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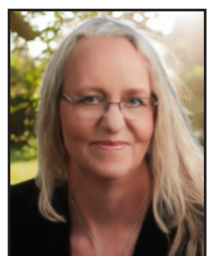
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Confessions of a Wannabe Declutterer



by Kerry Schafer

Full disclosure. I am not what you'd call top shelf housewifely material (sorry, Mom, I know you tried). When it comes to cleaning, I tend to have two settings:

Clean House Radar On: obsessive awareness of every little speck of dust, every muddy footprint, every dish left in the sink, and every item left where it doesn't belong. **Clean House Radar**

Off: blissful oblivion.

Okay, I'm exaggerating a little. Our house is reasonably clean and I'm not a hoarder or anything, but Better Homes and Gardens we are not. There are so many other much more satisfying and rewarding things to do with my time.

When I write a book, for example, nobody comes along behind me and undoes sentences as I type them. If an artist paints a picture, it stays painted. Housework, on the other hand, does not stay done. If you wash the dishes, clean off the counters, and polish the sink until it shines — inevitably somebody is going to have a snack. Probably the minute you sit down for a well-earned rest. Crumbs on the counter. Dirty dishes in that spotless sink. If you vacuum and mop

the floors, the dogs are going to track in mud and the cats are going to make a point of immediately shedding all over the carpet.

Clean the toilet, and... well, you get the idea.

And then, of course, there's clutter. The Viking and I discuss, off and on, the fact that any empty flat surface is a breeding ground for clutter. I'm pretty sure it proliferates itself when I'm not looking. And then there is the drawer. You know the one, stuffed full of things that you're maybe going to need someday like elastic bands, unused birthday candles, paper clips, seed packets, twist ties, and wine corks. It's the drawer that jams when you try to open it. When you manage to yank it open, random items fall out and you have to cram them back in.

If you do not have such a drawer, you and I cannot ever be friends.

Some of us (I'm speaking theoretically and admit to nothing) might even have multiple such drawers. Maybe also some shelves and a closet or two, all harboring things that might be needed someday. And then there are those clothes that used to fit two years ago and will surely magically fit again someday.

I'm not particularly fond of decluttering, but it feels much

more satisfying than regular cleaning. It can also be fascinating, sort of like an archeologist working through the layers of years, making new discoveries all along the way — for about 15 minutes, anyway.

A big decluttering and reorganizing project feels great while inspired. When that fades away, it's pure, boring drudgery.

Still, I'm motivated to keep trying by the theory that there is stagnant energy attached to stored objects that can make us feel stuck. Yes, I know that's a little on the woo-woo side, but more practically, there's the simple frustration of a drawer that doesn't open properly and of being out of space to store more things.

Marie Condo, the renowned diva of decluttering, suggests asking the question, "Does this object give you joy?" And if the answer is "no," out it goes. Maybe this works for some people, but Marie absolutely lost me the day she suggested decluttering book collections. This is heresy and anathema to my book-loving soul, and I've had no time for her ever since.

Recently, I attempted something called the "Nine Day, 21 Item" method, which is exactly what it sounds like. You commit to donating or discarding 21 things for nine consecutive days. If you miss a day, you're supposed to start your

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The Plentiful Perils of Potholes



by **Bob Johnson**

During the 15 years I spent in purgatory... I mean Chicago... the running joke was that the Windy City had two seasons: winter and construction.

Much-needed infrastructure repairs could wait until a train trestle, as an example, completely rusted out. "Oh, it should last another year," was the official road department position... until it wasn't. Instead, the construction work focused on two primary projects: installing more toll cameras and filling potholes. In that order of priority.

Correct me if I'm wrong, but we have not encountered even one toll road since the lovely Michelle and I moved to the Inland Northwest – and we have done a lot of exploring in eastern Washington, northern Idaho, and western Montana. However, we *have* experienced a plethora of potholes, primarily on the unpaved road that leads to our house, but also on city streets and interstate highways. The pothole, it would seem, does not discriminate on the basis of road type.

Research reveals, and long-time residents would concur, that Spokane has a significant pothole problem. The city even has a 24-hour pothole hotline. This provides drivers with something to do while waiting for AAA to arrive and fix their tires.

According to the city, Spokane's road crews filled 3,100 potholes in 2025, some more than once. No statistics are available on how many potholes went unfilled. Honestly, that number seems low, but you can't argue with City Hall.

March, April, and May are the prime



pothole-filling months, the timing based on the winter thaw – or, this year, the winter thaws. (Are you one of the people who planted their garden too early?) That said, pothole filling is a year-round activity in Washington because of the state's wet climate.

Post-Chicago, we lived in a desert climate before moving here, so we knew one of the big differences in our lives would be water. Specifically, the abundance of it. No longer would we need to deal with pressure-regulating showerheads or HOA spies monitoring car washing on non-designated days of the week.

About those two "conservation" policies:

- Does a 10-minute shower with a

pressure-regulated showerhead really use less water than a five-minute shower with a free-flowing head?

- Does it truly matter whether a car is washed on a Thursday as opposed to a Tuesday?

Ironically, friends tell us that potholes have become a major problem in that desert community, the result of aging infrastructure and years without repaving. Selfishly, that news makes us feel even better about our move.

