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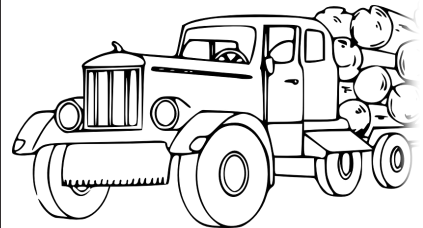
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Renews All In Nature
- JOHN ODELL, WordsOfWords.com



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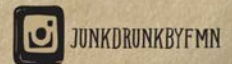
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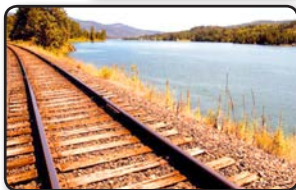
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We Can Disagree Positively

By Christine Wilson

"Let me never fall into the vulgar mistake of dreaming that I am persecuted whenever I am contradicted."

~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

"Gracious words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones."

~ Proverbs 16:24

"Balance to a lot of people means stasis; that you arrive at a balance and then you stay there. To me balance is what you do when you walk. First you balance on your left foot and then you balance on your right and that's how you keep going. You have to be in balance in order to walk but the whole thing is a balancing act."

~ Ursula K Le Guin

"Balance is never still."

~ Sarah Kilpatrick

"Thank you so much for pointing out my flaws. That makes me a better person and I am so grateful to you."

~ Nobody. Ever.

My early training included an assumption that disagreement was a bad thing. In my years as a therapist, I have found it to be a common component of most people's upbringing. Unfortunately, what I have also observed, in my own life as well as that of others, is that if only happy thoughts are considered part of the sweet honeycomb of words, we inadvertently build in limits to our self-awareness. It becomes more difficult to change, and we suffer with unresolved resentment. I've felt my share of that resentment and I would have to say it is my least favorite feeling.

I suppose being flawless would be fun, but I saw a skit once in which Superman was married to Lois Lane and she was unhappy with how perfect he was. The image of Lois Lane confiding her unhappiness to Clark Kent has become part of my thinking about perfection and defensiveness. The goal, I think, isn't to be mistake-free but to do the best we can and repair any difficulties we experience.

Thinking that way allows us to be open to disagreement without seeing it as an attack, making room in our lives for people who we do not agree with, and having the same standards for ourselves that we have for others.

None of this is easy, in my experience, depending on what our particular triggers are, how our past has shaped us, and whether or not we had our soul-strengthening power smoothie on any particular morning. Knowing we can repair glitches in relationships has been a relief for me personally; it turns out we are not fragile after all and we can restore connections after disruptions.

I think that listening with curiosity to the less flattering parts of the honeycomb of words can expand our ability to accept imperfection in ourselves without seeing ourselves as victims. Fantasy novelist Ursula K. Le Guin said in an interview, "That's what you go to college for, to test received ideas and find out that there is more than one way to think and to lose your bearings."

I would expand that beyond college, since

you do not have to be listening to professors in order to lose your bearings or have your sense of self challenged. All you have to do is spend time with a person who is willing to keep it real. If you are listening, especially if they are respectful, they will help you lose your bearings in all the right ways. As a consultant, I have spoken with many therapists who talk about having to "leave our ego at the door." I was told once by a child in our second session together that she thought I'd be younger. That was 20 years ago, so I can't imagine what she'd think now. She was not lacking in graciousness, just speaking her genuine truth out of surprise and curiosity.

We all get knocked off balance from time to time. I have resumed my use of squats and tree pose as a way to increase my stability and strengthen my knees. As a renewed apprentice of equilibrium, I groan, whine and think mean thoughts about myself as I fall over. Fortunately, I know about persistence and props. Squats get easier as I practice and tree pose can be done against a wall until my body and mind remember how to keep my bent leg from sliding down its straight companion.

I tell myself I have no balance, I challenge myself, and I practice to increase my skill. Within that series are the three steps of "thesis, antithesis, and synthesis." I have a perspective, a different perspective shows up, and then I produce a livable plan. The German philosopher Johann Gottlieb Fichte came up with the language and life has shown me the application. Imagine a three-part journey: I think a certain thing, I get challenged by someone who thinks differently than I do, and, if I so choose, I synthesize the information into a more well-thought-out perspective. I cannot do that if I put all my effort

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Random Acts of Community

into defending my thesis.

There are two spaces in my life in which a limited perspective on gracious words can wreak havoc. One is in my personal relationships. I told my husband recently that I believed him to be much better at non-defensiveness than I am. He responded by saying: "No one has ever been less defensive than me." Wow. Way to take a compliment and happily turn it into a fast and snappy example of my point. We don't have to love it when our friends and family point out our shortcomings. However, we can foster in ourselves the ability to hear what other people have to say and work our way around to that expanded definition of graciousness.

Long before I understood any of this, I complained to a friend about my feelings being hurt and he told me that I had to decide if they were wrong or right. If they were right, I should work on changing myself and if they were wrong, "Heck with 'em." No need for me to get defensive, he said: Learn what you can and lighten up about the rest.

A larger venue for defensiveness management is social media, where I have observed a significant lack of civility. A gracious honeycomb it is not, I would say. I'm hoping it will self-correct and that we will shift into a better way of managing information. Apparently, we must first live through this disruptive time.

In my experience, most of us are conflict-phobic to some level and our response to dealing directly with differences of opinion, disappointments and betrayal (perceived or otherwise) can range from uncomfortable to terrifying. It makes sense to me then that we would be tempted by the virtual option of avoiding direct contact with the person of our discontent. There is a certain attraction to calling people names, writing people off, and finding people who agree with us.

Ralph Waldo Emerson's journal quote about "vulgar mistakes" probably ought to be part of a mission statement for all of us as individuals, and even more so for arenas of discourse where we don't have to make eye contact with those people who trigger us. Otherwise, it seems it is easy to whip ourselves up into frenzied group rants. Public meetings sometimes take on the tenor of unleashed id, giving free rein to our least community-oriented nature. Having been laughed at and ridiculed when I've shared my opinions in such circumstances, I can attest to the disappointment and sadness at this missed opportunity for gracious disagreement.

As always, I hope we can collectively mature. Typically, I have found that personal relationships inspire a loyalty that fosters the tenacity we need to repair and move on from difficult conversations. But it can be tougher in the larger

world where that loyalty is shakier. Even before the internet, we had the saying, "Bad news travels around the world twice before good news gets out of bed." Good news needs our help opening its eyes and spreading itself out there.

In personal relationships, the research shows that we need five positive interactions for every one negative to keep an open heart. In our communities at large, I'd assume the same ratio

is at play. It's so much easier to hear negative feedback when it's balanced with those positives. That is the combination most likely to help us manage any defensiveness. Here's my hope for our communities: thesis, antithesis, synthesis, with a heavy emphasis on synthesis.

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



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Adeline for President

By Dr. Barry Bacon, MD

Children tell us important things about ourselves and about the world as they see it. One of the most important things that we can do, I believe, is to listen to them. They don't vote and they are often overlooked because they lack life experience. However, there isn't one of us who doesn't know what it is to be a child.

For example, there is a seven-year-old in my life who was given an assignment. She was asked to write about what she would do if she were President of the United States. Her name is Adeline and she is my granddaughter. Here is what she wrote:

"If I were president I would make all food free. I would also make there be no more wars. I would make there be homes for homeless people and I would give them money. I would tell rich people to give homeless people money and if they don't I would tell them that I am the President and I made the law about it. I would read to people if they were feeling sad. I would be kind to all people. I would tell poor children

about math and I would teach them it. That is what I would do if I were President."

Hmmm. A lot of good stuff from a seven-year-old. Many of her classmates wrote about building better 747 jets, making everyone billionaires, sending their parents for long-term time outs, eating all the jelly beans they wanted, or telling their parents when they need to go to bed. Not Adeline. She is thinking about people who are hungry, distressed, homeless, impoverished or depressed.

It makes me wonder, what causes this seven-year-old, or any of us, to be aware of, thoughtful of and moved by compassion to do something about the plight of others? I believe it is one of the defining evidences of our humanity – certainly not survival of the fittest – but something much more profound, a deep awareness of what it means to be human and enter into the suffering of fellow humans.

It is not unique to humans, however. I heard about a blind blackbird who, for his entire life,

was fed and cared for by other blackbirds who assigned themselves to be his caregivers. I recall years ago a pair of tundra swans migrating north on the shores of Lake Superior. One had died in a quiet pool near the lake, and the other stayed by its mate's side, day after day.

We all know what it is to suffer. We do not all seem to have the inclination to be compassionate and kind when others are suffering.

Through the Hope Street Project, I am working with a group of high school students on homelessness. We have chosen one homeless family and the students and Hope Street are intent on helping the family create and build their modest home. I became curious about what drives high school students to help strangers, so I asked one of the students, Kristina, if she would be willing to share a bit about why. Here is what she told me:

"I want to work with homeless people because I want to help those less fortunate. I love helping people out and making them happy. I

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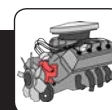
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Life Matters

also want to send a message to those in need that they are loved and we are here to help, that we care for them and they are not alone and on their own.

"My background experience is helping my dad remodel old homes and build homes. My dad is a self-contractor and I have worked with him since I was a kid, from building the home we live in now to helping him on remodeling projects. ...

"However, the biggest and best experience that I have had in building was helping poor families build two homes in Bogota, Colombia. I went with the Interact Club from my school.

"I can't say I have any big personal connections to homelessness from any friends or family. However, I have always had a big heart to be able to help those that don't have a home. The only thing I can possibly connect with homelessness is the striking poverty and poor housing conditions my grandparents lived in during the former communist times in Russia. They are still alive and share their stories. They have always encouraged me to help those in need.

"I hope to gain understanding and share that with my club members and others. I hope to gain an understanding heart about why people are in need of help and the actions I can take and involve others to help them. In the bigger picture, I want to gain the skills of undertaking a project of teamwork and effort and acknowledge that everyone has a circumstance in life when they might need help, and that coming together as human beings to help each other out is a key foundation to understanding one another and what we can do for each other to make our community and the lives of others stronger, better and kinder."

All of this leads me to the next logical question. What am I doing about it? I could find plenty of reasons not to get involved. I know

there are a thousand worthwhile causes in the world. Throw a dart at the globe and you will find a need. Often, I think we rationalize by saying the problem is too small and therefore there is nothing I need to do, or too big and therefore there is nothing I can do.

But break it down into bite-sized pieces. No one is asking us to fix everything. The real question becomes, can I help this one soul in my path and, in so doing, can I be changed in the process? That's the question Kristina is asking, expecting of herself. The answer is clearly, unmistakably, yes. And that is enough.

Fortunately, there are children around. They can jump in and change one life, and then another, and create a lifelong trail of memories in the process. Like Kristina, they find themselves wanting to experience the profound joy of helping someone else, simply because they can, not for any medals or ribbons but because it makes us better people.

A blind blackbird surrounded by his caregivers. A migrating swan who won't leave its mate. A seven-year-old whose presidential policies are world-changing. A high school student hoping to gain an understanding heart so that she can make our community stronger, better, kinder. I don't think there is much more

that needs to be said.

Let's listen to these children. Let's see homelessness and other forms of human suffering for what they are, a chance to change the way things are, to see the world differently, to dream, to truly live. I hope that you will understand now why I am campaigning for a non-partisan, underage candidate during the next election, starting now. Vote Adeline for president.

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



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Peter and Julia *Part I*

By Jack Nisbet

Peter Skene Ogden embodied all the energy and contradictions of our region's early fur trade history. Short and round, he was also physically agile and astonishingly durable. Many acquaintances remarked on his keen sense of humor, but others noted his difficult, even violent, disposition.

He was a lifetime fur-man who worked first for the North West Company, then for their bitter rivals from Hudson's Bay. Ogden could be brutally spiteful of native people, but married a tribal wife who traveled the West beside him. Serving as trader, field boss, explorer and diplomat, his assignments ranged from northern British Columbia to Baja California, and spanned the Northwest's transition from disputed territory to statehood. The core of his legacy, however, remains tied to the Inland Northwest and to his relationship with Julia Rivet.

The son of a Montreal judge, Ogden signed on for a seven-year apprenticeship with the North West Company in 1810. His first posting was at Ile-a-la-Crosse in northern Saskatchewan, where he took a country wife according to the practices of the fur trade. Usually identified as an unnamed Cree woman, she bore him a boy child at about the time Ogden turned 21 years old.

