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The Abraham Lincoln Railcar



by Alex Chaoukouri

Readers are likely familiar with railroads. Whether from history lessons about the Transcontinental Railroad in middle school, or the trains that seem to block the road specifically when you are in a rush, we are surrounded by these metal titans. However, there is a railroad car in our midst with significant historical value and prominence: the Pullman Car Company's Abraham Lincoln, also known as Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad Business Car No. 101. Here in eastern Washington is one of the most unique railcars in American history, with a legacy so fascinating that it earned a place on the National Register of Historic Places.

The title of the car may be misleading, since President Abraham Lincoln was long gone and buried by the time this railcar came to be. But, at the very least, there was one Lincoln involved: his son, Robert. While the father helped open the West to railroad expansion by signing the Pacific Railway Act of 1862, the son became president of the Pullman Car Company in 1897, heir to both the Lincoln name and the company's powerful hold on sleeping cars. Thirteen years after Robert Todd Lincoln took over the presidency, the Pullman Car Company made an abrupt pivot from 60-foot varnished wooden railroad cars to an 80-foot, riveted-steel design. In September of that year, coach 895 was manufactured for the Western Pacific Railroad. It was configured as an 84-seat passenger car and featured some of the most modern features of the era, including electric lighting.

By 1929, coach 895 had been retired from Western Pacific service and was purchased by the Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad Company (D&RGW), where it would ultimately be rebuilt into self-contained business car No. 101 for use by the railroad president and other officials. The rebuild completely transformed the car, adding office space, two staterooms (one with an attached bathroom), a hallway bathroom, a dining room, servants' quarters, a kitchen, and the all-important observation area. It even had air conditioning and steam heat. That's what I would call riding in style.

The D&RGW held on to the railcar until 1964, when Golden West Rail Tours bought it and used it for nearly two decades before it was sold for scrap value. While in Golden West Rail Tours' care, business car No. 101 accrued depreciation of \$44,409.60, equivalent to \$481,640.08 in 2026, giving it a net value of \$3,250, equivalent to \$35,247.56 in



2026, according to Edward Furey of calculatorsoup.com. It seemed that all hope might be lost for our coach protagonist, yet the tale was not over. In 1983, Curtis Andrews purchased the car from a Los Angeles scrapyard and sent it to Tucson for eight months of extensive mechanical rebuilding to bring it up to Amtrak standards. Finally, Andrews gave the car a name to carry for the rest of its lifetime, titling it the Abraham Lincoln to honor both the president of the United States and the president of the Pullman Car Company. In 1988, the Abraham Lincoln railcar was listed on the National Register of Historic Places and was recognized as the oldest operational car in America allowed on tracks run by Amtrak.

Three railroad companies and two rebuilds later, the Abraham Lincoln now lives in Othello, Wash., and is available for private tours. It is also on loan to the Inland Northwest Rail Museum at 27300 Sprinkle Rd., Reardan, and available for public viewing through July during museum



hours, Thursday-Sunday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Call 509-796-3377 or visit inlandnwrailmuseum.com for more information.

With all the frustration some of may feel toward trains that cause delays in our day, not to mention their ear-splitting whistles, we might take railroads for granted. While a handful of people living in the Pacific Northwest can say their families trekked the Oregon Trail in covered wagons, braving the wilderness in the name of expansion and prosperity, many others of us probably would not call this place home without the railroad boom of the late 19th century. The Union Pacific Corporation is especially close to my own heart because of my grandfather's work in communications for the company. Either way, living in the Pacific Northwest gives each of us an intrinsic connection with the railroads that connect our cities and towns.

Alex Chaoukouri just graduated from Central Valley High School with honors and will be attending the University of Washington in the fall to study law.

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Taste Budz Review: Temple Tavern



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

Temple Tavern is a new restaurant in the Garland District that opened in February of this year. It was formerly North Hill on Garland. We never made it in prior, however, I am happy to say that Temple Tavern is phenomenal.