But I digress. Given that potholes are a real "thing" here, I had to learn more. For instance, how does Spokane compare to other cities from a pothole perspective?

Great news: Spokane is considered a "Top-10 City," on a per-capita basis, for the entire country. Take that, Zags! (Yes, we know that Gonzaga University's basketball team is officially called the Bulldogs, but we are demonstrating our local knowledge by referring to it by its nickname.) Within Washington, Spokane typically competes with Yakima for pothole superiority.

According to the American Public Works Association, potholes are created when the top layer of pavement and the material beneath it – known as the base or sub-base – cannot support the weight of the traffic. This explains why the slow lane of a major highway, the domain of big-rig trucks, tends to get more potholes than the fast lane.

Like humans, potholes have a gestation period. It begins when snow melt or rain seeps through cracks in the pavement into the sub-base. If the moisture can't drain away adequately, the sub-base becomes saturated and soft.

The trapped moisture often is subjected to repeated freeze/thaw cycles, much like local gardeners have experienced this year. With each such occurrence, the expanding ice lifts and cracks the pavement more. This is exasperated by the passing traffic, which weakens the pavement, causing it to crack further.

While we may embrace the rising temperatures, which cause the ice to melt, the result is a void left under the pavement. This void collects more water and, during the next freeze, the void will enlarge. When vehicles drive over the weakened pavement, the surface eventually breaks, collapses into the void and creates a pothole.

It's a process that requires multiple steps and anywhere between two and 12 weeks to complete. In comparison, the human gestation process requires only one step, initially, but takes 280 days to complete. Which brings up an obvious question: when it comes to gestation, are potholes or humans superior? I do not claim to have all the answers; my job as a reporter is to ask the questions.

Speaking of reporters, one local journalist posted this news item on New Year's Eve:

"Residents of Spokane are familiar with the inevitable potholes that emerge in spring. However, this year's fluctuating winter weather could mean potholes will appear sooner or worsen existing ones."

And that was before the weather really started fluctuating. The report continued:

"Long-time Spokane locals know the potential damage potholes can cause to vehicles. Tires can go out of alignment."

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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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The Kids are Alright



by Amy McGarry

*Kids!
They are disobedient, disrespectful oafs!
Noisy, crazy, dirty, lazy, loafers!
Why can't they be like we were,
Perfect in every way?*

What's the matter with kids today?

Do you recognize these lyrics? If yes, you were probably in your high school's musical theater production of "Bye Bye Birdie." Either that, or you are old enough to have seen the movie versions that came out in 1963 and 1995.

Although "Bye Bye Birdie" came out in the 60s, it's set in 1958 and is based loosely on Elvis Presley being drafted into

as having been better as teenagers. This causes us to perceive the current youth as worse, or less than – less intelligent, less moral, and less respectful.

What we understand better these days is what normal adolescent brain development entails. Yes, I'm arguing that teens are literally wired to be bad. Brain science indicates that the developing teen brain is prone to risk-taking and rebellion. Add the hormonal influence on mood swings and it's no wonder teens get such a bad rap.

While my own teenage daughter is a perfect angel (ahem), I nevertheless read and hear all kinds of horror stories about today's youth who face a whole different set of challenges, thanks to cell phones, social media, and AI. I mean really, what's the matter with kids these days?

school teacher, I knew first-hand the value of parent volunteers in club activities. I also have this annoying desire to be helpful in general. I took a deep breath and allowed myself to be wrangled in.

I was assigned to judge the Congress category. I literally had no idea what to expect.

When I arrived at my assigned room, I saw that most of the boys were dressed in suits. Hmm, you don't see that often. Most of the girls were also dressed up. I discovered quickly that Congress competitors follow parliamentary procedure and formally refer to each other as "Senator." They simulate a legislative assembly, debating for and against actual congressional bills. I found the process educational and fascinating. I also found the debaters,

I left each tournament with my heart warmed and feeling hopeful. I began to trust that the future is in very good hands.

Speech and Debate season is now finished for the year. Spring is the season of poetry, and my kid competed in her high school's Poetry Slam, which was held in the school library. The librarian set the mood in the venue with black tablecloths, dimmed lights, and battery candles. The six-member high school jazz band added to the mood by playing music before the poetry performances.

As I sat at my "candle-lit" table, watching these teenagers play some very impressive, very adult smooth jazz, it dawned on me. I had seen the keyboard player conducting his fifth-grade class musical performance at their elementary school graduation. He will be graduating from high school this year. And I was recently surprised to see the saxophone player working at a grocery store. I have been seeing him in my daughter's schools since visiting their first-grade class. He's graduating too.

When it was time for the Poetry Slam to start, the charming and funny MC was the keyboard player/fifth grade conductor. I was so proud of him. And he's not even my kid.

Then came the poets. While they ranged in talent as poets and performers, each and every one of them showed so much strength and courage to even approach the microphone. I was proud of all of them. Especially my kid.

Tears came to my eyes as my daughter took second place, and I had an epiphany. The kids are more than alright. The kids are amazing. And our future is in excellent hands.

As for those behavior issues that supposedly drove me out of teaching high school, I now blame the "One Bad Apple" theory. Sometimes just one or two misbehaving kids makes it feel like it's the whole batch. In reality, for the greatest part, the kids were alright. They were more than alright. They're always alright.