At Ile-a-la-Crosse Ogden fell in with a veteran North West agent named Samuel Black, and over a long winter the two of them systematically harassed traders at the rival Hudson's Bay Company post nearby. Their tactics, which included threats, crude intimidation, slashing clothes with knives, smashing fingers with sticks, and open-handed slaps to the face, were clearly described in Bay Company journals that depict Ogden as a bullying lout.

The same pattern repeated itself throughout Ogden's Prairie years, and culminated in the

well-documented murder and "butchery" of a tribal man named Buffalo, whose only offense was asserting his preference to trade with Hudson's Bay rather than the North West Company.

The Bay Company chief agent instituted a legal action against Ogden that eventually resulted in a murder warrant. By the time an authority figure arrived at Ile-a-la-Crosse to serve the warrant, Ogden was long gone, having skipped across Athabasca Pass to the Columbia Country. He ended up at Fort George, a North West Company post at the river's mouth near modern Astoria.

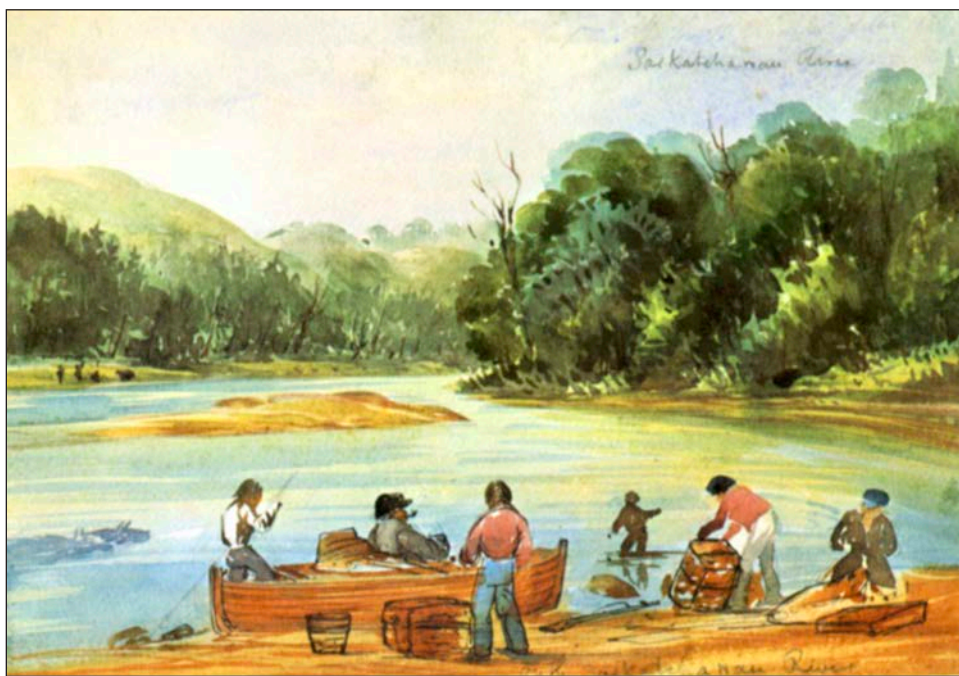
equal to the returns of last year" – and kept order at the post.

He also took a new country wife in the person of Julia Rivet, a woman who had much more impact on Ogden's life, and Northwest history, than his more casual alliances at Ile-a-la-Crosse and Fort George.

Julia was the stepdaughter of Francois Rivet, a legendary French-Canadian fur-man who worked for Lewis and Clark at the Mandan villages in 1804-05 and David Thompson at Saleesh House in Montana over the winter of 1809-10. Thompson saw Rivet again in the Colville

Valley in 1811 and 1812, where the French-Canadian and other free trappers had settled with their country wives. Most of the women were connected to the local Salish-speaking tribes, especially Bitterroot Salish, Kalispel/Pend Oreille, and Spokane. Although later Catholic mission records listed Julia's mother as "Therese Tete Platte," wife of Francois Rivet, the identity of Julia's real father remains a mystery.

That same uncertainty carried over into her relationship with Peter Skene



Looking portly in a York boat, Peter Skene Ogden waits for voyageurs to paddle him across the Saskatchewan River in the Canadian prairie. Henry James Warre, 1845, Crossing the Saskatchewan, courtesy American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Mass.

There Ogden was assigned to mitigate a violent dispute between some Iroquois trappers and a Cowlitz tribal band. Accompanied by the group of Iroquois in question, he traveled upstream to a village on the Cowlitz River. But the Iroquois were not there for mediation, and the violence that ensued soured relations between the Cowlitz and the fur companies forever.

Whether to get their troubled clerk clear of this mess or simply to give him his own command, the North West bosses next assigned Ogden to take charge of Spokane House. Although no journal survives from that outfit, it is known that over the winter of 1818-19 he took in reasonable trade receipts – "at least

Ogden. Their union at Spokane House was not officially recorded, and later in their long partnership Ogden refused to participate in a formal church wedding that would have codified their marriage. Julia Rivet remains a ghostly presence in Ogden's story, revealed only by infrequent journal mentions, church records, and difficult-to-verify oral accounts.

In the spring of 1819, Ogden left Julia Rivet in the Columbia District to travel east to Fort William, the North West Company warehouse on Lake Superior. There he discovered that the Hudson's Bay governors were about to amalgamate with the North West Company in what amounted to a hostile takeover.

This was not good news for Ogden. Not only did the Bay men still have an outstanding murder warrant written in his name, but his bully-boy behavior at Ile-a-la-Crosse had won him a host of lifelong enemies among the Bay Company agents. Under the new regime, in fact, both he and Samuel Black were marked as unfit to serve in the expanded Hudson's Bay Company.

Ogden responded by booking passage to England, where he used family connections to take his case directly to the Hudson's Bay Company Board of Governors. Before the board he argued that past events should be forgotten now, and that he had become a man with the experience and fortitude to be a valuable agent in the disputed west. He vowed to serve the Bay Company with the same zeal that he had always devoted to the North West cause.

Governor George Simpson had a large hand in determining the future of the Bay Company. He kept a ruthless eye on the company's bottom line, and soon realized that there were places he could use hard-driving men like Black and Ogden. Simpson restored them both to the payrolls and assigned Black to the Peace River Country in the far north. Ogden was told to

reassume his post, at least for the time being, back at Spokane House. "Ogden has gone to the Columbia and determined to do great things," wrote Simpson. "He does not want for ability."

A few years later, the governor expanded on his view of Peter Skene Ogden:

A keen, sharp off-hand fellow of superior abilities to most of his colleagues, very hardy and active and not sparing of his personal labour. Has had the benefit of a good plain Education, both writes and speaks tolerably well, and has the address of a Man who has mixed a good deal in the World. Has been very Wild & thoughtless and is still fond of coarse practical jokes, but with all the appearance of thoughtlessness he is a very cool calculating fellow who is capable of doing any thing to gain his own ends.

George Simpson's biting character assessments, often written after only a passing acquaintance with the subject, never included any mention of women, family or the context of tribal culture in which the fur trade operated. For Peter Skene Ogden, after he returned to Spokane House and rejoined Julia in the early 1820s, those very elements would prove far more important than any boss's cold disapproval.

To be continued next month.

Jack Nisbet's essay on *Spokane House* will appear this spring in the anthology *The Spokane River*, published by the University of Washington Press. For more information, go to <http://www.washington.edu/uwpress/search/books/LINSP0.html> or www.jacknisbet.com.



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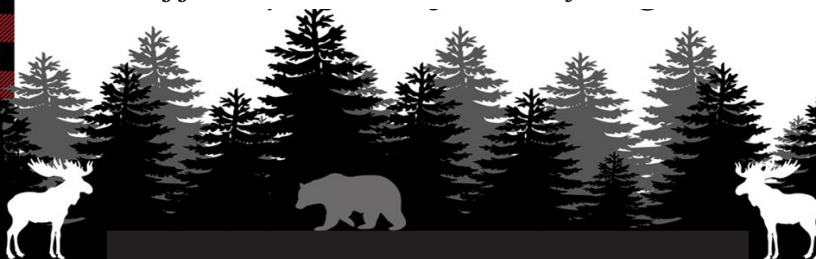
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Chasing the Super-Blood-Blue Moon

Composite photo and article by Patricia Ediger

On January 31, 2018, our alarm rings at 2:45 a.m. ... the day to chase the moon has arrived. We drag ourselves out of bed. It's dang early. But immediately we notice, jubilantly, that the skies are clear but for a few wispy clouds. After days of heavy clouds right up until the previous evening, we are thankful for the clarity we have been offered to view this special moment.

We make the coffee, build a fire in the wood stove, dress warmly and load our gear into the truck. By 3:15 a.m. we are making our way down our icy driveway with a bit more sliding than we would like, but it adds some tension to the adventure awaiting us.

We head southwest toward our first designated spot to photograph the moon: Rocky Top Drive by Seven Bays, WA. The moon's orbit is not a perfect circle but rather elliptical, and during its closest approach to us the moon looks bigger than normal, a super-moon. It appears about 14% larger or brighter when near the horizon.

It is also a blue moon – not the color as the name suggests, but a colloquial term for something that is unlikely to occur, as in “once in a blue moon.” A blue moon is the term given for a second full moon in the same month. Full moons are separated on average by 29.53 days. If a full moon lands on the first or second day of a month, it is likely to come again on one of the last days of that month. Blue moons make up about 3% of all full moons.

Added to this combo of super-blue moon was a blood-moon event, the name given to a total lunar eclipse. Only twice a year is there a chance for a total lunar eclipse, which is when the moon's orbit lines up with the earth/sun orbit. The blood-moon term is given due to the rosy orange hue of the light of the sun as it bends around our planet, the sunrise and sunset of the earth falling on the moon.

So, on this early morning, we have quite a special occasion with our super-blood-blue moon, or, as the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) call it, a Lunar Trifecta. According to NASA, these three phenomena had

not lined up for observers in North America since 1866 and, on average, a super-blood-blue moon occurs only once every 265 years.

We speed south on Highway 25. Only two cars pass by the whole way down. The only other participants we can see awake at this time of the morning are the numerous flocks of wild turkeys and groups of deer eating in the moonlight. The moon is beautifully full, reflecting on the surface of the Columbia River. My husband tries to keep his eyes on the road while I keep my eyes on the moon.

Within the first 20 minutes we notice a shadow starting to darken the bright orb. At first, I think it is just wispy clouds, but it remains on the face of the moon and grows in size. We realize the eclipse is already beginning. As soon as it is safe and the view clear of obstacles, we pull over, grab the photo gear and begin to snap shots.

I have carefully studied for days about all the camera settings, hints and helps to make this a successful photo shoot. It is getting darker by the minute and I have to operate my camera, including changing lenses by feel and habit. The lunar eclipse is happening way faster than we expected. We are not going to make our scouted location in time for totality (full eclipse).

Days before, we had driven down the Columbia, looking for spots that would allow for an unhindered view of the spectacle for as long as possible. Living in such a mountainous area, staying home was not an acceptable option. We needed lots of horizon.

Now, as we drive, stop, shoot, drive, stop, shoot, we wonder when we will see the blood moon hue. As the moon nears totality, the hue does indeed change. It is fascinating to watch. Beautiful and awesome. The stars are now easier to see as the sky darkens considerably. We reach our Rocky Top spot. We pull out the chairs, blankets, coffee and gear, set up and wait in the 28-degree, crispy morning air.

The super-moon has reached 100% fullness by 5:30 a.m. and the lunar eclipse totality lasts much longer than we anticipated. The earth is

huge, compared to the moon. My husband is getting colder as he patiently waits with me, warming himself in the truck. Me? I hardly notice, as I am so enthralled and determined to get the best photos I can.

By 6:30 a.m. we see the sun beginning to shed light from behind us on the scene. It is easier to see now. Suddenly we notice that the moon is also starting to glow brightly on the left side of its face. The earth's shadow is completing its pass across the moon. We linger, getting shots of the progressively retreating shadow and rosy hue. Finally, the blood moon phase is gone, but the adventure is still not over.

Quickly, we load everything into the truck, jump in and speed farther down the highway to our next designated spot – an abandoned farm, complete with old-time barn and a perfect horizon to observe the moonset over the Palouse-like landscape.

The sky is changing, some clouds are moving in. Our time is short. We jump out into the icy, snow-patched, grassy field. The moon is getting larger now as it settles on the horizon. It's just over the barn, now it's above the fence line. We turn around to see a gorgeous sunrise developing behind us, with its own demand for photos. We look back toward the setting moon, moving closer into the old farm buildings. The moon is huge, taking on another rosy glow, a reflection of the colorful sunrise. We stay, we watch, we shoot until the super-moon sinks below the grassy hills. Yet it is still not complete.

