People build ‘beaver’ dams to clean water

By Mary Stamp

To help restore a wetland area along Thompson Creek as it flows into Newman Lake, Kat Hall, director of The Land’s Council’s Restoration Program, organized teams last fall to do what beavers do: build dams. Working with Gonzaga’s School of Engineering and Applied Science and its “Best Dam Team,” they built “beaver dam analogs” (BDAs) by weaving tree branches through wooden posts pounded in across the creek at intervals over a length of 3,000 feet. People are building “beaver” dams in other Northeast Washington locations where such dams are needed and beaver populations have declined as farmers and ranchers drained wetlands, said Kat.

She organized teams of staff and volunteers in October for the Beaver Dam Analogue (BDA) Thompson Creek Project to help keep sediment down in the creek to improve the water quality of the creek and lake. Beaver dams do three things for the environment:
• They create pools or ponds that slow the flow of water to be absorbed to recharge the aquifer that is depleted as more people use the water.
• They assure that the dams filter sediment in the water so the water quality improves.
• They make the water pond behind the dams to create wetlands that are of value for wildlife.

“If there are beavers in the area to build dams, great, but areas that are drained and channelized lack habitat for beavers,” Kat said.

“Healthy rivers wind and meander. Native vegetation along them slows and absorbs flooding,” she explained.

“Many of the region’s streams and wetlands were ditched and channeled to direct irrigation water for agriculture—crops and cows. As streams were ditched, spring runoffs eroded sediment off the land, degraded the water quality and lowered the water table,” she said. “Those factors make it hard for native species to survive, reducing food for beavers.

“Without habitat for beaver, human beings have come in to make beaver dams to do what beaver dams are supposed to do,” Kat said.

“Building BDAs in a creek
Continued on page 4

‘Diversity, equity and inclusion’ are about all students at Whitworth

The words, “diversity, equity and inclusion,” and programs associated with them are often assumed to be just for people of color, but those words “are for everyone,” asserted Roberta Wilburn, who started as interim director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at Whitworth in the summer of 2021.

“Building cross-cultural and cross-racial understanding is a journey, not a destination,” she said.

Roberta wants Whitworth to be Martin Luther King Jr’s beloved community. So she has been immersed in bringing those words—diversity, equity, inclusion—to life in people’s lives through her life and ministry, but particularly through her years at Whitworth.

During her nearly 14 years at Whitworth, she has met one-on-one with students of color and white students. She helped hire and support her predecessors Larry Burnley and Lorna Hernandez Jarvis during her years as dean of the department of education.

After leading a recent book study with Whitworth leaders, she told them the next step was implementation.

“We are all brothers and sisters in Christ at Whitworth, even though not all students are Christian. There are Muslims, Jews, agnostics and more,” she said.

In 2020, Roberta retired to develop Wilburn and Associates, a consulting company with her husband James to promote diversity, equity and inclusion. They were also thinking of moving nearer their grandchildren.

“God and Whitworth had something else in mind,” said Roberta, who helped start Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at Whitworth, hiring Larry and Lorna, and working with them.

When Lorna left in June 2021, Whitworth President Scott McQuillin asked her to be interim. “I did not want the program to backslide,” she said, but she waited to start after spending a month with her new grandson and his brother in Mississippi and two weeks with another grandson in Maryland.

When Larry left, Roberta debated applying, but liked what Kat Hall organized teams of volunteers to build Beaver Analog Dams.
The Fig Tree is hosting a bioethics symposium on “Achieving Health Equity: This Time Is Ours, Local, Structural Racism in Health Care.”

Physician Rachel Joasak, assistant professor of gastroenterology and hepatology at the University of Washington, will speak on structural racism in healthcare via Zoom from Seattle at 7 p.m., Thursday, March 10 at Weyerhaeuser Hall.

Rachel did her health equity research at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center on reducing colorectal cancer mortality by increasing screening in underserved populations, with funds from National Institute of Health (NIH), Medicare and Medicaid.

She contributed to guidelines for the Centers for Disease Control, and advised the President’s Cancer Panel and the COVID-19 Pandemic Response, that Medicaid had oversight for NIH vaccine trials.

“She will discuss disparities in healthcare on racial and economic lines,” said Aaron Putke, Whitworth biology professor, “we work need to as we lean into issues of injustice.”

For information, call 777-4433 or email dsoden@whitworth.edu.

YWCA Spokane honors eight women at the 40th Women of Achievement Awards Celebration from Jan. 15 to noon, Thursday, March 24, at the Davenport Hotel.

