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The Community Paper of the Inland Northwest

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# Vital Signs for Musings & Amusing



by Bob Johnson

It may seem inconceivable that a man could arrive home after work and be met with this question from his wife: "What did you see at the strip club today, honey?" Yet that's

a common occurrence in Las Vegas, where the question focuses not on what the husband may have seen inside Little Darlings, but rather the verbiage on that club's roadside marquee sign.

Some have suggested that in Sin City, the Little Darlings marquee is second in fame only to the "Welcome to Las Vegas" sign. It's certainly favored by locals because of its ever-changing words of wisdom (occasionally), snark (often) and innuendo (more often). We will cite a few messages fit for family consumption.

During the days of hyper egg-fflation, the sign one day read:

LAP DANCES:  
CHEAPER  
THAN EGGS

During one of the recurring government shutdowns, this message was projected:

NOW  
AUDITIONING  
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Then there was this sign that made perfect sense to all:

HUSBAND  
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### CENTER

Here in the Inland Northwest, the star of the marquee sign is a business that has nothing to do with strippers but does know how to handle stripped brakes. Whether one is driving by a Golden Rule Brake shop in Spokane's North Monroe Business District, the North Spokane area, Spokane Valley or Post Falls, there's a marquee sign offering words of wisdom, points to ponder, puns and more.

For instance, during the aforementioned period of egg-fflation, the Golden Rule Brake marquees read:

THESE EGG  
PRICES BETTER  
NOT AFFECT THE  
CADBURY ONES

"I try to do a decent mix of things that are funny and things that are thought provoking," said Dallas Low, the third-generation owner of the company, which marked its 72<sup>nd</sup> birthday in February. "People tend to like the funny stuff, but it's more meaningful to me to put up something thought provoking."

Low's grandfather, Lester, and Lester's brother, Harvey, started the business in 1954. Low's father, Jerry, bought the business in 1980 and introduced the marquee signs in the early 1990s. Low purchased the business in 2013 and, along with the keys to the doors, came "the books," collections of quotes that were used to provide a steady flow of material for the signs, which are changed weekly and feature a different message on each side — 104 messages per year.

"My dad thought the signs would be a good marketing tool, and he was absolute-



This message graced the marquee signs at the Golden Rule shops during the third week of February.

ly right," Low said. "As people are driving, there's a lot that's competing for their attention. He thought the messages would get more eyes looking at our business, and that would lead to more people coming to us when they needed a repair."

Low added that he's mindful that any given message may be received or interpreted in different ways by different people.

"I don't want to shove a particular message down the throats of people because then they'll tune me out," he said. "There's no sense in doing that. So, I do a mix of

what I think is appropriate that the community will be receptive to. I'm not over-handed with the religious stuff, although it's super important to me."

While "the books" were helpful during Low's early years of sign message authoring, the evolution of the internet also has provided a treasure trove of material. And he said his ears are always open, including while attending church.

"My pastor might say something during his sermon that strikes a chord. I'll get my

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# Winter Blues



by Ray Bilderback

In northeast Washington, there are outdoor activities to spare: skiing, hiking trails, fishing, bird-watching, dog walking, wading or swimming in local lakes. You will add more, I'm sure. Great stuff, but these are weekend activities with adults. Sometimes my grandchildren would ask me, "Grandpa, what did you do when you were a kid?" And they meant, "What did kids do on their own with no adults involved? I explained that we had no organized entertainment except the radio and sometimes, if I was visiting my cousin in the city, a matinee movie at the theater. We would watch some western movies or a whole bunch of cartoons. I preferred the cartoons.

But that was special. Usually after school I would go with a friend to his house and listen to 15-minute radio shows. There were a bunch of them lasting an hour or so. There was Captain Midnight, Terry and the Pirates, and Jack Armstrong the All American Boy. My personal favorite was Henry Aldridge. The program would open with his mother calling, "Henry, Hennnry Aldridge." And he would answer, "Coming, mother." Sounds dippy now, but we would scrunch forward on our chairs because we knew he was in trouble or there was a problem in the neighborhood, and would he solve it before the 15 minutes were up. We were boys and he was a boy. His problems were our problems, and his triumphs were our triumphs.

Such shows were sponsored by breakfast cereals or soft drinks or some other item they hoped kids would press their mom to buy. Some programs had nifty

items you could get. I clipped a pair of coupons off cereal boxes, added 10 cents and mailed it in. I got a Captain Midnight decoder ring. It turned my finger green and after a few weeks our attention turned to baseball, but for a while it was the thing. I think of the radio programs as canned entertainment.

That still was not what they meant by, "What did you do?" They meant unorganized activities. I think of them as "our games." Some of them involved marbles or milk tops (both of these sports involved building up a supply of marbles or the paper stoppers of glass milk bottles because kids usually played "Keeps," and until you got good at it, you "lost your marbles" or milk stoppers (if that was the game).

Milk tops could be played in the house when the weather was bad. You made a circle on the floor with chalk. Each player would put a stopper in the circle and somebody (I don't remember how we decided who'd go first) would throw a top at those in the circle, and if he covered a top, he kept both of them. Next kid around the circle tried to do the same. Sometimes you could get two or three tops with one throw. The object was to get an awesome pile of tops. You followed "house rules" and if you came back after lunch they might be different. You had to ask.

