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Living with an Open Heart



by Kerry Schafer

Alfred Lord Tennyson wrote, "In the spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love." I realize that we've got a long way to go before we get to spring, no matter how mild this winter has been (so far.) And chances are good that if you're reading this, you're not exactly young. Yet, all February long, your thoughts are going to be turned to thoughts of love every time you walk into a store. Or turn on the television. Or look at social media.

The entire month of February seems to be about Valentine's Day. For the first half of the month, hearts and chocolate and flowers are everywhere. After February 14, the hearts and chocolate are still everywhere, now available at a deep discount.

Whether you are a romance enthusiast who adores all of this, or somebody a little more jaded, perhaps even a Valentine's Day Scrooge who walks around muttering "bah humbug" or possibly other more creative epithets whenever you're confronted by the commercialized love extravaganza, February is arguably the perfect month to open up to a little more love in your life.

Love feels good, right? You know what I mean; that warm, expansive sensation in your chest, the lightness in your step, and the song on your lips. The feeling that anything is possible, and along with it, the inspiration and momentum to create things and go on adventures.

Fortunately, we don't have to wait for Valentine's Day and we don't need to be "in love" with a special someone in order to feel all of those good feelings. We can find love everywhere all around us if we remember to look for it.

Think for a minute about all of the different loves you already have in your life. A child or a parent or a good friend. Your dog, cat, hamster, or other furry (or scaly) critter that invokes that feeling of love for you. Even the great outdoors – a spectacular moon, a sunrise, or sunset – can do it.

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Here's a tougher one: what about self love? Some of us struggle with this one. Maybe we don't feel lovable, or we've even been taught to believe that loving ourselves is selfish or self-centered. On the contrary, learning to love ourselves makes us more able to love others, and therefore more open, more generous, and less selfish in the long run.

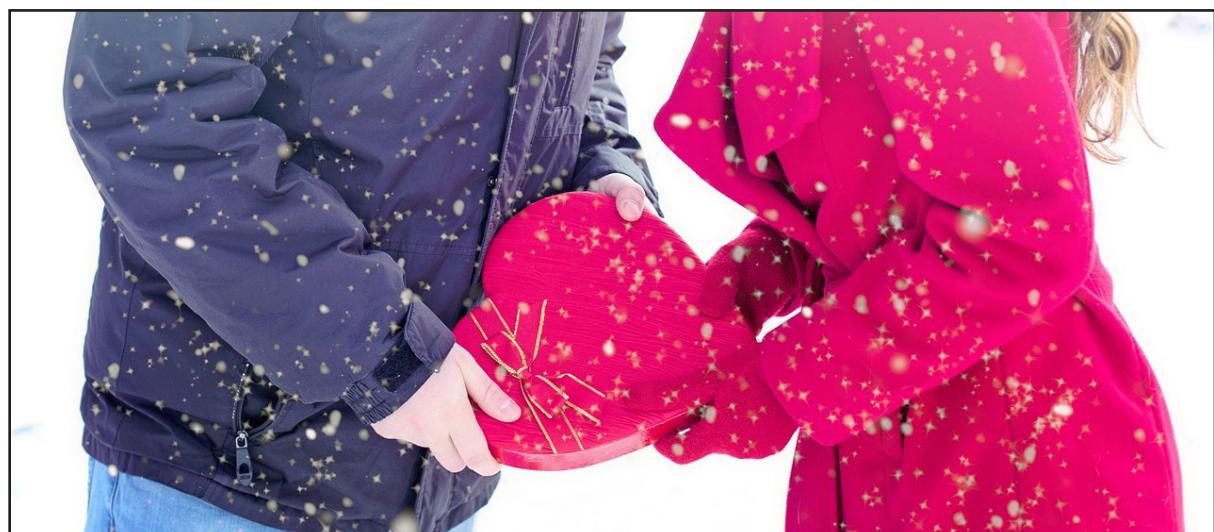
But what if your heart feels scarred, bruised, tight, and guarded? Maybe you've been hurt one time too many

heart. Keep one of your hands resting over your heart as a physical reminder.

Bring into your mind a person, animal, or place that evokes the feeling of love for you. As you keep breathing in and out of your heart, focus on that feeling. Let it grow and expand.

Allow that feeling to move through your body as you breathe.

That's it! That's all there is to it. No fancy meditation



and that loving feeling is no more than a dim memory. Or maybe you're just having a bad day (or week, or month) and anger or cynicism is much more accessible.

Whether you're feeling a lot of love right now or it's been a while, you might want to try this super easy heart opening breathing meditation. It won't hurt, I promise, and you might end up feeling amazing.

Here's what you do:

Find five minutes when you can be quiet and undisturbed such as in the car, in your bedroom, or in the bathroom. Silence your phone. Turn off the TV.

Place a hand over your heart and take a deep breath in through your nose, then breathe slowly out through your nose. Repeat.

Close your eyes if it's safe and feels comfortable for you. This isn't necessary, but it helps with focus.

Now, as you keep breathing those nice slow breaths in and out, imagine that you're breathing in and out of your

process. All you need is your breath and your imagination. After you've practiced this a few times in quiet and solitude, it's easy to employ in other busy places and stressful moments, like waiting in a long line at the grocery store, or while carpools the kids, or even when you're driving.

