raging and I have become so much more educated on the Black Lives Matter movement, which I was at a loss to comprehend. I didn't grow up thinking about racism or thinking that anyone was different. As a child I would think that differences between people are things like hobbies, favorite subjects in school, or what music they like to listen to. I did not think about race or sexuality or gender.

But now these issues are almost all I see around me. There has been so much anger and hatred spewing through the media and through the streets and I cannot help but feel, ultimately, so very confused. I grew up thinking that love is the greatest force, not hate. I thought that love could conquer anything. Seeing what is happening in the world today, though, I find that all my beliefs are or could soon be very much in doubt.

I question: What is right and wrong? What is the right way to go about helping others? What is the right way to listen to others? What is the right way to lend support to others? What is the right way to keep people you love safe?

I am filled with doubt on what I believe and how I should act. I am filled with doubt when speaking about controversial topics, either because I feel uninformed or because I am afraid to be on the "wrong

side" or even because it just feels too overwhelming to start a conversation.

I know that speaking up for what you believe in is something that is encouraged in our society, where our constitution guarantees us freedom of speech, but I often feel now that society is so divided that people will not let there be a middle ground. People may not let you be anti-racist while also against protests in the streets, to give an example of what I mean.

Speaking up is something that I have always felt so confident about. But now there is so much uncertainty and so much polarization that I suddenly do not feel confident. I know some people in my life are feeling a similar way – stuck in a box that they do not know how to escape.

I have not figured out how to get out of my box by writing this article, but I hope that anyone reading this and feeling the same way will know that they are not alone. None of us are alone, for we are all here on earth together. Humans have shown perseverance and drive against all odds throughout history, and the one belief that I do not doubt is that we can do it again with the power of love. I long for peace and prosperity for all humans and I will continue to hold on to my hope that this will someday become a reality.

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.

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From the Publisher's Desk, *by Gabriel Cruden*

The life cycle has been very present in my consciousness lately. My wife just brought home a couple of 3-month-old Pygora goats that are super soft and adorable with their big ears and curiosity. Then there is the great burst of plant-related activity going on around our place. The hope and anticipation of the vegetable gardens, berries, and fruit trees. The transient glory of the flower gardens. The honeybees industrious, in and out of their hive.

At the other end of the cycle, Molly, our family dog of 13 years, died of an illness on Father's Day. She lived a good life, if not as long as hoped for, and is already so very missed. In the bigger world, I know a number of people who have lost dear friends and relatives in recent weeks. And for me, I was shocked to learn of the unexpected passing of a friend and former housemate from college. I was bearing up with all that's been going on in adjusting to the changed landscape of the pandemic, political and social divisiveness and discord, and the various setbacks of best-laid plans, but this news sent me into a bit of a tailspin.

I thought of her two children – similar in age to two of my own – and her husband. I thought about how much they will miss her. The impact her death will have on the rest of their lives. I thought about all that she has been doing and striving for in the world, who she was as a person. And I felt really sad for what seemed to me an abrupt end to a life still very much in the midst of being well lived.

Recognizing that I needed a personal reset, I took some time in the mountains by a creek to reflect and, along the way, gathered materials for making a little fairy house – something my friend was fond of doing – in her memory. Part of that reflection centered on priorities and how I am choosing to live now, which is driven largely by an extensive To Do list.

Stephen Covey talks about the Big Rocks of life – the things that we say are important, such as family, health, etc. – and demonstrates that when we pour the sand of all the little things on our To Do list into a jar first, not all of the Big Rocks can fit in the jar. But when we put the Big Rocks in first, all the sand fits in around the Big Rocks. I know this. And have been trying. But I've still been turning first to the To Do list.

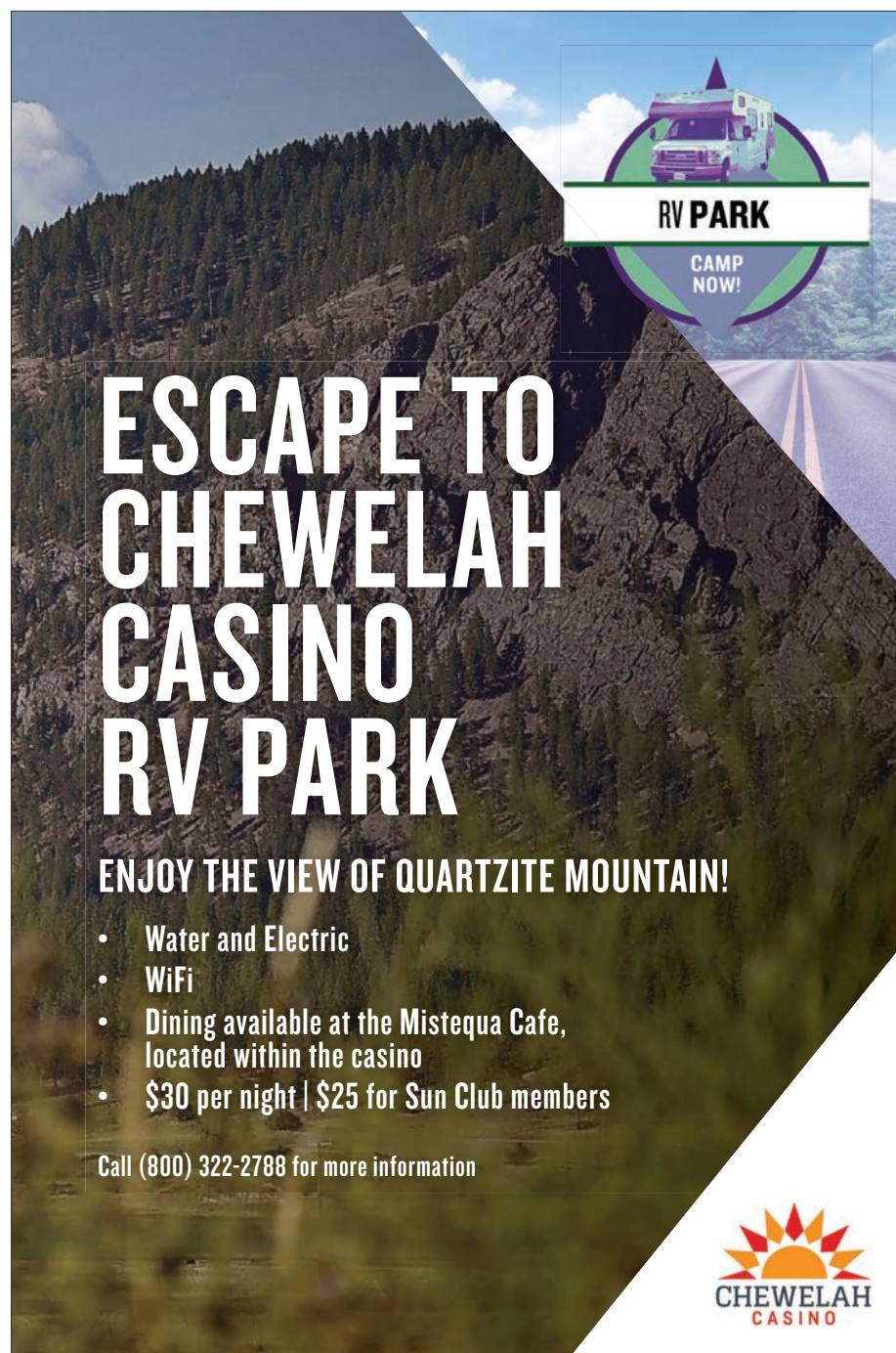
So now I have a new plan: change the list. Put the Big Rocks ON the list and in specific

detail, instead of relegating them to after the list is done. And ask of each thing I put on the list, "Is this important?"

I also thought about what a life well lived looks like and how I would want to be remembered. I share a birthday with Johnny Appleseed and, in the way that he planted trees as he walked the country, I wish to be remembered as someone who nurtured and

brought forth beauty in the world. In how I walked my path, in how I created and played and danced and worked and cared and faced my fears and challenges in life, in how I raised my children, in how I looked at the world and shared that perspective, in how I fostered community and forged relationships, in how I loved and was love.

Time to start my new and improved list.



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Magic Coin Collecting

By Christine Wilson

“The heart is bigger than trouble and the heart is bigger than doubt, but the heart sometimes needs a little help to figure that out.”

~ Connie Kaldor, Wind River

When my father was diagnosed with cancer, I cried a lot. I remember getting teary in front of someone who said she thought that since I was a counselor, I shouldn't be so sad. I told her, perhaps a bit more grumpily than necessary, that being a counselor helped me know that feeling sad was a normal part of life. At some point I forgave her for her disapproval, especially when I realized that I had hoped for the same thing. I pretty much went to graduate school thinking I'd be able to stop feeling so much.

I'm grateful for the journey I've been on to learn more about the core of my emotional heart. There was the original period of not noticing my feelings. As I teach people now, they don't go away. They just turn into stomach aches or anger or whatever your habitual unconscious default is.

Then there was the period of noticing them but specializing in resenting people for bringing them out. I really hated that stage.

Then there was the unfortunate period of some people promoting the theory that feelings are neither good nor bad. I wasn't able to sign on with that one because I was pretty sure I preferred joy over sorrow. I was not even aware of the power of shame yet, but I felt it anyway, thinking that perhaps I wasn't as evolved as people who thought all feelings were neutral.

Eventually I came to make friends with sadness, shame, and “the full catastrophe” (to steal a line from *Zorba the Greek*.) Well, I wouldn't say they are my best friends. Maybe I wouldn't arrange a Zoom cocktail party during a pandemic with shame and sadness and fear. I guess they are more like inevitable companions that I have had arguments with and resistance to over the years, but that I am making peace with now.

That peace is coming in handy at this point.

In February, my sister-in-law had a seizure in the middle of the night. She was whisked off to the hospital and diagnosed with herpes encephalitis. My brother was told she was dying and he was to say his goodbyes. He pursued brain surgery instead, transferring her to Swedish Hospital. It was described as an especially rare and terrible kind of encephalitis and hers was the worst the brain surgeon at Swedish Hospital in Seattle had ever seen.

The morning after her surgery, I took the bus to the Spokane Airport. Halfway there, I discovered I did not have my driver's license or passport. I sobbed my way through a conversation with the bus driver, with

the Department of Licensing, in a call to Alaska Airlines, and with a few conversations with friends, including my husband.

A TSA woman said it would be fine; her father had done the same thing the prior week. Another TSA worker came over and told me about the three strokes he had had while at work there the year before. He pointed to the chair he had sat in waiting for the EMTs. He showed me his scar. He said, as if he had access straight through to another realm, that my sister-in-law had a hard road ahead of her, that she was strong, and that she would be fine. I was helped through security with my Costco photo ID, even though that picture is probably from when my kids were in grade school and before my hair was drained of color.

I got to Seattle and gratefully hung out with my brother in my sister-in-law's room. He taught me to drink coffee without cream.

She got moved to a rehab center, contracted COVID, survived, and is still there, working to get her language and walking skills back. We don't know what the future holds, but I call her most days. She doesn't

always get her words straight but sometimes she is as sharp as ever. When I asked her something about physical therapy she said, “The Vietnam War was a long time ago.” On their 40th anniversary, I told her I thought their 41st would probably be better and she said “Yes, it will be spectacular.” When I called her during a thunderstorm she told me London was overhead.

Then the stress took its toll on my brother. His commutes to the hospital and his long hours sitting with this lovely woman he still calls his bride crashed his immune system, or at least that's how I see it. He's been in and out of the hospital himself and has had numerous tests, blood draws, and diagnostic consults. They have decided he has lymphoma and he will start chemo as soon as they get a more precise reading. I talk to him every day too, as he wanders around his house with a feeding tube and a port, his beloved cat trailing alongside.

My husband's best friend has been dealing with a cancer diagnosis for years. He has defied the odds, done a ton of different treatments, and is at the end of his life now. He has never shied away from his prognosis. He has leaned into the journey and pushed us to do the same. The last time we parted company, he was heading back home after our annual winter trip. I told him it was hard to say goodbye and he looked back as he was getting in the car, saying something about goodbye being inevitable. He didn't say it with sorrow or self-pity; it was more like an acknowledgment of a reality he was fiercely accepting.

All this while a pandemic sweeps the planet. And then, the country erupted into rage. The deep pain and suffering left unfaced for so long has come to the front and center of the American experience. We may all have different takes on what is happening and what to do about any of it, but I think that underneath all that, we would do well to tap into our potential for emotional intelligence, known as EQ.

“I'm grateful for the journey I've been on to learn more about the core of my emotional heart.”

Random Acts of Community

I'm reminded of a dear client from decades ago. At ten years old, she was mad at her mother for something that was just a random circumstance. I asked her why she was mad at her mom and she said "Well, I have to be mad at somebody." "No," I responded, "You don't." There are times of random disappointment, as was the case for her, and there are genuine and huge social issues that must be faced with courage and intelligence. They all require stalwart EQ.

I want to lean into my life, the way our dying friend is leaning into his. I feel a little bit like a character from one of the video games my kids played when they were growing up. Each level was fraught with danger. Surrounding these risks were magic coins, full of enough enchantment to secure extra life. My life has involved collecting the human version of magic coins, which in my business is called our emotional skills tool kit.

One of my early magic coins was to understand that sadness was normal and not to be avoided or feared. Gradually, I learned the same about the other feelings, although I'm still not a fan of shame. It can be a great teacher, is definitely humbling, and misery is lessened as it is faced, but like I said, I'm not planning any jovial Zoom sessions with it. The universal look of shame includes the casting down of your eyes, so it would be a weird Zoom call anyway.

We all have our heartbreaks, our fears, our causes of sadness. I do not tell my tale to glorify our family's version of sorrow. There is no contest here. I tell this story to

help you take heart in the midst of your own stories, your own whiplashed emotional journey. A community of fellow travelers is more important than ever. Being out in nature, even if it just means stepping out your front door, is a remedy proven by science and experience to help soothe our souls. The journey into our own hearts, our consciences, and our aspirations for

a better world rounds out my suggestions for a healing trifecta.