Marbles were played outdoors with a circle in the dirt; local rules applied. You had to ask. Marbles may become a lifetime addiction with collections running into the hundreds. Some people collect only glass marbles. My favorites were "Dobies," because they were handmade and had personality.

Spring was a time of windy days and kites. You went to the five and dime store and bought string and a kite (some assembly required). The string you learned was awkward unless you got a good stout stick and wound the string on it. The

string would roll easily off the stick and was easily rewound. We soon learned that a kite was hard to manage until we put a stabilizing tail on it. A few strips from an old pillowcase would do nicely (better ask mom).

Crashes were inevitable so we were good at repairs. Once we learned to repair kites, we were soon making our own versions. You needed tissue paper and balsa wood strips and glue. The five and dime store had supplies. This brings to mind another activity: if you were short of cash, you could collect pop bottles. The grocery store would give you a penny or two for each bottle. Doesn't seem like much? Twenty-five cents could buy the string you needed with enough left over for Tootsie Rolls.

If you were a kite enthusiast, you were never too old to play. Evenings and weekends some adults would join us on the kiting ground, bringing their own ideas about kite flying.

Sometimes kite flying brought problems because it requires a fairly level area free from power lines and trees. That is where we were apt to congregate to play baseball. To complicate matters, both sports are popular in the spring. Fortunately, the kite flyers and the baseballers were usually the same kids.

Often there were not enough kids for a regular game so we played workup or chose up sides. We played with whatever equipment was available. My father had played for the Alta Mountain Goats so I used his old glove. Baseballs were hard to come by and were often more tape than ball.

Baseball was a good activity because many towns had amateur teams that you could watch and you could listen to games on the radio. Dads often had projects on weekends. Maybe there were lawn chairs that needed repairs and painting. That was a perfect setup. You could listen to a ball game on the radio with your dad and, if things went right, you could help with the painting.

When I was a kid of 6 or 7, we lived at the edge of town for a time near a wooded area with pine and oak trees. Kids in that neighborhood built forts in the brush or flattened grocery boxes to make sleds. I

soon joined them. There was a little ravine that we piled high with glossy brown needles. We would slide down into the ravine on our cardboard sleds. Down into the ravine and out again packing our cardboard sleds.

We built forts in the trees or played Tarzan swinging from a rope in the live oak tree.

A fuller account of kids' pastimes of your grandfather's youth may be found in *Where did you go? Out. What did you do? Nothing.*, by Robert Paul Smith. It was published in 1957 and may be hard to find. Ask your librarian.

That brings up another subject. People read Mother Goose stories to me when I was small. I remember the book and the neat pictures. But there was a big void. I learned to read alright, but I had no access to a library. There were a few books in the house but nothing for a young reader. I missed out on such books as *Treasure Island* and *Tom Sawyer* and other classics. I read them later, but I should have read them when I was a kid.

If you have children or grandchildren, read to them as they grow up. Let them know how much you value reading. How do you do that? Be a regular at your local library. Have books laying around. Talk about books. We have great libraries in our area thanks to North Central Washington Libraries or the Steven County system. Those are the ones I am familiar with. Other areas have good systems as well.

And remember to take some time to do nothing. Take all day if you need it. Make a snow fort. Build a snowman. Count your marbles. Just don't give in to the winter blues.

Ray Bilderback, creator of the Reuben Braddock novels, was born and raised in the Sierra foothills of California. He served in the U.S. Navy Seabees during the Korean War and taught for many years in the West. He makes his home in the mountains of eastern Washington with his archeologist wife, Madilane Perry. "In the 1930s and 1940s, where I lived, we still used horses and hand tools, canned and preserved what we grew or raised, lit our kerosene lanterns, stoked our woodstoves. In my writing, I draw from those times like water from a sweet well."

## 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 1<sup>st</sup> of each month.

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# Taste Budz Review: Luna Spokane



By Zack & Brooklyn Bolin, Facebook: Taste Budz, Instagram: tastebudz\_spokane

For Valentine's Day, Zack and I decided to check out Luna on the South Hill in Spokane; we were drawn to the name, as that's what we'd like to name a daughter one day.

What we enjoyed:

- Bread & Butter
- Seafood Gumbo
- 2 Piece & a Biscuit
- Chocolate Torte

The ambiance of Luna was perfect for Valentine's Day, with unique decor such as birdcage chandeliers, dim lighting, and a cozy setting.

As usual, Zack was starving when we arrived, and our attentive waitress brought out complimentary bread and butter. The butter was rich and fresh, and the bread was similar to a ciabatta roll with a crunchy exterior and fluffy interior.

If you love elevated cocktails, this is the restaurant for you; they have a wide variety of drinks made with everything from gin to rye. They also have an extensive wine list; I ordered a glass of the sauvignon blanc, which was crisp, refreshing, and delicious. Zack was in the mood for a classic beer, so he ordered a pilsner and thoroughly enjoyed it.

Onto the food: their menu covers a wide range of cuisine. They have everything from vegetable curry to crab pasta to flatbreads. That was part of the reason we chose it; we didn't have to pick one style of food for the evening. I ended up ordering the seafood gumbo. I was looking for something hearty and warm but also want-

ed seafood. The dark roux was delicious and well-seasoned, and the shrimp were cooked perfectly. I did wish that there were more chunks of sausage and that it was a tad bit hotter, as I was cold and craving that warm heartiness, but overall the flavor was impeccable.