Maybe we can use all of February's hearts and flowers as a reminder to open up to all of the other kinds of love out there. When you walk into the grocery store and see the Valentine's display, when the ad pops into your email inbox or onto the TV, use it as a reminder to take a few deep breaths and let your heart open up, just for a minute. And then pass some of that feel-good energy on to the person in the line behind you, or the driver of the car in front of you, or yes, even the next idiot who really pushes your buttons.

You'll feel better, and the world will be a little better too.

Colville resident Kerry Schafer (who also writes as Kerry Anne King) is the bestselling author of 15 novels, the co-host of *The One Happy Thing* Podcast, and a licensed mental health counselor. Find out more at www.allthingskerry.com.

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Decisions, Decisions!



by Amy McGarry

One of my all-time favorite memes that's been going around Facebook for several years hits home hard for me as it speaks truth to one of my greatest struggles in life. That's not hyperbole. The struggle is real. The meme states:

"Who knew the hardest part of being an adult is figuring out what to cook every single night for the rest of your life."

The vast number of times I've seen this meme reposted tells me it resonates for many of us. Finally, we are free to admit that something that should be so easy, is hard. For some people at least, including me.

On further reflection, that's just one small example of a much bigger epidemic facing modern day Americans. In today's world, we encounter more decisions on a daily basis than ever. When I was growing up, we had four television channels. Back then, it was a travesty if two shows you wanted to watch happened to air at the same time. How would you decide what to watch? You know where I'm going with this. Compare that to the decision-making from hundreds of channels on cable TV. But apparently those hundreds of channels were still not enough to satisfy our need for more choices. No, we needed Netflix, Hulu, Prime, and so many other streaming platforms that I am cross-eyed.

If you're like me and aim to make decision-making a little simpler, you stick with one streaming platform. I'm



old school, so I stick with Netflix. But this "simpler" decision-making strategy is an illusion. For it merely leads to yet more choices. Let me illustrate this point with a couple of more Facebook memes.

"I spend more time tryna find something to watch on Netflix than watching something on Netflix."

"Going down to Blockbuster, picking a movie, renting it and buying snacks was still quicker than finding a good film on Netflix."

By now you're probably thinking I spend far too much time on Facebook, which is true. In fact, I completely ignore my Instagram, X, and TikTok

accounts. Why? Because if I stick to Facebook, that's one less decision I have to make.

Despite simplifying my life by sticking to Netflix and Facebook, I still suffer the consequences of too many choices. It's exhausting. Thus, the term researchers have coined to describe these consequences is apt: "decision fatigue."

It turns out, we humans have what can be described as decision making muscles in our brains. Imagine holding an 8-pound weight in your hand. Now imagine that every decision you make during the day is like doing a bicep curl – lifting that weight up. Decide what to eat for breakfast, lift the weight. Decide what to wear, lift the weight. Keep lifting that weight with every little decision you make during the day and guess how that bicep may feel once the day is over. Fatigued. You might not even be able to lift that weight at all by the end of the day. And that, dear reader, is exactly what happens to those decision-making muscles in your brain. They become fatigued to the point of debilitation.

So, what does a debilitated decision-making muscle look like? According to researchers, the symptoms of decision fatigue include irritability, difficulty focusing or brain fog, poor decisions, indecision, procrastination, irrational behavior, feeling overwhelmed, and the desire to avoid further choices. No wonder we don't want to decide what to make for dinner at the end of the day!

Technically it's called "decision paralysis." It's when the brain freezes, making even small choices difficult. Like deciding what to make for dinner.

Before I share all the strategies for combatting decision fatigue, I want to first acknowledge that not everyone has this problem deciding what to make for dinner and that there are strategies for making that decision easier. But trust me, in my case, it's complicated. First, of the three people in my family, no one likes the same foods. At least

one of us is always going to be unhappy with the choice. Second, I don't like to cook. Therefore, I will only cook what I feel like cooking, which makes a pre-planned menu pointless. Third, since I haven't pre-planned the menu, who knows what's in the refrigerator on any given evening. Finally, my husband refuses to tell me what sounds good to him on any given day. But I digress.

Back to the good news: there are strategies for preventing decision fatigue, even if they don't help me decide what to make for dinner. Here are a few:

- Automate and simplify options by creating routines for your morning, meals, and clothes to reduce daily choices.
- Limit options by using a capsule wardrobe or standard grocery list.
- Schedule breaks and incorporate nonnegotiable rest, walks, or deep breathing.
- Get support and ask trusted people for input or guidance.
- Prioritize rest by treating it as a necessary part of your day.
- Seek professional help if decision fatigue is interfering with your quality of life.

While all these strategies can be useful for preventing the symptoms of decision fatigue, they don't help with all the decisions we make on a daily basis. One strategy I have found that helps me make a choice, is the Buddhist idea that "there is no wrong decision." Except when it comes to what's for dinner. Just ask my husband and kid.

Since I don't want to cook anyway, maybe we'll just order out tonight. Now, just let me decide where we should order from....