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.



the U.S. Army in 1957. Its themes explore youth challenging societal norms and reflect the shifting values of the 1960s youth culture, including the rise of rock and roll.

I grew up in the 70s and 80s, after the cultural revolution of the 1960s. Rock and roll music was mainstream. Men with very long hair were all over album covers and sex and drugs were all over TV and movies. So, it's hard for me to imagine how Elvis Presley's rise to fame could have been shocking or controversial. Especially since my mom always loved Elvis. She was still a teenager herself when he became popular. My brother remembers jumping up and down as a little kid joining my mom dancing to Elvis music on the stereo.

As an older adult, this same mom was mortified when her little boy became a teenager and was the first male in our large, extended family to grow his hair long. Apparently Elvis and his pelvis was one thing. A long-haired hippie in the family was quite another. Instead of my mother playing Elvis on the stereo, it was my brother blasting The Who's "My Generation."

People try to put us down (talkin' bout my generation)

Just because we get around (talking about my generation)

And so it continues. The older generation disparaging the new. It's a timeless phenomenon. So timeless, it dates back to ancient Greece. Complaints about disrespectful, rebellious youth go back in writing as far as the 8th century BC in ancient Greece, "When I was young, we were taught to be discreet and respectful of elders, but the present youth are exceedingly disrespectful and impatient of restraint." (Hesiod, 8th century BC)

In fact, researchers have coined this phenomenon the "Kids These Days Effect." It's a cognitive bias where older generations "falsely" remember themselves

Full confession: teenagers scare me. I used to be a high school teacher. I quit after three years of soul-crushing behavior and attitudes from the kids in my classroom. (Shout out to all the high school teachers in the world. You are heroes and saints.)

So, when I got the text from my kid one afternoon as she was attending winter Speech and Debate club, telling me the coach was in dire need of tournament judges, my first thought was H-E-double-hockey-sticks no. Immediately the guilt set in. Having been a class advisor and a drama club advisor when I was a high

these teenagers, incredibly impressive. They were good researchers with well-developed arguments. They were also talented public speakers.

At the end of that first round, most of the debaters approached me with a smile, looked me straight in the eye, proffered their hand for shaking, and thanked me for judging. Hmm... impressive indeed.

I loved the judging experience so much I volunteered to judge in all of the tournaments. There were days when I judged almost every category, from impromptu speeches to oral interpretation. I saw the gamut of types of talent in today's youth.

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Taste Budz Review: Sorella



By Zack & Brooklyn Bolin, Facebook: Taste Budz, Instagram: tastebudz_spokane

Zack was craving pasta for his birthday dinner, and I have been dying to try Sorella in Kendall Yards, so we decided to combine the two.

What we enjoyed:

- ~Arancini
- ~Bolognese
- ~Speciale
- ~Aperol Spritz
- ~Limoncello Spritz
- ~Tiramisu

I love a red sauce for my pasta, and bolognese is usually my go-to. However, this dish was out of this world. They serve huge, fresh, house-made pappardelle noodles smothered in a rich, buttery, creamy beurre blanc sauce. Then they top it off with a generous amount of savory bolognese. The combination was absolutely insane, and I ate it faster than I would like to admit.

Zack decided to order the Speciale pasta, which was unlike anything we've ever had. Those delicious big pappardelle noodles get tossed with large chunks of brisket and sautéed

mushrooms, then everything gets coated in this almost indescribable creamy, savory, broth-style sauce. They topped it off with huge shavings of Parmesan cheese.

ed that it was Zack's birthday, and they not only had a little birthday card ready for him but also brought out a birthday cake and limoncello shots for dessert. Of course, I couldn't eat his birthday

cake, so I had to order tiramisu. The consistency was excellent; the ladyfingers were soft but not mushy, and you can never go wrong with the combination of chocolate and coffee.



Onto the extensive, fabulous drink menu. I love an Aperol spritz, but the ratios need to be just right, or you can end up with an Aperol-heavy cocktail that tastes almost like syrup. On the other hand, if there's too much prosecco, not enough of the zesty-citrus flavor of Aperol comes through. I am ecstatic to report that Sorella not only made a perfect cocktail but also garnished it with a big orange slice. It was so refreshing. Zack ordered a limoncello spritz, and again, they nailed it.

When I made the reservation, I not-



Sorella knocks it out of the park in both food and ambiance. The kitchen is open concept, so you can see the chefs as they cook. They have beautiful marble countertops and tons of candles burning; it is very upscale and romantic. This restaurant is perfect for special occasions, but make sure to book in advance, as they fill up quickly. Next time you are celebrating, consider dining at Sorella.

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In Appreciation of the Easter Ham

By Cassie Patton

All across the world, families will once again come together to celebrate the arrival of Easter. As Americans, we tend to mix things up and go against the status quo, and for Easter, some of us will do just that by splurging on our famous honey-glazed ham, while other countries will likely be serving up lamb. For the ham lovers, this is how your juicy pig came to be the main centerpiece of Easter.

Up until the early 20th century, many did not have dependable refrigeration methods, as we do today. Consequently, meat preservation techniques were largely relied upon, with smoking, salting, and curing being the most popular methods. Curing was designed to preserve what meat hadn't been sold by the farmer in the fall so it would last till spring.