I hope your collection of magic coins keeps growing. Something tells me we are going to keep needing it.

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



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Going Beyond 'Do No Harm'

By Dr. Barry Bacon, MD

I am not an expert, by any measure, on the subject of racism. I would like to share my perspective and experience about it from a place of great concern for the disproportionate number of people of color who are killed, incarcerated and otherwise impacted by inequality.

I have benefited from my white privilege, unaware of the doors that have been opened to me because I looked like the people in power. I have personally witnessed the ridicule of people of other ethnicity by my classmates, by resident physicians and by our instructors. And I kept silent, comforted I suppose by the fact that I had not participated in the ugly things that were said. But in keeping silent, I see now that I did participate. My silence was shouting loudly to those Asian or Hispan-

ic or black colleagues who were insulted that they could not count on me to raise my voice. Their humiliation didn't matter enough for me to speak.

I could argue that my ancestors were not slave owners and that they fought for freedom for all people, or that some of them were in fact immigrants fleeing oppression in Europe, and therefore I cannot be held responsible. I can look at the course of my life and swear to you that I am not a racist. But that would be less than honest.

Having lived and worked in an African nation for three years, I could argue that I have seen iron-fisted oppression by black individuals against other black people as terrible as anything under apartheid in South Africa, and that would be true. But I would be missing the point. I could di-

rect you to Kosovo, to the Middle East, to Lebanon and to Syria, to the genocides in Rwanda and in South Sudan, and say to you that racism is a human problem, not a white American problem, and I would be right. But I would be badly missing what needs to be said.

The place where I most need to address racism and bigotry is me. It is my own soul that I must examine. I must look in the mirror. This I fear the most. I must reflect on my silence, my attitudes, my ignorance. I must listen, learn, and lift my voice.

The thing about America is not that we are better men and women than others, but because of the nature of our Constitution and founding principles, we still represent hope. We have the opportunity to create what many long for. Every life important. Everyone equal before the law. No one held back, attacked or imprisoned because they are of a certain race.

What kind of country do we want? What do we wish to hand to our children? Do we believe in the inherent dignity and value of each person? Will we fulfill the dreams of our fathers and mothers to create a land where all men and women are created equal? Will those in power stand aside to share that power with others for the sake of equality?

I read an editorial not long ago written by a black American woman. She got my attention when she wrote about loving

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Life Matters

mercy and practicing justice. But the hardest thing for me to swallow was her notion about restitution, reparations. I bristled at the thought. Why should I pay anything back? Until I really heard what she was saying.

She was asking all of us who have known the privilege which the color of our skin has dealt us to stand with them. To pay it forward. Pay someone's rent when we have the means to do so and see that they are struggling. Buy some groceries when someone is hungry, help them as genuine neighbors with no expectation of a pat on the back, but simply because it is the just and right thing to do. In so speaking, she gripped my soul. Suddenly it became clear.

Not out of guilt or as punishment but because their lives matter. I thought, I can do this.

Black lives matter to me. This is why I will support a peace initiative in Kapedo, Kenya, where for decades the Pokots and Turkans have been battling it out in the desert, decimating their children's chance for a future, both sides equally impoverished by fighting. The toll in lives lost to violence and disease and starvation is astounding. Violence begets racism, tribalism, prejudice and hatred.

And I'm working with a small group of dedicated people to create a medical school in a western region of Ethiopia where 500,000 refugees flee back and forth across

the South Sudan border because of tribal hatred and genocide, i.e., racism. Through a generous gift from a former partner, we have sent face masks, gloves and soap to support them in preventing the spread of COVID-19. We will put together teams to help them open the operating room in a hospital which delivers 50 babies per month but does not have the capacity to perform a c-section due to lack of trained personnel and equipment.

Our vision is to create a medical school designed to train local people, including refugees, to become self-reliant in addressing the brutal health challenges they face, to solve their problems with local solutions, to replace ourselves with well qualified and trained medical professionals, to transform health outcomes for the entire region. Why? Because their lives matter.

This medical school is the dream of a South Sudanese friend who resides in the U.S., one of the lost boys of South Sudan, who cannot lay down the memories of what he left behind. He cannot forget the suffering of his people. I have simply joined his dream. He and some friends have been chipping away at the monumental challenges. We have worked on it for years, and sometimes it feels like we are no further along than when we started. But here's the thing. The people we work for, the people suffering in deep poverty beaten up by life

are still in need. That is why we cannot stop. Because their suffering matters to us.

Earlier this year, I sat at a table along the Baro River under the shade of a lovely grove of trees, sharing a few moments with our team. South Sudanese, Ethiopians, and two white people. We took turns speaking to each other, affirming our team, sharing from our hearts, telling each other how important our work is, and how each one of us has a significant role.

When it was my turn to speak to the team member whose dream we all had adopted, it was hard for me to put into words what I was feeling. I looked at him intently and spoke with broken and hesitant speech: "I will not back down if you don't back down. I believe we will accomplish everything we have dreamed. Your people are my people and my people are your people."

I don't know how else to say it. If we see each other as part of the same beautiful fabric, then we must stand together. When one of us suffers from oppression, we all suffer. Yes, all lives matter. And yes, Black Lives Matter. They are not mutually exclusive. I believe we cannot be free until all of us are free. That is the truth I must live. Listen, learn, speak. Strip down the tyranny of racism. Open our hearts to one another. Let freedom ring.

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.

"Suddenly it became clear. Not out of guilt or as punishment but because their lives matter."

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Little Owl Gift

Article & Photos by Joanie Christian

For me, 2020 has brought a continual barrage of fear, conflict and confusion. With no instruction manual to navigate this strange new landscape, I find myself wanting to turn it all off and seek ways to remain calm and centered. So even a small dose of “nature therapy” helps me to see the world from a different view, reclaim that part of myself that gets lost in the overwhelming chaos, and remember the beauty that continues to surround us all.

In my nearly two decades as a nature photographer, there have been a handful of times when I have been able to follow a family of creatures over a period of time. Through a tip, I learned of a great horned owllet on the ground this spring and was excited for the opportunity to see and photograph an owllet that was probably beginning to fledge.

What my husband and I found, though, was a little great horned owllet yet to grow flight feathers just 15 feet away from a well-traveled road. The parents had been bringing it food (remnants from a meal were nearby). A much

larger sibling and adult female were in a tree overhead. I could see no signs of a nest.

Great horned owls often use the former nests of other birds, which can be flimsy, and they do little if anything to fortify the nest. Consequently, it is not uncommon for a nest to disintegrate in a windstorm, causing the owllets to fall out of the tree. Generally the parents continue to care for them, so it's best for humans to not intervene.

We left the little guy where he was and returned the next morning to check on the owl family. We found both owllets on the ground, trapped in wire fencing. I called a wildlife biologist friend, and we consulted the Kettle River Raptor Center, which commonly gets calls in the spring about great horned owllets on the ground. With help and monitoring in an area with minimal human interference, they have a chance to make it in the wild, which is the ideal outcome, we learned.

Adult great horned owls can be aggressive when they feel their owllets are threatened, so that evening (which happened to be Earth

Day) the three of us bundled up in protective gear before netting the owllets. The biologist placed them up in a tree in a safer location. Both parents landed nearby but were not aggressive.

Several days in a row, we found the smaller owllet back on the ground and trapped against the fencing. Injuries were evident on its face. We later realized it was injuring itself by trying to push through the fencing in an effort to be closer to the mother. So we moved the owllets to the other side of the fencing in a clump of trees where the mother often perched. After that, things began to slowly improve, with some hiccups along the way.

I began to think of them as Stan and Ollie, the larger, round owllet being Ollie, who was soon hopping between branches and flying. The much smaller Stan had a tougher go of it, sometimes getting knocked out of the tree by windstorms or heavy rain, taking cover until weather conditions improved, then climbing back up into the trees. Both parents were often nearby. We continued communications with





the raptor center and wildlife biologist about new concerns that arose.

Stan's face slowly began to heal, and he started appearing in trees farther and farther away, so we knew he was now flying too, at least a little. On Mother's Day they were strong enough to venture away from the little chunk of land where we had been monitoring them, a reassuring sign.

But this was not the end of our journey with the owlets. As luck would have it, we came across Stan and Ollie a few weeks later in a different location. They had grown and I was not a hundred percent certain it was them, but enlarging a photograph showed Stan's distinct healed scars. I was elated that they appeared to be thriving.

I've seen 16 owls this year, which is very unusual in my previous experience. I began to wonder and, in researching, I learned that owls are often considered a symbol of courage, strength and watchful protection, and as a guide during confusing situations. They symbolize being able to navigate any darkness in life, releasing the past and putting down burdens that hold one back. Great horned owls in particular encourage taking a break from life and seeking solitude and considering the big picture – all relevant in

my life right now.

I still see the two young owls from time to time. And I find solace with them. A sanctuary during the storm. All the external noise disappears and there is room to breathe. A peace envelops me as I watch Stan and Ollie explore their world, climbing up logs, chasing bugs, grooming each other, stretching their wings, learning how to hide, napping in the afternoon sunshine. The breeze catches their fluffy, downy feathers, carrying them away one at a time as newly-developed feathers take their place.

The beautiful female adult patiently watches nearby, her luminous golden eyes peering out from the dark places where she conceals herself. A raccoon walks in the distance. Pygmy nuthatches feed their chicks on a pine bough in front of me. A doe gives birth to a fawn in the thicket below. I am fully present in these moments and the cares of the world are blissfully absent.

Just yesterday, as of this writing, we received word that my husband's terminally ill mother's condition had worsened, and she would pass away within an hour. COVID-19 restrictions prohibited more visitors that day, and we were two hours away. My husband looked at me and said, "I'd like to go and see

the owls."

As we arrived at the location where we sometimes see them, we learned that she had just passed away. Before returning to be with family, we first took a few moments for a quiet walk into the woods.

Astonishingly, we came across the beautiful mother owl about 30 feet in front of us. Usually concealed in dark places and very hard to find, she was instead perched on a dead snag out in the open, peering down at us. We could see her every detail. She calmly looked at us for a short while, then took flight, gliding off into the forest and out of sight, mirroring our feelings of our own mom departing to another realm.

Our time with the owls has been a rare gift. What began as a mission to save a little one spilled over into our lives in surprising ways. They brought peace. Calm. They gave witness to the circle of life. A sense of the sacred that is ever-present. And hope ... hope that we too can overcome the "fences" and barriers in our lives, and once again thrive.

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

Understanding History; Understanding Ourselves: *A Conversation with Louanne Atherley*

By Loren Cruden

On our first sunny June day in a long time, Louanne Atherley and I sat outside gazing over the Columbia and talking about history. Robins splashed in a rain-filled garden pool, their voices caught by my tape recorder while a cool breeze rippled tall field grasses and cottonwood leaves twinkled: a perfect day for conversation about links between people and landscape.

I first asked Louanne what initially had sparked her interest in history.

"I've always been curious about why people were where they were. There's a quote I heard somewhere, about how in each generation of a family there's one person who is the keeper of the history. As a kid I was always asking my mother about what she knew of earlier times, wanting to know who the people were and what their lives were like.

"When I went to college in the 1960s girls became either nurses or teachers; those were the choices. I never even considered anything else. But I remember that in the sixth grade when we were taught about the Incas and

assigned to write a story, I wrote one about an archaeologist going to South America to discover things about the past. A cave and some treasure may've been involved, and my teacher turned the story into a play. But then that interest in history got put on a shelf.

"At college I studied English literature – I didn't want to be a nurse so I assumed I'd be a teacher. I wasn't passionate about it, though. It wasn't anything I put a lot of energy into. I didn't care enough to even finish – stopped about a year short of my degree.

"When my first marriage ended, I was faced with 'What now?' I had two small children at the time but decided that

being a student again was probably a reasonable option. I went to Portland State and thought: *Anthropology*. That was the loose end from my childhood. I wanted to do something that was interesting to me, without thought about where it was going to take me."

How did you end up here, by Kettle Falls?

"Life circumstances took over. My husband Ben and I were looking for land and this seemed a cool place. Ben was familiar with it and we knew we could get land cheaply. He was trying to get his blacksmith business going. By that time, I had three kids. Then – just through happenstance – I met someone with connections to the Forest Service, which happened to be looking for someone who could do field work in archaeology. I got the job, liked it and was even able to finish my anthropology degree while working for the Forest Service.

I did field work for a few years and it evolved into a position where I was doing interpretation."

How did that unfold?

"Firstly, in order to do my job I had to have

a good grasp of the area's history. The work involved my looking at the impact of historic human habitation on forest land. I had to comb through all kinds of sources – courthouse records, placer claims, homestead records, as well as the written history of whatever area I was assigned to explore. The research was needed in order to understand what might've happened in an area, after which I'd be sent out to look for evidence on the land."

How much input was sought from local tribes?

"Request for their input on any areas of concern was always part of the process, though it didn't figure largely in what I was doing at the time. The land I was looking at

was mountain land, where historical tribal presence was mostly transitory; I wasn't working along the river at all."

Tell me more about the interpretive side of your work.

"I was on the board at the Kettle Falls Historical Center early on, when they were just getting under way. But then I got too busy with interpretive work for the Forest Service, which included a lot of traveling. This started because of a Native site at Pioneer Park, on the Pend Oreille River, that involved excavation and ground disturbance. I was part of an archaeology team they brought in, and part of our work had to do with interpreting what we found.

"The team did well and gained some notoriety from it – a reputation. It snowballed from there, branching out into broader historical and natural-history interpretation work, both with the Forest Service and agencies with which we had cooperative agreements. Eventually we became part of a team that was sent all over the country."

As if cued by the word "country" a military jet roared into view, low over the river, banking to follow its curve as we covered our ears, a close reminder of human history's impact.