*Amy McGarry grew up in Spokane Valley, Washington. After a 20 year hiatus, she moved back to Spokane Valley where she lives with her husband, daughter and two cats. She is the author of *I am Farang: Adventures of a Peace Corps Volunteer in Thailand*, available on Amazon.com.*

Huckleberry Press

The Huckleberry Press began in the Fruitland Valley, nestled in the shadow of northeastern Washington's Huckleberry Mountains. Since 2003, "Huckleberry Country" has expanded throughout the Inland Northwest to the 12 counties of Adams, Benewah, Bonner, Douglas, Ferry, Kootenai, Lincoln, Okanogan, Pend Oreille, Spokane, Stevens, and Whitman.

The Huckleberry Press is dedicated to **celebrating and connecting people with their communities** by featuring stories of people making major contributions as individuals, with new or expanding businesses, and through special, community events. Also included are small business advice, lifestyle, humor, and seasonal features. The Huckleberry Press is dated the 1st of each month.

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CREATE – A Living Community Space for the Arts in Newport



by Robin Milligan

There are places in small towns that don't announce themselves loudly. They don't feel like institutions. They feel more like secrets passed hand to hand. The kind of place someone tells you about quietly and says, "You should go see this." CREATE is one of those places. Tucked in one block from the middle school on 4th Street in Newport. It is not just a building or a schedule of classes. It is a vibrant community space that exists because people cared enough to build it and continue to sustain it and keep showing up for it.

CREATE, which stands for Community Resource Emphasis on Arts Through Education, is a community center for the arts. It provides a wide variety of programs for all ages, including classes, events, activities, and concerts. CREATE works with other non-profit organizations in the community to expand the variety of information and experiences available to the public. They attribute a

lot of their success to the contributions of the Kalispel Tribe of Indians and donations from the public.

One thing that is easy to miss but essential to understand about CREATE is that it is an all-volunteer nonprofit organization. From the very beginning, this space was built and sustained by community members who believed in the importance of accessible arts education. As this ambitious idea was getting off the ground, with hundreds of supporters contributing in large and small ways, it was affectionately referred to as, "The Create Place," a

name that still hangs on the sign over the front door.

Volunteers have helped in innumerable ways, from construction and repair to cleaning, organizing, and sealing envelopes. CREATE has faced many challenges. However, the people involved believe deeply in its value to the community and continue working to maintain and enhance what it can provide.

CREATE partners with the Newport Creative District, the Kalispel Tribe, Selkirk Alliance for Science, Responsible Growth Northeast Wash-

ington, and opportunities for people to write their own poetry books, exploring two or three different poetry styles. Youth classes are supported by the Kalispel Tribe of Indians.

CREATE hosts diverse classes for a wide range of ages, and people regularly come from Sandpoint, Spokane, and surrounding areas to attend. Membership is not required, though preregistration is appreciated so organizers can gauge how full classes will be. Joyce says they try to be as flexible as possible to make programs accessible to as many people as they can, but that preregistration is essential to making sure the classes can happen.

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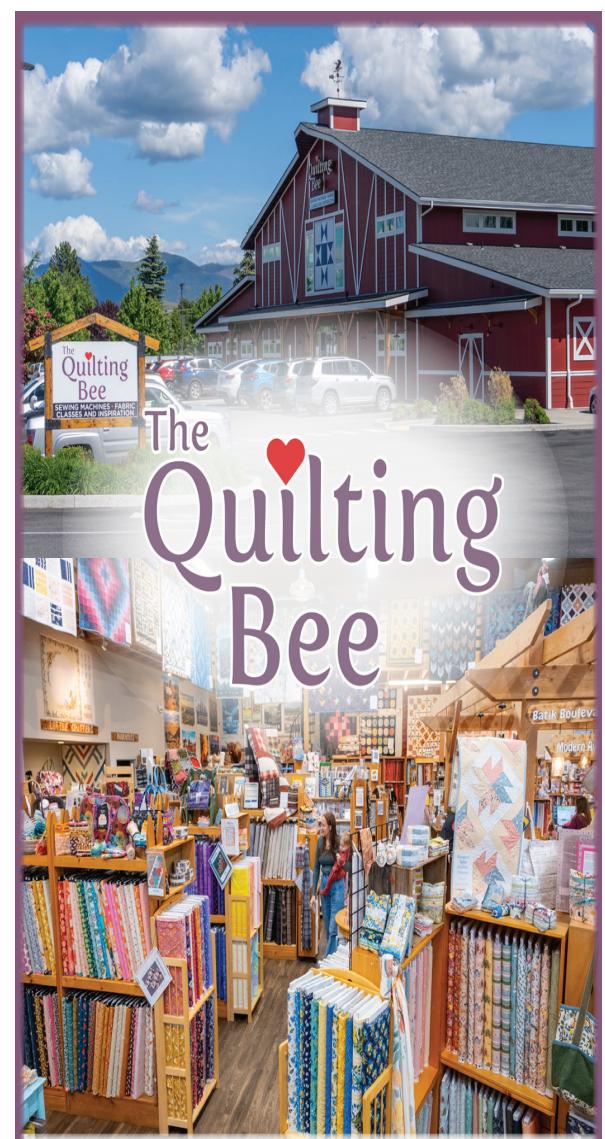
Carl Rey & Truck Mills and Popeye Rose Social Club at CREATE!

ton, the Pend Oreille County Library District, the Pend Oreille County Conservation District, WSU Pend Oreille County Extension Master Gardeners, the Newport Farmers Market, the Evergreen Artist Association, and others. These collaborations enable CREATE to broaden its reach and deepen its impact.