Fast forward to both World Wars, wool was the standard fabric of uniforms. Wool was praised for its warmth and long-lasting material. With this type of material made for combat, it would go on to help the soldiers in the freezing trenches of Europe. Wool coats,

socks, and blankets would be somewhat of a barrier for the bone-chilling weather conditions. Wool also offered some flame resistance, giving an extra layer of protection in battle zones where soldiers would encounter explosions and open flames.

Since the military uniforms were primarily made from wool, sheep were in high demand in the U.S. However, after World War II, the price of lamb skyrocketed as there was a collapse in the wool market, along with high labor costs and a lasting consumer aversion to the meat. Because of this, we get the delicious spiral ham. In 1957, the first Honey Baked Ham Store on Eight Mile Road in Detroit opened to the public. Harry J. Hoenselaar was the founder of the first spiral ham slicer, which is still used today in commercial settings, such as one's local market. In honor of Hoenselaar's creation, April 15 is national Glazed Spiral Ham Day.

While it's possible to find ham in other countries for Easter, lamb remains the most traditional Easter symbol in most European and Mediterranean countries, carrying a strong symbolism as the "Lamb of God," which is also connected to the Jewish Passover.

Something the U.S. has in common with the rest of the world on Easter is our love for indulging in the craftiness of decorating the world-popular Easter egg. This tradition dates back to Mesopotamia, when ancient peoples dyed the eggs red to represent Christ's blood that was shed. Other colors have since emerged. Yellow is said to represent the resurrection, and blue represents God's (or the divine's) unconditional love.

Let's not forget the children's favorite activity of all: the Easter egg hunt! According to chaseoaks.org, "Easter egg hunts originated with early Christian missionaries who hid eggs painted with gospel scenes for the children to find and use to tell the Easter story. This tradition is also associated with Martin Luther, who had men hide eggs for women and children, mirroring the joy the women at the tomb of Jesus felt when it was discovered empty."

Hoppy Easter!

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.

Easter Ham Glaze and Aunt Ruthie's Sauce

By Karen Giebel

Easter is right around the corner and I thought I'd share two of my favorite holiday recipes. Both are very easy and can be made several days in advance and kept in the refrigerator. My orange spiced ham glaze is something I put together many years ago and it's the only glaze I use for ham. Since I really love baked ham, I can assure you that this glaze coats it beautifully and really adds a tasty flavor to your ham.

The second recipe has a wonderful personal history to it. Aunt Ruthie was married to my mom's brother. She hosted our family for dinner every Christmas and Easter from the time I

was born until they moved to Florida in 1980. The holiday menu never varied and her recipe for Raisin Sauce to be served with those baked hams was something I craved every holiday. Still do...I can't eat ham without an ample ladle of that lemony flavored sauce chock full of plump raisins on the side. How good is it? I have been loving that sauce for over 65 years! Where did Aunt Ruthie get that recipe? Most likely at one of the endless potluck dinners at The First Baptist Church in Dunkirk, New York. I can still see in my mind's eye, all those wonderful ladies sitting around chatting and sharing their best recipes after yet again, another delicious dinner.

Karen's Orange Spiced Glaze

- 1 cup light brown sugar
- 1/2 cup orange juice
- 1/2 tsp cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp ground cloves

Stir all ingredients together in a small bowl. Cover and refrigerate until needed. Liberally brush over the ham every 20 minutes during the last hour of baking the ham. Remove from oven and give it a good final glaze. Cover and let the ham rest for 20 minutes before carving. I always put canned pineapple rings on my ham secured with toothpicks and brush the glaze over the pineapple too.

Aunt Ruthie's Raisin Sauce

- 1/4 cup packed brown sugar
- 1/2 tsp lemon zest

- 2 Tbsp cornstarch
- 2 Tbsp fresh lemon juice
- 1-1/2 cups water
- 1 Tbsp cider vinegar
- 1 cup dark raisins

In a medium saucepan combine the brown sugar and cornstarch. Stir in the water, raisins, lemon zest, lemon juice and the vinegar. Bring to a boil over medium heat, stirring frequently. Lower heat to a simmer and cook one more minute. Remove from heat, cool and refrigerate. Reheat to serve. Makes 2 cups.

Happy Easter everyone!

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

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Spring Again



by Ray Bilderback

This weather is just a bit milder and pulling me out of the house. I know that some of you have been out all winter and wondering what the fuss is about. Spring? I've been out all winter.

Here at our house on Curlew Lake, we've found our first buttercup and I have been to the greenhouse deciding where to clean and where not. I tend to be slovenly and let the place get messy. My rationale, my excuse for such behavior, is that I worry that if I get too ambitious, I will kill as many good guys as I do bad. I don't have mites or aphids, and I think it's

because the good bugs and good spiders have the upper hand and I'm going to leave it that way.

Evenings still get chilly and are a prime excuse for a fire. Sometimes that calls for popcorn and memories. Lately, I've been remembering some good excursions with children and grandchildren, and some bad ones, too. In some families of a bye-gone era, it was fashionable to introduce youngsters to swimming by throwing them in the water. Such caveman tactics worked for some kids but brutalized others. There are less macho ways to introduce an activity.