As we watch, the landscape enters its “golden hour.” The grass is lit by golden sunshine, the snow-patched grassy hills glow, the barn is backlit by an array of wild colors.

It's time to go home, back to our work day, tired but with souls and spirits filled with this awesome four-hour experience. I am thankful for my partner, his skills with geometry and navigation, his passion for adventure and pushing me further in it, his willingness to lose sleep, endure the cold and join me in this once-in-a-lifetime marvel. Was it worth all the effort? Absolutely!

Writing Tips Your Mother Never Told You

By Loren Cruden

My mother was an English teacher and, among other things, a writer. But the only prose tip she ever gave me was to not wallow in personal feelings. Emotionality in nonfiction gave her the heebie-jeebies. Beyond that exhortation, I had to evolve my own guidelines, a few of which, in defiance of professional secrecy, are shared here.

1. When writing fiction, if you grow tired of keeping track of certain characters, or want to try out an irresistible scenario, or feel sadistic toward sensitive readers – or want to get published – kill off a few.
2. Realize that – as in life – self-editing has its blind spots, manifesting most frequently in the young and the old, and – as with table-saw injuries – in the least and most experienced.
3. Just because a book is a bestseller doesn't mean it is well written. Which is why "Literary" is a publishing category of

its own. In fact, so many bestsellers are badly written that "Bestseller" has become a publishing category of its own, and when a well-written book turns out to be a bestseller (as opposed to having been written as a Bestseller), it startles everyone.

4. It may help your writing career's financial success if you submit work under a pseudonym sounding like that of a Bestselling author. Pseudonyms such as Don Brown, Leigh Child, Wanna Tart, K.J. Rolling – or even a lighthearted takeoff on a celebrity name, like Tater Champing or Peach Pitt – might do the trick.
5. Aspiring writers may want to cultivate personality traits conducive to authorial inspiration. Traditional mainstays include binge drinking, cynicism, uncontrollable bouts of fantasizing or staring

out of or into windows, the compulsion to live in a garret, knowing what a garret is, and eating only popcorn for dinner.

6. Adverbs and adjectives are amateur. Take it from a sharp pro: similes and metaphors make your writing more better.
7. If writing nonfiction, avoid waiting until your third paragraph to decide your topic.
8. If your story involves a character giving commands to a dog, please remember to have your character say "Lie down," not "Lay down." Misuse of the word "lay" has resulted – according to a United Nations study – in the U.S. being ranked thirty-seventh in terms of grammatical canine commands. Correct usage of lay and lie applies to chicken – and even hamster and iguana – commands, as well. Though not to cats, who are of

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course above commands (and grammar). Do your part to raise our national score and the education of our pets! Also, be aware that the correct position command for dogs is spelled “heel,” not “heal,” which would direct a laying-on of paws.

9. Poetry, like country music and blues, best arises from suffering. (See number 5.)
10. With few exceptions, reading something written in dialect is excruciating/ethno-offensive to readers even if, by some miracle, the writer pulls it off realistically.
11. Coming up with a killer opening sentence will be of little avail if it bears no relation to the rest of the piece. Ditto for cool titles. There may be anthologies that collect these, however. Or check online for sites at which writers sell or swap killer opening sentences and cool titles.
12. Ignore the fact that editors frown on neologisms. They’re just envious. Making up your own words offers rare moments of independence within a livelihood based on submission, revision, rejection, and having editors change your titles. (Not to mention all the health hazards endemic to the profession, such as writer’s cramp, bad posture, deadline neuroses, sedentary afflictions, eating only popcorn for dinner, and getting remaindered by your publisher.) Slipping a neologism or two past your editor is a liberating occasion. High-five yourself!
13. Book ideas that will never make it into print, for good reason: Albanian cookery in sonnet form; sex manuals for robots; diet books centered on eating popcorn for dinner; critical analyses of tights in Shakespeare; Sudoku for pets; collections of partisan Swiss opinions;

Deep South fiction without characters named Billy Bob, Elly May or Earl, or without characters having first and last names that are both last names. Or first and last names that are both first names. Or characters named after southern states or capitols.

14. Perhaps worth a try, when submitting badly punctuated, baffling, boring or unfinished manuscripts, is to present them as *avant-garde*. (A potentially successful strategy for neologisms as well!)
15. To make your writing sound Northern European, use understatement. For a truly American tone, use hyperbole (and the word “awesome” at least five times).

16. Happy endings are for sissies (and Bestsellers). Aim high. Go for “Literary” by writing something depressing. Flaunt words such as “ossified” and “supposititious” and “divaricate.” Or “touristation” (which I made up and am hoping to get into general usage). Be confident in killing off your main character just before a potentially happy ending. (Killing her/him off early in the story is more *avant-garde* than literary.) Including an alcoholic Russian intellectual living in Paris is a good ingredient. Or a precociously philosophical Italian street urchin in 1930s Venice. Don’t shy away from the boldly derivative.

Write on!

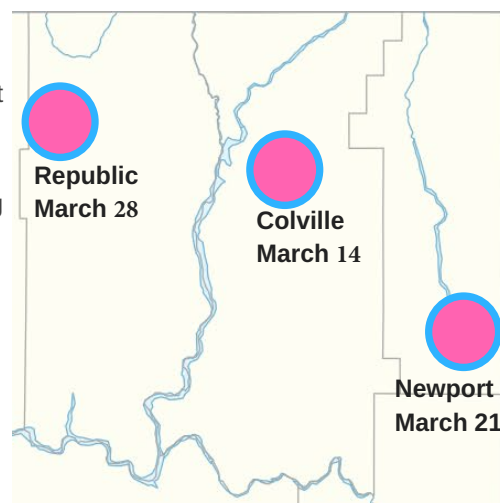
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The Deceptively Named Ring-Necked Duck

Article & Photo By J. Foster Fanning

We spend much of our time within the walls of the buildings we have built or the confines of the vehicles that transport us and our belongings place to place. Regardless of what we choose to do, the days continue to flow by and all the while the natural world is just a few footsteps beyond the door, a place to learn, explore and often relax.

What never ceases to amaze me is no matter the amount of time I am out in the wilds, or how much knowledge I gain about the flora, fauna, geology, archeology or anthropology of an area, there is a vast amount more to learn. In northeast Washington, the area encompassed within the Okanogan Highlands, including the upper Columbia region, is a treasure trove of wildlife with 75 species of mammals, 233 varieties of birds, 20 types of amphibians and reptiles and 34 kinds of fish. That's a grand total of 362 wildlife species not including insects, humans or domestic animals.

I'm lucky to have photographed maybe 20% of those critters. Most of which I wouldn't be able to identify at first glance when and if I finally get to observe them. Hence it was rewarding to recently note my first photographic sighting of the quite common, but new to my lens, ring-necked duck, which I found in a small backwater of the Columbia River in January.

While migration patterns take the ring-necked duck all across North America, the Pacific Northwest along with the northern reaches of the Rocky Mountains and the northern Sierra Nevada Range of California are year-round habitat areas for this dark-feathered duck. It typically breeds in the north and winters in the south.

It was the distinctive white bill markings and uniformly dark upper wings that keyed my initial identification of this duck, clearly distinguishing it from the scaups and other ducks nearby. The females of this species (*Aythya collaris*) are harder to identify given their close resemblance to female redhead ducks, but acute inspection reveals a smaller and peaked head profile and paleness around the face.

The term "ring neck" was at first to me somewhat deceiving in that this marking is just a faint brownish ring around the base of the neck – visible only upon close inspection. According to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, "this bird's common name (and its scientific name 'collaris,' too) refer to the ring-necked duck's hard-to-see chestnut collar on its black neck. It's not a good field mark to use for identifying the bird, but it jumped out to the nineteenth-century biologists that described the species using dead specimens."

It is the clear and obvious white band circling the blue-grey bill on both the drake and hen that is so much more easily discerned that has earned it the nickname "ringbill" by some hunters and birders. There is even a plea before the National Audubon Society to formally change the name of this bird to ring-bill duck.

While researching and writing about wildlife over the last few years, I've come to realize that each species has a unique niche, garnered by distinct skills, adaptations and abilities that translate into survival methods predominantly exclusive to themselves. The ring-necked duck has developed a feature that most other water fowl lack; this duck is not only a strong and fast flier, it is capable of attaining flight by launching directly from the water's surface, without the laborious take-off run of most diving ducks, giving it a marked advantage in predator avoidance.

Several other traits separate this bird from its peers. Unlike many diving ducks, the female and her brood often hide in marshy areas rather than seeking safety in open water. Another behavior is how the female will generally remain with her offspring until they are old enough to fly, approximately 50 days after hatching.

And finally, a noted difference with this duck is its diving ability. While many diving ducks feed in the 20-foot range, the ring-necked duck can easily dive to a depth of 40 feet to forage on its mainly vegetarian diet, 80 percent of which is seeds, tubers and pondweeds. These ducks supplement their intake with insect larvae, mollusks, worms and crustaceans. Young ring-necks consume invertebrates, principally during their first two to three weeks after hatching.

So, we have a deep diving duck, which might bring one to consider searching for them in deep lakes. Nope. Just like the deceptive name this water fowl bears, so too the duck itself fools us and primarily resides on smaller bodies of water, including beaver ponds, small lakes, marshes, stock ponds, or even flooded agricultural fields.

The oldest known ring-necked duck was a male, and at least 20 years, 5 months old. He was banded in 1964 in Louisiana and was shot in 1983 in Minnesota.

Listen close, that clock is ticking. The great outdoors is there for you. Lace 'em up. Grab a jacket and leave some footprints in the late winter snow.

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

WHAT'S



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

Mar 11: Daylight Savings - clocks ahead 1 hour.

Mar 13: Colville Community Blood Drive, Noon-5:45, Ag Trade Center. Call 509-991-2418 for more info.

Mar 14, 21, 28: Getting the Most Out of Your Board: a free workshop offered by Connections Consulting in partnership with WSU Extension and Washington Nonprofits at the WSU Extension Offices in Republic (March 14), Newport (March 21), and Colville (March 28). See ad on page 15 for details and how to register.

Mar 16-17: Colville Chamber of Commerce Home & Garden Show, 10-5 (Friday), 9-4 (Saturday), Colville Community College, 965 E. Elm St., Colville. Fantastic prizes totaling over \$1,200. See ad on back page for details and a 2-for-1 admission coupon.

Mar 17: St. Patrick's Day.

Mar 17: Tundra Swan Festival, 10-2, Camas Center for Community Wellness, 1821 N LeClerc Rd, Cusick, WA. Calispel Lake wildlife viewing bus ride, baked ham lunch, two tundra talks on Caribou Recovery Effort and Whitenose Bat Syndrome, select local art vendors. \$20 suggested donation. Discounts available. See ad on page 5 for details. Ticket reservations at www.porta.us or call 1-844-767-8287.

Mar 24: Let's Roll, Amazing Race, presented by Casey McKern's Pay It Forward, 9-1 (check in by 8:45 am), Happy Dell Park in Kettle Falls. Create teams of 4-6 family and friends, drive to numerous locations for challenges, inside and out, and enjoy a meal from Backyard BBQ, all to raise funds to support those with spinal cord injuries. First team to complete all challenges wins, plus prizes for specific challenges in adult and family categories. Email vmckern@yahoo.com for more info.

Mar 30: Healing the Columbia River: author Eileen Delehanty Pearkes will share her experiences about the possibilities for the Columbia River's

increased health and prosperity in the upcoming international treaty renegotiations, Rendezvous Theater at the Spokane Community College, Colville Campus. Doors open at 6:30, program at 7. This free event includes refreshments and door prizes and is sponsored by the Friends of the Little Pend Oreille National Wildlife Refuge.

Mar 31: Easter Egg Hunt, 10 am, NE WA Fairgrounds, Colville. Over 5,000 eggs and the Easter Bunny. Sponsored by Colville Elks, Colville Rotary, Boy Scouts, and Northeast Washington Fairgrounds. Call 509-684-2585 for more info.

Music, Dance, Theater & Film

Mar 1-3: 5th Annual Wild & Scenic Film Festival, featuring *Groundswell* presented by the Kettle Range Conservation Group at the Alpine Theater, Colville, Mar. 1, Roxy Theater, Newport, Mar. 2, and Quartzite Brewery, Chewelah, Mar. 3. Advance tickets: \$15 adults, \$5 students, \$15 at the door. Visit KettleRange.org for more info.