Ears uncovered again, Louanne picked up the conversation:

"A lot of what our team was doing was interpretive planning. That ended up being my particular job description, to define the audience, the place's points of interest, and the best vehicle for delivering interpretive information to that audience. We did signs, brochures, calendars, workbooks, displays. Some of the parks we worked with were more well-known, some served international or cross-country visitors – or academics – some places were more geared to local people; it really varied. In order to figure out what people needed to understand in order to appreciate what was there, we had to find out what people

"When I went to college in the 1960s girls became either nurses or teachers; those were the choices."

Conversations

came to a place.

"We did a lot of work with the Nez Perce Trail over the years, developing successive signs and a visitors' guide with keys to different segments of the trail – numbered stops that would give some of the history and what was interesting at each particular point. Every year we would do a poster and a children's workbook with activities in it.

"After retiring I decided to use some of the things I learned to contribute to the community here, because we have a good story to tell. So, I got involved again with the interpretive center in Kettle Falls, rejoining the board, designing some signs for the front of the building and working on displays – that kind of thing."

Do you think people these days are changing in how they view local environment?

"I think they may be more aware that everything is interconnected, that everything depends on everything else – that impact moves through every bit of it.

"I like to think that places like the Kettle Falls center serve a vital need. The farther removed from the natural environment we are – the more urban – the more we need to be aware of where our roots are. There are a lot of school groups that come to the center and I think it's absolutely necessary that children be exposed to ideas and challenges and ways of life from the past, that they understand where they came from and why things are the way they are.

"But that's my personal bias. I think about my own children in their urban settings these days, but they came from a rural background and so have a different relationship with place than a lot of urban people do. Both my girls live in wooded settings where they can't really see their neighbors, for instance, and they have some commitment to taking care of the land around them. They teach their children birdwatching, go hiking a lot and spend time out on the land. They recognize the benefit of not being online all the time."

I asked Louanne if she thought knowledge of history helped reconcile differences among people, or if such knowledge, instead, supported conflict brought on by historical differences.

"On an individual, personal level, I think history gives greater understanding. I think that as neighbors here we all have appreciation for where we live; we all value the beauty we're living in the midst

roots in a more rural existence, so were able to see that life here was possible, and how to make it work for us in this present time. This place has everything: It has four seasons, arable land, water, forests, wildlife; it is a livable place."

My final question, of course, was about the Columbia: The river is the most historically significant feature of our landscape and remains central to life



of here. Understanding history seems to me key to understanding who we are as a community. It helps us value the people who have been here for generations. The choices those people made for their lives become understandable in the context of the time in history in which their family arrived or what the world was like when they lived here.

"The very thing that brought so many of our ancestors here was a severing from the past, but we still carry some of that past within us. What we do have in common is a hope for something better in the future and maybe a chance to correct some of the things that were intolerable.

"For me, coming to this spot to live required a vision from my past and my husband's past enabling us to visualize what life might be here. We both have

here. What is your relationship with the river these days?

"It's not like I go down to the river all the time, but it's a comfort to know it's there. It feels like a ticking clock, a life force; it's in the background, right there; it's a tether. I never get tired of driving along the river. Sometimes when I go to town I go toward the river first, even though it's a longer drive. I just need to see it and feel connected to it.

"In the spring when the willows and red osier start coloring up, that yellow and red with the blue water is my favorite color palette. And if there's a white cloud to set it off, so much the better."

Loren Cruden writes fiction, nonfiction, and poetry, available at www.LorenBooks.com, and provides Home Pet Care in the north Stevens County area.

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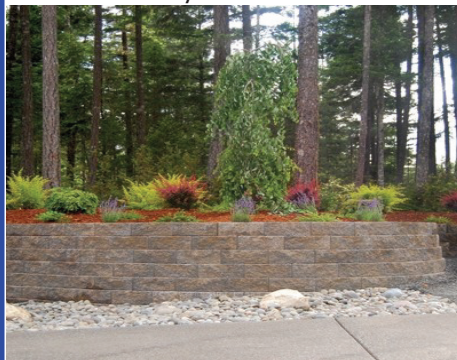
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Centering, Balancing, and the River

By Louanne Atherley

Some 36 years ago, when we moved to Kettle Falls, my husband heard someone refer to it as the center of the universe. That idea resonated with him and when, a few years later, we were left with a two-inch hole in our wood floor due to some remodeling, he placed a copper patch over the hole embossed with an X and the words “Center of the Universe.” At certain times in history, for different people and for various reasons, Kettle Falls has been that center.

If you were to ask just about any resident what they like about living here, they would probably say something about the river, the surrounding forest, and the mountains. The history of this place, right up to the timber industry and tourism of the present, has all been shaped by the land and by the Columbia River, one of the largest and perhaps most beautiful rivers in the country.

People who visit Kettle Falls for the first time often ask, “Where are the falls?” The easy answer is simple enough but an understanding of why the falls were buried is complex and spans events that occurred over more than a hundred years.

At one time the falls drew people from great distances to trade and catch salmon in numbers second only to Celilo Falls, farther down the Columbia River. It was the gathering of native people at this site that made it attractive to the Hudson’s Bay Company when they arrived in the early 1800s. The people who gathered here to fish also helped the fur traders harvest the beaver for their pelts, which had become a valuable commodity in Europe. At one time the network of Hudson’s Bay posts and forts to which people could exchange furs for goods stretched from the Great Lakes

to Alaska and south to Fort Vancouver near the mouth of the Columbia River.

During the gold rush in the mid and late 1800s there were placer miners on the Columbia and the river was used to transport miners back and forth from the gold fields north in British Columbia. Transportation was taken over by the railroads, which also followed the river. Later, irrigation flumes were constructed to bring the water of the Columbia to orchards that flourished along its banks. Then, during the Depression, a scheme to employ hundreds of Americans and bring electrical power to remote corners of our country finally buried the falls behind the waters of the Grand Coulee Dam.

People are naturally drawn to water. Like the air, it is always moving and circulating around our planet and is essential for life itself. I spent most of my childhood farther down on the Columbia near Portland. I grew up eating salmon and taking for granted that there would always be salmon to eat. My father and my brother both fished the river.

When I was a teenager we used to swim in a tributary to the Columbia River where the salmon went to spawn. Our favorite spot was not far from the headwaters of the tributary and far enough from town that we were usually the only ones there. There was a deep pool next to a waterfall where the river made a bend. When we would arrive at the pool we often saw salmon jumping the falls, but once we started swimming we would see them far below us. They waited until we left to continue their journey.

One summer day I was the first one in the water. I swam across the pool and climbed up some rocks to a short section

of falls and pools next to the main waterfall. A rock overhang created a little sheltered space where you could sit while the water poured down in front of you. As soon as I settled myself there, a salmon swam across my lap, barely grazing my legs as it went. That touched me deeply and made me feel like I was part of the river.

When I was old enough to leave home, I remember thinking that I could never live away from the river. Although it took a few years, I did end up back near the Columbia again. Besides the visceral connection I bring from my childhood, I now have an adult’s perspective on the tension between using and preserving natural resources as well as a deep love and appreciation for our local history. It is complicated. It is a matter of balance and respect.

Now that I am retired from the Forest Service, I spend some of my time helping to develop exhibits at the Kettle Falls Historical Center, now open Thursday-Sunday, 11-5. There they tell the story of the river and Kettle Falls for both local people and visitors to our community. I believe it is essential for people to know and understand what an amazing and interesting place we live in.

We have a complex history and our relationship to the river continues to be just as vital as in the past. I believe in striving to attain a balance between humanity and nature that respects both. And I believe an understanding of our past is crucial to moving forward.

Louanne Atherley has lived in Stevens County for 36 years. In her retirement she enjoys the outdoors, gardening, reading, and writing, as well as travel although she has yet to find any place to compare with home.

Becoming Patrolman Stewart

By McLean Taylor

This account comes from records and interviews with Alex Stewart provided by Wayne Krewski and the Rossland Miner and Evening World newspapers and is written from Stewart's point of view.

As I passed the saloon a big cheer went up. Glancing in, I was surprised to see a burly policeman being thrown to the floor. Unthinking, I rushed in and hauled back an angry man about to launch a kick at the police sergeant's head. With the patrons angry and ready to pounce, I'd put myself in a tight spot. I opted for a response I'd witnessed in Halifax.

Releasing the attacker's shirt, I put my hands in my pockets and said, "If you're in trouble you go with the police officer, and if you are fined in the morning I'll pay your fine." My statement created a hubbub but beating up the sergeant would cause more trouble. After some debate, my solution was adopted. Back on his feet, Sergeant Bradshaw snapped on the handcuffs and I accompanied him to the jail, where I promised the prisoner I would see him the next day.

At six o'clock the next morning, the hotel manager knocked on my door saying I was wanted at the police station. Not yet, I countered. When she explained it was a request from the police chief, I hastened to present myself.

"You are the young fellow who gave the sergeant a hand last night?" asked Chief

Ingram.

"Yes sir."

"How would you like to be a policeman?"

"No. I wouldn't like the job," I stated.

"You ought to change your mind," the chief coaxed, "because I think you would make a police officer." Ingram was persuasive. I signed on for thirty days.

[The *Rossland Miner*, February 12, 1902, noted that Alex Stewart commenced his new position of "Police Officer on Probation" at midnight February 11.]

At the end of my probation period, the chief called me into his office. "Alex, you'd make a good police officer but you just won't settle down."

"Chief, I don't want the job in the first place."

"I'm going to give you thirty more days," he responded. "Try and settle down because I want to keep you."

There were no benefits aside from having the room next to the jail assigned to me. I had no real authority. I was lowest man on the force. Soon, my second thirty days were up. As I was heading through the office, the chief hollered that he wanted to talk to me.

"I can't do any more," I said. "I'm mighty sorry but the jig is up this time." He responded, "You and I are the only two policemen in Rossland tonight. And it's Collins, the preacher."

Walter Collins was wanted in the Koo-

tenays for four counts of forgery, primarily because of a certain Miss Nellie Lake from Cornwall, England. Her fiancé, Wilfred Graham, wrote to her telling her to come to Canada, then a Mr. McPhail wrote advising her Graham had been accidentally shot, followed by another letter saying he was dead. Another letter from Graham told her she had been misinformed. In pursuit of the truth, the 39-year-old woman of "some culture and refinement" arrived in Rossland. Unable to locate her fiancé, she approached the *Rossland Miner*. On April 10, 1902, the newspaper ran a full column regarding her search.

The lost-love story aroused great interest and empathy from its readers. Unfortunately, no one knew Wilfred Graham or the mysterious Duncan McPhail. However, Collins had been seen reading Graham's mail and he had requested it be forwarded to Greenwood. Unlike the missing Graham, Collins was well known as he occasionally preached in the Baptist Church, was a member of the Rocky Mountain Rangers, and had worked in a local mine before moving to Greenwood. Some speculated he had crossed the border into Washington while some of the other Cornwall miners postulated that he had been in England visiting his wife and six children. Then, the newspapers implied, Collins had eluded both the London constables and the New York police waiting at dockside for his ship, and the miscreant was currently enroute to the Kootenays.

Not taking any chances, Chief Ingram dispatched the complete police force to the train station. Constables rode the trains, surveilling the stations, checkpoints and switchbacks along the routes where the wanted man might exit.

It was my last night. Chief Ingram took me to dinner and then we walked up Washington Street. He pointed out Miss Lake's accommodations and admonished, "Keep your eyes open around here tonight."

That was amusing. I had a date later that night with a young nurse caring for

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a sick person in a house across the street from where Miss Lake was staying. The chief showed me around and introduced me to the elderly couple who managed the rooming house. He advised both the couple and Miss Lake that the preacher was thought to be on the train and assured them the criminal would be caught.

When the chief went home about eleven o'clock, his parting words were, "Alex, you are the only man left on the force. Will you behave yourself?"

"Chief, this is one night I'm going to be on the job. You can depend on me."

By the time my shift was over, the trains had pulled in with the whole force. Sergeant Bradshaw's report blamed everyone – the London police were mistaken, as were the New York City police – and Collins hadn't come to Rossland. The preacher was in the wind.

Sergeant Bradshaw also derided me: "You're through and you're through for good."

"I want to be through," I replied and walked out to meet the nurse.

It was a beautiful night with the moon directly overhead. I was a little early, so I stood by the bushes on Washington Street waiting for her to come to the door. I heard movement and was startled to see a bewhiskered fellow, hunched low, creeping downhill. When he reached the rooming house, he stood up and tapped on a window. The window opened and a woman reached out and dragged him inside.

"Golly, that's Collins, the preacher." I was stunned. He'd evaded the whole force. "Holy cow, now what do I do?"

The preacher was supposed to be a dangerous character as well as an athletic fellow, and perhaps armed, but I decided it was worth the attempt to take him on. Mulling over my options, I woke the old couple, told them Collins was in the room with a woman, and asked if they had any shooting irons.

The old man pulled a rifle off the wall but it was useless; there was no firing plug. I gave him my service revolver. With a quickly concocted plan the old man and I crept out of the house and around to the window Collins had entered. The laughing

from inside hid any noise we made. The old man slipped behind a big stump, about six feet from the window, and braced my revolver on the stump.

I returned inside and went to the lady's door. I needed to go in with one bounce. I stood outside her room for a few seconds listening to the giggling and tickling. I braced myself and made my charge. The door went down – with me on top of it! Collins was tangled in the bedsheets. By the time he was free and out of the bed, I was on my feet and ready for action. That was one tough fight! He was in good condition. Finally, I choked him unconscious and put on the handcuffs.

As we were walking to the police station, he kept looking me up and down. I thought he was preparing to escape.

"Well," he offered, "I never thought I'd be arrested by a kid cop."

"It is a funny thing but this is my last act. When I lock you up, I'm fired."

"Oh no!" he exclaimed. "When I'm through talking you'll be promoted."

When we walked in, the two policemen on duty berated me, saying I was off-shift so I couldn't arrest anyone. I didn't want them to know who I had, so I told them I had arrested a drunk. Hearing this, Preacher Collins promptly keeled over against the wall and pretended he was intoxicated.