During the summer, Joyce Weir, board chair of CREATE, can be found under a nine-foot umbrella at the Newport Farmers Market with an ironing board beside her and her six-year-old garlic chives

growing in the same container they've shared since they were planted there. She teaches people how to grow greens in containers year-round, shares community information, and talks easily with passersby. That approachable, hands-on energy carries through everything CREATE does.

Back at the CREATE building, a wide variety of classes and gatherings take place. There are belly dancing classes on Tuesday evenings, fiber arts gatherings, hand stitching and sewing, watercolor painting classes, Tai Chi classes, basket and wire art instruction, playdates for children and adults, and even craft sessions designed specifically for toddlers. Girl Scout groups meet there. There are pottery classes for kids



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Taste Budz Review: For the Love of God Brewing and Pizzeria



By Zack & Brooklyn Bolin, Facebook:
Taste Budz, Instagram: [tastebudz_spokane](#)

Perhaps the best combination on the planet is pizza and beer. Just when you thought it couldn't get any better, For the Love of God Brewing made the combo even more delicious by elevating the pizza and creating the best brews.

What we enjoyed:

- Veggie Pizza add Arugula
- Pepperoni Pizza add Burrata, Olives, and Prosciutto
- Beer Flight
- Pistachio Cannoli

I love a loaded veggie pizza and they did not disappoint. Their dough puffs up so big, it almost makes a pizza bowl. They slather flavorful, house-made marinara all over, then load it with mozzarella, bell peppers, onion, Kalamata olives, artichoke hearts, and sun-dried tomatoes. They then topped it with a beautiful bed of arugula after it came out of the oven. I almost always have to add extra veggies to my pizza, but this one was perfect. The arugula added a spicy freshness. But wait, it gets better. Instead of cutting the pizza for you, they serve it with huge scissors, and you get to cut your own slices.

Zack decided to build his own pizza. He usually sticks to pepperoni and black olives. However, they had his favorite meat: prosciutto. There isn't enough cheese in the world to satisfy Zack, so of course when he

saw that you could add a burrata ball, he was all in. He devoured his pizza, and the prosciutto was the perfect size and high quality.

I absolutely love sour ales, but they are not the most common to come by, so you can imagine my excitement when I discovered that they had four different sours on draft. I got a flight and tried the Double Scoop, Guava Guava, Awakening, and Apricot. My favorite was the Double Scoop; it's brewed with strawberries, bananas, and waffle cones. The flavor profile was incredible without being too sweet. Zack liked Awakening the best. That one was brewed with fruity pebbles, dragon fruit puree, and vanilla. They are absolute pros at bringing out the flavor of each ingredient without creating a sickly sweet ale.

We were stuffed from all our pizza and drinks, but we knew we had to try a cannoli. They only had one pistachio left, so we didn't let it get away. The ricotta filling was so creamy, and the shell was perfectly fried, but the pistachios made the whole dish light and nutty rather than rich. It was the perfect ending to a perfect meal.

The ambience inside is a relaxed, elevated pub with huge, gorgeous wood tables. You order at the counter and then sit down, and they bring you your food. Seeing as it is winter, we weren't able to take advantage of their lovely patio, but we will definitely be back in the summer to soak it all in.

If you are looking for the best pizza and truly unique brewing, this is the place to go. Make sure you check them out.

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Hit the Trail with Soph



By Sophia Mattice-Aldous

I stopped making New Year's resolutions a long time ago when I finally admitted to myself that I like the creating of them more than I enjoy the execution. However, that doesn't mean I don't look forward to planning upcoming excursions. There are several hikes on my annual bucket list for 2026. Some I have already done and want to revisit, like old friends, and some, I am embarrassed to say, I haven't embarked on, even though they are practically in my backyard. Here are a few of the hikes, with added information gleaned from the Washington Trails Association website (wta.org), which celebrates its 60th anniversary this year.

Indian Creek Community Forest – Arboretum Loop Trail

Length: 0.58 miles

This one is super easy to get to and walk, with barely any inclines and multiple trail options. I have yet to explore all those options, though, so I will be returning this year to do so. The area is accessible year-round from Indian Creek Community Forest in the summer, or from the Geophysical SnoPark in winter. The trails are open to hiking, skiing and snowshoes only (leave the bikes and horses at home this time). Indian Creek Community Forest is a 350-acre property managed by the Kalispel Tribe Natural Resources Department. According to WTA, "The Arboretum Loop Trail is slightly over a half mile with very little elevation change and was designed to be an easy hiking route to highlight the native tree and shrub varieties that call this ecosystem home. Interpretive signage is located along the route, so a hike

here is easy, meditative, and educational."