Zack went with the two-piece and a biscuit, which was two chicken legs, fried golden brown, a bowl of mashed potatoes with gravy, and a house-made biscuit. The chicken was juicy and very crispy, just like he wanted, and the biscuit was fluffy and warm. They served it with a side of hot honey, which Zack thought meant temperature hot, and didn't realize it was the spicy honey that seemed to come with every dish today. However, he enjoyed it and thought it complemented the savoriness of the meal well. The mashed potatoes were good; the gravy was lighter, and he usually prefers it



chocolate and crust sprinkled around. The flavors came together perfectly, and I devoured the whole thing.

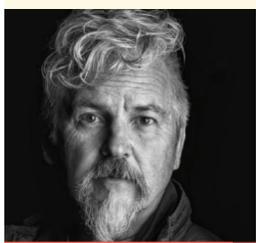
Even though it was February, they had their back patio area set up with a gas fireplace where couples could sit and have a drink. Next time we go, it'll definitely be in the summer, when we can enjoy their lovely patio area and break away from the crowds.

Overall, Luna provides a very upscale and classy ambiance, which is perfect for special occasions, and they offer an extensive menu so that everyone in your party will be able to find something to eat.

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# Is it Spring Yet?



by Amy McGarry

Can we talk about the weather again? As disappointed as I was in the lack of snow this winter, I was delighted at the beginning of February to see not only crocuses, not only daffodils, but also tulips sprouting up through the earth. If we're not going to have a real winter, let's go ahead and move on, shall we?

One particularly sunny, warmish day this past February, I got so excited for spring that I rolled down my windows

and opened up my sunroof. It snowed that night. Thank goodness I went out to get the mail and noticed I had left my sunroof open.

February never fails to bring us a few days of warm, sunny weather, tricking us into thinking spring is here. To check my memory vs. science, I looked it up. "False spring" is a thing. It doesn't just trick us humans into thinking spring has arrived. It tricks tulips and all kinds of other plants. They feel the premature warmth in their little planty veins and say, "Hey! It's time to shoot up and reveal our green beauty to the world!" Then, it snows.

I'm impatient for spring because winter

'25/26 seemed especially gray and dreary to me. Each morning, going outside, looking up to see yet another gray, cloudy sky, felt very much like the movie *Groundhog Day*. It made me feel desperate for spring. And if you are as big of a fan of Punxsutawney Phil as I am, right now you're saying to yourself, "Sorry, lady. Punxsutawney Phil saw his shadow on Feb. 2. We all know what that means. Six more weeks of winter."

While I do love that handsome, chubby chap, furry Phil and I have a relationship that is what you might call...complicated. As with all of my relationships, I'm happiest when he tells me what I want to hear. Needless to say, I am not happy with Phil. You might say when it comes to Phil, I'm a "fair-weather friend." Fickle and flighty by nature, I'm no faithful follower of Phil. I don't even know why we listen to the guy. He has been correct only 30% to 35% of the time predicting an early spring or extended winter. That's worse reliability than flipping a coin.

Enough about Phil since February is finally finished. Let's move on to March.

On the calendar, March is the first month of spring. But does March really count as spring? March is in the winter quarter on my community college teaching calendar, so, is it? Or isn't it?

The answer is, yes, it is. And it isn't. March is an even more paradoxical month than February. Here in the Inland Northwest, March teeters between frost and thaw, wind and sun, all the while cloud-bursts of sudden showers are always a blink of an eye away. And yet, the days in March always do stretch a little longer and mornings are a little brighter. What is this sensation in my chest? It feels vaguely familiar. Could it be...hope?

As if the calendar itself is impatient for spring, March gives the day a little shove,

a little "spring forward" on March 8, the start of daylight saving time. Talk about paradoxes! First, we feel groggy and exhausted with the change of the clock in spring, making us irritable and stressed. After a few days of adjustment, longer evening daylight boosts mood, energy, and motivation with more activity and higher serotonin levels. And, we still have to contend with unpredictable March weather.

However, once we've survived the tumultuous first weeks of March, we finally land on one of the most magical celestial events of the year - the spring equinox. Occurring on the 20<sup>th</sup> this year - the miracle of the motions of the sun and Earth gives us a brief span in which day and night stand in perfect balance. From this day forward, after months of dwelling in darkness, night gives sway as day takes its rightful place of dominance.

So regardless of the weather, let's call March spring. Let's practice patience in the paradox of March, where "March many-weathers can be both spring and winter" (Kamran Mofid, poet). This uncertainty which feels unstable is really just the stirrings of change. Let's practice trust in the rhythms of nature, knowing light inevitably returns again. Let's feel hopeful. Every sprout, every ray of sun, a promise of what's to come.

"Just as plants lean toward the sun, humans instinctively respond to the promise of brighter days. Hope, after all, is a form of light, and March teaches us how to turn toward it even when the ground beneath our feet is still cold." -Anonymous

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.

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# Beneath the Surface, Our Most Precious Resource: An Interview with A&H Well Services



by Robin Milligan

When a job determines whether a family has access to something as important as clean water, integrity matters. The owners of A&H Well Services in Chewelah are dedicated to precision and integrity.