The next morning, Sergeant Bradshaw came directly to my room demanding, "What's the idea of arresting a man after you've been fired? And for being drunk? The two policemen on duty say he was perfectly sober." I told him to wait until

the hearing for the explanation.

Thirty minutes later, Chief Ingram thumped into my room.

"Alex, what the deuce happened last night? You were off shift so how come you arrested the drunk?"

"Chief, do you know who I got? I got Collins the preacher."

The chief wound up furiously lambasting the officers. "You nuts!" he yelled. "I sent you all the way out there so you wouldn't miss him and he sat in the seat and talked to Bradshaw all the way in." No officer had recognized Collins with his whiskers on.

Collins and Graham were indeed the same person. In court, Collins was asked for an explanation. He kept his word and gave the finest speech I'd ever heard. It would bring tears to your eyes.

He declared, "You got a boy there of which no police force need to be ashamed. You ought to be proud of all he's done."

Following six court appearances, Collins was released on bail and promptly disappeared. Miss Lake returned to Cornwall. Stewart continued serving Rossland as the night shift patrolman. In November 1914, the Rossland police chief transferred to Nelson, BC, to take over the police force there, and took Stewart with him. Stewart later became Nelson's chief, retired in 1940, moved to Seattle, and served as head of Boeing Security for six years.

Taylor moved to the North Columbia-Kootenay region 20 years ago and discovered a history of interesting and intriguing characters and believes their stories should be shared and celebrated.

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Cassin's Likes These Mountains

Article & Photo By J. Foster Fanning

One of my first sightings of the Cassin's finch was a streak of rosy-red color flying across a roadway I was driving upon. It vanished into some nearby trees. I found a pullout, parked and walked back to the forest grove with camera in hand. Search as I might, the "rose bird" evaded observation this time.

By the way, I use a free smartphone app called Merlin Bird ID, created by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. I have the Audubon app as well, but over time I've come to rely more on the Merlin. Upload some data regarding time, location, behavior and general colors and a list of potential birds appears on the app.

My observations have found that Cassin's finches are quite active, social, vocal and curious.

Cassin's finches are small songbirds closely related to the purple finch and the house finch. You might also hear them referred to as "American rose finches." There are places in the Pacific Northwest where all three of these finch species can be found together. The Cassin's shares characteristic traits with other finches, such as a short, forked, brown tail, brown wings, and somewhat peaked heads.

The adult birds of this species (*Haemorhous cassinii*) have a longer bill than other finches, with adult males sporting that rosy red on the head, breast, back and rump. Their lower back and under-tail appear streaked. The adult females don't stand out nearly as much, with light brown upper parts and brown streaks throughout their bodies. Both sexes frequently show a thin white eye-ring. Males take two years to reach mature plumage, and one-year males look a lot like females.

From May through October, look for Cassin's finches east of the Cascades in British Columbia and Washington state. Small numbers remain in this region throughout the winter, depending upon their food source. Cassin's, purple, and house finches can be seen in our region where agriculture, pine forests and rivers converge. And while Cassin's finches are generally widespread east of the Cascades, their occurrence in any given location is highly variable from year to year, primarily based on food sources.

It was a bit surprising when this bird (in late winter and early spring of 2020) became my number-one observed species here in the Kettle River Valley, where I hadn't seen them in such notable numbers previously.

During spring in our area, the bulk of their diet consists of the buds of quaking aspen and cottonwoods. They are known to extract seeds from Ponderosa pine cones or occasionally to collect those seeds fallen to the ground. Berries, grapes and apples are within the scope of their diet as well. As summer comes, this finch switches to larvae, tussock moths and butterflies. In autumn, Cassin's finches gather into foraging groups with fellow finches, crossbills and other mountain birds, with the flocks frequently visiting mineral deposits to sate their salty cravings.

As songbirds, these finches give a lively, varying warble, longer and more complex than the purple or house finch's. Cassin's fly with an undulating pattern, rising when they flap and dipping when they glide. If you spot one in flight, listen for a "tee-dee-yip ... tee-dee-yip."

Cassin's finches tend to reside in evergreen forests in the mountains up to the timberline sometimes, reaching 10,000 feet elevation. In winter, they may move to the lower mountain slopes. Their breeding area is throughout the conifer belts of North America's western interior mountains, from central

British Columbia to the northern reaches of the southwestern states. During winter some drift southward, others descend into nearby lowlands, and yet others remain on the breeding range.

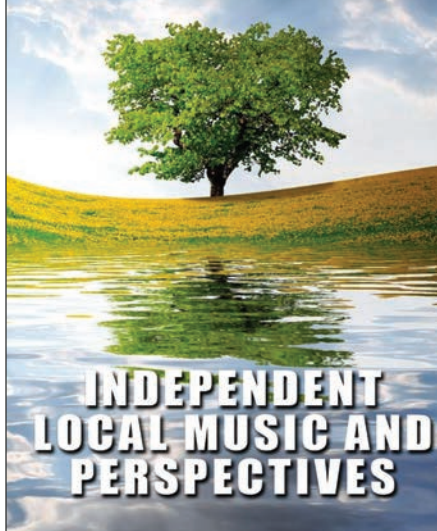

Cassin's finches form one-on-one pairs to tend the nest, but ornithologists suggest they mate outside the pair bond as well. It's not known whether they reunite with the same mate year after year.

Nesting sites are established by the female. Then her mate starts chasing other males from the area. By the time the pair is incubating their eggs, the male will endure other nest-building pairs within several feet. The nest is commonly near the top of a conifer tree or on a branch away from the trunk, at least a dozen feet above the ground.

Once incubation starts the male often feeds the female. When the hatchlings arrive both parents take on the chore of feeding. Fledglings leave the nest about two weeks after hatching, and it is not unusual that the parents and young may promptly leave the nesting area but remain in the family group. Pairs generally raise a single brood each season.

Summer is upon us whether you are paddling, rowing, sailing, hiking or biking. It's great to be outdoors. Take care, stay 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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Primary Election Candidates Featured!

The North Columbia Monthly contacted all Ferry, Stevens, and Pend Oreille County Commissioner candidates, Legislative District 7 candidates, and Congressional District 5 candidates and offered each an equal opportunity to be included in this special primary election feature.

Washington State's Primary election is
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According to the state election office:
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I believe we must **protect** the things that make Ferry County wonderful while

building economic resources and modern amenities so that it can be an attractive place for **future generations** to live, work and raise families.

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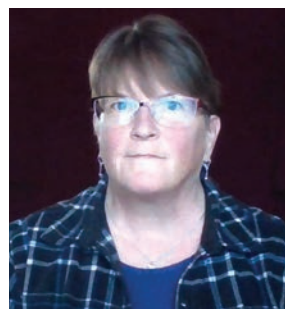
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“Blazing” Virtual Trails

By Adenea Thompson

It seems no matter what, life goes on. As the pandemic presses forward meetings haven't ceased. They've adapted with Zoom, GoToMeeting and Microsoft Teams. If the most tedious and boring portions of our lives can adapt to COVID-19 then why can't the fun aspects adapt?

This is exactly what is occurring. As events, festivals and races face the reality of cancellation, adaptations are beginning to emerge. As a species we are sociable creatures and even in isolation, or six feet apart, we will discover alternatives and thrive.

This year two local racing events are looking at such solutions. The Tiger Tri hosted by the Parks and Rec department in Colville and Blazing Saddles hosted by the Rotary Club of Colville are looking to move to a virtual platform. This strategy is not unique. It has been around for several years, but this is the first time these two events have contemplated such a thing.

The great thing about a virtual race is the flexibility. Have a conflict with the day of the race? No worries, do it the weekend before, do it midweek, get some friends together and participate on a day of your choice. Don't want to drive all the way to Colville to participate? That's ok. It's all about the distance and not the terrain.

Tiger Tri this year is looking to move to a duathlon. Due to the challenging logistics, the swim portion will be left out of the race. If you've ever wanted to participate but were nervous about competing, this is the year to try! You can check out their Facebook page @tiger.triathlon or www.tigertri.com for details.

Blazing Saddles is also looking at a virtual race possibility with two intriguing opportunities. Option One: participate from wherever you are in the world and share your scenes on social media. Option Two: Bike the actual route on a day of your choice. The route is all mapped out and available online. You can still take in the striking vistas of Lake Roosevelt but on a day and time of your choice.

This year is our Huckelberry Ferry Ride with the options of 100, 68 or 45 miles. For the Century Ride, you climb over the Huckleberry Range and then ride along the shores of Lake Roosevelt, with a ferry crossing to the west side of the lake and a return around Colville Mountain. The 68-mile ride starts the same, traversing the Huckleberry Range and then, instead of turning left and going down to the ferry, you will turn right and head north to Kettle Falls, traveling along Lake Roosevelt, and then from Kettle Falls back around Colville Mountain.

If you are looking for something a little shorter there is the option of 45 miles where you cycle the Colville Loop. This route is scenic gentle rolling hills and valley terrain with only one short climb out of the valley floor. You can find more details on Facebook @BlazingSaddlesBikeRide or <http://blazing100.org>.

In a year when the past hasn't been present to guide us why not try something new? Take this year to experience a different version of something you know and love. Or take this year to get the gumption to participate in something you've always wanted to but never mustered the courage for. Being challenged to adapt isn't always a bad thing and we look forward to experiencing this new adventure together. #NEWstrong

*This page made possible by the Rotary Club of Colville. Learn more on FB @ColvilleRotary
To view a list of all the Rotary Clubs in the district, visit district5080.org/clubdirectory*

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Sons of Apollo: A Year of Living Dangerously

It's always a crapshoot when well-established musicians get together to form a "supergroup." You can get a couple great albums before egos and personalities clash (Asia, Audioslave) or you can have utter duds that seemed great on paper, but produced what turned out to be, in my opinion, cautionary tales rather than the hoped for fantastic records (Tinted Windows, Lou Reed with Metallica).

While some people love to see supergroup soap-operas implode, sometimes you get a fantastic and unexpected combination of

personalities and sounds... and that is where we come to Sons of Apollo. Forging hard-rock virtuosity (Mr. Big uber-bassist Billy Sheehan and ex-Journey power-vocalist Jeff Scott Soto) with otherworldly prog (alien-guitarist Bumblefoot and Dream Theater alumni Derek Sherinian and Mike Portnoy), these Sons seem to have a blast writing and recording

together, producing *MMXX* (2020) as their second studio album.

Opening with the keyboard insanity of "Goodbye Divinity," the recording leans

more into edgy rock and relentless metal as Jeff Scott Soto hits the mic with lyrics like: "Shot down in vain / Still we rise above salvation / Goodbye divinity." With every member of the band seamlessly burning all at once, the album really opens up with cranium-crushing excursions like "Fall to Ascend" and "Resurrection Day" before giving way to the 15-minute, unpredictable "New World Today."

With the passing of prog-gods like Rush and the splintering of Yes into multiple lineups, Sons of Apollo is a ferocious addition to the ranks of prog-rock, while still being wholly accessible to people who enjoy inventive hard-rock and great songwriting. *MMXX* has been an unpredictably insane year so far, but as albums go... Sons of Apollo have created a masterpiece.



Willet's Flying A: Tune Up

Vintage twang and warmth abound on this Seattle-area release, as Marc Willett drops a 14-song record into the region's country/Americana sound-slot.

Sounding like it was captured on vintage tape machines, *Tune Up* fuses classic country sounds, a dash of vaudeville and modern lyrical sensibilities with an unapologetic ease. "Tippy Toe" feels like a Postmodern Jukebox staple, while "40 Mph" and "Mexico" effortlessly infuse

the merest elements of surf-rock and modern country into the mix, creating a clever and expansive collection of sounds that never leans too much in one direction.

Fourteen songs is a lot to write. Often it's eleven songs too many, and albums shine with just two or three gems while the rest is there to have you sit in one place for 30 minutes or so. With *Tune Up*, the mix of styles is charming and grounded in



a studio warmth that really speaks to the intelligence going on behind the scenes.

While some albums clearly sound better in the digital realm, Willett's Flying A absolutely benefits from a warmer, analog-ish treatment.

By the time you get to lush ballads like "The Heart Wants" or the rock-steady "Word of Thanks," this album really pulls its own weight in terms of songwriting and adding a healthy dose of material to a country/Americana genre that sometimes gets overlooked in the Pacific Northwest.

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

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A Good Read

Reviews by Loren Cruden

Earthly Possessions, by Anne Tyler

A reader would have to work hard not to be charmed by the natural, unfussy grace of Anne Tyler's prose. It's as though she smiles – just a hint of it – while she writes.

Tyler's long procession of well-written novels continues – a new one was released this spring – but her literary style was born during another era; she won a Pulitzer in 1988 and *Earthly Possessions* was published more than a decade before that. Her ordinary but never ho-hum characters do not-quite-ordinary things. Reading about them is like watching a child meander along a tightrope eating an ice cream cone. Tyler's stories are full of consequential whimsy and truth.

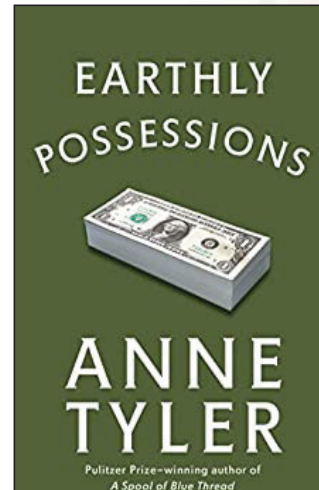
Set in the 1960s and '70s, *Earthly Possessions* features a small-town woman taken hostage during a small-scale bank heist. The woman seems more inconvenienced than distressed by this sudden disruption. (She reminded me of my sister.) What unfolds is nothing you'd expect but perfectly possible. At moments it evokes Elmore Leonard-type dialogues among its fringe-dwellers.