I remember trying to match my ideas of a good activity with theirs. I like to garden, hike off to fly fish in beaver ponds that might no longer exist, put on a CD of classic Italian arias, eat, do a spot of bird watching, try my hand at watercolors, eat, see if the recent rain brought mushrooms, eat, go to the library, read, hunt the wily huckleberry...it's quite a list, but spring is in the air and we (some of us) have been cooped up all winter.

So, outdoor activities that might interest a child: gardening, hunting for mushrooms or berries, bird watching, eating, painting. I am saving mushroom hunting and fly fishing for older children.

Let's imagine a sample activity for the younger set: you have grandchildren visiting for the afternoon and you are checking your window plants.

"What are you doing, Grandpa?"

The child is curious, and you answer, "I'm checking my outdoor plants. They get an early start in the window. These need water. We should use slightly warm water. Don't you think?" You draw water and return to the window where you have started onion plants.

"Oh, Grandpa, there are so many."

"Onions don't mind being crowded. When they get bigger and stronger, about 7 or 8 inches tall, I can set them out in the garden. Then they need more space. If you

are here at that time, you can help plant them. Right now, they need water. Would you like to water them?"

That is an easy introduction to gardening, and the child/children will be successful. You can send them home with the ingredients necessary to start their own onion patch or, better yet, help them do it on the spot. I use a 6-inch pot and fill it with potting soil and our homemade compost. Thirty or more seeds will do for that size container. I use a tray or saucer of some sort under the planter.

Once you and the kid(s) get the pot ready and the seeds planted, you point to the drainage holes in the bottom of the pot. "We don't want to drown them. When you get home, find a sunny spot in a south or west-facing window and water them. One of your parents will help you. And remember, they need sunshine and water just like we do, but they also need to breathe.

Unless they are your children, it might be a good idea to share your plans with a parent before their visit. Gardening can be as interesting as an ant farm or an aquarium, way less expensive and far more useful.

Bird watching is another indoor/outdoor activity that suits the season, and the great yards, parks, meadows, lakes and forests of Eastern Washington are uncrowded (mostly) and waiting for you. Much the same as above, you can ease children into bird watching. And, just like gardening, it may become a life-long activity.

You can start at your own backyard feeder. At our feeders, we commonly have finches, juncos, nuthatches and flickers, to name a few. They come to our sunflower seeds and suet. Contact the North Central Washington Audubon Society at P.O. box 2934, Wenatchee, WA 98807, or ncwaudubon.org, for advice on setting up bird feeding stations or visit with a local birdwatcher. If you don't have a reliable bird book, visit your local library. Our libraries are terrific, and so are our librarians. Or, it might be time to visit your local bookstore, if you are lucky enough to have one. A good app for bird identification is Merlin.

Libraries, bookstores...You say you don't know where to take the kids?

The value of spending time with your children or grandchildren cannot be overstated. It's good for you as well as them. You don't want to smother them, of course, as they need unsupervised time (time to take the dog for a walk, time to inspect a pond for frogs and so on), but they need direction as well. Just make sure it is a good experience.

My son and I went on a two-hour road trip with a friend so that he could show us a favorite trail. We took water and a light jacket in our pack and set off at a good pace, but the trail soon became overgrown with brush and even young trees. He had not been on the trail for many years. Now he tells us.

An hour or so later, we lost the trail all together and ended in a swampy area replete with mosquitoes. Lots of mosquitoes. Add to that, we were losing our light. We were able to backtrack and get to the car safely, but it was a miserable experience and not a good introduction to the joys of hiking.

Next month I hope to have good news: my novel, *Little Ruby*, will finally be back from the publisher. Look for my ad in *The Huckleberry Press*.

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."

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- Cornflower
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- Crocsmia
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- Dahlia
- Rose
- Daylily
- Rosemary
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- Rudbeckia
- Euphorbia
- SeaHolly
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- Sunflower
- Geranium
- SweetPea
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- Hosta
- Tulip
- Hyacinth
- Viola
- Hydrangea
- Weigela
- Impatien
- Zinnia

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				9		8		2
					3	1		
		8	1					4
	2	1	4	3				
7								6
				6	9	7	2	
5					2	6		
		4	8					
1		9		5				

Sudoku Puzzle Instructions:

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

Enter digits from 1 to 9 into the blank spaces.

Every row must contain one of each digit, so must every column, as must every 3x3 square.

Puzzle difficulty level is "Medium."

Good luck!

HUCKLEBERRY COUNTRY SUDOKU ANSWER

7	4	2	6	5	3	9	8	1
3	9	5	7	1	8	4	6	2
8	1	6	2	9	4	7	5	3
1	2	7	9	6	5	3	8	4
6	3	8	1	4	2	5	7	9
7	9	5	2	1	8	4	3	6
9	7	8	1	4	3	7	9	5
4	5	2	6	8	3	1	7	9
3	1	6	7	9	4	8	5	2

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Berry Funnies

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Why was the math book sad during tax season?
Because it had too many problems.

What do you call a financial controller who always works through lunch, takes two days of vacation every two years, is in the office every weekend, and leaves every night after 10 p.m.? Lazy.

What do a tax auditor and a rottweiler have in common? They never let go.

They say that two things in life are unavoidable: death and taxes. I haven't decided which is worse.

What do accountants do for fun? Add the telephone book.

What do accountants suffer from that ordinary people don't? Depreciation.

What do you call an accountant without a spreadsheet? Lost.