Chris Payne grew up in Chattaroy, Charles Parsons, who goes by Buster, was raised near Oroville, and Andy Peters lived in Nine Mile. Local guys who love this area

and care about how they affect the environment and the lives of the people who live here.

A&H was founded in 2019. Peters said had been working well completions in the oil industry previously. He needed a water well tested, but the tester he hired didn't know the answers to his questions, so he went about finding the answers for himself. He said this led him on the path to the career he now loves, serving the region he calls home, doing what he believes is most important: helping people. According to his partners, he talked them into joining his team, where they share equal authority and ownership over their business.

Payne said he is the pump guy, Parsons drills, and Peters does the estimates and diagnostics. A&H doesn't just drill wells. They set and fix pumps, test water, fix wells that are not working correctly, and more. They have worked for most of the PUDs (Planned Unit Development), trailer parks, HOAs (Homeowners Association), and water districts. Their focus is residential and commercial water drilling, and they said they are probably the only residential-focused company with an engineer on staff in the area. They care about the quality of their work and all three of them are serious about making sure the work they do is done right the first time.

Working across northeastern Washington and Idaho means working in diverse geology: shale, granite, alluvial soils, and basalt zones.

"This area is unique in that there are transition areas where we encounter basalt flows and granite and they are very different and present their own unique challenges. You get into the basalt flows and then you get into an overburden from the alluvial Glacial Lake Missoula, where we have encountered over 100 feet of sand and then clay and more sand," Parsons said. The sand and clay layers Parsons described trace back to the Ice Age floods from Glacial Lake Missoula, which shaped much of eastern Washington's geology.

"Getting from job site to job site can be tough at times because of simple access issues. Trees might need to be cut. We can give an educated guess as to what we'll encounter. We want to do good work and be transparent about what it will cost and the outcome we'll achieve. We want the cus-

tomers to feel confident that our estimates are as close as possible and never go over budget without the customer's direction," Parsons added.

Groundwater, Parsons explained, is often misunderstood. "People tend to think of groundwater as a lake, but it is more like a sponge. It's about permeability, and that can cause problems because it affects the recharge rate of a finished well." The recharge rate is how quickly a well fills back up when empty.

When the geological formation is uncertain, the stakes are high.

Parsons said, "I always explain that drilling for water can be a gamble. I will investigate every change in the formation to determine the best course of action for the customer. We focus on the quality of the finished product over getting the job finished quickly. It's a huge investment for most people. The customer is often putting everything they have on the line for their future. For us, it's about answering all of their questions and being forward about rea-

ply. Wells can decline with age, and when they are improperly installed it can be a big problem."

Parsons added, "During droughts, wells can run low or out of water, so more drilling to reach deeper water can often be the answer. Depending on the original construction, it can possibly be deepened, but sometimes you have to start over and drill a whole new well."

He continued, "On an industrial level, if a farm has a water right, it should stand, and individuals have the right to have a water well on their property. I am a believer that the state is doing a good job with the regulatory system we have."

The owners said certain formations present particular environmental and financial risks.

With Basalt, the solution is to go deeper, which can be cost prohibitive. It can contain pollutants or contaminants, especially within the first 300 feet.

A well drilled in shale can seem like it's going to be fine, but then wane because of its softness. Shale is a sedimentary rock. The softer the formation, the more possible it is that it will seal itself off in time when the clay absorbs water and swells into the fractures in the stone. Highly fractured, soft bedrock can also collapse into the well just like clay or sand layers, so that has to be accounted for as well.

Granite can also be tricky because it does not contain as many fractures as shale, and some of the fractures hold water but don't conduct water. Like shale, though, softer rock contains clay and makes it harder to get water out. Medium-to-hard granite stays open the best, conducting water better.

When asked how much water is enough for the average family, Peters said, "The EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) and USGS (U.S. Geological Survey) both roughly agree that 82-100 gallons per person per day is necessary. If a well gives three gallons per minute or less, you'll need storage. Five gallons per minute (GPM) needs a deep well, and seven GPM or better is good."

Groundwater is a shared and finite resource that A&H Well Services takes very seriously. Water quality remains central to their work.

"Water is public, finite, and we should be good stewards and protect the ground water from contaminants," Peters said. "PFAS' (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) is a current worry affecting water quality. These can come from shampoo, outdoor wear, cleaning products, Teflon cookware, and many other products prior to 2010. This is part of a broader national drinking water concern. I worry that because the thresholds for testing are very low, and old wells are being pulled offline because of it. I see this

continued on page 11



sonable expectations."

Since 2020, the number of people making those investments has increased dramatically. "The data says it clearly," Peters said.

For rural families, a well can mean more than infrastructure. A well means water independence and the ability to have fresh, clean drinking water. "Many of our clients have a hand pump option installed or generators to keep the flow going even when the power is out," Peters said.

This independence does not mean unlimited supply. Peters explained what can happen when wells decline: "The more people who drill into an aquifer, the less overall water that exists for everyone tapped into that same water sup-

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# Seven Things I Love About Doing My Taxes



by Kerry Schafer

The other day, I went in for my annual appointment with my tax guy and something miraculous happened.