Tyler has no qualms about telling it like it is for her main character: "I tripped over a mustard jar big enough

to pickle a baby in." And, "I began to consider all our belongings with an eye to how they would look beside the trashcan." And, "My life has been a history of casting off encumbrances, paring down to the bare essentials.... A husband was another encumbrance ... and children even more so.... I

looked at my children with the same mixture of love and resentment that I used to feel for my Sleepy Doll. I would have liked to strip myself of people, too. I was pleased when I lost any friends."

Yet things keep coming back.



The Infinities, by John Banville

Action-wise, not much happens in Irishman John Banville's novel *The Infinities*. A man lies in bed in a post-stroke coma. His family gathers at his house: gentle, alcoholic wife; big bumbling son; son's wife, a gorgeous actress; marginal 19-year-old daughter and her glossy boyfriend whose actual interest is in her brilliant, comatose father.

Along with them gathers a selection of gods (Zeus, Hermes, and Pan) who, as gods are wont to do, stir the pot and thus the plot in divinely troublesome ways.

Banville, who has written numerous serious – sometimes prize-winning – novels, pulls off this sly deathbed romp without bruising the subject's sensitivity.

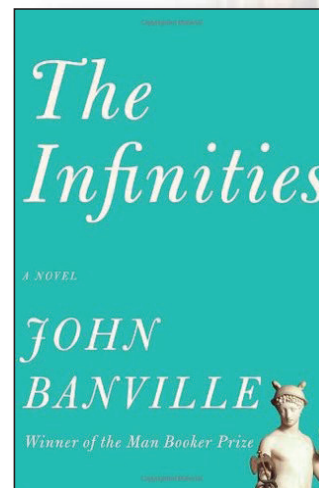
The god Hermes narrates the story, remarking at one point: "The inability of mortals to imagine things as they truly are is what allows them to live, since one momentary, unresisted glimpse of the world's totality of suffering would annihilate them on the spot, like a whiff of the most lethal sewer gas."

Even if Banville's scrutiny weren't lacking in malice the reader would forgive him in the face of such appealing images as "...a black cormorant perched on a log with wings spread to dry, as though posing for its portrait as

an imperial emblem."

Banville's characters, including the gods, are tenderly drawn, cradled in their separate predilections, thoughts, and flaws, and their isolation which is also their familiarity with one another. Like the dying math genius who understands infinities but can't move his hand to touch his wife "...solitary and at the same time together somehow here in this place, dying as they may be and yet fixed forever in a luminous, unending instant."

Loren Cruden writes fiction, nonfiction, and poetry, available at www.LorenBooks.com, and provides Home Pet Care in the north Stevens County area.





Mountain Meandering

Summer Bird Babies

Article & Photo by Patricia Ediger

Spring and summer represent to me new life and growth epitomized by the birth of offspring in nature. No matter what creature, I see wildlife babies as adorable ... well maybe with the exception of opossums, rats and insects, or ... okay, there are probably many exceptions. But for me, birds have to be one of the most delightful.

I am also repeatedly amazed and surprised by the speed of bird maturity, from egg to fully feathered and able to soar through the skies in a matter of weeks!

In doing research I learned there are two categories of baby bird growth: altricial and precocial. Altricial birds are those born naked or with sparse feathers, eyes closed, and completely dependent upon parents. Songbirds, hummingbirds, swal-

lows and woodpeckers who nest above ground are in this first category. Precocial are birds born covered in fluffy down feathers with eyes open and the ability to walk almost immediately, such as swans, ducks, geese, quail, turkeys, pheasants and shorebirds who all nest on the ground.

We are fortunate to live in an area where both types are born. Most of what I see, however, is the altricial growth upon our mountain. The chicks require much care, needing warmth, food and protection from the many hazards, especially predators. They need to eat several times an hour, insects preferably for the high protein content. The baby altricial birds are wobbly and clumsy and weak but able to beg with wide open mouths. Sometimes these mouths can look comical, out

of proportion to their little heads.

As they grow, they develop pin feathers on their wing-shafts which will eventually fan out into full feathers. Their eyes open and they gain strength until they begin to perch and show soft fluffy feathers on the head and face. These early feathers tend to be dull or spotted to serve as camouflage.

They really get cute as fledglings, meaning young birds, ready to leave but not quite able to fly effectively and very much still-dependent upon the parent bird for food. Fledglings are about the same size as adults but sometimes the tail feathers are still growing.

In June, we were already seeing fledglings of the early nesters, such as red-breasted nuthatches, chickadees (both black-capped and mountain), and the evening grosbeaks. All of these species winter here, in the firs, pines and cedars. In fact, this last winter I had a flock of over 30 evening grosbeaks visiting my feeders. It was loud and chaotic and messy.

The young fledgling sits by the parent on a branch, fluttering to let the parent know that it is hungry. The fluttering continues when the fledgling begins to eat. So far this spring I have seen the red-breasted nuthatches feeding both suet and seeds from the feeder to their young, as well as the mountain chickadees, along with the evening grosbeaks (pictured). They all do a similar flutter and it is fun to observe.



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When baby birds leave the nest, they tend to flutter and hop on the ground. They may stay low in shrubbery and might seem to be abandoned but parent birds are quite aware of their offspring's whereabouts, providing food and guidance. The baby birds molt or shed some of the spotted and camouflaged feathers as they mature. This time period is so important as they learn about their surroundings, safe roosting spots, appropriate food sources, and dangerous predators.

The next stage for these adult-sized babies varies according to species. Some stick with the family until the next breeding season and some even help their parents raise another generation of youngsters. Some species flock together as families and remain together indefinitely. The evening grosbeaks that reside near

our home seem to be increasing in numbers from year to year and staying around longer. Perhaps the flock likes the habitat I have provided here. Keeping my feeders full of black sunflower seeds year-round has certainly helped.

I also am seeing members of the rather large finch family (which includes 83 species plus 8 subspecies) such as the lazuli buntings, pine-siskins, goldfinches, black-headed grosbeaks, dark-eyed juncos, spotted towhees, cross-bills and sparrows, all beginning their courtships, pairing up, and nest building.

Cedar waxwings have arrived and will also begin choosing an ideal place to build a nest. Last year, a pair of waxwings built a lovely little nest in our lilac bush, only to abandon it – eggs and all – due to the winds that came through in July

and shook the shrubbery. I hope they will choose a little wiser this year, though it was a delight to sit and photograph their nest building teamwork.

We also have resident ring-necked pheasants that wintered over successfully, and I would love to get photos of a sweet pheasant family. Each year brings unexpected guests and I anticipate these wonderful surprises. I sure miss visiting my kids who live states away, but this is a nice compensation for a crazy bird lover like me. I am indeed thankful for these small blessings.

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.

A Woman's Best Friend

By Karen Castleberry Giebel

A few years ago there were the three of us living happily in suburbia with a dog door and a fenced back yard and life was good. Ralph was a black and white terrier mix. About 45 pounds.

A pound puppy, he became this woman's best friend. When Mom died at my house, in my bedroom, the day after Christmas (and three weeks after my marriage ended), it was Ralph who looked around at the empty bedroom with no bed, no carpet, and just a pile of blankets on the floor. Those big eyes seemed all-knowing and all-caring as he circled around and laid down, never taking his eyes from my face. I remember thinking, "Thank you," as I got his message and laid down on the floor next to him and slept for the first time in weeks. He never left my side.

Billy joined our little family, supposedly as the cute little lap dog. A nine-pound bundle of non-stop yipping energy, this black and white Shih Tzu-poodle mix soon dominated the house with his endless demands, taking on the role of baby. That little guy yipped, barked and whined so much at night that I finally gave up, picked him up, put him in bed with me and that is where he slept, quite happily from that night forward.

Billy would wait on the back of the sofa for Ralph to come wandering past and then leap on top of him – Cowabunga! – and they would roll and tumble across the floor. Ralph was the benevolent old uncle and Billy remained the incorrigible two-year-old toddler the entire eight years we had together. They were two of the greatest gifts I've ever received. They made me laugh daily. We walked for miles every day, rain or shine. Well, sometimes

I ended up carrying Billy. With the "real" kids grown and gone, we were our own little family.

Ralph developed congestive heart failure and the end came quickly. One run to the emergency vet at 12:30 a.m. and I rocked my best friend in my arms, telling him all that he meant to me those twelve years as the veterinarian mercifully sent his spirit upward.

Little Billy went under the sofa and stayed there for a month. I wanted to join him. The second hardest thing I had to do was pick Billy up, take him outside and begin our walks together, just the two of us.

A year later, my little guy who I thought would be my sixteen-year companion be-

they were together and happy.

I spent a very selfish four years alone. Selfish, because it turned out there was yet another dog out there who needed me as much as I needed him. I found Otto at the Buffalo Animal Shelter (his picture online had me laughing out loud). Black and white with Martian ears and handsome as could be, this two-year-old mutt, rescued from neglect and abuse, had my heart before I even met him.

At the shelter I informed Mr. O that I had a three-bedroom tri-level home with a stockade fenced yard and a dog door into the backyard and lots of squirrels to chase. I asked him if he wanted to go with me or stay there and wait for a better offer. The look he gave me said "I'm with you babe, let's get out of here!"

For the past thirteen years he has been my constant companion (pictured left, riding shotgun, as usual), though we did have a rough moment at the start. Four days after he adopted me I was headed to the basement with one last load of laundry late in the evening when he clipped the back of my legs and sent me airborne down the stairs. I broke my leg, but he was busily licking my face as I tried to pull myself off the floor.

Otto had lots of muscle and more energy than should be allowed, but also more heart than you can imagine. He is kind, affectionate and loyal. He thinks he's a lap dog. Don't tell anyone, but this shepherd/pit bull mix is a love bug with a huge heart and a playful spirit that cracks me up every day.

We walked for miles, the same route as with the boys. Otto loved playing ball and snatching that ball straight out of the air, jumping higher than I could imagine.



came ill, too ill to cure. Once again there was the heartbreaking privilege of rocking and crooning to my baby as the veterinarian helped him to the rainbow bridge to meet Ralph. I swear he died of a broken heart. I know I almost did. The hardest thing I had to do was get up and set out on that first walk by myself without my boys. But there are miracles and I looked up through my tears to find a double rainbow filling the sky in full color and I knew

Then there are those days when I guess his memory of the tough times returns and he comes to me and looks up with those soulful eyes, puts his head on my lap and just sighs. It's as if he's thanking me. I put my arms around him, rub his head and say, "Thank you, Otto." Thank you for making me stop being selfish and realizing that it's only when we give love that we receive love and we both have a lot of love to give.

We moved here in 2011 and my city/suburban dog joyfully became a country canine. Oh, the sights, the sounds and especially the country smells made him one gloriously happy pooch! Long naps on the sunny, warm porch alternating with chasing balls forever. Or winter naps on the couch, head in my lap in front of the wood stove as I read.

Otto is fifteen now; older than any dog I have ever had. Blind and deaf but his smell still works perfectly. He can smell cheese a mile away. I am now his eyes and ears as he follows me from room to room always needing to be with me. Arthritis has stopped him from snatching balls out of midair, but once in a while Otto enjoys tracking a ball ten feet as my husband rolls it across the grass for him.

We still go on our walks twice a day, but now it takes us twice as long to go half the distance. But I let him call the shots. Sometimes he will steadily walk the whole distance but other times he stops, stares into space and just sniffs the air. I try to turn him around toward home but he will look down the road and so we walk just a little bit farther.

In January he developed a funny little cough. X-ray showed that he had a tumor in his lungs. I was devastated. The veterinarian said he should have a few good months left and they have been good. He's happy and comfortable and loves taking his medicine with peanut butter. He sleeps for hours and hours and hours. Used to be when I got up in the morning, he bounced right out of his bed eager to start the day with me. Now he sleeps until I awaken him.

And so, we wait. We make the best of each day, both of us grateful for each oth-

er. I had always hoped that when it was time for him to go, there would be one final leap into the air, snatching that ball as his big old heart stopped. Well, that's not going to be and I may have to once again make "the decision." When my goofy buddy does leave this earth, I will be inconsolable for a time. But I will also be filled

with gratitude. These dogs, Ralph, Billy and Otto, have indeed been this woman's best friends and my life would have been so empty without them.

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

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Fungus Art and Craft

By Jim Groth

I am no artist by any stretch of the imagination. But I can appreciate any artistic or craft creation of a fungus as long as it does not deviate far from reality. We all know about household knick-knacks, cartoons, comic books, etc., that celebrate mushrooms for being beautiful, ominous or humorous. I appreciate this small amount of attention.

My wife collects ceramic, glass, concrete and wooden depictions of mushrooms that she distributes around the house. Print fabric is easy to find with nice depictions of mushrooms. Mushroom coffee cups, posters, jewelry – you name it and it can be readily found on the web or in some stores. I enjoy carving morels on top of walking sticks, which I give away to anyone who expresses a strong interest in such things.

But too often illustrated as typical is a mushroom having a red cap covered with white spots. Not that these are rare; they can be found in all parts of the northern hemisphere. However, they're poisonous.

The mushroom depicted is *Amanita muscaria*, the fly agaric. The “muscaria” is based on the fact that this poisonous mushroom was often soaked in water and put out on a table where it was toxic to flies (genus *Musca*). Much safer than spraying nasty insecticides into the air! But the beauty of the fly agaric led to its popularity as a model for all woodland mushrooms. So restrictive. Many other mushrooms deserve our interest as spectacular additions to the natural world.

I find mushrooms and other big fungi beautiful in so many ways. I think they complement the diversity of plant life

in wild places. It is always a treat to see so many mushrooms along the trail in spring or late summer. Not that they are always present – they come and go like the wind (or, more accurately, the rain). It often seems most mysterious. So it is no wonder that they have been subjects of various artistic efforts.

If you pick up a modern mushroom guide, its illustrations will be high-quality color photos. Such photos only became readily available in the late 1940s. Color is essential in properly illustrating mushrooms. Early black and white photos were colorized (ugh). The better field guides contain high-quality images of mushrooms in their natural settings.

Illustrating a field guide with hand paintings or drawings has to be more difficult, slow, and expensive than using photographs. This explains why photographs replaced artistic depictions in recent times, but not why some European books retained graphic artists in relatively recent works. I must admit that I prefer drawn or painted depictions.