Gypsy Peak – Selkirk Range

Length: 16 miles, roundtrip

Going from the leisurely pace of Indian Creek Community Forest to the steep gains of Gypsy Peak, noted as the highest peak in eastern Washington at 7,325 feet, the top offers glorious views into Canada and northern Idaho. While it's quite possible my parents hiked this carrying me along as a wee bairn, I don't remember, so I feel comfortable saying I've never traversed Gypsy Peak before. The two trailheads that access the peak are Bear Pasture (which closes Aug. 15 to protect grizzly habitat, so be aware) and Crowell Ridge trailhead, which is considered an advanced trail where a compass and plentiful off-trail experience are highly advised. According to WTA, the road to Crowell Ridge trailhead is rough and rocky; high-clearance vehicles are recommended. As always, bring plenty of water.

Hall Mountain – Selkirk Range

Length: 14 miles, roundtrip

Maybe I'm a bit of a masochist, because this is another hike that has you ascend through several layers of forest before you're rewarded with open meadows and wildflowers or vibrant fall foliage (depending on the time of year, of course). The foundation of a former fire lookout marks the top, with views that make you feel like you're on top of the world. When the weather is good, the mountain is accessible via the Noisy Creek Trail, adjacent to Sullivan Lake, which I have hiked before. It's a beautiful excursion, marred at the time only by some lazy litterbugs and a person who did not understand trail bathroom etiquette, but overall, it was a scenic experience. My party and I stopped and turned around just before the trail goes up to Hall Mountain, and since then, I have needed

to scratch the itch of going all the way.

Sophia Mattice-Aldous is not a doctor, personal trainer or dietician, so if you're looking for that kind of exercise and health column, it's not this one. However, she is a lifelong Washington resident and reporter with an affinity for The Great Outdoors who thinks fitness should be fun, and that looks different for everyone. For her, it's going outside. If you have questions and/or comments, including hiking suggestions, email sophiamatticealdous@gmail.com.



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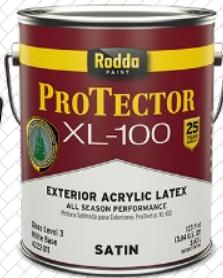
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A Moose Missive: Are They Real?



by Bob Johnson

I was promised a moose. In fact, I was promised a moose once before, so this is nothing new. Are moose promises legal and binding, or are they merely

lures to convince unsuspecting city bumpkins to visit cold places or move out to the country?

The first moose promise was made by the lovely Michelle several years ago when she was trying to convince me that we should plan a trip to Alaska to see her cousin, "Captain Steve," as he is known in and around the community of Ninilchik, runs a fishing lodge and takes guests out on the ocean in search of halibut, salmon (king, silver and sockeye), lingcod, and rockfish (black and yelloweye).

I used to fish off a pier, but no amount of Dramamine could keep me happy on the sea, even in calm waters.

"You don't have to fish," Michelle said. "It would be about some beautiful scenery (it's a three-and-a-half-hour drive from the airport in Anchorage to Ninilchik), some great food (the lodge feeds breakfast and dinner to its guests) and spending time with my cousin."

Michelle sized me up as I pondered the potential itinerary. Sensing I wasn't completely convinced, she added, "Plus, you'd get to see moose."

There it was: "You'd get to see moose."

Not, "You might get to see moose."

Not, "There's a chance you'll see moose."

No, Michelle said, with no degree of uncertainty, "You'd get to see moose."

And because she didn't include an "a" before the word "moose," the implication was that I'd see multiple moose.

Michelle knew she'd played her best card because she also knew that I was a big fan of "The Adventures of Rocky and Bullwinkle" when I was a child. Specifically, I was a fan of Bullwinkle J. Moose, who was dimwitted but good-natured. He also was a punster. In other words, Bullwinkle was me.

"So, you're telling me I'm guaranteed to see moose while we're there?" I pressed.

"Guaranteed," Michelle said.

"Okay, let's check air fares."

Michelle was right about the scenery. The drive from Anchorage to Ninilchik provided vistas that were beyond beautiful. It was breathtaking.

She also was right about the food. In fact, one of the dinners at the lodge would rank among the top five of my life. It began with a creamy halibut chowder, proceeded with halibut/lingcod ceviche, and concluded with a well-seasoned (but not overly seasoned) halibut filet. Yeah, I'm a halibut guy.

But I had come to see moose. Around town, animated moose were featured

on several business signs. A laundromat's sign had a drawing of a grinning moose in a bubble bath. The McDonald's in the neighboring town of Homer had a drawing of a moose on one of its advertising signs. I asserted that those did not count.

"Just wait," Michelle said. "You'll see one."

Aha! She had meant a singular moose all along.

The days passed. We enjoyed more great meals at the lodge, spent quality time with Michelle's cousin, went on a few drives, and even visited a winery that crafted sweet wines out of any fruit you could conjure, except grapes. But no matter where we went, there were no moose to be seen.

We made the long drive back to Anchorage and the semi-long flight home. It had been a great trip – but a completely moose-less one.

Not one to hold a grudge, I hadn't given that incident much thought in the ensuing years – not until we had decided to move to the Inland Northwest and were trying to figure out where we should live. Unlike where we'd come from, "country living" was an option on the table.

As we weighed the pros and cons of the various cities and towns, as well as the type of dwelling, Michelle suggested that "living out in the country" might be fun. I did not disagree with that, as we'd grown weary of having neighboring houses that were less than

10 feet apart in the urban sprawl we were abandoning.