I am not a numbers person. I did well in school in general, but math? I memorized my way through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. I'd tell myself things like, "This looks like that other problem where you did this thing to get the right answer." And I'd use the same formula and cross my fingers and hope I got it right. Fortunately, I have a good memory. Also, I was dating a math whiz. Don't tell anybody, but I still count on my fingers.

When you combine numbers and math with tax rules and bookkeeping and records - well, let's just say that I have a long history of approaching tax prep with fear, dread, and loathing. Like, much as I fear the dentist (and I fear the dentist greatly), I'd prefer to get a root canal. Usually I come away from a tax appointment feeling equal parts demoralized, stupid, guilt-ridden, and resentful.

My mind would be spinning with questions. Why am I being forced to part with my hard-earned money? Why am I cursed with a brain that stares slack-jawed at numbers, frozen like a suicidal deer on a narrow country road? Am I going to get money back or am I going to have to pay?

Which brings me back to this year's miracle.

I walked into my income tax appointment with a smile instead of the usual dread and loathing. I enjoyed the visit and was still smiling when I walked out again later. No, I didn't discover that I was getting unexpected thousands back in a return, nor did I make so much money last year that it's easy to let some of it go.

So, what's different?

Me. I'm different. I've been working on my thoughts and beliefs around money and taxes as part of my commitment to choosing to live a joyful life. What allowed me to actually enjoy preparing my taxes this year and have fun during a meeting with my tax accountant, is the way I've learned to think about money and taxes and my own ability to manage both.

On the off chance that you are not a fan of taxes yourself, I'm sharing my seven favorite things about tax season:

1. Here's the easiest and most accessible one: it feels so good when the taxes are done. You can make it feel even better by giving yourself a small reward (or a big one!) to celebrate such as dinner out, a treat from the bakery, or a glass of Champagne. Hey, you've earned it.
2. I've realized that if I'm paying taxes, it's because money came in to pay taxes on. And the more taxes I'm paying, the more money I've been making. I make a conscious point of being grateful for money that has flowed in.
3. Instead of wallowing in resentment about the government taking my money, I tell myself that my money is contributing to the well-being of others (and my own!).

I'm contributing to Social Security and VA (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs) benefits, to health insurance funds and feeding hungry kids and paying law enforcement personnel and other good things for all of us. Yes, my tax dollars also go to a lot of other things that I'm less excited about, but hey, life is short and I choose to focus on the good things.



4. Tax prep is an opportunity to review the past year, to look at what I've accomplished, what I've learned and experienced, and also what I might want to work harder on or do differently this year. Was the money I spent well spent, or do I want to switch things up and do it differently?
5. I enjoy spending time with my tax accountant. We laugh and have fun going through my records. It's amazing to me that he actually loves all of the number crunching and organizing of income streams. The tax things that are mystifying and mind-numbing for me are a fun puzzle for him. I look back (way back) to the days when my taxes were relatively simple and I did them myself, and shudder. It felt so uncertain and unwieldy. I never knew for sure whether I did it right. Now, I have confidence that it's all in good hands and that is an excellent feeling.
6. When I'm spending time assembling all of the tax things, instead of resenting the time I could be spending on other things, I tell myself I'm working for a paycheck. My withholdings are sufficient and I'm confident I'm going to get a return; that's something to get excited about.
7. I used to avoid tracking my income and spending because, hello, math! Also, I'd told myself for years that I was bad with money. Who wants to spend time working on something they believe they're bad at? Then, when my tax appointment came around, I had to face up to a year of neglecting my records right alongside the shame and loathing that came with believing I was a bad money person. Turns out, I'm actually pretty good with my money when I stop avoiding it and pay attention to it. This year, I knew what I needed. I knew where my deductions were. My records were reasonably up to date, and it was easy to pull together what I needed.

So those are my favorite tax season things. I guess what it all boils down to is this: taxes are inevitable, as Ben Franklin said, so we might as well make the best of it.

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 [allthingskerry.com](http://allthingskerry.com).

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Each Sudoku has a unique solution that can be reached logically without guessing.

Enter digits from 1 to 9 into the blank spaces.

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Puzzle difficulty level is "Medium."

Good luck!

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	3	7			2			5
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# Berry Funnies

Jokes curated from the Internet and books, and created by Thea Cruden

**What type of bird should you never take to the bank?** A robin.

**What do sheep do on a sunny spring day?**

Have a Baa baa cue.

**Why is the letter A like a flower?** The B comes after it.

**What do you call a grizzly bear caught in the rain?**

A drizzly bear.

**What falls, but never needs a bandage?** The rain.

**What goes up when the rain comes down?** Umbrellas.

**What type of a bow can't be tied or untied?** A rainbow.

**I tried to catch the fog, but I mist.**

**What did the dirt say to the rain?**

If you keep this up, my name will be mud.

**What do stinging insects wear in the rain?**

Their yellow jackets.

**How does the sun listen to its favorite music?**

On the ray-dio.

### Double Positive

An MIT linguistics professor was lecturing his class the other day. "In English," he said, "a double negative forms a positive. However, in some languages, such as Russian, a double negative remains a negative. But there isn't a single language, not one, in which a double positive can express a negative." A voice from the back of the room said, "Yeah, right."