- What we enjoyed:
- Calibrian Salad
 - Bread Service
 - Gnocchi
 - The Book Pizza
 - Affogotto

They have a two-story patio, and Zack and I really wanted to soak it all in. However, when we arrived, they were packed and didn't have any available spots. We decided to start at the bar and order some drinks and small items. The Calibrian Salad had my name written all over it. They toss fresh, spicy arugula in a vinaigrette, with pickled peppers, chunks of fresh mozzarella, pepitas, pecorino cheese, and diced figs. The flavor combination was impeccable; it was the perfect balance of acid, fat, and salt. I only let Zack have one bite.

Since I knew I would not be sharing my salad, we also ordered the bread service, so Zack wouldn't be without a snack. They serve a focaccia-like bread with oil and vinegar for dipping. The slices are so thick and fluffy that we

couldn't finish them, so of course, we boxed them up.

We were still waiting for a table after appetizers and decided to take a stroll through the adorable Garland district. The staff were very accommodating and said they would hold our table once it became available. When we returned, they had the most stunning spot on the upstairs patio ready for us. You could see peak-a-boo views of Mt. Spokane, and bright green trees lined the railing; it was the perfect summer evening.

For our main entrees, I ordered their gnocchi pasta. They mix the potato gnocchi up with wilted kale, caramelized onions, and sausage bits. Then toss it in an herbaceous pesto and top it with grated pecorino cheese. It was absolutely divine.

Zack wanted to try one of their signature pizzas, but he's a bit picky. He decided to order The Book without onions, and honestly, it was the star of the night. It's a wood-fired pizza with marinara, mozzarella, sausage, black olives, mushrooms, and usually onions. I don't know what they put in their sauce, but that pizza was packed with so much flavor. The fresh parsley added a touch of brightness, too.

The building is an old Masonic temple, and they kept the vibe alive by using third eyes in their logos, stained-glass light coverings, and exposed brick.

Not only was the food out of this world, but we received some of the best customer service that we have had in a while. Make sure to check out this new spot; there is truly something for everyone.

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CONTACT INFORMATION:

P.O. Box 983, Kettle Falls, WA 99141 • 844-344-8344 • huckleberrypress.com

Publisher, Senior Editor
Gabriel Cruden

Editor
Camille Krema

Advertising Sales
Gabriel Cruden
844-344-8344

Advertising Sales
Christa McDonald
509-570-8460

Advertising Sales
Shannon Chapman
509-690-6599

ads@huckleberrypress.com christamc@aol.com ads@inlandnwmediagroup.com

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Where Is the Middle of Nowhere?



by Bob Johnson

When friends who are not from the Inland Northwest visit us, the common refrain is, “You’re out in the middle of nowhere.” To get to our modest abode in the woods, one must traverse a gravel road for three-quarters of a mile, which, we have learned, is a quarter-mile farther than the mail carrier will drive to deliver a package that doesn’t fit in our mailbox that’s among the bank of boxes adjacent to the main (paved) road. Instead of making that four-minute round-trip, the carrier will instead take five minutes to fill out an elaborate form for us to take to the post office in order to claim the package...but not until the next day. This is what is known as government efficiency.

It does suggest, however, that a universal definition of “the middle of nowhere” may exist, although I struggle to understand how “nowhere” – which, by definition, means nonexistent – could have a middle. Regular readers of this column know I have a tendency to digress occasionally, but in this case, the concept of “nowhere” actually is the topic. Specifically, the “middle of nowhere.”

To get to the middle of nowhere, one must first suspend belief and embrace the concept that nowhere is an actual place. A glass of Washington wine, beer, or cider can be helpful in attaining that state of nowhere nirvana.

So can listening to The Beatles’ “Rubber Soul” album: “He’s a real nowhere man/ Sitting in his nowhere land/ Making all his nowhere plans for nobody.” Although, like many Beatles songs credited to the Lennon-McCartney songwriter team, it was John Lennon who penned the lyrics to “Nowhere Man.” And while Lennon never spoke of potent potables from Washington state, he did once say, “We were well into marijuana and nobody could communicate with us because we were just glazed eyes, giggling all the time.”

In other words, they spent a lot of time nowhere. What’s not known is whether Lennon spent any time in Nowhere, Oklahoma, an actual unincorporated community in Caddo County with a population of three to five people, depending on who’s in town and who is somewhere else, which would mean they’re not nowhere.