There are just two rules for creating a successful accountancy business: Number 1: Don't tell them everything you know. Number 2: [Redacted].

How can you tell when the chief accountant is getting soft? When he listens to marketing before saying no.

Why did the Easter egg hide? He was a little chicken.

What do you call an egg from outer space? An egg-stra-terrestrial.

How can you make Easter preparations go faster? Use the eggs-press lane.

What do Easter eggs do for fun? Kar-ee-yolk-e.

What did the chicken say when it saw the scrambled Easter eggs? "Crazy, mixed-up kids."

Where does Christmas come before Easter? In the dictionary.

What's the best way to make Easter easier? Put an "i" where the "t" is.

Why did the jellybean go to school? Because he really wanted to be a Smartie.

What do baby ducks have for lunch? Soup and quackers.

What did the Easter Bunny say to the carrot? Nice gnawing you.

What's an Easter Bunny's favorite vegetable to grow? Eggplant.

Did you hear about the bunny who sat on a bumblebee? It's a tender tail.

How does the Easter Bunny stay cool during summer? With hare conditioning.

How does the Easter Bunny wish you a Happy Easter? Hoppy Easter!

Why does the rabbit bring toilet paper to the party? Because he's a party pooper.

Where does the Easter Bunny get a haircut? At the hare salon.

What is the Easter Bunny's favorite dance move? The bunny hop.

Why is the Easter Bunny such a good listener? He's all ears.

What is the Easter Bunny's favorite kind of music? Hip-hop.

What do you call a rabbit with fleas? Bugs Bunny.

Why does the Easter Bunny have such a good complexion? He eggs-foliates.

Where does the Easter Bunny like to eat breakfast? IHOP.

What did the Easter Bunny say to cheer its friend up? Don't worry. Be hoppy.

Why are Easter bunnies more tired when Easter's in April? Because they've just finished a long March.

Why did the Easter Bunny go on strike? Because he wanted a better celery.

Why did the Easter Bunny cross the road? Because the chicken had his eggs.

What's the Easter Bunny's favorite sport? Basketball.

What do you get when you cross the Easter bunny with an onion? A bunion.

Where did the Easter Bunny learn to ski? On the bunny hill.

Why are waterbeds so bouncy? They're filled with spring water.

Does February march? No, but April may.

Which month of the year is the shortest? May. It only has three letters.

Did you hear about the pregnant bedbug? She's having her babies in the springs.

What can you find in the middle of April and March but not at the beginning or end of either? The letter R.

Why is Yoda such a good gardener? He has a green thumb.

What did the dirt say to the rain? You'd better cut it out, or my name will be mud!

What did the flower say when he found out it was allergy season? "You've got to be pollen my leg."

When is the best time to wash your Slinky? During spring cleaning.

Why did the bird go to the flower shop? It wanted to pick up some chicks.

What do gardeners wear on their legs? Garden hose.

How can you tell the weather's getting warmer? There's a spring in people's steps.

What do you call an emergency in spring? May Day.

What is a flower's favorite kind of pickle? A daffodill.

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

How do you plant a kiss in spring? With two lips.

When is it impossible to plant flowers? When you haven't botany.

What did the seed say to the flower? OK, bloomer.

Why couldn't the little flower bud ride a bike? It didn't have any petals.

How do brand-new spring flowers greet each other? "Hey, bud!"

What happened when the man opened up his flower shop? Business was blooming.

What's the best flower for a boy to give on Mother's Day? A sunflower.

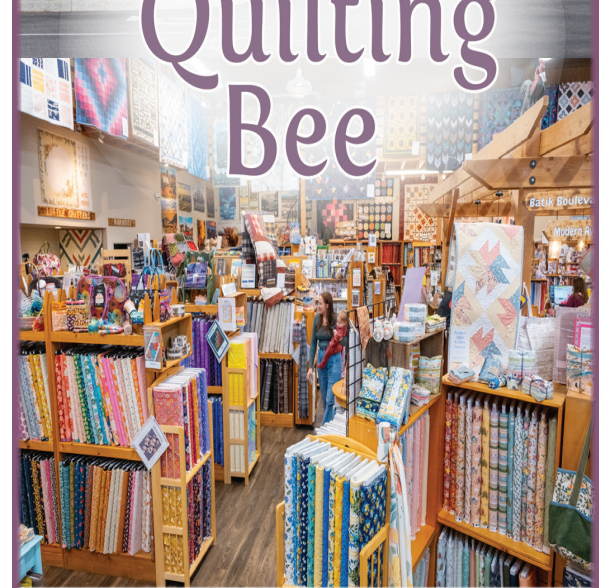
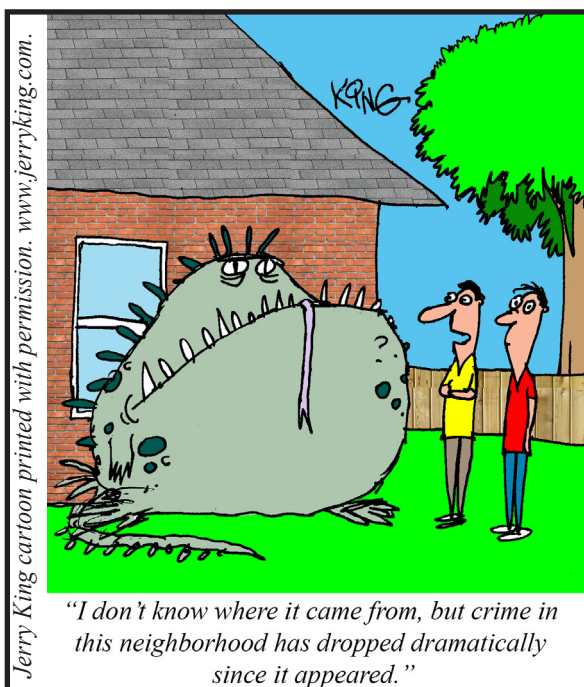
Did you hear about the flower who went on a date with another flower? It's a budding romance.