Still, it is a rare art for a photographer to get the right lighting and setting to really show all of the important features of a mushroom. This reveals my scientific

bias. Illustrations in mushroom manuals are designed to show the important features that define a species. So, we tip

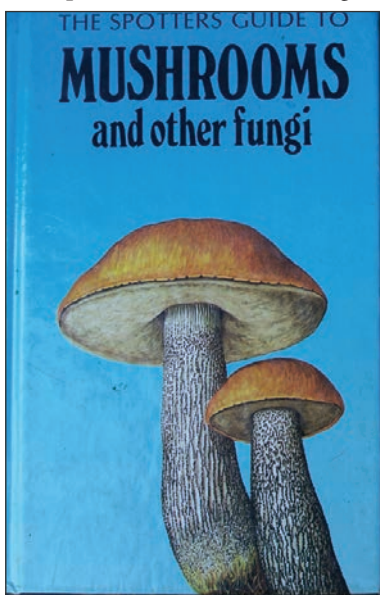


a mushroom on its side or back to show details of the gills, stem, etc. And, worse, I always include a Swiss army knife to give the proper scale. Talk about ruining an otherwise decent photo!

To illustrate the difficulties of getting good depictions of mushrooms, here I present three renderings.

Figure 1 (left) is a cover of a mushroom book from Czechoslovakia from the mid-1980s. It shows a large species of *Leccinum*, a Bolete with pores instead of gills underneath, that I know well and have eaten a few times in Minnesota. I have never seen a photo of this mushroom (including my own, which I thought were pretty good) that illustrates as well the beauty and detail seen in this artistic depiction, possibly based on a photograph. The figures inside the book are clearly paintings, and they are things of beauty.

Figure 2 (above) is a depiction from an unknown book of some colorful fall mushrooms called *Cortinarius* painted in their natural habitat. A joy to look at for a mushroom enthusiast, even if they are not good subjects for the table. One of the reasons that European books have such





amazing illustrations must be the popularity of these guides. People there really appreciate and know mushrooms.

Three other European books I own and love for their artwork are a small volume from Great Britain (published in 1943 when things there were not going so well), a 1981 British book dealing with Ascomycetes, which are mostly tiny fungi that also include morels and truffles, and one from the 1960s from Denmark. I note that many bird books as well use painted illustrations, probably because they can show the field marks more clearly and consistently than most collections of photos of birds.

Some fungi also lend themselves to art as a canvas. A great example is in the use of the white base of large shelf fungi that occur on dead trees. The primary one is *Ganoderma applanatum*, found on dead hardwoods. These are not common in our conifer-dominated forests, but they do occur here. We have a Western competitor in *Fomitopsis pinicola* on large dead conifer trees and stumps. It is easy to recognize because it has an orange-to-red zone along the edge of the conk (the large shelf).

The white base of these two can be

scratched to reveal a brown layer beneath. Subtle shading is possible, but I don't know how this is done. Artists and would-be artists have used this medium

shelf fungus is also visible below.

This item was presented to me when I retired from the University of Minnesota, so long ago. It was a fitting gift, since, for the last five years of my tenure there, I taught a comprehensive evening mushroom class that was populated by students from virtually every college in the university, thus proving how popular the subject of mushrooms had become. I became regarded as the "mushroom guy." There were, of course, other and better mushroom people at the university. But they did not wish to share their knowledge with the run of non-science undergraduates.

Fungi have not been front and center in art. I know of no still life works by the Masters. Even the most beautiful and striking mushrooms have been looked on with suspicion and discounted. I suppose that they share this trait with snakes, spiders, slugs, etc. But all of these things, and especially fungi, are critical parts of the web of nature. And fungi figure large in human culture and survival, both for good and ill.

Jim Groth taught mycology for 21 years at the University of Minnesota. His love of the West and of quiet rural living prompted his wife Jo Ann and him to move here in 2004.



to produce truly amazing examples. We have purchased several, of varying quality, from thrift stores.

Figure 3 (above) shows a depiction of a stinkhorn mushroom "drawn" on the base of a *Ganoderma*. The subtle shading is extraordinary. The brown top of the

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Free as a Bird

By Brenda St. John

"Tame birds sing of freedom. Wild birds fly" ~ John Lennon



When did I become a bird watcher? It seems to have happened gradually over the past couple years. I've become more and more enamored with the birds in my backyard, which, if you include the fields on either side of my property, amounts to about a hundred acres. Since the intentional development of the wetland next door, the increase in birds has been tremendous, and the music from their chorus brightens my days.

Birds were quite special to the ancient yogis, and many asana were given bird names. Yoga poses with bird names that come to mind are Eagle, Crane, Crow, Heron, Peacock, Pigeon, Swan, Rooster, Sunbird and Ruddy Goose. How many of these can you visualize when you hear the name? Did I forget any?

We do some of these bird poses in class frequently, others infrequently, but Rooster might be a mystery to many. It's the only one mentioned that I have never introduced in class . . . because I can't do it.

Rooster, along with Crow and Peacock, is classified as an arm balance pose. Eagle and Crane are standing balance poses. Heron, Pigeon and Swan are hip openers. Sunbird (a.k.a. Spinal Balance) is for increasing core strength and cross-body coordination, and Ruddy Goose releases tension in the lower back. I'll give you yogis a hint if you can't visualize Ruddy Goose, since I never call it by that name: From Table Top, sink your hips to your heels (Child's Pose), then return to Table Top. Moving back and forth between the two positions is called Ruddy Goose. The word "ruddy" refers to a reddish color.

One recurring yogic theme is yoga's power to bring about freedom or liberation. Freedom from what? Liberation from what? Superficially, we might notice that after a couple yoga classes, we feel more freedom in our joints. Our bodies start to move easier. Some chronic pains may dissipate. After several more classes, the freedom moves deeper within us. We actually start to feel freedom from the tyranny of our thoughts. We understand, according to the teachings, that we are not our thoughts, that our thoughts are separate from who we truly are. We might also experience liberation or freedom from limiting beliefs. We are often capable of much more than we think we are.

In the yogic philosophy, our beliefs are shaped by thinking we know it all, that we can see the big picture, when in fact we are seeing only a small section of reality or possibly even what the yogis call "false knowledge." False knowledge is the second of the five causes of suffering, some of which have been discussed in this column previously. False knowledge can be avoided when we practice freedom from attachment. Attachment often leads

to interpreting something such that it resembles the outcome we desire, rather than the truth, which is why non-attachment is such an important tenant of the yogic philosophy.

Watching birds in flight brings to mind feelings of freedom from ties or knots that bind us to the cares of this world or other types of heaviness that hold us down.

"Watching birds in flight brings to mind feelings of freedom from ties or knots that bind us to the cares of this world or other types of heaviness that hold us down."

Of the yoga birds mentioned above, four varieties can be viewed from my patio. They include eagles, crows, geese, and a lone heron. The Sanskrit word for Heron is *Krounchasana* (crown-CHA-sa-nah), and the asana is a seated posture with one leg bent back (Hero-style) and the opposite leg extended high. It provides a very intense stretch of the hamstring muscles. The name comes from the resemblance of the aerial leg to a heron's long neck.

To do Heron Pose, begin in Dandasana (sitting on the floor with both legs extended). Bend the left knee and place the left foot adjacent to the left hip with the toes pointing straight back. Then bend the right knee and hold the foot with both hands. Raise the right foot in the air, keeping the knee straight. The leg should come as close to vertical as you can manage. The spine should remain straight and tall with the shoulders down. Hold the position for about five cycles of breath, then release the pose on an exhalation, return to Dandasana, and repeat with the other side. One modification is to slightly bend the knee of the raised leg. A modification for the foundational leg is to lower the knee out to the side with the sole of the foot at the midline of the body (like Cobbler Pose), or even to keep the bottom leg straight on the floor. Besides stretching the hamstrings, Heron Pose is also said to be beneficial for the abdominal organs.



With time, the bird poses can bring about inner peace and harmony as they are practiced with lightness, grace, and a joyful heart.

Namaste.

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

A Year On the Farm

Positively Enduring

By Michelle Lancaster

These volatile days, I find myself searching for a predictable plot and a happy ending, which means I have been watching a lot of Hallmark movies. I know I am not alone in my feelings, since my husband has not complained after watching several with me! The lyrics to Luke Bryan's song "Most People Are Good" says how I feel: "I believe / if you just go / by the nightly news / your faith in all mankind / would be the first thing you lose."

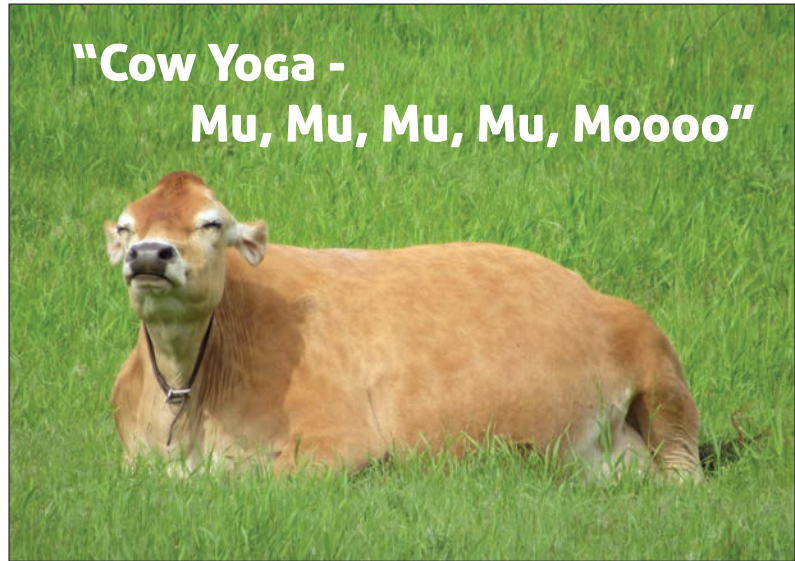
I do not want to lose faith in mankind, but I struggle each day with the current events and what I can do to bring about positive change. One thing I tried is posting, for 10 days on Facebook, a Funny Farm Photo of the day. I hope it made at least a few people laugh and delivered a snippet of Hallmark-worthy joy to a few lives.

One of the movies we watched recently was "The Magic of Ordinary Days," which is a 2005 film set during World War II. The story takes place in Colorado, near a Japanese internment camp.

When I heard about possible quarantine camps in the year 2020, my initial reaction was like that of many others – no way would that be legal to do in America! Watching this movie reminded me of the removal and detainment of Japanese-Americans, something many living during the 1940s may have thought not possible in their lifetime. That part of our history shocks me, even though I know it to be a true part of our past.

Knowledge of history can help us from repeating past mistakes and learn from good decisions to influence and speed up positive change. I hear quite often from people that they fully trust the government or know everything is being done for our benefit. That makes me wonder if those people have not heard about our history and the history of other countries. History tells me a dif-

**"Cow Yoga -
Mu, Mu, Mu, Mu, Moooo"**



ferent story – that those in power are not always making the best decisions. Often, yes, they are, but we also have to use discernment about how those in power use their decision-making capabilities.

What can I do? I ask myself this question often.

I strongly believe in the power of the vote. I do believe our votes count and matter. The 100th anniversary of women's suffrage is yet another great reason to celebrate the freedom in America for all citizens to have the right and ability to vote. We are not required to vote; we have the privilege of voting. What an honor, to have the opportunity to be heard. And once they are voted into office, we need to hold those elected officials accountable to the Constitution.

I also believe in the form of discussion called debate. Debate adheres to rules of conduct so that both parties can present information clearly. No screaming or fighting, as that just causes people to shut down and stop listening to the other side. Listening has the power to change lives.

In the movie, the main character used the word "forbearance." My husband asked what that word meant. I said, "It's an old-fashioned word," and in looking it up in our dictionary I found the word has been in use since at least the 1500s. A synonym is the word tolerance.

We like the meaning of the word forbearance and wonder what life could be like if forbearance was practiced today, as a modern word.

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

**"DO YOU EVER GET THE
FEELING SOMETHING'S
BOTHERING YOU?"**



Growth Cycles, *by Joe Barreca*

I finally got a chance to talk with Eileen Napier on the phone. She called (using a headset) while driving on her hour-and-a-half commute to the Liberty Lake Farmers Market from her home near Ione, Washington. I had just gotten up and only had one shoe on.

The conversation was not as hectic as it sounds. I'll get back to the farmers market part but what was on my mind was a podcast I had listened to the day before. Joel Salatin, inventor of the "chicken tractor" (I'll get back to that too) and author of many books on natural farming, was talking on a Regenerative Agriculture Podcast about his family farm heritage. He said, "The average age of a farmer today is 65, so about 50% of America's farmland will shift in ownership in the next 15 years." Salatin expects this to be the biggest peaceful change of land ownership in human history.

Control and Prevention. I was talking to Eileen because she is in a new generation of farmers who were not raised on a farm. Her family began farming intentionally. Well, maybe not knowing full on what they were getting themselves into, but they were willing to grow into it. Feeling that it is fun to farm was key to their success.

They began out where many of us who have our own gardens started, wanting to grow good clean food. To grow food without what Eileen terms "chemical dependencies," you need to learn about all of the food cycle. You can grow fruits and vegetables with soil, seed, sunshine, fertilizer and water. But all of those things are part of bigger cycles.

The soil is teeming with life that breaks down dead organisms and feeds them back to living ones. Seeds evolve, are selected and sometimes are modified. Water comes to us from the sky, circulates on

decided to grow animals.

They started on two acres with a chicken tractor. To be clear, that is not a mechanical tractor powered by or controlled by chickens. It is just a movable pen, sometimes including a chicken house, that is used to feed chickens and bring their energy into eating insects, weeds and whatever is in their way.