Mar 8-9: Peter Underhill, premiere concert, March 8, 7pm, CHS Auditorium, including concert bands and choir. Music composition residency and master classes, March 9, 8-3, Colville Junior High School music room. All events are free. Call 509-684-7820 and see ad on page 27 for more info.

Mar 11: Dances of Universal Peace, simple, meditative, joyous, multi-cultural dances, 2-5 pm at the Colville Library basement. Donations appreciated. Potluck following. Call 509-684-1590 for more info.

Cutter Theatre, 302 Park Street, Metaline Falls, calendar of events. Call 509-446-4108 for more info.
8th: Klondike - The Last Adventure, 7 pm
10th: Health & Wellness Expo, 8 am - 2 pm
24th: Leonard Bernstein at 100, 6 pm reception, 7 pm lecture.

Pend Oreille Playhouse, 236 S Union Ave, Newport, calendar of events. Details available at pendoreilleplayers.org and 509-447-9900.
17th: Bridges Home, The Celtic Concert, 7 pm
23rd-25th: The Stinky Feet Gang (3-6 grade play), 7 pm (3 pm on Sunday)

Trail & District Arts Council calendar of events. Details available at trail-arts.com.
2nd: PIGS: Canada's Most Authentic Pink Floyd Tribute, 7:30-10:15 pm

10th: Symphonic Rock Evolution, 8-10 pm

12th: Joe Trio, 7:30-9:30 pm

15th: Laura Landsberg, 7:30-10 pm

Woodland Theatre, at the spotlight in Kettle Falls, calendar of events. Details available at woodland-productions.org and 509-738-6626.

2nd-4th, 9th-11th, 15th-18th: You're a Good Man Charlie Brown, the Broadway Musical. See ad on page 5 for details and showtimes.

Music at Northern Ales, 325 W. 3rd Ave., Kettle Falls, northernales.com, 509-738-7382:

1st: Sara Brown, 6-8 pm

8th: Checkmate Reality, 6-8 pm

9th: Moondogs, 7-10 pm

16th: Open Mic, 7-10 pm

17th: Chipped and Broken, 7-10 pm

22nd: Borderland Blues, 6-8 pm

23rd: Fire Creek, 7-10 pm

29th: Refugees Unplugged, 6 pm

30th: Northern Aliens, 7-10 pm

Music at Republic Brewing Company, 26 Clark Ave., Republic, republicbrew.com, 509-775-2700.
Note: some shows require tickets.

17th: LazyLove, 7 pm

Arts & Crafts

Mar 1: First Thursday Gallery opening with David R. Andersen, 5:30-8 pm at Trails End Gallery, 101 N. Park St. Suite B, Chewelah.

Mar 9-11: Cabin Fever, three days in Republic, WA of arts, crafts, jewelry making, crocheting, knitting, painting, photography, scrapbooking, and more. Take as many classes as you want, all taught by Ferry County artists. If making hotel reservations, ask for the Cabin Fever rate. Visit ferrycounty.com or call 509-207-8334 for more information.

Literature & Writing

Mar 9: All Libraries of Stevens County branches will be closed Friday, March 9 for a staff training day. Visit theosc.org or call 509-233-9621 for more info.

Mar 10: Colville Library Improvement Club Book Sale, 10-1, library basement, featuring items for all ages. Hardbacks \$0.50, paperbacks \$0.25, CD's and videos \$0.25, many children's books \$0.10. Also books by well-known authors, \$1.00 and free items.

Mar 14: An Evening Celebrating Women Poets, 5:30-7 pm, local poet Lynn Schott shares the work of female poets at the Colville Public Library in celebration of Women's History Month.

Farm, Field & Forest

Mar 3: 4-H Sensational Saturday, 9-2, Community College in Colville, open to all school-age youth. Free workshops include sewing, livestock, horse first aid, dog grooming quilting, make and take crafts, and more. Complimentary lunch provided for attendees. Email sgordon@wsu.edu or call 509-684-2588 for more info.

Mar 3: Washington Farm Forestry Association workshop, Forest to Faucet: Streams, Wells, and Wetlands and the impacts on Small Forest Landowners, 9-4:30, 2537 Sand Canyon Rd, Chewelah. Check-in begins at 8 am. Adults, \$20, under 18, \$10. Continental breakfast, lunch, and refreshments provided. Registration on the day of the meeting will be taken, but lunch and seating cannot be guaranteed. Visit wafarmforestry.com/NorthEast, call or text 509-596-0931 or email wffa.ne.chapter@gmail.com for more info and to register.

Mar 7, 14: Milk Jug Gardening: learn how to make mini-greenhouses from containers such as gallon milk jugs. Step-by-step instructions and some insider tips. Plant your own mini-greenhouse to take home. Co-sponsored by Stevens County Rural Library District. March 7 at the Hunters Library, March 14 at the Kettle Falls Library. Email asabins@wsu.edu or call 509-684-2588 for more info.

Mar 10: NEWPG Monthly Movie Night, 5:30 pm at the Meyers Falls Market Community Connections Room, 160 E 3rd, Kettle Falls. *SEED: The Untold Story* follows passionate seed keepers protecting our 12,000 year-old food legacy and features Vandana Shiva, Dr. Jane Goodall, Andrew Kimbrell, Winona Laduke and Raj Patel. \$5 suggested donation. Discussion to follow movie. Sponsored by the Northeast Washington Permaculture Group. Email fungipermastead@gmail.com for more info.

North East Back Country Horsemen events:

March 6, Board Meeting, 6-8 pm. Pizza Factory, 619 S. Fir, Deer Park, open to all. **March 11**, Ride, 11 am, 33221 N. Missile Site Rd, Deer Park. **March 17**, General Meeting with potluck, 6-8:30 pm, Clayton Grange. **March 16-18**, Ellensburg Rendezvous, open to the public, crammed with free classes, demos, stock training, packing, used tack sale, dinner, live auction, Dutch oven cooking, competitions in crosscut sawing, truck and trailer rodeo, and more. Visit NEBCHW.com or call 509-598-0333 for more info.

Nominations Requested for Notable Trees to be featured in the annual Arbor Day Ceremony in April 2018, hosted by the City of Colville Tree

Board. Email annelawson@colville.wa.us for more info and nomination details.

Miscellany

Mar 10: New Veterans For Peace Chapter discussion with Spokane Veterans For Peace, "World Beyond War" and what about the U.S. Department of Peace? Presented in association with People Power at Kettle Falls Public Library, Noon-3 p.m. Lunch and snacks offered, bring non-alcoholic beverage of choice. Email to sinixt@centurytel.net for more info.

Mar 14: Northeast Washington Genealogy Society meeting, 1 pm, basement of the LDS Church on Juniper Street in Colville, entry at the back of the building. Most of us have seen the commercial where the guy tests his DNA only to discover his genes don't fit the family history he was given. In this month's program, Norma Yost, NeWGS Vice President, will describe how DNA testing proved her mother's research, revealed family secrets, and smashed a brick wall that stumped descendants for generations. Visit <https://newgs.org> for more info. All visitors are welcome.

Mar 14, 28: Wellness Naturally Group, 10-11:30 am, Meyers Falls Market Community Room. Inspiring people to improve the quality of their life with natural solutions, to make their own healthy lifestyle choices that transform the lives of themselves, their families and those they love with the truth about health. Call Laurie at 509-930-0953 for more info.

Mar 23: Kettle Falls Chamber of Commerce will host a Thank You party for past Kettle Falls Mayor Dorothy Slagle, former Kettle Falls City Planner Dave Keeley, and former Chamber VP Dave Blanck, 5-7 pm at Northern Ales. Light appetizers provided.

NCPR annual fruit tree sale to raise money to help support NCPR and the Northport Community Garden. Trees are 2 years old, 4-7 ft. tall (depending on variety), and grown in Washington state. Email jimaeh@earthlink.net or call 509-732-6106.

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

Flu Clinic: 1st and 3rd Thursday from 8-3, Tri County Health District 240E. Dominion Ave. Colville. Walk-in or by appointment. Adult \$20, child \$7.

MORE LISTINGS & DETAILS AT NCMONTHLY.COM

CALL HOSTING PARTIES TO CONFIRM LISTING INFO. THE NORTH COLUMBIA MONTHLY WILL NOT BE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR ERRORS OR SCHEDULE CHANGES.
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LISTEN UP

Derek Smalls Taps Into Music Royalty

Reviewed by Michael Pickett

In the 34 years since the absolute genius of Spinal Tap gave us a glimpse into the coming world of “reality” TV, the various members have appeared just enough (with three albums and as many tours) to remind us that they are the greatest “mockumentary” – sorry, “rockumentary” act to ever turn their amps up to eleven.

That’s why it’s so exciting that bassist and Stonehenge expert, Derek Smalls (comedian, Harry Shearer), is back with a solo album so full of upper-echelon musicians, that you can’t help but wonder what it all sounds like.



From Peter Frampton to the Hungarian Studio Orchestra; from Donald Fagen (Steely Dan) to

Dweezil Zappa; Joe Satriani, Steve Vai, Steve Lukather, Larry Carlton, Jeff “Skunk” Baxter and the list goes on ... Smalls spared no effort in finding the best musicians to execute his vision.

Just what is that vision? Well, *Smalls Change (Meditations Upon Ageing)* is an album that is incredibly dynamic, going from symphonic hard rock to lilting balladry in the space of an hour or so. From the opening swells of “Openture” through the wry “Complete Faith,”

followed closely by “Faith No More” and “Hell Toupee,” Smalls makes full use of his musician friends, and his almost Zappa-esque vocals and spoken word passages (title track), which are fantastic.

It would be sad not to see another Spinal Tap album or performance, but this is a glimpse into the comedic mind that helped make them so great. Smalls actually plays bass too, and has some wicked insights into aging, accidental “butt-dialing,” medical procedures, and a host of other topics that make this album – honestly – a beautiful-sounding piece of comedy. Right up there with Stan Freberg, Derek Smalls/Harry Shearer creates a fantastic album that really has no competition in today’s marketplace (well, unless you’re counting Fergie singing the national anthem).

P!nk Makes Art from Carnage

Reviewed by Michael Pickett

It’s almost crazy to think how long P!nk has been knocking us out with great vocals. Some artists have an arc that isn’t half as long (or interesting) as hers, and find themselves either recycling their own sound or floundering to find a new one.

As it happens, *Beautiful Trauma* is an album that is beautiful, explicit and jolts you in and out of pop masterpieces punctuated by crushing lyrical turns.

“Revenge” feels kind of like a page from the Gwen Stefani playbook, and where this works is on the R&B-infused “Better Life,” with P!nk in a deep, comfortable groove that’s unmistakably perfect for her. The world-dominating “What

About Us” doesn’t really ever get old, and suits her perfectly; but is nothing compared to the rocking “Whatever You Want” or the gripping cabaret of album closer, “You Get My Love.”

Is this P!nk’s best work ever? It’s certainly right up there, and manages to cross over from radio and stream-friendly to in-your-face honest without breaking the pace of a great album. Having been pouring gas on her solo fire since 2000, P!nk is a veteran artist who knows how

to find songs that will connect with the mainstream, and yet not water down what she believes in (and what she sounds like). Where a lot of artists will come and go in the space of less than an album, P!nk has convinced me that she will be here for another decade or two without breaking a sweat.

Stream Pickett music free on Apple Music, Spotify, Rhapsody and Beats. Just search “Pickett magnetic feed-back” and enjoy a whole album’s worth of music!



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A Good Read

Small Mercies, by Eddie Joyce

Reviewed by Loren Cruden

Debut novelist Eddie Joyce takes to heart the adage to write about what you know. A Staten Island stalwart who practiced law in Manhattan for a decade, Joyce intimately portrays Staten Island's Irish-Italian working class virtues – and vices, including bigotry – while occasionally turning a contrasting eye on snooty lifestyles in Manhattan.

Peter, one of three Amandola brothers in a Staten Island family, becomes a lawyer in a prestigious Manhattan firm, the only brother to fly the Staten Island coop. The middle brother, Franky, churns and stagnates after Bobby, the youngest, a firefighter, dies during the September 11 disaster.

Joyce's chapters rove among narrators: the surviving brothers, the mother, the father, the widow. We see in-laws, neighbors, friends, and the variety of different ways people grieve. Not in the immediate aftermath of loss, but in the long term – which sets this book apart from the usual literary drama. The author Joyce most reminds me of is Richard Russo, who so vigorously works the mine of American family quirks.