Should I plant flowers in April? May as well.

What type of flower do you plant in the dark? A light bulb.

Why was the bee mad? You'd be mad, too, if someone stole your honey every time you made it.

Why did the farmer bury his money? To make his soil rich.



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Confessions ...continued from page 1

nine days over again from the beginning. The idea is that you build momentum, moving into a positive flow of spaciousness and a clutter-free mentality. Easy-peasy, right? How could I possibly fail?

I think we can all see where this is going. It worked out exactly as might have been expected, in that I did great for about five days and then missed a day and was definitely not starting over. Especially since I'd already gotten rid of all of the really easy things that I'd planned on discarding anyway. On a side note, if you've ever filled a box to take to Goodwill only to have it still sitting in your garage a

year later (again, I admit nothing!) you are not alone. You know what actually worked for me? A super easy challenge on an online productivity and self-care app called Finch. The challenge includes 14 spring cleaning tasks during the month of March. One of them was to clean out one drawer. Okay, I could do that. I picked an easy drawer. Not much in there. And then I got to tap the little checkmark on the app that I'd done the thing and was instantly rewarded by stars and confetti as well as the promise of even more stars and confetti if I complete another spring-cleaning challenge. Here's the interesting part. I went on to clean TWO

MORE drawers after that first one. Bonus points! Not from the app, just from my own inner cheering section. I'm feeling like I might do a few more, covertly and quietly so as not to invoke my own resistance. Who knows? Maybe I'll even finally take the box to the Goodwill and start in on another. Sometimes, it seems, a really small goal can move us forward farther and faster than a big one. 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

Potholes ...continued from page 2

ment or require significant repairs after hitting a pothole. The recent cold and warm spells this winter might lead to potholes emerging earlier than usual."

Let's look at a couple key phrases in that report: "could mean" and "might lead to." In journalistic circles, the technical term for such phrases is "covering one's back," although one without a journalism degree might instead make reference to a domesticated or wild-hoofed mammal of the genus Equus, family Equidae, closely related to horses but characterized by long ears and a shorter mane.

It's kind of like watching the local weather report on TV before going to bed. We stopped doing that after seven consecutive days of incorrect forecasts during one stretch in February. Our mantra now, when it comes to the weather, is: "Surprise us!"

But I digress (yet again). Because potholes are so common in this neck of the woods (and city), they have motivated punsters and joke writers to weigh in on the topic. To wit:

- I didn't hit a pothole; the pothole hit me.
- My car now knows what rock bottom feels like.
- Potholes are speed bumps with anger issues.
- My suspension just filed a complaint.
- That pothole was deeper than my thoughts.

While it's healthy to laugh at life's challenges, there's no getting around the fact that potholes are serious business. In America, we spend nearly \$3 billion annually on car damage caused by potholes. That's a huge number for something that, by definition, may be

only a few inches deep and only a few more inches wide.

As we've learned, unpaved roads present their own set of challenges when it comes to potholes – primarily drainage issues caused by the lack of a properly shaped crown, combined with high shoulders. For two weeks in March, a series of potholes less than 100 feet from our driveway gradually morphed into a single, long, giant one that stretched across the width of the road. It was so big it needed its own zip code (more pothole humor). There was no avoiding it. Friends came to visit one day, saw it, stopped and called, asking what they should do.

My initial response was, "You truly are from the big city." When they did not find that observation humorous, I added, "Pull right up to it. Come to a complete stop. Then lift your foot off the

brake pedal. It'll be a little rocky, but it won't do any harm to your car."

Replied our friend: "Oh, I'm not worried about that. It's a rental."

"Then what are you worried about?" "We just picked up coffee and didn't get stoppers."

Which makes a good case for tumbler... and possibly the need for new friends.

Fortunately, we have managed to avoid pothole-caused vehicle damage thus far, in part because we're always on the lookout for them and, in larger part, because we've been lucky.

Just after our friend hung up, NASA called. They want their craters back.

Award-winning writer Bob Johnson and his wife Michelle enjoy exploring the Inland Northwest, avoiding potholes as much as possible, and sharing their observations with Huckleberry Press readers.