There were other benefits, she added. We'd get to enjoy beautiful scenery every day. There would be hardly any traffic. We could see the stars at night.

And then, saving the best argument for last, as all great debaters do, she said, "Plus, you'll get to see moose all the time."

As my memories of the failed Alaska trip came rushing back, Michelle could see that I was incredulous. But she was ready.

"We can even talk to the contractor about placing the house so your office is facing the woods where the moose live," she said.

"How would he know which direction that is?" I retorted.

"He's been talking to our neighbors."

Great. Neighbors on two and perhaps three sides of us already were figuring that the new guy moving into the neighborhood was some kind of moose nut job. And we hadn't even bought the land yet.

But there was no turning back. Our former house sold quickly, we put most of our earthly belongings into storage, and we made the move north. We bought the piece of land in question, and lived first in a cottage, then in an apartment and then in a motel until our new place was ready to occupy.

During our apartment dwelling days, Michelle and I took a walk around downtown Coeur d'Alene one day.

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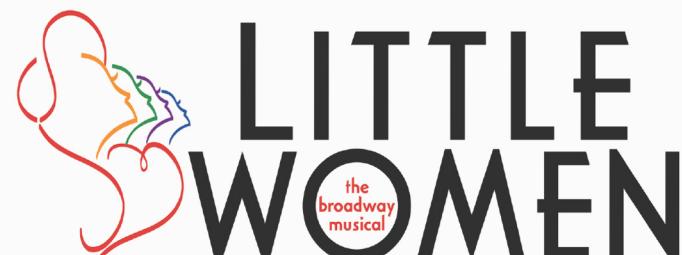
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Book by
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Lyrics by
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Right on the main drag, we came face to face with a bronze moose statue. Before Michelle could open her mouth, I said, "Nope. Doesn't count."

Further investigation revealed that the bronze moose has a name (Mudgy) and is one of five such statues along "The Mudgy Moose Trail" developed by the Coeur d'Alene Parks Department to further confuse and mislead city bumpkins into considering a move to the area.

Our new house is fronted by a dirt road that's accessed by a two-lane highway and has state park land in the rear. On either side, dozens of rows of tall evergreens separate us from the neighbors, who already think they know more about me than they should. And, no question, my home office has an outstanding view of the surrounding timberland.

Six days into the new year, it started snowing at 8:30 a.m. and didn't stop until after 7 p.m. I know this because I had a front-row seat from my office. At times, the snowflakes floated to the ground and at other times they were whirled around by gusting winds. By sunset, the house was surrounded by a thick layer of white.

I do not "touch type" – that's for people who like to show off – so I would type a sentence or paragraph and look up, then repeat, all day long. Every so

"What did you do?" I asked, surprised by her affirmative answer.

"Well, they can be mean, you know," she said. "I just tried to stay calm,

other windows in the house. Not along the dirt road connecting our home to the main drag.

My thoughts wandered back to my childhood. I knew then and know now that Bullwinkle J. Moose was a cartoon character. But didn't he have to be based on something? You know, like a moose?

One occasionally reliable source, Wikipedia, has an article about moose which describes them as "the world's tallest, largest and heaviest extant species of deer."

Wait – a moose is a deer? They never taught us that in the city school I went to way back when. Now I'm more confused than ever.

But one thing remains crystal clear: I was promised a moose.

And until I see one, I can only consider the trip to Alaska and our move to the Inland Northwest woods to be moose ruses.

When not looking for moose, award-winning writer Bob Johnson and his award-winning photographer wife, Michelle, enjoy exploring their new and final home in the Inland Northwest and sharing their observations with Huckleberry Press readers.



often, I'd focus on the trees a hundred feet away, hoping to see that promised moose. One never materialized.

The next day, one of our new neighbors brought over a housewarming gift. As the conversation went on, Michelle knew what I was going to do.

"So, I hear we have moose around here," I said.

"Oh, yes," the neighbor replied. "One time, when my husband was out of town, I was out in our hot tub, and a moose came right up to me."

spoke very calmly to it – you know, 'Nice moose...' – and slowly made my way back to the house. We've had lots of sightings through the years, but that was the closest I got to one."

I didn't respond immediately. Had Michelle put her up to telling this tall tale? Or could it have been true?

Finally, I said, "Wow."

The days went by. Some were snowy. Some rainy. A few sunny. Their one commonality: no moose to be seen. Not from my office. Not through any

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October 2025



What's February's favorite type of music? Love songs with a short playlist.

Why don't February calendars ever get lost? Because they always date themselves.

What did the snowman say on Valentine's Day? "I'm snow in love with you!"

How are corny dad jokes like Groundhog Day jokes? You always keep hearing the same puns over and over again.

Do you have a date for Valentine's Day? Of course! February 14th.

How was George Washington able to live through his 67th birthday? He had a strong constitution.

Did you know that candy hearts have been around since 1901? I know – it's heart to believe!

Did you hear that it's supposed to rain chickens and ducks on National Weatherperson's Day? What a fowl way to spend their holiday.

Why should you order a burger on Fat Tuesday in New Orleans? They serve the best French Quarter pounders.

What do you call two people who fall in love on Valentine's Day in South Korea? Seoul-mates.