Joyce writes about what he knows, but also about experiences he perhaps hasn't had, such as the particular alliance between mothers and sons, and what it feels like to be old. He gets these things right – and the importance of small pleasures and, of course, small mercies. He works

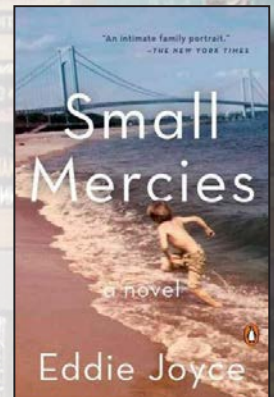
with touchstones of ordinariness that connect or elude us: homing in on food, drink, career, relationships; snapping at loved ones, falling flat in public, having or almost having love affairs, taking refuge in the familiar, or feeling desperate to escape it.

This book is not a romance, thriller, mystery, literary dazzler or adventure story. It's a song of family and place, simply and warmly told, but with a harrowing extremity at its core.

"Work, lateness, responsibility, hangovers, anger. [Until this moment] these all matter. We are still innocent. And, then, we are not. The world changes in the space of hours. Time untethers itself. ... Somewhere deep inside of her, a howl is born. She will live with it until the grave." *Small Mercies* is about what courage or its lack in the face of this may look like as time passes.

The plot revolves around the approach of a family party for Bobby Jr.'s ninth birthday. Bobby's widow will be introducing her new man to the Amandola family. Bobby's father "doesn't want the day to be ruined. He's happy for Tina. This guy, Wade, isn't half bad. Maybe not exactly his kind of guy, but he's nice."

To top it all off, there's some excellent basketball action thrown into the story. What's not to like, *paisano*?



The Ordeal of Katherine Krinz and Other Matters,

by Ray Bilderback

Reviewed by Loren Cruden

Republic, Washington's Ray Bilderback has resumed his prose momentum with an eagerly awaited collection of short stories. Unsurprisingly, they are Western stories, set in the 1800s and early 1900s, each told in Bilderback's laconic colloquial style. The surprise is finding two poems also, tucked into the collection and very much of a piece with it.

The stories are the kind that rural people tell one another over dinner or while repairing a fence line. They reflect the times: its racial attitudes and gender roles, simple pleasures and elemental challenges, and the transition from a horse-centered to auto-centered lifestyle. They are about people in a big landscape trying to get by, whether through hard work or by short-cutting authority; about families and the pressures that beleaguer them.

Bilderback dishes it up with gentle humor and sly dialogue, never overplaying the drama of extreme situations. He writes of landscapes with which he is well familiar, and takes care with period details – what was for supper, what tools were used for the day's labor. And horses are not generic; they are roans, bays, pintos. It is as if Bilderback has his cowboy-booted feet propped on the rail of one of his character's porches, jotting down these stories as he watches them unfold.

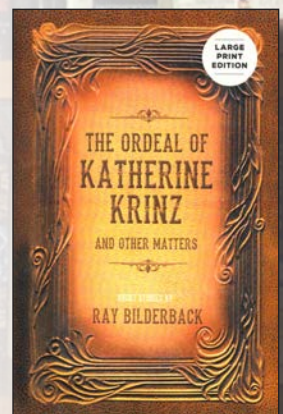
My favorites are "Tree Trouble," about the potent "why?" of a job seeming to go very wrong ("The way we

heard it your dad's crew killed Vestor Jenson. Fell a tree on him."). And "A Death at Fort Dwindle," where the vexed dynamic between a cavalry sergeant and his lieutenant is resolved in a way both mysterious and satisfying ("You take care of the men and horses and I'll take care of policy. Or do I need a different sergeant in charge?"). And "Summer Berries," the short, evocative portrait of how time does not heal loss, only hides it within the familiar ("Like a song not quite remembered, it lingered just beyond her reach.").

Bilderback writes with surety in his settings and ease in his narrative. For example, from "Reuben on the Run," featuring a character we last saw in Bilderback's novel, *Lawman's Dilemma*: "Back on the Merkle Valley Trail, he watched from a distance as they struggled down from the Jimson Trail. They were keeping up with Reuben but their horses had lost any piss and vinegar they may have started with that morning, whereas his horses had plenty of reserve. He was thankful again for his father's advice: 'Comes to horses,' he said, 'buy the best you can afford. You're not likely to waste money on good horses. Unless they are race horses, of course.'"

A time and way of life worth revisiting.

Loren Cruden's fiction, nonfiction and poetry can be found at Meyer's Falls Market in Kettle Falls, and at lorenbooks.com.



North Columbia Monthly Poet in Residence

Our Poet

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

Our Residency

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

Submissions

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

Window on the Columbia: Landscape With Birds by Lynn Rigney Schott

It comes and goes, the way white borders,
then is, black on the magpie's back. Or the way
the refrigerator runs unnoticed until silence
suddenly severs its illusion with itself
and your jaw ungrips, your teeth unclench.

The March river stirs, undoes December's work,
carrying its cold luggage to an approaching shore,
its disappearing ground. Ice is water, then ice
again, undecided.

This windy day the gorge goes unreflected, straining
for symmetry, its lost dimension. It is a reminder:
some days are faceless: the way an eagle could easily
be overhead, or a pair of ravens; as easily the sky
is empty, without omen either way.

Again, the refrigerator. Across the room another
window, south-facing. The snow retreats. You long
to be the grass gaining ground, the robin arriving.
Close-up the magpie's feather is oily green, not
black, and you have been deceived again. It continues
in spite of you: this becoming, this unbecoming.



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Recognizing Our **JANUARY** **GYMNASTS OF THE MONTH**



From left: Emily Elliott (Bronze), Timber Campbell (Lil Stars), Payton Hoogstad (Silver), Adalyn Sullivan (Twinkle Stars), and Rylee Dyar (Platinum).

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Choosing a Writing Career

By Linda Bond

Writing can be lots of fun. It can also involve a lot of work. It can be short (as in small ad copy) and it can be long, e.g. a novel. Some writing requires a lot of research, effort and time. Or the writing may mostly rely on our imaginations rather than facts. The varieties are endless. If you have not yet chosen a career path for your writing interest, or if you want to sample some of the writing opportunities available to you, here are some ideas to start you on your journey of discovery.

Personal Survey

Before looking at some of the areas of professional writing, it may help to know something of your work style and needs. Ask yourself:

- Do you want to work as an independent contractor (freelancer) or as a salaried staff member or wage earner?
- Can you work in an office or do you need to work from home?
- Do you have a background in any particular fields of knowledge such as medicine, advertising, entertainment, justice system, etc.?
- Are your finances such that you can patiently grow your earning curve, or do you need to make money as quickly as possible?

Make a list of your needs, limitations, expectations and the gifts/talents you bring to your writing path.

Surveying the Field

There are literally hundreds of job titles that utilize the skills of a writer. From creative independent writing – novels, short stories,

nonfiction books – to staff writing for government, business, industry or entertainment. But where to start looking?

Local libraries are a good source of reference materials you can review. Magazines can have lots of ads for online sites that offer information or direct contact with a variety of employers for both employment and for freelancing. And fortunately, the internet provides us with a relatively easy and fast way to gather information from the comfort of our own homes. Here are a few suggestions to get you started:

- Wikipedia lists lots of writing occupations at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_writing_occupations. Here you'll find definitions of occupations like "authors," "screenwriters," "freelancers," "copy writers/editors" and others. Jump from link to link in order to gather insights and see how many of these jobs are connected to each other and which ones sound interesting to you.
- Professional organizations offer information about the writing careers of their members. One list is found at: <https://www.whatiwritewith.com/2017/04/16/40-writers-organizations-to-know-about/>

But don't stop there. A Google search for "writing organizations" resulted in numerous links to follow. One I pursued led me to an article at BanderasNews.com and a wealth of info about such organizations as the American Society of Journalists and Authors, and Authorlink for news, information and marketing service for editors, literary agents, writers and readers, as well as the Freelance Editorial Association and many others.

Make a list of one or more occupations or types of writing you would like to investigate.

Preparing for Your Goals

Next, it can help to find out what academic or credentialed requirements might be a part of your chosen field. Medical writers, for instance, must have knowledge of medical terminology in order to prepare reports. Using the categories on your list, look for their:

- Educational or certification requirements.
- Ways to gain entry-level experience (e.g. through an internship) in order to get your first work assignments or job.
- Associations you can join to help you in your new chosen field.
- People or groups who might be able to mentor you and help you meet your goals.

Job Search

At this point you should be in a position to start looking for that next great writing opportunity. If you want an actual employment position, follow normal job search practices by looking for job listings in newspapers, magazines, online, on community bulletin boards and other likely posting locations.

Or, if you want to start your freelance career, see if you can partner with a more experienced writer who can get you started.

How ever you go about searching, keep at it. Before long, you'll get your foot in that first door and you'll be on your way.

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



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Living in the Moment and Embracing the Now

By Joanie Christian

For many people, along with winter comes a bit of cabin fever and the winter blahs. I have always found the time between Christmas and the first of spring to be especially challenging. The grey days and sandy grit everywhere can really seem dismal day after day. This year has been particularly so as the winter doldrums immediately followed my diagnosis of ovarian cancer and subsequent surgery last fall. It has been a bit of an emotional roller coaster to say the least.

While my cancer was caught early, and I have an optimistic prognosis, this major life event caused a great deal of anxiety, yet also provided a time of growth, introspection and self-reflection. It taught me to be grateful for every moment, and to search for the silver linings in life.

Which brings me back to the winter blahs. I am now more intentional about appreciating every moment, even while in the throes of winter. While late spring, summer and early fall is our typical kayaking season, I am learning to find creative ways to tide me over until spring is clearly here. And I look for the bright and shiny silver linings amid the dull grey.

One of my best tips is to unplug and GO OUTSIDE. While many animals or birds have migrated south or are in hibernation, there are remarkable things to be seen this time of year. Things that can't be seen at any other time of year. Dress in layers before going out, and your experience will be even better.

One of my very favorite things is to watch otters in the winter. They are usually seen

in groups on area lakes, and can be spotted running across the ice or sliding down snow banks before returning to the water through a hole in the ice. They often come out of the water onto the ice to feed on fish they have just caught.

This winter I had the privilege of watch-

ful to watch.

There were many holes in the ice, and they swam from hole to hole, peeking up through the holes to watch me. Periodically, the whole group would effortlessly climb up onto the ice, dog piling, cuddling and rough-housing with one another. There were many times when they surfaced very close to me, and I could easily hear the various sounds they made, and observe their interactions. They are very social and affectionate with one another. And curious. As curious about us as we are about them.

As luck would have it, my camera was in for repair and I only had a small point and shoot model. But maybe this was just another lesson in learning to be in the moment, rather than behind the lens. This was more than an otter spotting. This was a close encounter of the very best kind.

Many species of birds overwinter here, and Lake Roosevelt is an excellent spot to see them. For the most part, the river doesn't freeze over, and they have a lot of open water to swim and feed in. Sometimes I see birds in pairs, and other times I see big groups of just males or just females. I recently saw a large group of male goldeneyes, with their iridescent hunter green heads and striking white and black plumage. It is common to

see large numbers and species of birds all mixed together: Canada goose, goldeneye, merganser, mallard, bufflehead, coot and one of my favorites, swan.

Swans begin heading back north in the late winter and early spring. With the water level





drawn down at Lake Roosevelt at the time of this writing, the shallower areas of the river are exposed, leaving a sandy shelf for them to rest on, and shallow water for them to feed. I've seen both trumpeter and tundra swans here. They look similar from a distance, but there are differences in size, bill shape and facial plumage color and markings. Trumpeters are much larger, and a Canada goose looks small in comparison.

The Pend Oreille Valley is known for the tundra swan migration. Tundra swans love the shallow waters of Lake Calispel. It nearly dries up in later summer, but in the early spring it becomes like a floodplain in the vast Pend Oreille Valley. It is a popular feeding ground for migrating tundra swans. On a good day, you can see several hundred tundra swans, mixed in with Canada geese and thousands of other waterfowl that are all there for the same reason.

Moose are common, if you know where to look, and are often easier to spot in the snow. Bull moose sometimes don't lose their

antlers until March, so you may see one with a full set of antlers still. Elk are increasingly seen here as well. Flowery Trail Road and the Pend Oreille Valley are excellent spots for spotting moose and elk.