**Been washing my trampoline. Seemed time to do some spring cleaning.**

**What do clouds wear during spring rain showers?**

Thunderwear.

**How can you tell the weather's warming up?**

There's a spring in people's step.

**How did the cake get wet?** It got sprinkled.

**What is a king's favorite kind of weather?** Reign-y!

**What do you call a deer who enjoys playing in the rain?** A reindeer.

**What kind of bow looks best when it's wet?** A rainbow.

**Long Life**  
A tough old cowboy from Texas counseled his granddaughter that if she wanted to live a long life, the secret was to sprinkle a pinch of gun powder on her oatmeal every morning. The granddaughter did this religiously until the age of 103, when she finally died peacefully in her sleep. She left behind 14 children, 30 grandchildren, 45 great-grandchildren, 25 great-great-grandchildren, and a 40-foot hole where the crematorium used to be.

**What did the mop say to the vacuum?**

"You clean up nice."

**I worked on unclogging the tub for nearly an hour. Now I feel so drained.**

**Did you hear about that brand-new broom that just came out?** It's sweeping the nation.

**What did the broom say to the mop?**

"I'm so tired of people pushing us around."

**When you clean a vacuum cleaner, you become a vacuum cleaner.**

**Why was the broom late?** It over-swept.

**Did you hear the one about the messy bed?**

Yeah, I made it up.

**My husband and I had a disagreement about whose turn it was to do the laundry. In the end, he threw in the towel.**

**I've decided to sell my vacuum cleaner. It was just collecting dust.**

**What do you call a well-dressed lion?** A dandy lion.

**Why are frogs so happy?** They eat whatever bugs them.

**What did the tree say to spring?** What a re-leaf.

**Why couldn't the sunflower ride its bike?**

It lost its petals.

**Why did the worm cross the ruler?**

To become an inchworm.

**Why did the bee's hair smell sweet?**

Because it used a honeycomb.

**What can you find in the middle of March and April, but not at the beginning or end of either?**

The letter R.

**What did the leprechaun say when the video game ended?** Game clover.

**What do you call leprechauns who collect aluminum cans, used newspapers, and plastic bottles?** Wee-cyclers.

**Who can catch a bad leprechaun?** An under-clover cop.

**What did the leprechaun say on March 17?**

Irish you a Happy St. Patrick's Day!

**Why do leprechauns recycle?** They like to go green.

**What is a leprechaun's favorite cereal?** Lucky Charms.

**What type of music do leprechauns love?**

Sham-rock and roll.

**What happens when a leprechaun falls in a river?**

He gets wet.

**How can you tell if a leprechaun is having a good time?** He's Dublin over with laughter.

**Why can't you borrow money from a leprechaun?** Because they're always a little short.

**What baseball position do leprechauns play?**

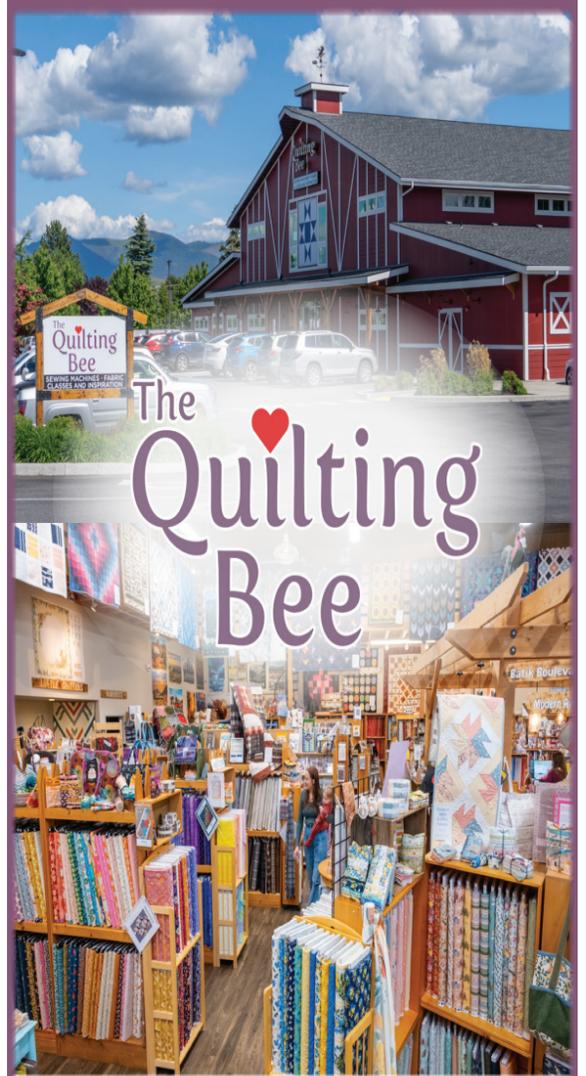
Shortstop.

### RIDDLES

1. What has a head, a tail, is brown and has no legs?
2. What breaks yet never falls, and what falls yet never breaks?
3. A man looks at a painting in a museum and says, "Brothers and sisters, I have none, but that man's father is my father's son." Who is in the painting?
4. It can't be seen, can't be felt, can't be heard, and can't be smelled. It lies behind stars and under hills, and empty holes it fills. What is it?
5. An electric train is headed east. Where does the smoke go?
6. What word in the dictionary is spelled incorrectly?