According to Google Maps, Nowhere can be found at the intersection of E1280 Road and County Street 2550. It is 5.5 miles south-southwest of Albert and 14 miles northwest of Anadarko – which would not put Nowhere in the middle of those two towns, but still make it a place, at least according to contemporary cartographers.

We reached out to the three to five residents of Nowhere, Oklahoma, for comment, but had not heard back at deadline time for this issue of Huckleberry Press.

Back here in the Inland Northwest, one is never far from the middle of nowhere, even if they call the middle of the big city (Spokane) home. For instance, approximately 21 minutes northwest of downtown Spokane (depending on how one hits the lights and dodges the potholes) is Nine Mile Falls. It straddles the Spokane River and is home to Riverside State Park. There, one can hike in peace, ride a horse in peace, or cross the Bowl and Pitcher Suspension Bridge in pure terror.

For the uninitiated, the “swinging” bridge, which connects the park’s day-use areas with the main campground, provides those who dare to traverse it with great views of the adjacent rock formations. Those hanging on for dear life and refusing to look up can still “enjoy” the journey by glimpsing the Devil’s Toenail whitewater rapids below.

Seriously (or as serious as a humor column can be), one needn’t be afraid when crossing the wooden bridge, which was opened to the public in 1998. On the other hand, its design was based on plans for the original Civilian Conservation Corps bridge that was built in the 1940s at a time when most of America’s best architects were serving in World War II.

Another heart-pumping adventure awaits adrenaline seekers at Fisk State Park, about 20 minutes beyond Nine Mile Falls. While most park visitors opt to do the breaststroke, cast a line or paddle a kayak, some head over to an area known as “The Cove.” There, they channel the Acapulco Cliff Diving Championships daredevils once featured on ABC’s “Wide World of Sports” and, if they survive, have a great story to tell their grandkids. The Cove is a remote, unmanaged area, the

utilized?

We reached out to Xunzi for answers and to the greatest and second greatest Confucian Chinese philosophers of antiquity for comment, but had not heard back from any of them at deadline time for this issue of Huckleberry Press.

While awaiting an opportunity to chat with the philosophers, I asked the lovely Michelle to share a few of her favorite middle of nowhere places with me.

“You mean besides our house?” she asked.

“Yes.”

“Let me get back to you on that.”

Could it be that the lovely Michelle is applying to become one of great Confucian Chinese philosophers of antiquity?

A little while later, she knocked on my office door and said, “I have a few places for you.”

“Great!” I said. “Just in time to make the column. Let’s do it.”

“How about Leavenworth?” she asked.

“I don’t think that’s technically considered part of the Inland Northwest,” I said.



There are many roads in the Inland Northwest that can take a driver to the middle of nowhere. Photo by (getting name).

very definition of being in the middle of nowhere.

On the far eastern side (by most definitions) of the Inland Northwest, the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness offers endless ways to access the middle of nowhere – which again challenges the concept of “middle,” but I really need to get past that. As one of the largest wilderness areas in the country, if you don’t consider Alaska part of the country, it’s easy to access but challenging to conquer. If you enjoy rugged terrain, swift river crossings, and weather that can change on a dime, SBW (as nowhere experts call it) is the place to go en route to the MOW (middle of nowhere).

Now that we’ve discussed a few of the places one can go to get to the middle of nowhere, we really should consider the mental and psychological aspects of the concept.

For that, we turn to the philosopher Xunzi (born Xun Kuang), who is generally considered the third greatest Confucian Chinese philosopher of antiquity. Xunzi noted, “The person attempting to travel two roads at once will get nowhere.”

As often occurs in philosophy, one observation suggests two more questions. In this case: 1. How is it even possible to travel two roads at once? 2. What means of travel is being

“But it was so much fun, even if it’s not a real Bavarian village.”

“I agree, but there are guidelines I have to follow.”

“I know,” she said with a sigh. “Well, I gave you my best answer.”

“Don’t give up,” I countered. “I’ll take your second-best answer. Even your third best. Remember, I’m on deadline.”

About an hour later the lovely Michelle returned to my office.

“You know when I really felt like I was out in the middle of nowhere since we moved here?” she posed. “It was when we were driving to Canada last summer and we got north of Sandpoint. It was really pretty up there. We’d drive miles and miles without seeing anything but trees.”