Birds of prey are present all winter long. Bald eagles and osprey remain very active, and can often be seen from the highway feeding on roadkill. American kestrels are starting to appear again and love to hunt field rodents. Blue herons can also winter over

of mine as a photographer is hoarfrost. This occurs following a freezing fog, leaving everything covered in shards of ice crystals. It is particularly beautiful on trees, plants and barbed wire fences. It seems like it happens only once or twice a year.

Alpenglo is another phenomenon occasionally seen in winter. A rosy glow on mountains just after sunset, it is particularly noticeable after a fresh snow. Fleeting, but exquisite.



in areas that don't freeze completely. A blue heron amid an icy scene is spectacular.

Speaking of ice, it can take on a life of its own in our winter climate. Creek beds and ponds have very interesting ice formations in different weather conditions. A favorite

vincible summer and silver linings amid the greys of life.

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

While I long for warmer and longer days, I have acquired a reverence for the gifts of the cold season. Winter can be both literal and figurative, and like philosopher Albert Camus, "I have finally learned that within me there lay an invincible summer." I encourage you to find your own in-

It Started with the “Plant Killer”

By Tina Tolliver Matney

What is your passion? What brings you joy? What is it that you do in your day that makes your heart feel full and feeds your soul?

Those can be tough questions. And really, it's none of my business and I generally don't ask them out loud unless someone leads into a conversation and wants to talk about it. But the events of the past week have left me wondering what it is that creates a drive in some of us to be creative and to feed our souls, even in times of despair, while in others there is just a void that has been filled with loneliness or anger or even just numbness to all emotion.

In my place of business I have recently noticed a rather disturbing trend of negativity. A few months ago, before the holiday season had even begun, a woman stepped into my plant shop. She stopped in the middle of the room and did a complete turn. There she stood looking at the plants and then her eyes landed on a painting I had propped up on the easel that sits on my work table. The first thing she said, with a rather sour look on her face, was “I kill plants.”

At first I was a little shocked. While she probably didn't mean it the way I heard it, her tone insinuated that she kills them on purpose. Then she said, “Did you paint that?”

I replied that “yes, I did.” It was a watercolor in progress that I was eager to finish. “So you're an artist then. I wish I could paint, I can't even

draw a straight line.” More negativity.

I have had to learn patience with customers who come into my shop bearing such negative attitudes and often hurtful comments. I call it patience because I've also learned that often I can find the kindness under that negativity by just talking with them. Usually I can find a truly kind person who just doesn't know how or can't remember how to express their joy. Something seems to be holding back their happiness.

It so happened that, on this day, this woman started to open up a little bit after I told her that exploring a medium like watercolor might be a really good way for her to try painting. She scoffed at my suggestion until I got out a piece of paper and wet down some paints. I offered her a brush and then we spent just five minutes playing with the awesome way these colors mingle and move on a wet surface. She smiled and then laughed – and there is no doubt in my mind that all of that negativity had just been chased from her very soul, at least for a moment.

When she left my shop she was smiling – not the disgruntled woman who had walked in just ten minutes before. I didn't kid myself that I had worked any magic, but I did hope that she could keep her smile and learn how to find it again the next time it went missing.

And sure enough, about a week later, she returned to purchase a little pan of watercolors and a pack of paper. She said she had gone home and dug out her daughter's old art set that had

been packed away in her basement. She said she had set aside an hour every morning and a few hours every evening putting colors down and then watching videos on the internet of some artists I had told her about that had informative and fun tutorials. She had found some joy in painting and wanted to continue. Then she told me that she had pretty much used up all of the paint and the paper that was her daughter's ... who had died from cancer just six months ago.

Oh, how this hurt my heart. Grief, in my experience, can become a wall between one's self and the entire outside world. But she wasn't telling me this in a heap of tears or anger. She was still smiling on this day while she bought new paints and new paper because she said she felt joy for the first time in a long time. Joy that she feared would never return to her heart. Getting up in the mornings had new purpose for her, as she had something to work on while she sipped her tea and contemplated the day ahead.

This woman comes to visit me in my shop now on a regular basis. And just last week she made the statement that she will be moving to a new house in town. She has chosen three of her daughter's unfinished paintings and has been working on finishing them so that they will hang on the wall in her sunroom ... that she plans to fill with plants that she hopes she can keep alive. I've promised to help her choose plants that are pretty much indestructible.

Art, whether admiring it or creating it, truly brings me joy. But painting also is a way for me to work past emotions that are far from joyous. Paul Cezanne said, “A work of art which didn't begin in emotions isn't art.” While I don't think any one person can define what is or is not art, I do find some truth for myself in this statement.

And: There are so many other things in life that can help restore joy to a heart filled with despair. Just sitting in a quiet garden or pulling the weeds or planting the flowers or growing the vegetables to set upon your own table. Those things, I think, all have the ability to help heal a broken life.

Being kind and recognizing the signs of despair seem to me what many of us could be practicing just a little bit more. We get lost in the sadness and the worry of the day and we forget sometimes that the person we just met might have just suffered a loss far greater than our own, or has just received life-changing news and hasn't even begun to process it yet, except to express a whole lot of negative anger out into the world.

As we near the end of this winter season and look ahead to spring, I hope that we can all reflect upon what truly brings us joy and feeds the heart and soul, and that we will take that and nurture it so that we can spread that joy out into the world. Because that's where I think it has to start, right here in our own hearts.

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Along the Mountain Path: Awareness of Breath

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

*A little poem. A song, a chant really, a prayer.
Soham, in and out, a quiet rasp, a whisper.
When it's done, what will you do for an encore?
~ Sarah Kilpatrick*

The conscious use of breath is one of the things that makes yoga so effective. Pranayama is the fourth limb in the classic Ashtanga philosophy. (Not to be confused with Ashtanga Yoga as developed by Pattabhi Jois.)

Pranayama is practiced only after the body, nervous system and lungs have been strengthened through asana practice. However, being aware of the breath, moving with it, is a part of asana practice from the beginning. Inhalation brings in oxygen and prana to stoke the fires of life. Exhalation is both cleansing and relaxing.

We generally expand the body with an inhalation, and move upon exhalation. Remember that when we "stretch," we are asking a muscle to relax, to let go. In order to use our breath effectively, we must first tune in to the flow of breath and the response of our body to that flow.

I start class with a centering breath awareness called three-part breath. With the body relaxed on the mat, lying on the back, knees bent and feet planted, arms out thirty degrees from the body, palms up, we tune into the present conditions of the body and mind. Tension, pain, thoughts, emotions are all noted. Then we watch the breath. It is challenging to simply watch and feel. Often students will want to jump in and expand the breath, or "fix" it in some way.

Learning to simply allow and observe takes practice. Of course, once you give your attention to the breath, it will expand. Observing the breath gives a true picture of our present state. We lengthen our exhales as a way to expand

and deepen the breath, and then we observe the movement of the body as the ribs expand and contract with the expansion and release of the lungs. Feeling the breath in the body is deeply relaxing.

Asana practice opens the chest and strengthens secondary muscles of respiration. It also brings the body into a balanced posture so that the diaphragm can move freely. There are some nice restorative stretches to open up the front and back of the torso for full breath. Backbends open the front of the body, and a simple supported bridge pose opens the front ribs to breath.

Sit on the edge of a standard yoga bolster (placed vertically on the mat), and recline with the body coming off the bolster just below the shoulder blades, so that they rest on the floor. Keep the knees bent, feet on the floor. Take the arms out thirty degrees, in external rotation to open the chest. Make sure your head is not tipped back, but you have a natural curve in your neck. You can close your eyes, but turn your internal gaze down toward your heart. Exhale fully, and allow your breath to flow freely, expanding the front ribs. Rest in this position for three to five minutes, gently roll to one side, and slowly press up.

Forward bends stretch the back body and open the back ribs to breath. Supported child's pose is a good rest for the muscles of the back. Begin sitting on your heels, legs folded, big toes touching, knees about mat-width apart. Place a

standard yoga bolster in front of you vertically, with the near end touching at the inner thighs. Your sitting bones will be resting on your heels.

Exhale fully and let the breath flow naturally. It will expand in the back ribs. After a minute or two, turn your head to the other side and continue to rest in supported child's pose for another minute or two. Place your hand under your shoulders, inhale and press up.

As you walk upon the mountain path, may you breathe freely. May the rhythm of your breath nourish and soothe you as it carries you up to the summit!

Namaste.

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



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"The Natural Choice"

Radish Redux

By Louanne Atherley

We always had radishes in our garden when I was growing up. As far as I can remember, my father was the only one who ate them. They were usually in salads, from which my brothers and sisters and I meticulously picked them out. Sometimes he just ate them whole, dipped in salt. I'm not sure if it was a carryover of my childhood prejudice, but I have never developed much appreciation for radishes. I no longer pick them out of my salads, but I don't plant them, and I don't buy them. So, in my quest to revisit underappreciated vegetables, I decided to take another look at radishes.

I thought that something that tastes so bad can't help but be good for you, and sure enough radishes are said to be very good for the liver and stomach as well as your heart and respiratory system. They facilitate digestion, prevent water retention and constipation, and generally detoxify the body. They are high in vitamins and minerals and low in calories and have both anti-fungal and anti-bacterial properties. These facts alone convinced me I really should give them another chance.

There are an amazing variety of radishes. The ones I grew up with were round, dark red, about the size of a quarter and very white inside. There are both spring and winter radishes, depending on when they are harvested, and there are many varieties, including black, purple, yellow, pink and white. They can be long and thin or short and round. There is an elongated radish, two to four inches, described as mild and sweet and called a French breakfast radish; daikon, a long white variety, and fancy round radishes that are white on the outside but pink or purple on the inside.

I have eaten daikon radish, and enjoyed it pickled with carrot in a simple brine of rice wine vinegar to accompany Asian food. On a recent visit to my daughter in Woodinville we decided to drive up to Bellingham to have dinner at Lovitt Restaurant with our old friends Kristen

and Norman Six. Norman served us a lovely cheese plate with his wonderful handmade crackers and, on the side, pickled carrot, pear and daikon. This got me thinking about variations on the daikon radish pickle.

Also, recently, at Meyers Falls Market, I tried a new product, Fire Cider. This is marketed as a tonic guaranteed to perk you up with its habanero pepper, horseradish and ginger. Straight from the bottle it does pack a good punch, and its recipe suggestions includes use in salad dressing. The market also happened to be carrying something called a watermelon radish that I couldn't resist. It is white on the outside, rather large, and a beautiful fuschia color on the inside.

It was lunchtime when I got home so I decided to start right off with taste testing. I happened to have an avocado and, sure enough, I found a sandwich recommendation for radish and avocado. I sliced the fuschia and white radish thinly and tossed it with lemon juice, oil and salt, spread it on toast covered with the mashed avocado, and sprinkled some gomashio or sesame salt over the top for good measure. The lemon juice and avocado combined to balance some of the sharp taste of the radish. It was not bad.

That night I was planning a tofu stir-fry. Someone had mentioned to me that they put daikon radish in their stir-fry, so I gave that a try. The cooked flavor was subtle against the tamari, ginger and sesame I used for the sauce, but the daikon kept its texture and so added a nice crunch. The other vegetables I used were broccoli, carrot and onion, and I tried baking



the tofu first instead of frying it as I usually do. Another good idea.

I got around to the salad a couple of nights later. I made coleslaw from half a head of cabbage with one smallish daikon and one medium carrot, both shredded. I dressed it with ¼ cup Fire Cider, ¼ cup grapeseed oil, one tablespoon honey and a pinch of salt. It was a light refreshing salad that would also be good on a sandwich or in a taco.

I had to try one last thing before passing final judgment on my radish experiment. Somewhere I saw a suggestion to grill them. As far as I am concerned just about anything is better grilled, so I sliced the watermelon radish and tossed it with olive oil and salt. As in the stir fry, it held its texture and had a slightly sweet, smoky bite once it was cooked. I would serve grilled radish with pork or beef in the future.

Well, there should still be time to order some fancy radish seeds before it's time to plant them. I think I will give them a try and then I will have radish greens to play with too.

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



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A Year On the Farm

New Lessons in Lambing

By Michelle Lancaster

Early Tuesday morning, Jay and I awoke to the noise that always makes us jump up, throw on our barn clothes, and rush out to the sheep pen. BWHAHAHAHA (repeated loudly, in a high pitch, every five seconds). Inside the barn where the sheep slumber, we found the source of the noise to be Bountiful's doe-eyed face looking up at us in concern. We pushed the other sheep outside to give her some space and then waited for what we assumed would be a normal lambing.