Moving the chickens from day to day means they fertilize each patch of ground as they find their food. They still need some good grain feed, but not as much as for chickens cooped up in a stationary pen. The Ramstead Ranch gets non-GMO grain from the Red Bridge Farm Store in Kettle Falls, and in turn delivers meat there. (Salatin noted that before combines, chicken and turkey were more expensive than beef or pork, which sheds a new light on the luxury of a Thanksgiving turkey dinner.)



The Ramstead Farmers: Stan, Jean and Eileen

The pressing questions on the podcast were, who would be the next generation of farmers and, just as important, how would they farm?

Many children of farmers are moving to the city. Farming is just not fun anymore. (*Time*, Nov. 27, 2019) Farmers have one of the highest suicide rates of any labor group, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease

and through the ground and animals and plants, and goes back to the ocean and the sky, either cleaner or dirtier than it arrived. The food we grow feeds our bodies and much of that goes to waste. Still more plants go back into the soil, sometimes through animals. In fact, that is where Eileen's family decided to step into a bigger cycle. They wanted animal protein. They

This gets us into a reborn twist on farming. In order to make it in a world of mass markets and centralized slaughterhouses, the Ramstead Ranch needed not only to grow food, they had to sell it at retail prices directly to customers. Farmers markets are a current version of the way people bought and sold food for thousands of years. But with Ramstead Ranch, and hundreds of other farms, farmers markets are only the beginning.

Eileen doesn't look at the Liberty Lake Market as merely a way to sell meat, but also as a way to do research into what products people want and how customers prepare their meat. She collects and distributes recipes. She invites people to become part of the cycle of life at Ramstead Ranch as customers who get regular deliveries. And she educates people on how and why the ranch manages their land the way they do.

These parts of the cycle include doing classes and tours at the ranch. Education is a two-way street. Ramstead now provides five kinds of meat: chicken, turkey, pig, cow and lamb. At every step of the way, expanding from one kind of livestock to another, they had to learn from books,

Down to Earth

neighbors and the internet how to raise those critters: what breeds to select; what to feed; how to birth; what diseases to look out for; what else they could use of the animals, such as wool and hides.

(What comes to mind is Salatin imagining a high school counselor telling an especially bright and hard-working student, "You are really talented. You could be a farmer.")

Passing such information on is not just paying it forward for Eileen, it is also another income stream, as agritourism. Part of her mission as a farmer is to let people be inspired by the beauty of a farm that works with healthy animals and plants. That part is really impressive and can be seen on a video of a year in the life of the ranch available through their website, ramsteadranch.com.

You don't usually think of a ranch as a place where sheep run over to check out new visitors, giant hogs like getting their backs scratched or a herd of cows and horses runs over at the sound of a whistle to be let into a fresh pasture. But that is part of the cycle at Ramstead Ranch.

A lot of the literature about regenerative agriculture, or any farming for that matter, will be about the details of things like grazing sections of pasture hard enough to include eating weeds but not so hard that the plants can't regrow. You will read about a balance of nitrogen sources and carbon. But you seldom read about the communication between cattle and the soil microbes that Eileen calls her "invisible livestock" or connections between new farmers and old ones.

Eileen says that she can learn from other farmers regardless of whether she agrees with their techniques. Fostering people-to-farm connections broadens the scope of how life on a farm naturally works and what a farmer's job really is.

There is a vision and a hope in the path that the Ramstead family has explored for making the change that Salatin sees com-

ing in how America farms and who are our farmers. It lies not just in the techniques, the joy and the beauty of how we can farm, but in the connections we can make by joining the herds on places like Ramstead Ranch.

Joe Barreca makes maps, grows grapes, makes wine and posts blogs on BarrecaVineyards.com.

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Digestive Matters

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.

Gastrointestinal herbs are often taken in capsule form to concentrate absorption on target, but they can also be used in teas and tinctures. Herbal “bitters” such as barberry, burdock, dandelion, centaury, goldenseal, gentian rt., white horehound, mugwort and wormwood, however, when used as digestives are always taken in tea or tincture, *not* capsules.

Herbs to relieve indigestion include coriander seeds, catnip, lemon balm, chamomile and peppermint. (Avoid peppermint and chamomile if heartburn is an issue.) Fennel seeds and other seeds such as caraway, coriander and cardamom subdue flatulence. Ginger rt. tones the stomach. Use barberry or Oregon grape rt. for indigestion from fats, hops fl. for indiges-

tion from starches, and echinacea rt. for fermentative upset. Calendula fl. in tincture – or meadowsweet infusion – helps neutralize acid stomach.

Meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*), whose scent and very name are comforting, is a wonderful digestive herb. The plant’s aerial parts soothe and protect the lining of the digestive tract. In addition to fever-reducing properties, meadowsweet is anti-inflammatory, anti-rheumatic, antacid, stomachic and astringent. It reduces nausea and heartburn and is helpful with gastritis and peptic ulcers (and children’s diarrhea). Take infusions 3 or more times daily as needed or as tincture 3 times daily.

Marshmallow and angelica roots bring heartburn relief. Angelica is also good for gas pains and cramps.

Hiccups sometimes respond to peppermint tincture – use black haw if they are persistent.

Ginger rt. is the herb of choice for motion sickness.

Nausea pre-meal may be relieved by gentian rt.; post-meal nausea is treated with swertia (*American columbo*), yerba mansa, Oregon grape rt. or peppermint. Other anti-nausea herbs include lavender, chamomile, catnip and wild yam rt. If these don’t help and nausea progresses to vomiting, try meadowsweet. Take chaparral if vomiting is due to fats or pastry-abuse, and goldenseal if due to alcohol.

Herbal emetics, on the other hand – to provoke therapeutic vomiting – include sufficient doses of lobelia, chamomile or Senega (snake root).

Herbal demulcents for soothing the digestive system’s linings feature slippery elm, oats, hops, Iceland moss, Irish moss, marshmallow rt. and comfrey rt.

Yerba mansa (*Anemopsis californica*) is a Central American plant whose

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Green Medicine

leaves may relieve colitis and stomach ulcers. Antiseptic and astringent, this herb helps whenever there is excess secretion – such as in sinus infections – and promotes healing for joint, gum and urinary tract inflammations also. Tincture dose is 20-60 drops up to 4 times daily, or yerba mansa can be taken in infusions.

Gastroenteritis – inflammation of the stomach or intestine – may be eased with Turkey rhubarb rt. if there is nausea or vomiting. A mix of 2 parts each comfrey rt., marshmallow rt. and meadowsweet with 1 part goldenseal, taken as an infusion after each meal, soothes and heals the stomach lining. Wild yam rt. can be added for pain.

Gastric ulcers, if not acute, may respond well to myrrh or goldenseal along with kava-kava, comfrey rt., meadowsweet, calendula fl., plantain, marshmallow rt. or slippery elm bk. If slow to heal, add yerba mansa or Oregon grape rt. Taking valerian rt. or hops in addition (short-term) may ease the stress aspect.

The colon's job is to sort and assimilate. If this is not going well, upset may erupt on the skin. So, if you're experiencing skin disorders it may help to support the colon by using demulcent tonics such as slippery elm, marshmallow, chamomile, fenugreek seeds, mullein lvs. and chickweed.

Chamomile (*Matricaria chamomilla* or *M. recutita*) could have an entire tract written about it, so varied and extensive are the herb's uses. In the gastrointestinal context chamomile's action is relieving and pacifying, used for stomach and intestinal distress, ulcers and irritable pain. (Think of Peter Rabbit.) As a digestive aid – unless you are subject to heartburn – drink chamomile after meals but don't take too much at any one time. More than two cups of infusion (or a large dose of tincture) may cause vomiting. Steep the flowers for no more than 5-7 minutes. Avoid chamomile if you are allergic to the aster family of plants or are taking blood-thinners. Lastly, for some people, handling the herb triggers contact dermatitis.

Gentian rt. and Oregon grape rt. strengthen an atonic colon. (Don't use

gentian if there are ulcers.) Constipation can be treated with cascara sagrada, senna pods, barberry, chickweed, horehound, fennel, agave (if feces are dry) or buckthorn, but root causes need to be addressed. The colon can become just as dependant on herbal laxatives as on conventional drugs for elimination. Best choice for an herb to normalize colon action is Turkey rhubarb rt., which must be taken in small amounts; otherwise it is purgative.

Herbs for irritable bowel syndrome include peppermint (in capsuled essential-oil form) or chamomile to calm spasms and reduce inflammation. (Don't use either of these if heartburn is an issue.)

The list of herbs for diarrhea is as long as that for constipation. Simple diarrhea (lasts no longer than a day or two) may respond well to echinacea rt., Astragalus or wild indigo if due to infection, or Oregon grape or bergamot if due to dietary indiscretions. Use grapefruit-seed extract, castela, quassia bk., Oregon grape – or its berberine-rich relatives – if diarrhea is due to giardia or other amoeba. Use cranesbill if chronic and meadowsweet, blackberry lvs. or plantain if treating a child. Yerba mansa, barberry and Oregon grape help during the recuperative phase of diarrhea, and chamomile, ginger or peppermint help if there are cramps. Other remedies include basil, nettle, mullein, raspberry lvs., slippery elm, calendula tincture, bilberry capsules, cooked carrots, and carob powder in hot milk.

For dysentery, herbs such as echinacea rt., wild indigo and goldenseal can be backed by mullein lvs. as a demulcent, white oak bk. as an astringent, and prickly ash bk. as a tonic, but dysentery and serious diarrhea need professional treatment.

Diverticulitis – pouches in the intestinal wall that become inflamed – may benefit from a mix of 3 parts wild yam rt., 2 parts chamomile, and 1 part each calamus rt. and marshmallow rt. taken 3 times daily. Slippery elm can be added as a further demulcent, and Turkey rhubarb rt. if there is constipation. Roughage in the diet should be avoided until the inflammation passes.

Antibiotic use tends to generate over-production of yeast in the colon. After a course of antibiotics, rebalance with pau d'arco bk., castela or red clover fl.

Hemorrhoids can be treated with herbal salves, compresses, fomentations and sitzbaths containing pilewort (of course) and plantain, comfrey rt., chickweed, witch hazel, wintergreen, chamomile, ocotillo, lady's mantle or yerba mansa. Use shepherd's purse if there is bleeding.

Intestinal worms may yield to wormwood, mugwort, quassia, castela or garlic, or to tansy enemas. (Do not use wormwood, mugwort or tansy for children or while pregnant!)

On that slightly queasy note, we'll exit the gastrointestinal realm.

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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Being Good in Myself

Article and Photo By Samantha Brown

It's coming and I know it. His oldest son will be 42 next summer. It keeps hitting me at the most unusual moments. It happened just today as I drove home in the rain, after running errands in town. I couldn't stop it – tears flooded my face and my heart felt like it was going to drown. I still hear the phone ringing, startling me up from my sleep. I feel the dark cold bedroom holding me, and my mother's weak voice spreading like a bloodstain on cotton through my mind. She was calling to let me know the body had been found.

I didn't even know he was missing. I had been a little out of touch with my family. My life choices had not been impressive in their eyes, and it was easier to just forget about me, rather than accept what I had done. Now however, it was time to cry together. I would be attending a funeral within the week.

I had been hiding on my mountain for a good two months. I was OK with being

forgotten. I had come to a point in my life where I realized I could not satisfy myself, let alone my family. I had tried so hard to be good, and to do good, and to be what everyone wanted me to be. I just wasn't.

That is not to say that I was bad. I simply did not understand what being good actually meant. I kept setting myself up for failure and didn't even see it. I was running on notions I thought I understood, but, in retrospect, I missed by miles.

I had recently given up my job and had not informed my family as to why. I had moved onto a small mountaintop away from the world with the one person who seemed to see me for who I was, and still liked me. We had decided to start a life together, tucked away and untouchable. I was happy hiding.

The unsettling feelings of fear and loss kept me awake through the dark hours. The stress did not help the growing human inside me sleep either. You see, I was going

on six months gestation, and comfort was already a hard state to achieve. I had not told my family, hence the feeling of fear.

A large part of the decision to start a new life was based on the hope that was growing inside me. I had jumped in head-first, giving it my all, and refusing to subject myself to judgment and ridicule. I had made the choice to feel joy. I knew sharing that news with my family would rob that from me. I did not want to lose it for even a moment. You see, I was not married, and this was not my first child. This was, however, the beginning of a beautiful future, free from the mistakes and heartbreaks of my youth.

At the funeral I wore a knee-length, blue silk dress. My growing belly protruded a good five inches past its usual self. I noticed every surprised face, and every tinge of disapproval. Shame is a fickle friend to me, both faithful and fleeting, and it will never define me. I smile like a beau-

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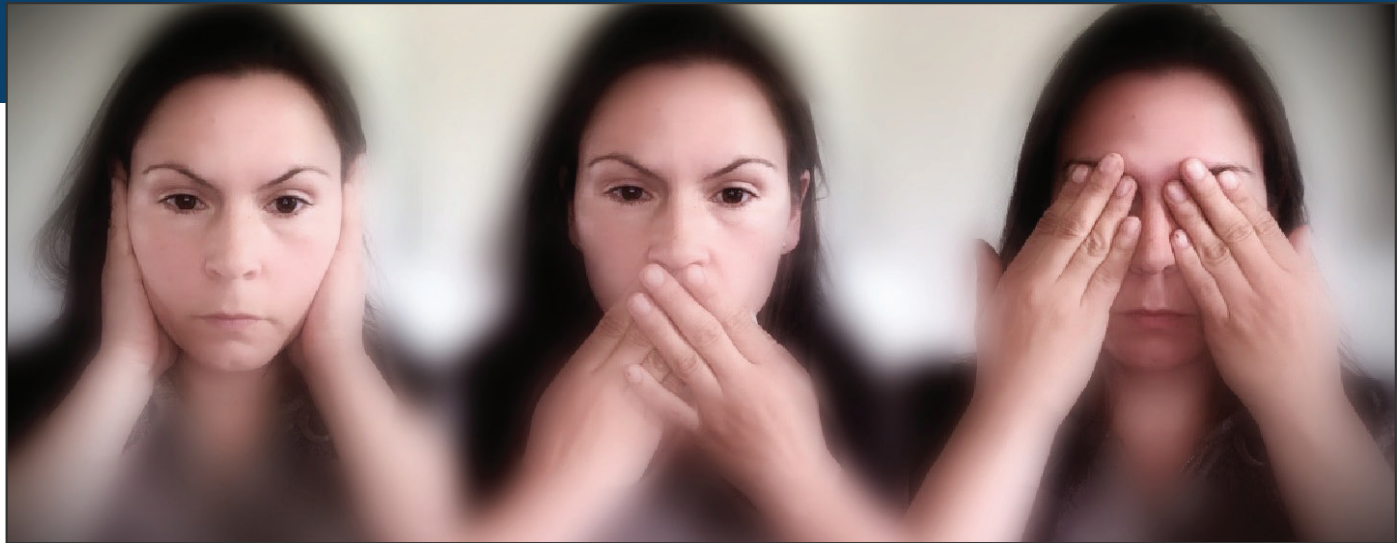
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ty queen on parade, broken or not. They call that courage, my friend, acting well, or doing good, against all adversity, including your own shame. That is probably the only good I was capable of doing. I would hope so anyway, I had a lot of practice.