That definitely was a fun day trip, even if the Canadian officer working the border check was a grouch. Perhaps he was not fortunate to live in the middle of nowhere and was reminded of that daily simply by driving to work.

Still later, the lovely Michelle returned yet again with one more remembrance of an enjoyable excursion. It was the day we drove down to Cheney and spent a few hours at the Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge. The setting is spectacular and the sheer number of birds we saw motivated me to go on Amazon and purchase the book, *The Birders’ Guide to Washington*. Now, it’s prompting me to ponder whether birds know, by instinct, how to find the middle of nowhere.

There is not enough space to share all our research on nowhere with you, but it’s obvious to me that nowhere can be reached by most Americans as long as they’re willing to put in a little effort. In some places, such as California, it just takes longer to get there, especially if you’re starting in Los Angeles on a Friday afternoon.

There’s one other thing we can state categorically: Here in the Inland Northwest, when you’re out in the middle of nowhere, you really are somewhere.

Award-winning writer Bob Johnson and his award-winning photographer-wife Michelle have found themselves out in the middle of nowhere often since moving to the Inland Northwest. They say they find nowhere a great place to be.



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Happy Semiquiencentennial USA!



by Amy McGarry

I nerd out on the fun Latin origins of semiquiencentennial. “Semi-” means half. “Quincent-” derives from “quingenti,” meaning five hundred.

Two-hundred and fifty years old already? Feels like just yesterday we were celebrating your 200th birthday. Yes, hard to believe that I’m old enough to remember when the USA was only 200. That birthday was, of course, famous as the 1976 bicentennial, which is so much easier to say than the semiquiencentennial. Because I’m an English teacher, please humor me as

“-ennial” comes from “annus,” meaning year. Together, “semiquiencentennial” refers to a celebration of 250 years, or half of 500 years. The simpler bicentennial breaks down like this: “Bi-” is a prefix meaning “two.” “Cent” comes from “centum,” which means “hundred” in Latin. The suffix “-ennial” is derived from “annus,” meaning “year.” Together, “bicentennial” refers to a period of 200 years. We do love our round numbers. When I turned 50 years old, I threw myself an epic karaoke birthday party, because 50 was special. Not once did I ask myself why 50 was so special. As we celebrate America’s 250th birthday, with much hullabaloo (purely an English word, no Latin break down), I began to wonder, what’s the big deal with the number 50. I mean, it’s just another number. Or is it ... ?

I started to research the reasons behind the significance of celebrating rounded numbers. We also like halves. Thus, I went so far down the rabbit hole of “Jubilee,” my eyes crossed and my head started spinning. I will get you started with an answer, then allow you the independence to explore more on your own. You know, in honor of Independence Day. “The original concept of the Jubilee is detailed within the Hebrew Bible, primarily in the Book of Leviticus, chapter 25. This religious law established a system where a Jubilee year was observed every fiftieth year, following seven cycles of the Sabbatical year.” scienceinsights.org/what-is-a-jubilee-and-why-is-it-celebrated. It gets complicated after that. So, let’s get back to our country’s birthday celebration. I was only seven years old for the bicentennial of 1976, but I remember that as an epic celebration on par with my 50th karaoke birthday party. I remember that particular 4th of July fondly, for my family traveled from Spokane to Stevens County and the town of Northport (population 294) to join in its bicentennial celebration. My grandpa, Estes, was to ride his horse in the parade, which, at that time, was exciting and made me proud. I was sure this meant he was famous. My mother even sewed me a colonial dress and bonnet to match my Grandma Estes. It’s funny what stands out in a child’s memory. I don’t remember watching the parade with my famous grandpa at all. But I vividly remember a greased pole that the strong and brave could try to climb for a prize. I wanted to try to climb that pole, but it would make a mess of my handmade dress. I also remember a big sandbox with coins hidden in the sand. This was designed for toddlers to find “buried treasure.” I remember my older brother suggesting we should say I was 4 years old and throw me in there and “clean up” on the coins. Once I heard that, I couldn’t let go of the idea and was sorely disappointed when I realized it was only a joke, and no one would believe I was only 4 next to all the toddlers in there. No coins for me. And no prize for the greased pole. I remember a log sawing competition where partners using a two-man saw competed with other partners to see who could cut their log fastest. But that might be a memory from