A half hour went by. Jay made hot chocolate to warm us up, then another 15 minutes went by. After 45 minutes of labor and strings hanging out, but no lamb born, we knew something must be wrong. Having small hands, I was the one to glove up and reach inside. I had to translate what my hands felt to what I would see if I had a camera inside.

I felt nothing – no lamb? Hmm ... I reached farther and found a head! But no legs. Hmm ... my first thought: lamb presented as head with legs down – I would have to fish for the legs. Farther in, though, I found two feet on top of the head, in my mind thinking, "Wait, a lamb does not have feet on top of their head!" Sometimes the brain is slow to recognize what the fingers feel.

The lamb was upside down – head pushed against the pelvic bowl, fitting like a joint into a socket – not able to come out on its own if left in this position. Now I started to really worry. This was equivalent to something that the Yorkshire Shepherdess, expert sheep keeper in England, might have to deal with, and her tales do not always end up happily. I did not feel up to the task, having almost zero experience assisting a lamb birth.

Jay said, "You need to try to flip the lamb and get it out. Now." I took a deep breath. Ready or not, I reached back in to put my hand over the top by the lamb's head and feet. I just wanted to see how pliable the area was, and so pushed the head to the left and down.

Maybe I got lucky with the correct side. Maybe the fact that we had not waited very long to inspect meant the membranes were still very supple. Either way, the lamb flipped right around. I grinned. Jay

cheered. Bountiful's face transmitted immediate relief. She dropped to her side and started pushing.

Within a minute or two, a white ewe lamb arrived. We named her Opal. She is the replacement ewe I have been waiting two years for. Any lambs beyond this are a bonus this year. Quite a way to start the season!

Two days later, a few hours after I headed off to work, Jay let the flock out of the barn to eat.



Wide-Load-Millie stayed in the barn, not showing signs of labor, but looking large enough to pop and acting peculiar. When animals get a faraway distant look, and do not respond to regular activities, we know their time is close. Jay kept checking in on her throughout the morning and, on one check, she was lying on the straw with amber-colored discharge. He left her for a while to push and do her normal lambing activities, because sheep prefer privacy at lambing time.

Jay returned a few minutes later, thinking Millie should have a lamb out or on the way. Instead, he found her standing despondent, neck turned, head down by her knees, big eyes pleading for help. Jay haltered her to keep her steady as he worked,

then gloved up and reached in. He felt two heads and one foot. One foot out of eight. Because of his experience with dairy cattle, Jay knew to match a foot with a head and push the second head back. He followed the foot and head, pushing back on them a bit for access. Up popped the other front foot and leg.

As mother nature would have it, Millie recognized the change and laid down to push. A tiny, coal-black ewe lamb, with streaks of white hair across her face, entered our world unresponsive. Jay thought she might be dead by now, two hours after the start of labor, but tried to revive her anyway. Using straw, he wiped her mouth clean, then swung her upside-down to clear her lungs. Nothing. So, he tried again and again. Finally, she coughed and started to breathe.

He laid the lamb by Millie's head, then reached inside again to find the second lamb. He repeated the procedure to deliver a large, fuzzy black ram lamb, more alive and vigorous than the first.

With both born and mother much improved, Millie jumped up to lick her babies – two licks to the girl, two licks to the boy, back and forth, equally loved. Millie drank a large pail of warm water and started eating some alfalfa, while intermittently cleaning her lambs.

When I got home from work, we dipped the exposed navel of each lamb with 7% iodine tincture to prevent infection. They latched on and nursed some

golden colostrum – to warm their little bodies up and provide immunity to diseases. Surprisingly, the whole group fared well. Sheep can be a lot stronger than we give them credit for!

Two black lambs, a girl and a boy, and one white ewe lamb. Just what I would have asked for, if I could have written up an order form for lambs. We learned that it is OK to be less patient and go after the lamb if labor does not progress in a timely manner. Jay and I would have preferred uneventful lambings, but after these successes we feel one step further qualified to become real shepherds.

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

Why Small Businesses Succeed and Fail

By Barry Lamont

What is a small business? The Internal Revenue Service and Small Business Administration (SBA) have a number of definitions, but two factors are usually used to determine the difference between small and large businesses: number of employees and annual revenue.

The range of employees and revenue is quite dramatic and, I'm sure, unbelievable to many of us living in northeastern Washington. A business could have as many as 1,500 employees and still be officially small, just like a business that has one employee. The revenue range is also quite a stretch, topping out at \$35.5 million annually.

When you apply those standards to the Tri-County region just about every business is a small business. More representative of our region is what is called a micro business, which is usually one owner with one to nine employees. This size easily makes up the majority of businesses in the region.

OK, so now what constitutes a failure and what are the rates of failure? Often the statistics do not separate why the business no longer exists. For instance, is it a failure if the business merged or was sold to another company? Consider the startup tech company that

after two years of operation is bought for millions and integrated into an existing corporation; hardly a failure for the original owner. The business no longer exists, but if the main goal for going into business is to make money, this goal was met very successfully.

What about the business that is sold to a new owner and the name is changed, or the business closes because of illness or death of the owner? As you consider failure rates you must realize that all may not be failures in the classic sense.

When you research failure rates for small businesses, you get a wide range of information. I found one source that claimed that nine out of ten businesses fail in the first year and another source that claimed only 15% failed in the first year. I even found single sources that contradict themselves, sometimes in the same paragraph. The Small Business Administration claims that 30% of businesses fail in the first two years and then also states that 50% fail in the first year. I'm not sure which rate I should believe.

I know that many of us have heard the statistic that half of all new businesses fail in the first year. I did some internet research and

could not find any data to support that statistic. What I did consistently find were statistics that indicate 80% of businesses survive the first year, 66% survive the second year, 50% survive the fifth year and 30% survive the tenth year. These are averaged rates and do vary by industry type.

Statistics also show that small businesses in rural areas have a slightly higher rate of survival. This is mainly because of the lack of competition due to a smaller number of businesses.

Specific industry rates vary. The industries with the highest survival rates for small businesses are health care and social assistance, at 85% survival in year one and 60% survival in year five. The worst rates are in construction, transportation and warehousing, with survival rates of 75% in the first year and 35% in the fifth year.

After excluding business sales, mergers, etc., the main reason for failure is financial issues. This includes not enough cash to fund the startup successfully, cash flow issues, overhead costs, low sales and misuse of funds.

Completing a business plan and financial forecasting with a realistic budget prior to startup are crucial for success. Knowing what your costs will be and forecasting expected revenues are priorities. The two classic examples of poor financial analysis are selling your product or service for less than it costs to produce and committing to overhead expenses that exceed the business's potential for sales.

Few entrepreneurs have all the skills and experience necessary for their startup venture. You may be a great chef but if you lack skills in management, marketing and finances, your restaurant may never succeed. Knowing your strengths and weaknesses and finding support to strengthen the weak areas go a long way toward improving your odds of success.

There are two ways to solve the issue of skill acquisition: You can hire it or learn it. Learning opportunities in business accounting, marketing and management abound, along with many businesses specializing in the same areas.

Here are three resources you can access locally that offer free information and support. Tri County Economic Development District (tricountyedd.com) is a great starting point for locating resources. Service Corps Of Retired Executives (score.org) offers free classes and an online library with lots of good information plus Excel templates for small businesses. The Small Business Administration (sba.gov) also offers a wide variety of resources and free online courses.

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From the Inside Out

Empty Mind: A Gateway to Love

By Daisy Pongrakthai

"The greatest medicine is the emptying of everything."

~ Gautama Buddha

One morning my daughter and I were in one of our usual philosophical discussions on life. She said: "Mom, our brain patterns run in grooves or habitual pathways. That's why it's a challenge for us to create newer ways of thinking, unless we know that they can. And they do. Our brain cells, just like all of our cells, are constantly refreshing themselves. That's how they're programmed. In order to rewire the brain, we have to become aware of this."

Ingenious! I chimed in about the importance of *awareness*, in that it holds the key to seeing our thoughts as they pass and sensing emotions as they arise. Then we can give ourselves a choice: "Do I want this or not?" Or, "Why is this feeling emerging?"

This fluid brain functioning is typically described as *neuroplasticity*, an efficacy of our brains that allows us to rewire any patterns or mental programs. Our cells in general are ever reforming, regenerating – *ever refreshing themselves* – demonstrating the extraordinary innate intelligence of our bodies. How do we become aware of this intelligence and know what to rewire? One of my teachers used to say, "First, we take medicine of Empty Mind."

When I empty my mind, it becomes like a cloudless sky, or a quartz crystal, which is a clear conductor of energy. It also "sees" incoming thoughts and outgoing projected ones. Empty mind is also like an unattached channel that opens my vessel to *sensing how I truly feel* at any given moment.

How do I feel right now? Elated or somewhat depressed, exuberant or lethargic, peaceful or anxious, bitter or forgiving, angry or loving, fearful or trusting, victimized or empowered? That feeling can be mapped out on an abridged self-awareness tool called a *Map of Consciousness* developed by Dr. David

Hawkins. His goal in creating it was "to overcome the inherent limitation of the human mind, whereby falsity has been misidentified as truth."

The Inner Dialogue Gateway

I have found that my inner dialogue holds the key to unlocking this zone or gateway, and when I tune in to my awareness I can clear away the mental self-sabotage programs racing about in a loop. By becoming clear about noticing these inner dialogues I can usher in more positivity and peace of mind.

Self-condemnation, self-distrust and any other self-negating or "not enough" type of thinking not only make me feel down, they project out onto others.

When my mind is empty, I can also hear others better and be attuned to what they are expressing or how they are feeling. In an empty mind state, others' thoughts and choices don't bother me because they are left to their free will, since there's nothing in my mind for their thoughts, choices and actions to attach to. Yet I can assess, weigh, understand and empathize.

E-motions & the Heart-Space

The next connected step I discovered to empty mind is to understand *e-motions*, which are essentially *energy in motion*. For me to come to an acceptance of these passing energies is to notice them for what they are: Whether perceived as "good" or "bad," they are forms of energy. And then I make sure not to attach myself to them – just notice and experience them, knowing that any feeling can be processed into the melting pot of love and higher frequency energies. This is the human heart-alchemy of transforming dense energies into the gold of love,

light, gratitude, forgiveness, acceptance of all "as is," not trying to change anyone or any thing.

Emptying the mind allows me to sense with my heart-space more – to get a coherent sense of how I truly feel. That way I can better deal with emotions because they're brought to conscious light. Additionally, that heart-space is less troubled when I empty or detach myself from emotions, especially shame, guilt, blame, martyrdom, worry, doubt, lack, anxiety and fear, because all these body-mind-heart stressors cause dis-ease (vs. at ease).

For me, getting beyond polarities and into *being* is a heart "at ease," not worrying or over-thinking or judging. There, surrender, forgiveness, gratitude and unconditional love enter easily into the conscious playing field, like effortless effort.

In countless wisdom traditions, their messages come back full circle to love out of our hearts. To me, this translates into downsizing thoughts and whittling away that which is not needed, that which does not serve our highest good and purpose, and allowing emotions to be processed while working to get to higher ground and balance bring one into the lighter being in the heart-space of love, which with effort increases over time.

In getting the mind out of the way, there are a number of quality inner tools to help in order to become more aware of our thoughts and what our bodies are sensing, such as meditation and breathing techniques. One practice I like is breathing in light and love and breathing out gratitude. Self-sabotage thoughts, such as self-criticism and judgment, do not serve us, and Empty Mind is a way to get beyond them and massage those lower vibrating energies into higher, more loving ones, such as self-compassion and self-forgiveness. For whatever our field of energy resonates within is exactly what frequency is transmitted out.

See more From the Inside Out on Daisy's blog at www.thepartyinside.com.

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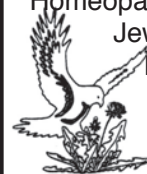
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Caution: New Creation Approaching

By Gabriele von Trapp

It can be difficult to accept that adverse circumstances in life are a perfect opportunity. In the midst of the adverse, I find myself asking, "Am I strong enough to withstand these untimely conditions? Can I be creative enough to make the best of what has been given? Can I find my way through the confusion? Can I rebuild myself on a new foundation? Do I have the gumption to change horses in the middle of the stream?"

I am of the opinion that life is full of illusions and misconceptions, oftentimes self-created, though I do not like to admit to it. There may be uncontrollable factors that impact and dismantle my life and that indubitably have the audacity to reveal the misperceptions of what I anticipate my future to be.