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Hit the Trail with Soph



By Sophia Mattice-Aldous

Greetings, fellow trekkers, may this column find you well, or at least high-spirited enough to be a thorn in the side of hustle culture. I was remiss in catching up with you last month, and what a month it was. In need of a new home, I jumped the border into Idaho. Moving, along with catching a dastardly bug that put me down for a week, prevented me from doing any hiking. I missed it a lot. As someone who has come to depend on time outdoors as a necessary component for my mental health, slinging boxes into the back of vehicles and continually blowing my nose are not my preferred exercise. However, I have very little to complain about as I just so happened to land in an apartment adjacent to the Priest River. There are enough trees to grant a sense of privacy, even though there are neighbors all along the water, and of course, lots of places to go walking. Cedars, firs, and scolding squirrels that watch you from their perch – it's got it all. And there's a town a short drive away. If I were to say I was "roughing it" by moving to the country, Mark Twain's spirit would call me a liar, and rightfully so, but after last month's hurry, worry, and germy grossness, I can't help but delight in my new surroundings. As I type this, the sun has gone down over the trees and tinged the horizon pink. Birds warble while the sound of the rushing river underscores it all. The Kaniksu National Forest is only a 30-minute drive away, and if you haven't been there before, let me tell you that you don't need to die in order to go to heaven. Upper Priest Lake Trail, here I come!

How has your trekking been so far in 2026? Gone on some wonderfully familiar routes? Tried someplace new? I'd love to hear from more hikers and outdoor enthusiasts via this writing. If you're out there, drop me a line at sophiamatticealdous@gmail.com. Happy trails, all.

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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By Dusty Roller

Spring is here and we have homes to sell!
Call or Text to BUY, SELL or get your FREE Market Analysis!

Waterfront Oasis: Listen to the sounds of the Kettle River from this stunning, custom built home 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.



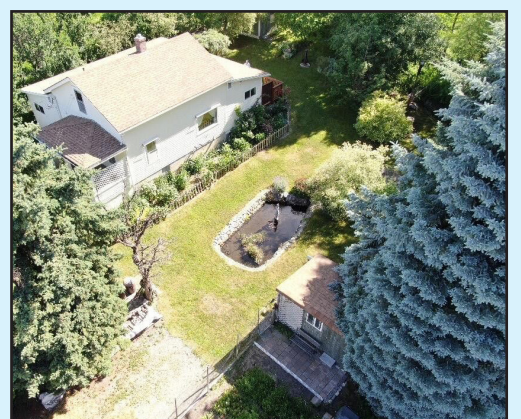
MLS# 44583 \$799,000



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 Peye Creek babbling through the front yard, under your very own bridge, lighted pathway and established native 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.

MLS# 44403 \$565,000

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 \$125,000

This home has been updated to perfection! Outstanding kitchen with new island and expansive countertops, plus new appliances. Open floor plan to the well-sized living room and fireplace. Beautiful mountain and territorial views. Upstairs bathroom is completely remodeled and 2 freshly painted bedrooms with barn door closets, and laminate floors throughout. Laundry room hosts a half bath and easy access from the upper floor and expansive recreational space, that was the garage and is completely finished. Lower level invites you into a comfortable living area with a country tub room and separate half bath. 2 additional bedrooms, extra storage room. Brand new deck to the garage/carport and chicken coop. 5 acres is hay pasture, Very private setting centrally located between Kettle falls and Colville. Separate RV hook up with septic, power and water. 30 gpm well for all your gardening and watering needs. It's all here for your enjoyment! Must see to appreciate all the splendor.



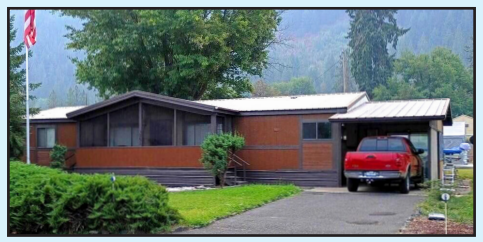
MLS# 45616 \$699,000



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.

MLS# 45002 \$220,000

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



46 +acres of quiet beauty, varied terrain with pastures, trees plus a seasonal pond that brings in an abundance of wildlife. Many possibilities to develop your homestead. Beautiful views if you build on the high point of the property. All of "Spirit Ridge Ranches" parcels have water, power, and phone available. Sensible CCR'S and a road maintenance agreement to protect your investment. Secured locked gate for all the parcels. Community water system \$250/yr per 20 acres.

MLS# 45567 \$329,000

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 \$329,999

Kettle River waterfront paradise – it's like buying your own park! Elegantly built home with an open floor plan, vaulted ceilings with lots of windows to let the sunlight and views. Floor-to-ceiling tiled wood stove in the living room with a spacious redwood deck to watch the river flow. Special crafted kitchen with Acacia wood counter tops from Africa, hickory cabinets with an abundance of counter space and storage, large dining room with a private viewing deck. Primary bedroom with jacuzzi tub, walk in shower and closet plus electric fireplace. Plenty of bathrooms for entertaining and sleep overs. Separate cabin with running water, electricity and private outhouse. Plenty of water with a private well and 2 car carport with storage room, plus a RV carport and the well house has an additional storage room. Level and private acres for your recreational needs.



MLS# 44847 \$789,000



MLS# 45287 \$520,000

80 acres with outstanding views of the Columbia River, Canada, and all of Kettle Falls, with plenty of wildlife. Gold Hill land backs up to state land and Timber Co. There is a resident elk herd of about 50 that visit the property every year. There are lots of apple trees that the whitetail and bears like to hang out in, mule deer and lots of turkeys come up in the spring. Hunter's paradise and build your dream home. See listings of four 20-acre parcels available.

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