Me at age 7 with my famous grandpa, Marshall Estes, and Grandma Iva Estes of Northport, Wash., July 4, 1976.

watching “Little House on the Prairie,” my favorite show at the time. I researched the internet in hopes of finding an old news article from July 1976 that might give details about that bicentennial celebration in Northport. While I found some information about how the bicentennial was celebrated in Philadelphia, Boston, and Washington, D.C., I didn’t find anything about Northport’s celebration. Not even my famous grandpa’s name in the newspaper for being in the parade. Now, in the year 2026, this month’s semiquiencentennial celebration makes me feel sentimental. (Try saying “sentimental semiquiencentennial” five times fast.) I remember learning to sing “America the Beautiful” before school let out for the summer. To help us learn the words, the music teacher had a beautifully illustrated picture book that showed spacious skies, purple mountains, and fruit trees. The image of the amber waves of grain was especially significant to me as we moved from Spokane to wheat-farming country outside of Ritzville that summer. It’s the first I remember amber waves of grain. That book, that song, and that music teacher also instilled in me the pride I still have in such an awe-inspiring, beautiful country that is the United States of America. “America the Beautiful” is still my favorite patriotic song. After extolling the natural wonders that are the beauty of our America, it reflects on our history and the sacrifices made for our “life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness.” My favorite line however is in the second stanza, “America! America! God shed His grace on thee, And crown thy good with brotherhood From sea to shining sea! What better gift for a 250th birthday.”



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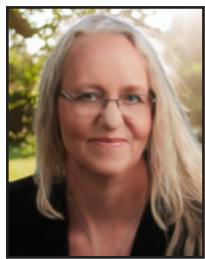
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Thank you, It's True — the Art of Receiving a Compliment



by Kerry Schafer

Have you ever noticed that receiving compliments can be hard? Doling them out can be easy. All you have to do is get out of your own head long enough to notice things about people, and then honestly tell them what you've noticed.

"Hey, that dress is fabulous on you. Awesome meal, you're an amazing cook. I really am blown away by the way you navigate your job and home life with so much grace. Love what you've done with this place."

See? Easy. Receiving compliments is another story altogether. A lot of us feel uncomfortable on the other side of praise. Just for fun, answer the following questions honestly and note the response types that are true for you.

A friend or acquaintance (or total stranger, we're not picky) bestows some honest and heartfelt praise upon you. Something along the lines of, "Fantastic job on pulling off (insert accomplishment here)."

What is your response?

"Oh, it was nothing." (Minimizing your accomplishment, even though the thing you did was a lot of work and required talent and skill.)

"What about you? And that amazing thing you did..." (Deflection and reciprocation. Remember, when it comes to compliments, it really does feel better to give than to receive.)

"Thank you." (But said with reservation, while internally wondering why this person is buttering you up and what they're going to want in exchange.)

"Thank you, it's true." (Genuinely receiving the compliment and acknowledging the truth of it.)

Small disclaimer: if you have ever in your life responded to a compliment with, "Thank you, it's true," this article is not for you. Take your beautifully-evolved, healthy self off elsewhere and leave this conversation to the rest of us messed up mortals.

Everybody else, stick around for a minute, because I have a feeling that our discomfort with compliments is a symptom of something a little deeper that would be helpful to take a look at.

Undervaluing our accomplishments and downplaying our abilities or even our personal appearance, isn't actually healthy. It's categorized as a learned behavior, and maybe one we'd be wise to unlearn.

Have you ever noticed how little kids will chatter about the picture they drew, a story they made up, being smart, how good they are at cartwheels, or how fast they can run? They're not being prideful or boastful. Just delightfully taking pleasure in being good at something.

Until well-meaning parents and teachers start worrying that they're getting too big for their britches and make a point of bringing them down a few pegs. Hands up if you've heard any of the following (or maybe said them yourself a time or two):

Pretty is as pretty does.
Pride goeth before a fall.
He sure has a good opinion of himself.
Don't toot your own horn.