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# Looking at Corned Beef's Ties to St. Patrick's Day

By Cassie Patton

The corned beef and cabbage has officially entered the group chat! While this iconic dish may not be a fan favorite for all, this dish is what makes St. Patrick's Day a main staple of the American tradition.

England's Cattle Acts of 1663 and 1667 were what initiated the beginning of the well-known dish of corned beef and cabbage that many Americans, Irish or not, celebrate by eating on March 17. These acts banned the export of live cattle to England, which led to an oversupply of beef in the Irish market. The Acts helped to boost not just the meat market, but the market for salted beef production specifically. Salt was the main reason why Ireland became the center for corned beef. This high-quality corned beef was nothing like what we eat today on St. Patrick's Day, with meat which was cured with salt the size of corn kernels.

One theory, however, states that corned beef was such a high request that when England and France were at war with each other during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the English allowed the French to dock in Ireland for the sake of this reason. According to an article by the Dublin Institute of Technology's School



of Culinary Arts and Food Technology, "Anglo-Irish landlords saw exports to France, despite the fact that England and France were at war, as a means of prof-

iting from the Cattle Acts... During the 18<sup>th</sup> century, wars played a significant role in the growth of exports of Irish beef. These wars were mainly fought at sea and navies had high demand for Irish salted beef for two reasons, firstly its longevity at sea and secondly its competitive price."

A plot twist: the Irish people were not fortunate enough to buy the luxurious beef for themselves, as England confiscated Ireland at the time, putting into place harsh laws discriminating against Irish Catholics. This would eventually lead to the million Irish immigrants arriving in America after the severe Great Famine of 1846-1851.

According to [smithsonianmagazine.com](http://smithsonianmagazine.com): "It didn't take long for corned beef and cabbage to become associated with St. Patrick's Day. Maybe it was on Abraham Lincoln's mind when he chose the menu for his first Inaugural Luncheon on March 4, 1861, which was corned beef, cabbage and potatoes."

Happy St. Patrick's Day!

Cassie Patton, born and raised in Washington state, says she has always enjoyed writing about any topic possible. When not actively writing, she can be found baking up a sweet treat or watching football.



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# Vital Signs ...continued from page 1

phone out to make a note, and my wife is like, 'Get off your phone, you're in church!' Sometimes I'll be watching a TV show, a character will say something, and I'll think, 'Oh, that's pretty good.' The ideas can come from anywhere."

The spectrum of topics is wide, from the challenges of aging to the battle of the (belly) bulge, and from the perils of relationships to puns based on dad jokes.

When it comes to aging, a sign might focus on one's physical appearance:

IF GRAY HAIR  
IS A SIGN OF  
WISDOM, I'M A  
FREAKIN' GENIUS

Or it may touch on one's physical state:

MY FAVORITE  
CHILDHOOD  
MEMORY IS MY  
BACK NOT HURTING

Or it could even harken to one's mis-spent youth:

WHEN YOU'RE OLD,  
YOU TAKE ALL  
YOUR DRUGS AFTER  
THE CONCERT

For those of us in a constant state of diet deprivation, some of the signs hit close to home. A prime (not prime rib) example:

I WANT BUNS OF  
STEEL, BUT I ALSO  
WANT BUNS OF  
CINNAMON

America's most popular take-home meal provided fodder for this message:

EATING PIZZA  
IS A GREAT WAY  
TO SUPPRESS  
YOUR APPETITE

And, as one who grew up in a family bakery business, I can vouch for the accuracy of this message:

STRESS CANNOT

EXIST IN THE  
PRESENCE  
OF PIE

From courting all the way through retirement, Golden Rule's signs have provided valuable relationship guidance. For instance:

DATING ADVICE:  
IF HE SMELLS LIKE  
FABRIC SOFTENER,  
HE'S MARRIED

Then there was this secret to a happy marriage:

I DO WHATEVER  
THE VOICES IN MY  
WIFE'S HEAD  
TELL ME TO DO

And for the marriage that beats the odds and holds up:

THE RETIRED  
HUSBAND  
IS A WIFE'S  
FULL-TIME JOB

This being a humor column, and me being a veteran dad jokester, the puns that occasionally find their way onto the signs are among my favorites. We'll begin with one that's so bad it could be considered pun-ishment:

COWS HAVE  
HOOVES INSTEAD  
OF FEET BECAUSE  
THEY LACTOSE

I never have excelled at math, so this one really added up:

PUNS MAKE ME  
NUMB. MATH  
PUNS MAKE  
ME NUMBER

But my favorite of all the puns is this one:

IF ATTACKED  
BY A MOB OF  
CLOWNS, GO FOR



Dallas Low (left) is the third-generation owner of Golden Rule Brake and the man behind the marquee sign messages at the company's four area shops. His son, Jeremiah, is now learning the ropes.

## THE JUGGLER

Low described the marquee signs as "something we can do that goes beyond fixing your car. They're something we can do for the community."

Tangible evidence of success in that regard was provided a few years ago.

"A woman who runs a half-way house for women stopped by," Low recalled. "She told me that every week when she drives by, she stops, writes down the message and then posts it on the bulletin board at the house."

"That really touched me. We may never know how a statement or a comment in

that moment intersects with the life of a person, whether they just need a pick-me-up or are really struggling."