My uncle was an alcoholic, divorced, and a father of eight children he didn't have the pleasure of spending much time with. If no one else could bring themselves to have anything good to say about my uncle, I sure would. The kindest words that ever graced my ears came from the mouth of that man. The tenderest expressions ever given to me shone through his simple, weak demeanor. I wanted every gloomy face in that room to know it, so I told them.

Life is beautiful. His life was beautiful. My uncle wore his weaknesses for the whole world to see. He could not hide them, try as he may. We all know he tried. Despite his struggles and many failings, he offered a tender heart and generous nature. The last words he said to me will live in my heart forever as the kindest gift I

have ever been given. He said, "Samantha, your dad loves you, even if he never tells you. In fact, if he says the complete opposite, he loves you just that much more, and I want you to know it."

I have no bad memories of my uncle. He never judged me or deemed me unworthy. He loved me and I lost him. We all had lost him.

He was 42 when he died. I look at his son. He seems so young, with so much to live for. I see myself at just two years younger. If I have only the next two years to become everything I want to be in this life, how do I go about that?

When my uncle offered me those words of encouragement, all those years ago, my father had never told me he loved me. I was 22. I chose to believe my uncle. To this day, I see myself more clearly because of him. I can see what it means to be good. Acting perfect does not make me good. Making the right choices doesn't make me good, wholly. What makes me good is loving unconditionally.

No one will care about my personal

shortcomings or struggles when my flesh settles in its grave. They will remember the words I did or didn't say to them ... the actions I took that helped them see the world for what it is ... the way I helped them feel about themselves, and that is all. If I want it to be good, well, that is something I am certainly capable of doing.

Samantha Brown is a "home-grown, off-grid homesteader who enjoys capturing and sharing glimpses of our way of life."



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A Good Utility Quilt, *by Nancy Drey Morris*

I was very taken by some of the quilts shown at the Piecin' Pals Quilt meeting the other night. Not necessarily all show-pieces, but some were obviously well used and well loved.

I was particularly interested in a quilt brought in by Karlene Harding that she made for her son, Shane, many years ago. It was constructed from denim that he had outgrown. There were stains, patches, pockets and zippers, all worn to a fine patina by an active young boy. She had to remove it from the bed of her grown grandson to bring it to show and tell. This quilt had been a favorite for many years and was now on its second generation of owners.

I am reminded of a quilt that my mother made for my husband, Art, and me when we married 40 years ago. It is made out of nine patch blocks using scrap fabric, some polyester, and a few pieces of wool and blends. It is backed with a cozy cotton shirting flannel and tied throughout to hold it together. It is big, at least 6

feet by 7 feet, and is wonderfully warm. "Just a good utility quilt," my mother had called it.

It is everyone's favorite quilt. It has been a floor mat for babies and a sleeping bag for grandkids. It easily converts to a tent or hiding place draped over a couple chairs. It can comfort when you are sick and need a cocoon to keep away the chills. It can shield you when you have lost a loved one and just need to wrap up and feel swaddled. It is a great addition to any sleeping situation on a cold winter night or a nippy camping expedition. It makes a fine tablecloth for an impromptu picnic, with or without a table. A cat or puppy will seek it out for a place to curl up and take a nap.

It has traveled extensively. It has camped out at Swan Lake and made many an excursion to the huckleberry patch. It has made countless trips to Arizona in the fifth-wheel trailer. It has often been carried in the back seat of the pickup. Just in case you come upon a wreck or need a nap

or want to stop for a picnic.

In its 40-year history it has been peed on, thrown up on, bled on, and spilled on with countless substances. It has absorbed the sorrow of tears, whispers of lovemaking, hysterical laughter of children, and snores of napping grandparents. What a story it could tell if it could talk.

It serenely goes into the wash and comes out looking fresh and ready for a new adventure. It is fading a bit with age and use, but has decades of good years left. It was well made to begin with, so its sewing has not come apart nor has its batting shifted. "Just a good utility quilt," my mother had said. Whenever I pick it up, I can hear her say that like it was yesterday.

Nancy Drey Morris, a nearly-80-year resident of Ferry County, recently published a book, My Scraps Of Wisdom, a collection of articles she has written for the local Quilters Guild newsletter, covering the history of quilts for families and the importance of sisterhood and creativity for the women who make them.

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New Days Always

Family Ties

By Becky Dubell

Well, this picture is showing me that life continues. Five years ago this hillside had no standing trees. It was a “clear cut” covered with downed trees all snarled up on the ground from the “burst” of wind that hit.

It's been five years already. I have a couple of “measuring sticks” involved in my life. First, and most important, is JJ, my granddaughter, who was born just over a month after Jim, her granddad, passed away five years ago. Second is a piece of heaven located out Tiger Highway known, in our family, as the “wedding cabin.” This piece of land was hit really hard by the “burst” that touched down around Bohanan Road the weekend before Jim passed. I just spent a super day out there with most of my family and noticed the trees and underbrush starting to take hold – a new beginning for the land. Our family new beginning is really taking shape now also. Things can change in a blink of the eye, as we have discovered over the past few months.

The little bit of traveling I have been able to do since mid-March has shown me how quickly things change out there by working with our own hands and some help from Mother Nature. Fields change from turned over dirt to the first green showing to the first mowing and bailing. New house for our new neighbors. That garage going in – wonder if it will actually have a place to park the



car when the snow hits (that darn four letter word!). The tips of the branches on the evergreen are light green which my dad chewed on if memory serves me from a way back childhood memory. “Many parts of a pine tree are edible.” Bare trees just starting to turn green to full green with blossoms to very small green plums and cherries – hurry up harvest time. Watching yards get a new look with the “Stay home. Stay safe.” going on. New construction on the truck route in Colville. More businesses opening – looking forward to sit-down desert at Maverick's!

Personal note time. I'd like to thank the local people who have continued working through all that is going on in our current world. I hope you have been showing these people how much it is appreciated by those us who were told to stay at home. Now ... I know what I've been doing for the past few months. I'd like to know what you've been up to? I'd like to hear the funny or heart-warming or heart-wrenching or just plain every day stuff that has been happening with you – dogs, kids, workers, family, friends, birds that float on the wind currents and make you wash your car again, weeds in the garden, etc. As Jim use to say, “Whatever blows your dress up!” Want to share? Leave a name and number on my machine and I'll call you back: 509-684-5147.

Make, and store, new memories each and every new day.



By Michael Pickett. Read more in his new book, available on Amazon.

A few years ago...

THE KID: “Wait...all these songs...you just made up?”

ME: “The one's I record, ..yeah...except for a couple.”

KID: (chuckles) “Dad, why in the world would you do that?”

ME: “Well, it's just what I do, plus it's how we pay for stuff.”

KID: (chuckles again) “Dad, there's no way you made up (sings with his heavy metal voice) ‘Set the world on firrrre!’”

ME: “Yeah, I did. It's about you in fact.”

KID: “What? It's about me? Why is it about me?”

ME: “Some of my songs are about you, some are about other people I know.”

KID: “Wait...I can set things on fire? Can I set some of my paper airplanes on fire?”

ME: “Absolutely not.”

KID: “Dang it.”

The Funny Corner

By Jerry King



“Dad must have an old operating system.
He keeps crashing.”

The Way It Was, According to Chick: *Growing Up On The Spokane Indian Reservation*

Excerpt from Robert "Chick" Wynecoop's book, printed in 2003 by Tornado Creek Publications, reprinted here, with permission.

Hay Play

While the cows were down in the field, we were allowed to go into the barn and play in the hay. This was one of our favorite winter games. Jumping from one of the rafters, I felt that I could fly like a bird before "landing" on the cushion of hay below. We even practiced our diving and did flips in the air, always landing safely in the soft hay. We'd go at it until we were completely played out – it was great fun for us kids.

When the barn was full of hay, we'd work our way across the barn under the beams that held the structure together. There was also a board on top of the rafters that ran down the middle of the barn. We liked to burrow under the board and rafters. This gave us a network of hay tunnels in the top of the barn. We spent many hours playing in these tunnels that would not cave in like our dirt tunnel might have.

I got smart and figured out a way of going up the hill to get to the barn without having to go near the cows. Once inside the barn, I crawled up into the hay. Then, using either a pitchfork or my hands, I pushed the hay down to the manger for the cows to eat.

While the cows were eating, Dad and Wig milked them by hand. Once in a while we kids crawled down to watch them milk. If we were lucky, they squirted milk towards us and we tried to catch it in our open mouths. They usually missed and milk hit us everywhere else, but it was a lot of fun. Body temperature milk is not that tasty, but the cats really liked getting it that way.

We also were strongly encouraged to go into the empty barn and help clean it of smelly manure and dirty hay. That was a nasty job, but we helped, once in a while.

As you can imagine, the hay that we fed to the cows didn't get there by itself. Dad cut and hauled it from a small field below the house. We were too small to help him with that chore, so Dad borrowed a team of horses or someone would come and help him move the hay. We could follow him around, but that got old and boring fast, and we usually went home before long.

I've already mentioned that Dad had bought some land a mile or two away where he planned to build a big house. Summers, we followed Dad down to this land that we called "The Ranch," to help



him with the hay. Like everything else, we caused more problems than we helped solve. Of course, Dad knew that some day we would be able to help, and he didn't want to dampen our spirits.

Dad had made a tractor out of an old truck, and he pulled the mower and hay rake with this old vehicle. Occasionally, he drove the tractor to and from the ranch. We kids thought it was a neat to catch a ride on the tractor. But for safety's sake, when he was pulling the mower or rake, we weren't allowed to ride on the back.

Once the hay was raked and dried it was shocked into piles. Then Dad got a wagon and using a pitchfork, threw the hay up onto the wagon. That was hard work. A lot of the hay would fall off the fork and end up all over you. If the day was warm, the hay dust stuck to your skin. Wild hay really smelled good, but the itching and scratching that came with it was a real pain.

We kids couldn't throw the hay onto

the wagon, because the bed was too high. It would take all day for us to pile in one load. When Dad started throwing the hay onto the wagon, we crawled into the hay and moved it around enough so he could put on a good load. After the wagon was more than full, Dad pulled the load of hay up to the barn and threw it in.

I don't remember if we had our own team of workhorses, so I guess Dad borrowed them when he needed to. The heavy harnesses were made to fit the huge horses. Actually, we had fun riding in the hay-filled wagon or sled all year long. Sometimes, we got to ride in a hay sleigh pulled by a team of horses. We burrowed down deep into the hay to stay warm. I remember how snow flew from the horses' hooves as they trotted along.

If we were riding in an empty sleigh, we had no protection from the wind as we moved along, so we tried to play to keep warm. One of our games was to try to see who could stand up the longest without holding on while the horses moved along. It was hard to keep standing for long in the middle of a bouncing, swaying sleigh or wagon.

The hay we gathered was mostly wild hay, but each year Dad planted a field of oats. He used a combine that made bundles of oats that were stacked into what, I believe, were called shocks. When dried, the shocks were hauled up to the hay barn. Oat bundles had to be stacked in a special manner. The stem was to the outside and top of the stalk was put in the center. This way, the better part of the grain was kept out of the weather.

Oats were a valuable crop, important both for their grain and for straw. We couldn't play in the oat stacks part of the barn, because we might have knocked off the precious oat grains. The cats really liked the oats, because the mice were after the oat and the cats were after the mice... and so it went.

Featured Dining & Lodging 2020

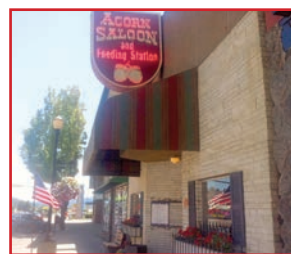
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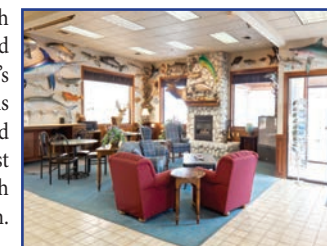
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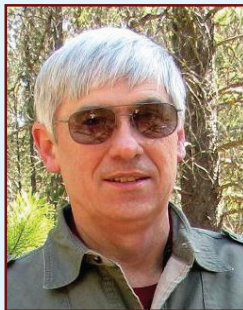
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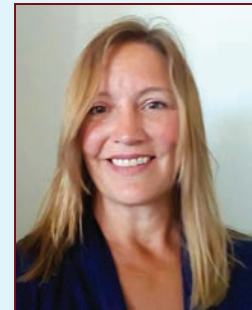
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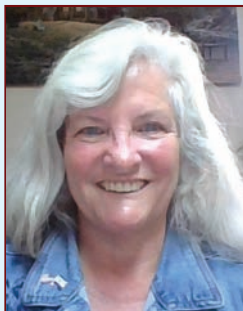
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