As kids, this is confusing. In one breath, we're told that lying is bad, and in the same breath we're taught to pretend we're not proud of the things we are actually proud of. We feel the duality and the wrongness of it, but we want to please. So, we pretend that we don't know if we are physically attractive. We pretend that we're not smart, talented, or exceptionally good at sports, music, art, business, or whatever. And the more we pretend, the more we begin to believe the lie is true. And after a while, that belief in the lie goes underground and lives there, unconscious and unseen, nibbling away at the roots of our self-esteem and what we are capable of accomplishing.

As a result, we doubt our own self-worth. We don't believe we deserve the good job, the raise, the time to ourselves. We're not worthy of the promotion, the attractive partner, the book deal, the art show, or the award. We make ourselves smaller. We self-sabotage.

We lose the ability to speak clearly and honestly about our own accomplishments.

I watched this go down in real time the other day while my co-hosts and I were recording an episode of the "One Happy Thing" podcast. Our guest asked Maddie Dawson a question that was a clear invitation to highlight one of Maddie's books, *Let's Pretend This Will Work*. And I watched, fascinated, as Maddie brushed right past a promotional moment big enough to drive a bus through. When I asked her about it later, she wasn't even aware of what she'd done.

Which brings us, finally, to the concept of "Thank you, it's true."

Last week, I was talking to some friends when the problem with accepting compliments came up. "We should practice," Linda said.

My immediate reaction was that of a deer caught in the headlights. Clearly, the woman had lost her ever-loving mind. It was highly tempting to make excuses and run off early, but I decided to stick around and play.

Linda proceeded to give me a compliment. The thing she said was actually something that I believe to be true. But to look her in the eye and actually respond with, "Thank you, it's true?"

Every socially conditioned fiber of my being started screaming, "Uh-uh. No how. No way."

But you know what? I did it. And then I did it again. And it felt kind of amazing to let myself believe that Linda meant what she said. And to admit that maybe I was actually good at this thing.

Here's your mission, should you choose to accept it. For the next week, every time somebody offers you a compliment – on an achievement, a skill, a natural ability, and yes, even your appearance – respond with, "Thank you, it's true." You get a free pass to say the, "it's true" part internally, just to yourself if you prefer. But practice actually letting yourself receive the compliment as truth.

No deflecting. No minimizing. No offering a reciprocal compliment instead.

It's going to feel uncomfortable at first. But I bet it's

a skill we can grow into over time. And who knows? Maybe our self-esteem will grow right along with 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.

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Playing in Paint and Making More Than Just Art



by Robin Milligan

For many people, making art is something they stopped doing somewhere between childhood and adulthood. Life gets busy, people become self-conscious, and creativity slowly gets pushed aside. Newport artist Clare Clark is on a mission to change that.

Clare is the founder of Muse, the rebrand and evolution of her long-running Paint & Party events, now focused on what she calls “joyful art experiences.” For the past 10 years, she has hosted public paint events throughout the Newport area at bars, restaurants, community centers, and private homes. Creating spaces where people can gather, relax, and make art without worrying about whether they are “good” at it.

What Clare noticed over the years was that people were often looking for more than a painting class.

“They weren’t just coming to paint,” Clare said. “They were coming to laugh, socialize, and step outside of their routines.”

That realization became the foundation for Muse and its guiding idea: art for the joy of it.

Clare Clark’s background teaching art in public schools helped shape the direction of the project. Watching both children and adults create showed her how differently people approach art as they get older. Children tend to jump in without hesitation, experimenting freely and enjoying the process. Adults often arrive carrying past judgement and self-doubt, apologizing before they even begin.

Muse is designed to break through some of that pressure.

At Clare’s events, people are encouraged to play with texture, layering, and



Clare Clark

spontaneous mark making rather than focusing on perfection. Paint-covered bubble wrap, scraping tools, scribbling, layered canvases, music, laughter, and tables full of people trying something outside their comfort zone have become familiar scenes over the years. The unconventional tools are part of that process. According to Clare, those simple, creative exercises can help people relax and stop overthinking.

“At Muse events, the point is not to leave with a perfect painting,” Clare explained. “It is to relax enough to enjoy creating something in the first place.”

Many participants arrive nervous about making mistakes or convinced they are not “artistic.” Clare says, that usually changes quickly once people settle in and begin working. Conversations start flowing across tables. People loosen up, laugh, experiment, and surprise themselves.