Did you know that February is Humpback Whale Awareness Month? I'm not shore if I will celebrate, but I whale let you know.

What kind of fish do Catholics eat on Fridays during Lent? Holy Mackerals.

Why do crawfish avoid getting into fights in February? They don't want to end up in hot water.

Why does coffee always taste better in the second month of the year? It's Feb-BREW-ary.

What do you call an amphibian born on February 29th? A leap frog.

What do you do at the end of the last day of February? You March on.

Why can you trust no one in the second month of the year? It's Fib-ruary.

What does someone's tombstone read when they die between February 19th and March 20th? Rest in Pisces.

What month gets the worst grades? F-ebruary.

The Groundhog's Big Decision

On February 2nd the groundhog popped out of his burrow, looked around, and sighed. His friend asked, "Well? Did you see your shadow?" The groundhog replied, "Yes...but I also saw my to-do list. I'm going back to bed."



A Detective Story

11:45 a.m. – Arrived at crime scene.
11:45 a.m. – Examined body. Signs of struggle.
11:45 a.m. – Found murder weapon in drain.
11:45 a.m. – Realized watch was broken.

Some species of frog can jump higher than a 3-story office building. It's because of their immensely powerful hind legs, and the fact that office buildings cannot jump.

I got stuck in an elevator... it was uplifting in its own weird way.

I tried a new coffee shop. The coffee was so strong, it filed a complaint against me for overuse.

A tomato family was crossing the road. The baby tomato lagged behind, and the dad yelled, "Ketchup!"

A cow told a joke – everyone laughed. The farmer said, "That's udderly funny!"

What did the ocean say to the shore? It said nothing – it just waved.

The cookie went to the doctor. "What's wrong?" "I feel crumby."

The pencil broke in class. It was pointless.

My bed and I have a great relationship – we're perfect together. But my alarm clock keeps trying to break us up.

Execution

For a weekend break, three old college buddies go to Tijuana, Mexico, to enjoy a reunion. Well, they hadn't seen each other for quite a few years, so the stories were long, the laughs were loud, and the booze really did flow that night. They had such a good time that they all woke up the following morning and found themselves in jail. None of them could remember anything. However, within a couple of hours, they're all sentenced to be executed the following day. The following morning, they're all escorted to death row, where Bill, the first of the group, is strapped into the electric chair. Then Bill is asked if he'd like to say any last words "Sure," Bill responds. "I'm from the Catholic University of America, and I believe in the power of almighty God. I am innocent, and God will intervene." The executioner throws the switch, but nothing happens. Well, the prison staff can't believe this turn of events. They beg Bill's forgiveness and release him. Next up for the chair is Gary. He's strapped in, and once again he's offered the opportunity to say something. "Well, I'm from Harvard Law School," says Gary, "and I believe that the power of natural justice will intervene because I'm innocent." Once again, the executioner throws the switch, but nothing happens. Again, the prison staff can't believe this turn of events. They beg Gary's forgiveness and release him. Finally, Mike's strapped into the chair, and once again he's offered the opportunity to say something. "Well," says Mike. "I have a PhD in Electrical Engineering from Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and I can tell you right now, you won't be executing anyone if you don't plug this thing in."

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CREATE ...continued from page 3

Joyce says that not a month goes by without someone saying, "I had no idea this was here." Getting the word out continues to be a challenge. They provide press releases and pass out flyers to the community and communicate with the schools, hoping to increase visibility.

"This whole thing began because there were a few of us who were frustrated by arts programs being pushed out of schools and we wanted to do something about it," Joyce told me. One of the early group members was an artist, and together they would go into classrooms to help with art projects. Kate, the artist, would come up with projects and the group would help bring them to life. It went over very well, and the kids loved it.

"There are some real smart women in this town," Joyce said, with a smile in her voice.

Momentum grew, and eventually the group began searching for a location. Joyce said that at the time, there were more state-supported arts programs. The group found a building one block from the middle school that had previously been a church. Soon after, a handicap accessibility grant allowed them to build a ramp and create a handicap-accessible bathroom, reinforcing their commitment to inclusion. This was to be a space for the enrichment of everyone.

Randy Haa, a fused glass artist from Diamond Lake, helped diversify the program from primarily visual art to include more types of classes and entertainment. CREATE brought musicians and entertainers into schools, expanding the exposure of students in Newport and the county to a broader range of creative disciplines.

"It's so important for communities to have a variety of education, concerts, and events," Joyce said. "We like to be available."

All concerts at CREATE are free to students. Live jazz and classical music are part of the offerings, but they try to include many genres and styles. Coffee in the Garden has become a beloved event when the weather is nice, drawing people together with music, art, and conversation in a lovely outdoor garden setting. "The largest Coffee in the Garden event was this last year, bringing about 25 people together for a live music drumming demonstration and for connection," Joyce said.

Joyce feels CREATE has a strong board and also that the organization continues to need more volunteers, especially as the demonstration garden is reopened. Proceeds from their silent auction and grant funding was recently secured for a new watering system, and, she says, the coming year will be a transition toward a more effective watering setup.

"My favorite part of what I do with CREATE is making connections in the community," Joyce said. "The community is supportive, but it can be a challenge to reach everyone because of how spread out people are. I love connecting with teachers to provide new classes, reaching new people who want to be involved but don't know about us yet, and encouraging people to participate in something for themselves."