Retirement is one example. At my age, I find myself mingling with persons looking forward to retirement. We portend it to be a time spent with family and grandchildren, with freedom to travel, time to oneself or with friends, etc. Of course these are realistic presumptions, but as

we approach those anticipated years, whether we are 62 or 65 or beyond, a lot of stuff can happen. Illness, incapacitation, depression, addiction, loss of income, dissolutions, family strife, catastrophes and even death. Yes, there are some who get to live the dream, but not all do.

As we advance in age, we continue to decline and what we have made of life catches up to us. Retirement may not pan out to be what we've imagined. If we are not prepared to be strong enough, flexible enough, creative or prepared enough, retirement can become a dark and empty place.

Success is another snare. My preconceived notions of the fulfillment of my aims, dreams, purposes and hopes can be adversely affected by circumstances. It is falsely and dangerously assumed that success is cumulative. There is no greater disappointment than to realize that all my efforts, strivings, endurance and commitments have not translated into my notion of success. The after-effects can be compromising and diminishing and bog me down. Where do

I begin to peel off the layers of disappointment and regret to uncover the kernel of a new inspiration?

Misconceptions can appear at any time in life. My daughter and son-in-law recently went on vacation to Hawaii. They had visited the same island several times before and had a wonderful experience each time, but planned to visit a new island. To save money my daughter arranged to stay at a couple of B&Bs. The first was sweet, but the second was filthy. When I called her, she was at a grocery store buying cleaners. Her anticipation was like a bubble that had burst and she was not enjoying her vacation at all! She wanted to come home.

When I called her the following day, she and her husband were gleefully sunburned, making the best of their time and situation. They had embraced the opportunity with flexibility and ingenuity to make the adjustments necessary to create a new attitude within their circumstances.

On the dark side, there are life circumstances

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Inner Landscape

some of us are not prepared to submit. We cannot seem to find the strength, creativity, flexibility or ability to withstand what has found us. Life can become overwhelming, disorienting and disappointing. Some choose to shut down and become inactive, and sink into the darkness of themselves. Fear, paranoia, despair and confusion can be powerfully debilitating. Some pull the trigger earlier or later in one form or another. That is what my husband chose to do.

He did not imagine or anticipate the circumstances in which he found himself. He could not, within himself, find creativity, endurance, wherewithal or his own audacity to overcome this turn of events. In his perception, he was inadvertently confronted with something bigger than himself. It was a perfect time to let go of his anticipations and approach life anew, own up, face forward and trust, and step out of the comfort of his illusions. Instead he pulled the trigger, literally.

He left behind three children under the age of six and a devoted and loving wife. I buried him on our seventh wedding anniversary. I subsequently inherited his misery.

Looking back over the years, the first year after his death is still only a blur. I was completely dysfunctional, miserable, lonely, frightened and in complete despair. I remember my children covering me with a blanket each night while I lay on my permanent perch, the couch. They would each tuck themselves into bed without my participation. I was completely drained physically, emotionally and spiritually. I saw no hope for our future and felt blindsided by our circumstances. This couldn't be my reality.

I soon surrendered to unimagined possibilities.

My children were my motivation and inspiration. I realized that I must become both mother and father and completely independent. I had to reinvent myself and what I believed was possible, without apprehension. A perfect opportunity was staring me in the face forgivingly in an

unforgiving landscape.

I accepted my circumstances and the challenges and was soon running my household, bringing in the firewood, tending to my children, tilling and planting a garden, fixing the broken water pipes, cleaning the chimney, changing the oil and swapping out snow tires. I even cut my own firewood, slinging the chainsaw like a pro (once I figured out how to get the thing started) and splitting eight cords of wood for each winter. I was resurrecting from adversity, circumstance and death itself. I was reaching out, still shaken and unsteady but determined to make the most of my situation and opportunity.

I still hand-split my own firewood today as a reminder of what is possible when you don't allow yourself to be ensnared by unfulfilled hopes, delusions, illusions or debilitating circumstances. It is easy to let someone else do the job or think that someone else should. I find great joy in knowing I can conquer, meet the requirements, stay fit as a fiddle, strong enough, creative and clever enough to get the job done. I never imagined this is what I would be doing at this age.

On the other hand, I recently lost an opportunity that I believed would meet all my expect-

tations of a perfect scenario in life. It was right at my fingertips and suddenly, poof... it was gone. I allowed myself to become hopeless, discouraged, downtrodden, doubting and disappointed in myself. But not for long. I recognized the face of that old enemy and refused to limit myself by accepting the defeat. Inspiration miraculously blossomed and dug its tendrils into me.

As I was stepping outside my front door, I noticed a slight fleck of color in a flowerbed that has been covered with snow and ice for some time. As I looked closer I saw a hint of green. I gently brushed back the white cover and a sweet little face peeked out at me. I could hardly believe my eyes. It was a frail little miniature pansy radiating in all her purple and white glory.

I reached out and lightly touched her butterfly wing-thin petals with my fingers. They were soft, tender and velvety, full of life. How could she possibly have survived the harshness of winter? The likelihood was minimal if not impossible. She was my miraculous inspiration, against all odds. Caution, a new creation is approaching.

Gabriele von Trapp is relocating to Deer Park in Spokane County with her memories, dreams and reflections in tow.

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Go Daddy Go!

By Becky Dubell

On April 10, 2017, Ellen Lusch walked into Petra's alteration shop to pick up her Spring Dance dress. When asked about her date for the dance, Ellen said, "No dating for me. I'm holding out for a man in his 80s that rides a bike and likes picnics."

Well, as it happened, my dad, Wil Bundy, 86, had just been in to pick up a pair of pants that Petra had altered for wearing on his motorcycle. She told Ellen, "You need to go see Becky at the Do-it Center." Ellen and I knew each other. She rides a silver CanAm and had offered a couple of times, after I lost Jim, to let me try it out.

So she came down to see me. We talked about the conversation at Petra's and she gave me her card to possibly give to Daddy, which I did when I got to the cabin that evening. By the time I got the stuff out of my car and into my house (right next door) the text message on my phone was, "We are having lunch at Ronnie D's tomorrow." Less than 10 minutes. Really? You go, Daddy!

They meet for lunch and he reaches for his wallet. Oops! No wallet. She had to pay for lunch. But she got a little even with him by having him run her around town on errands. I didn't chaperone that meal but I did get invited to the next one. We went to TJ's because Daddy loves the pan-fried oysters and Ellen is also an oyster fan. I have always told my dad that if the cook saw what he did to the oysters he would probably get kicked out of the establishment. He takes the tartar sauce, puts it on the plate, adds ketchup and mixes it all together.

Well ... Ellen orders the oysters, picks up the tartar sauce and adds ketchup to it!

When my eyes got really big and my hand went to my mouth, she thought she had done something wrong. I just pointed to Daddy's plate and laughed. He had a silly grin on his face too, and, come to think of it, that grin has been on his face quite a bit lately.

Daddy left for Lake Isabella about two weeks later for the summer to give my sister a hand with their Airbnb business. I'm thinking that these two "kids" were burning up the phone lines all summer long. Ellen tells me they would talk four to five times a day, which is very odd since neither one likes to talk on the phone. You know how kids can be.

One phone call was not so fun, though. I got a call from Daddy. He said something was wrong with Ellen - she had answered the phone with "I'm in trouble." It was during the smoky time here and it had affected her lungs. I now

know that I can get to her place in under five minutes if I have to. And we had to do an ambulance ride and the whole bit. The really weird thing is that at the time he called her, she should have been swimming and would not have been there to answer the call. Her angels were working overtime that day and must have bugged him until he picked up the phone.

Before leaving for California, Ellen had us both riding her CanAm to try it out. Daddy, who has been a two-wheeler since his twenties, loved it. Don't have to hold the bike up and can see where your wheels are out front. While in California, he was using the internet to find a bike - Florida, Texas, Maine, wherever. Planned on flying to get the bike and riding it back to California. He finally found one. Had to come all the way back to Spokane to pick it up and ride it down. And guess what? It's the same model and color as Ellen's. They look sooo CUTE! Both of them say, "I don't do cute." Oh yes you do! (Note: This is the bike that I rode up from California in October 2017.)

Wil Bundy, the halfway techno guy, is really good at sending text messages. On January 19, us siblings got this text: "The purpose of this message is to let all of you know at the same time that today Ellen and I became engaged." He even got down on one knee. My Dad, the romantic at 87. Whoa. They talked about a November wedding. She wanted to wait to make sure Daddy didn't feel pressured.

On February 1 I got a text that they were



both in the cabin and to come on over. Then the phone beeped again. That text: "This is to inform all of you at the same time. Ellen and I eloped." I screamed. Ran down the stairs and right on out.

Got met by Daddy at the cabin door (I did knock, I think), with his silly grin, Safeway bag in hand filled with clean undies and socks. Asked him if he was running away from home.

They had been sitting around trying to decide what to do - family, church, friends ... he says, "Let's just do this." She got up. Grabbed the cooler. PB&J sandwiches, cookies, two glass jars (the wedding glasses) of milk, fruit go in the cooler. "I'm ready." And off to the Hitchin' Post they went. At a rest stop on the way home, with the sunset happening, they ate their wedding dinner.

My Dad has been here with me since Jim passed away. He has been my rock. Now it's time for me to move on and hand him over to Ellen. They are both so cute with those matching silly grins on their faces! Note to Daddy: Just to let you know, Ellen tells me that she married you so she could get us as daughters.

Love to the both of you and many silly grins to be scattered throughout your lives and spilling over into others!



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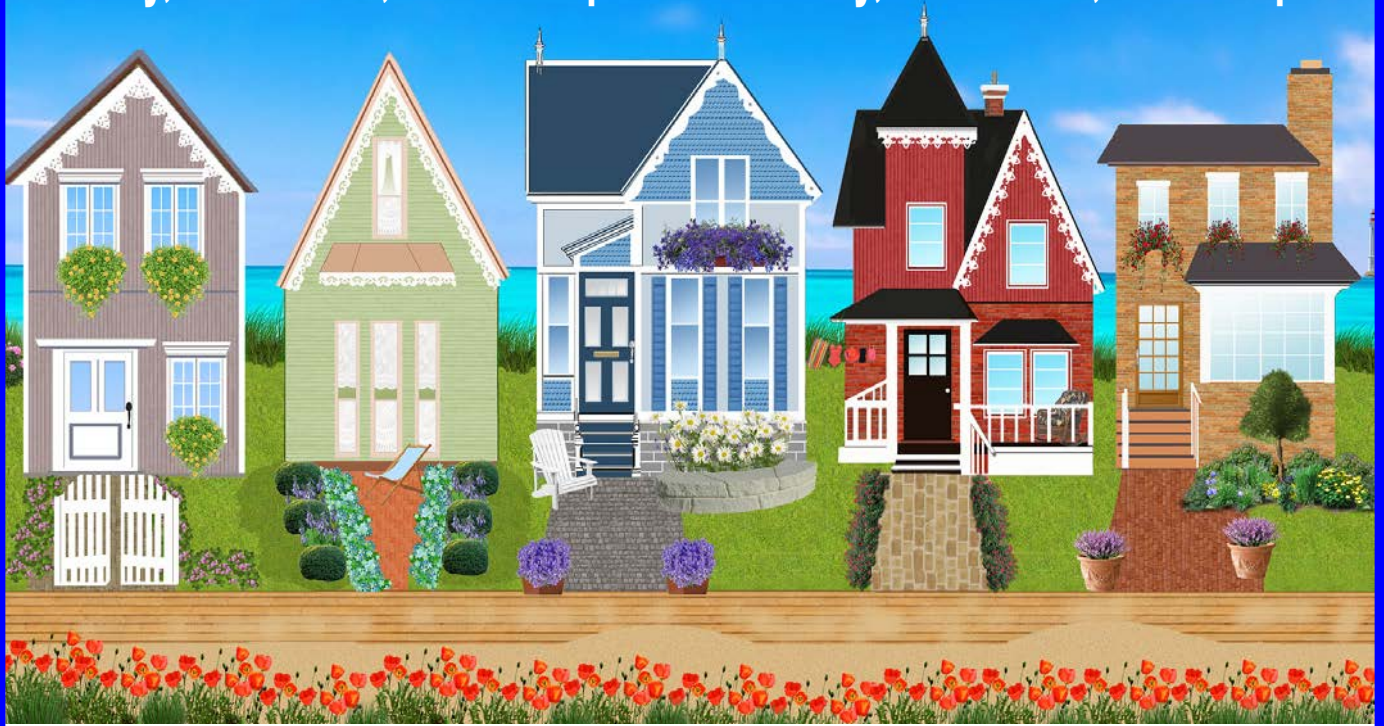
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