For some people, it becomes less about

painting and more about giving themselves permission to slow down for a couple of hours. Permission to play.

Clare guides participants through the process but leaves plenty of room for individuality and experimentation. The atmosphere is intentionally relaxed. This is when the magic happens.

In a small town, gatherings like these often become more than art classes. Friends reconnect, coworkers unwind after work, couples try something new together, and neighbors who may not otherwise cross paths end up sharing a table and conversation.

Clare’s own artwork reflects many of the same ideas she brings into her events. Her pieces are layered and textured, focused more on movement, feeling, and expression than rigid realism. She describes creating art as a way of reconnecting with the carefree feeling of childhood, when making something was natural and freer from

growing part of the project. Rather than traditional team building exercises, the sessions use collaborative art making to encourage communication, creativity, and connection in a more relaxed environment.

For Clare, the larger goal has always been simple: helping people reconnect with creativity in a way that feels welcoming instead of intimidating.

A lot of adults quietly believe they are not creative because they stopped making art somewhere along the way. Muse pushes back against that idea. Participants do not need experience, formal training, or artistic talent to take part. The focus is on curiosity, experimentation, and enjoying the experience of making something with your own hands.

This approach seems to resonate with people looking for something different from their normal routines. In a world where so much time is spent online or rushing from



Muse paint party participant. Photos courtesy Clare Clark.

judgment.

That connection to creativity is what inspired her to begin sharing the experience with others in the first place.

While the original Paint & Party events focused mostly on mobile gatherings, Muse is continuing to expand. In addition to public and private paint parties, Clare now offers smaller restorative studio sessions as well as creative team building experiences for businesses and organizations.

The Muse studio is located at 808 Gregg Road in Newport and allows for a quieter, more intimate setting than some of the larger public events. Studio sessions focus less on entertainment and more on slowing down and engaging with the creative process itself.

The business workshops are another

one responsibility to another, sitting around a table, painting with other people, can feel surprisingly refreshing.

For a couple of hours, people get to stop worrying about whether they are doing things “right” and simply create.

Over the past decade, Clare has watched strangers become friends at her events, nervous first-time painters discover confidence, and people leave feeling lighter than when they arrived. That sense of connection and ease is what she hopes Muse brings to everyone who walks through the doors.

For more information about Muse, upcoming events, and studio sessions, check out the Muse website, muse4joy.com, call 509-671-0898, or email to clare4arts@gmail.com.

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Hit the Trail with Soph: No, Not Like That



By Sophia Mattice-Aldous

We all know there's things you don't do at family gatherings if you want to keep the peace and not have a brawl before you get to dessert. Don't talk politics and stop asking your nieces and nephews when they are going to get married and/or have kids (really, Aunt Deborah, it is almost too expensive to have a dog in this economy, much less human children).

Thankfully, my family is pretty much on the same political spectrum, which means we don't ask invasive questions about kids and matrimony. Speaking of dogs though, another familial consideration that popped up recently was maybe, don't think you're more athletic than your family's dog. Bear with me, that's a specific addendum for a reason.

Earlier this month, my mom's side of the family gathered for our annual reunion at Emigrant Springs State Heritage Area in Oregon. Yes, we actually like each other's company enough to make hanging out a tradition, and Emigrant Springs is a good in-between location, considering where we are all traveling from. Near the summit of the Blue Mountains, Emigrant Springs State Heritage Area is a campsite and recreation area where people, including ye olde travelers on the Oregon Trail and Native Americans, would replenish their water supplies. While the heritage area sits next to a loud freeway that travelers of the Oregon Trail probably would've wished they had the benefit of if they knew what a freeway was in the 1840s, it's a gorgeous site in late spring/early summer. It's about a 20-25-minute drive from Pendleton and has plenty of hiking trails (and horse trails for those who prefer that mode of wilderness exploration).