From listening to Joyce, CREATE isn't just an arts center. It is a shared com-

munity investment. It exists because people volunteer, donate, teach, clean, repair, organize, and believe. It grows through word of mouth. Someone bringing a friend to a class, parents telling other parents, students inviting classmates, and neighbors walking in, out of curiosity, and leaving feeling like they have found something rare.

CREATE is open to the public during classes and events, as well as Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Joyce says she is sometimes there until 5 p.m., and if you see someone inside, you are welcome to come in, see what's happening, and get involved.

CREATE Art and Community Center, 900 W. 4th, Newport, WA 99156, 509-447-9277, createarts.org.



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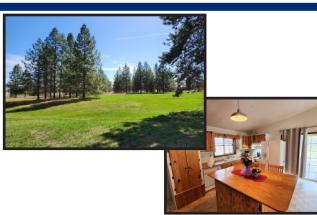
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2 car garage. Secondary house for family and friends, that includes a kitchen, bath and huge bonus room with pool table and room for several sleeping areas and includes 2 car garage. In-ground sprinkler, huge woodshed with storage, Screened gazebo and shed. Custom wood working throughout this home, radiant heat, wood stove and a mini split is included and the pad is in it just needs to be installed. Generator stays, 220 on the outside of the garage and STAR Link service stays - you just have to sign up.



MLS# 44583

\$879,000



MLS# 44032

\$149,000

This lot is ready for your new home! Power, water, septic and concrete pad are installed (old home was recently removed). 2 car garage on this property and the cars are in the process of being removed. Last home was 23'X 44'.



MLS# 44937

\$265,000



MLS# 45002

\$230,000

A beautiful setting with room to garden, just off the Columbia with water views and close to town. Some established grapes and raspberries to get you started. Features 2 bedroom, with a 3rd extra room for games or additional sleep space. Attached 1 car garage. Starter home or bring your tool belt and bring up to date with your own personal touches.



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MLS# 45002

\$230,000

Repairs have been completed, and this home should finance! Nice singlewide home with a large shop on beautiful view acreage. 2 bedrooms, 1 bath, open kitchen to living area. Needs a little TLC. Easy access from gravel road and the views are beautiful. Just updated the decks. Garage door has been ordered to replace. Seller is willing to help with closing costs on an acceptable offer.

2 HOMES: Fantastic opportunity to live in one home and have a rental or guest home too. Beautifully updated 1930s home with stunning hardwood floors, primary bedroom & walk-in closet, updated bathroom with claw foot tub and shower. Door out to your own private deck to enjoy the peaceful setting. New appliances in the updated kitchen with pass through opening to the living room, gas log stove and French doors out to the pergola covered deck. Fenced garden area with shed and a separate greenhouse style shed. Year around pond with pump for watering and a creek that is spring fed. There is a French drain installed around the main house and an outside entry to the basement where the laundry is located and 2 cool storage rooms, Updated 1940 2-bedroom 1 bath ADU with its own fenced side yard. There is so much to this property you just have to see it to appreciate the beauty. The soil is incredible and the creek runs all year. The property is fenced with a few access options for easy entry to both yards. Plus a 2 car garage that has been freshly painted.



MLS# 44446

\$449,000

Beautifully well-maintain home in the heart of Kettle Falls. Close to schools, parks, restaurants, shopping, medical and the Lake Roosevelt Marina. 3 bedrooms 1.5 baths with comfortable size rooms, 2 bedrooms have walk-in closets. Wood stove in the living room that keeps the home warm and toasty. Insulated windows, new front and back doors, wood cabinets throughout, Installed new flooring in 2023, Mohawk non-scratch hard surface floors and carpet in the bedrooms. Chain link fenced back yard with alley access, carport and 8'x12' shed, thornless blackberries and raspberries in a fenced garden area. Raised garden beds, strawberries, grapes and the doghouse is included. Front yard sprinkler system, covered porch, it's all here for your comfort and ease.



MLS# 45456

\$335,000

Stunning Lake Roosevelt views and 17 acres of waterfront with 1,250 ft of riverbank frontage. Updated 1960's 4 bdrm 3 bath custom-built house, large primary ensuite bedroom with fabulous walk-in closet system. Daylight basement has fireplace. Swimming pool and cabana structure (pool needs TLC). Fenced garden/orchard, Barn, shop and assorted outbuildings. Beautiful green pastures are fenced and cross-fenced, ready to go for horses or livestock. The property has spring-fed water. Large hay barn is all natural barnwood. The shop has a car lift set-up. There's an old log cabin that could be re-constructed. 2 separate parcels with room to build a second residence. Easy access all year long off paved county road. Beautiful setting, just 30 minutes from all the amenities, including medical.



MLS# 45460

\$649,000

and assorted outbuildings. Beautiful green pastures are fenced and cross-fenced, ready to go for horses or livestock. The property has spring-fed water. Large hay barn is all natural barnwood. The shop has a car lift set-up. There's an old log cabin that could be re-constructed. 2 separate parcels with room to build a second residence. Easy access all year long off paved county road. Beautiful setting, just 30 minutes from all the amenities, including medical.

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