Whether touching a heart or tickling a funny bone, the marquee signs fronting Low's brake shops provide thoughts worth sharing — with no need to even go near a strip club.

Bob Johnson can write about strip clubs only anecdotally, but he knows a good marquee sign when he sees one as he and wife Michelle explore the communities and neighborhoods of the Inland Northwest and share their observations with Huckleberry Press readers.

# Beneath the Surface ...continued from page 5

becoming more of an issue concerning older wells in the near future."

Parsons said, "People need to be aware of protecting their resources. We have an issue with PFAS because it is a forever chemical. It is everywhere, not just here, and can be found in many products. High nitrate content from fertilizers and naturally occurring sources, phosphorus, uranium, and arsenic can also be problematic. It's important to get your water tested, although it may not be required."

Water testing often happens before the sale of a property with a well. Peters said he tries to get people to test water on their own many times, so he isn't charging to take a sample to the lab and says that everyone who gets a well drilled should also get their well water tested. He recommends taking your water sample to Anatek in Spokane because they are the most reputable.

"I'm not in the business of selling hope," Peters said. "I give you options and show you the data that exists, but it's always possible that you'll get a dry hole. We tell customers that upfront."

He continued, "A deeper hole doesn't always have the

effect of more water. The first 300 feet in granite, for instance, often has the most fractures because it cooled the fastest. A deep well does hold more water, but the pump will cost a lot more and doesn't always translate to being cost effective. We're honest. Communication is so big. We're blunt about the reality of the situation. People's lives are on the line."

That sense of responsibility is built into everything they do.

"It's interesting," Peters said. "Always a little bit of a different problem at each place. Growing up on a farm, my uncle told me the only thing people will remember about you is how you treated them. We try not to charge for simple service calls if we don't have to. That's how we do business. We give a written estimate before we do anything. We sell a good product and we stand behind it. We show up, are polite, diagnose the problem, and even if we can't fix it today or the customer doesn't go through us, helping people feels good. The customer experience being positive is important to us. It matters how you treat people."

Parsons agreed: "I'm a simple man. I can pound nails,

chase cows, or do this. It's something I'm good at. I enjoy the challenge; no two days are the same. Never facing the monotony of the same thing day after day. Sometimes the work is straightforward and sometimes it's trigonometry. It's an interesting job and never boring."

In a region where water feels abundant, the message beneath the surface is clear.

"Water is a precious resource," Parsons said.

In northeastern Washington, the health of the region depends not only on what lies underground, but on the integrity of the people trusted to reach it.

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Robin Milligan is an artist and entrepreneur living in Spokane, Wa. She curates art shows, runs an IT company, and teaches ceramics and painting from her home studio. When not working, Robin spends her time with her three children exploring nature, rockhounding, making art, and swimming.

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situated on 6.52 acres bordering the Kettle River. Large open floor plan with views from the kitchen, dining and living room. Plenty of windows to bring the beauty of outside inside. Main floor living with radiant heat, laundry and primary bed and bath. A beautifully finished basement includes wet bar, stone floors, a wood stove, bed and bath, lots of windows and an outside entrance. Two decks for your entertaining enjoyment & oversized

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**



Over 3,000 sq. ft. in this 4 bed/3.5bath home on a large corner lot within an hour of Spokane, with golf course and ski hill as a part of your new community. This home highlights custom craftsman build including a theater stage and full screen wired for sound/lights and projector for all your family and or entertaining possibilities. Chewelah's Pey Creek babbling through the front yard, under your very own bridge, lighted pathway and established native

**MLS# 44403 \$565,000**

and elaborate landscaped yard. Fully fenced back and side yard in addition to a 2 car attached garage with workshop. This home has it all and the room and design to accommodate a multitude of living enjoyment and options! Come see it today.

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**



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# 44032 \$149,000**

HOME FEELS LIKE A BRAND NEW HOME, Complete remodel & ready to move into. Beautiful remodel with new windows, flooring, walls, doors, new efficient kitchen w/ big closet pantry, large dining area, laundry room & updated bathroom, large corner lot with 2 off street parking areas, room to garden, deck, and a 10 x 16 storage shed, located minutes from Lake Roosevelt and boat launch. Home okay for FHA, VA Financing.



**MLS# 44937 \$265,000**



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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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.

**MLS# 45002 \$230,000**

PRICED TO SELL - SMALL TOWN LIVING. Very well maintained home. This home is ready for you to make it your own. A large kitchen, 3 large bedrooms, 2 bath and one has a walk in bathtub. Pellet stove, heat pump, ceiling fan, wheel chair ramp, laundry room is off the kitchen in its own room, with exit/entry from the attached carport. Enjoy peace and quiet while sitting on your covered, screened in front porch or on the newly redone porch in the back. Partially fenced, large yard with established landscape and room for a garden. Large shed and/or workshop, existing slab and electrical are ready for your garage to be built, car shelter can stay. So much potential at a great price and READY TO MOVE IN!



**MLS# 44404 \$244,999**



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.

**MLS# 45002 \$230,000**

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**



Highway frontage with easy access off Hwy. 395, 7.83 acres with a shared well. Rural 5 zoning. Seller financing available.

**MLS# 44923 \$350,000**

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