After plenty of time spent lounging about visiting and eating purposefully non-healthy food, I decided I should go for a walk on one of those trails, where my aunt Michele and uncle Bert accompanied me with their dogs,

Darius and Delilah. Darius and Delilah are both of the sausage variety, short, spirited, occasionally noisy and amiable. Feeling good after a dopamine hit from homemade pecan banana bread and the overall beauty of the day, I offered to walk Darius, an adorable fellow with a wiry haircut and the typical "the-world-is-mine" terrier attitude. Before we were too long on our trek, we came upon a fallen tree that blocked the trail. Thinking that I was somehow serving as an athletic example to a creature whose legs just happened to be shorter than mine, I took the lead, stepping toward the tree with Darius's leash in my left hand as he looked at me quizzically.

"You can do it, Darius," I encouraged, as if he had asked me to do so in the first place. "It's a small tree. Just do what I do." I wish it had been a huge tree, dear reader. Not quite an old growth, but one of impressive size that would have soothed my bruised ego in the aftermath of my attempted hurdle.

"Like this," I advised, attempting to jump jauntily over the trunk. As soon as the words were out of my mouth, my jaunt turned janky and the toe of my shoe caught the tree, tripping me and sending me face-first into the dirt.

When you're not injured psychically, sometimes the only balm to your embarrassment is to laugh at yourself, which I promptly started to do, much to the relief of my aunt and uncle, who hurried to see if my swan dive had resulted in injury.

"You're laughing, so you can't be too hurt," Bert said, smiling. A fair assessment. I looked at Darius, whose front paws were resting on the downed tree, leash trailing over the bark where I dropped it, his soft brown eyes assessing my efforts. "How about not like that?" his look seemed to say.

Sophia Mattice-Aldous is not a doctor, dietician, extreme sports enthusiast, or a mini Sasquatch, though some of her exes may disagree with that last one. She just enjoys the opportunity to be outside and hike. If you have any recommendations where she should go next, email sophiamatticealdous@gmail.com.

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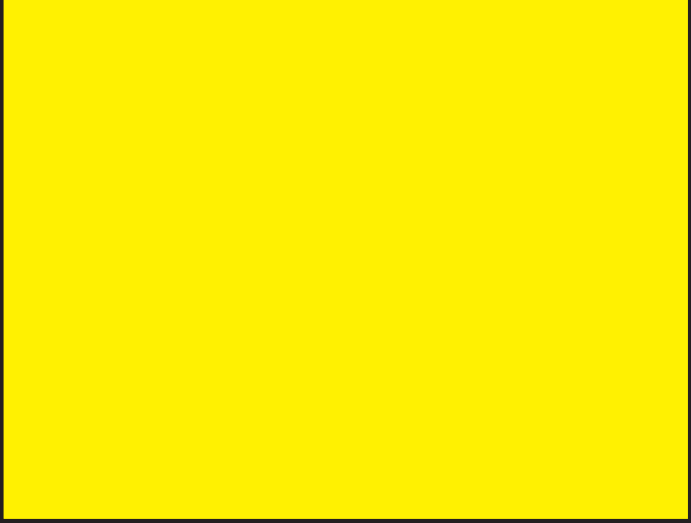


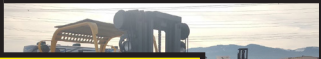
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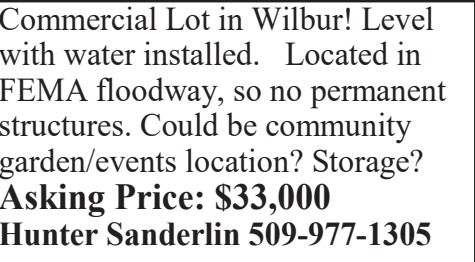
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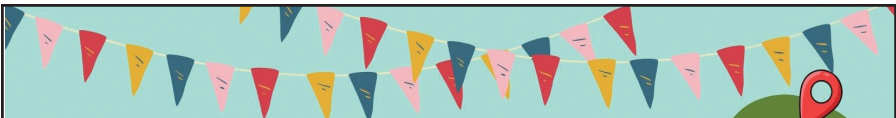
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Handmade & Vintage Vendors, Tractor Show, Pony Rides, Vintage Fair Games, Live Music, Rummage Sale, Farmer's Market, Pie Sale, Food Truck, Beer Garden+Trivia, Community Wide Yard Sales and more!



SPONSORED BY:

The Electric Hotel • Odessa Trading Co./Ritzville Warehouse • Wende's Artisan Sourdough





See you at the fair!



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