The event, which isYWCA Spokane’s primary fundraiser, has honored more than 250 women leaders over 40 years.

The keynote speaker is Dr. Michelle Howard, was the first woman to command a U.S. Naval ship, be a four-star admiral and be chief of naval operations.

FLLC offer photographic contest

For a Photographic Story Contest, Faith Leaders and Leaders of Conscience of Eastern Washington University (FLLC) invite photographers to tell a story through five to ten images with text on “It’s Time to Do Something About …”

The contest is for middle and high school students, and adults using a digital camera. The deadline is June 30.

The top prize is $150. A runner up in each age group will receive $100. The event will be judged over the summer. Winners’ stories will be displayed in the fall.

This is FLLC’s third contest for people in the Inland Northwest to share their gifts and visions. The first was an art contest and the second was a short story contest.

For information, email FLLC-Press@ymcawhat.com.

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Habitat’s Women Build is March 16 to 19

Women will volunteer to help Habitat for Humanity Spokane build affordable homes during a four-day building event March 16 to 19. They will join Habitat families in hands-on building opportunities, not requiring any prior experience, empowering the women as they help address the housing crisis in Spokane County.

Participants will learn new skills through an experience geared to improve community. Women Build encourages women to break down stereotypes, learn skills to build new homes, come together and have fun.

Congregations can help by providing lunches for the 60 volunteers. For information, call 535-9517.

PJALS plans Membership Meeting March 9

The Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane (PJALS) 2022 Membership Meeting will be held from 6 to 7:30 p.m., Wednesday, March 9, on Zoom. The PJALS Steering Committee and staff will announce plans for the spring and summer. They will tell of ways people can be involved, and report on activities and finances. For information, visit pjals.org.

River City Youth Ops seeks board members

River City Youth Ops (RCYO) in West Central Spokane is seeking community members to serve on its growing board of directors. Applications are due March 18.

RCYO seeks people committed to farm fresh food and neighbor- hood youth. It is an urban farm network that creates opportunities for youth enrichment through community engagement, job training and education. Its seasonal programs teach youth ages 12 to 18 environmental stewardship and entrepreneurship through growing and selling of fresh food. RCYO pays youth stipends, provides educational opportunities and connects them with community service.

For information, call 990-3010, email stephanie.watson@projectothespokane.org or visit youthops.org.

Camp Gifford seeks stories, photos for 100th

To mark the 100th anniversary of Camp Gifford in 2022, The Salvation Army is seeking stories, quotes and photos from campers who have attended Camp Gifford during the past 100 years. Individuals are asked to send stories, quotes and photos with their names and years they attended Camp Gifford by April 15.

Camp Gifford is the oldest Salvation Army camp operating in the nation in its original location. For more information, contact Brian Pickering, development and communications director.

For information, call 325-6810 or email brian.pickering@us. salvationarmy.org.

HBPA matches students and professionals

Hispanic Business Professional Association’s (HBPA) mentor program is matching students, young professionals and returning professionals to an HBPA mentor through its Latinos Unidos en Acción (LUNA) program. For information, call 557-4066 or email asociacion.hispana-spokane@gmail.com.

Mardi Bras parties gather items women need

Through Mardi Bras, Volunteers of America and Transitions offer an opportunity to help meet basic needs of more than 1,800 women experiencing homelessness and involved at Hope House and Women’s Hearth.

Congregations and individuals are hosting online Mardi Bras parties and inviting friends to give decadent, tampons, bras, underwire, socks and bus passes.

For information, call 688-1117 or email development@voaspokane.org.

Catholic Charities opens Pasco housing

Catholic Charities of Eastern Washington (CCCEW) broke ground on Pasco Haven, its newest affordable housing complex in Pasco to provide affordable, permanent, supportive housing for individuals experiencing homelessness.

The project at 20th Ave. and Lewis St. includes 60 housing units for vulnerable people.

Pasco Haven is the first affordable housing project of its kind in Pasco. It will provide a long-term housing option for chronically homeless individuals.

For information, call 509.315.9875 or visit wishingtreebookstore.com or pullmanucc.org.

MiA launches helpline

MiA launched Spokane’s first bilingual domestic violence and sexual assault helpline on Monday, Feb. 14. Primera Conexión will support Spanish speaking survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

As Hansned Sanchez, director, became involved in Spokane in 2017, she realized there was need “for a culturally responsive helpline for the people and by the people.”

With Primera Conexión, MiA offers a confidential support system, crisis intervention, safety planning and resources for people experiencing domestic violence or sexual assault and provide a way for them to communicate in their native language with advocates who are culturally and emotionally well-being of the individual.

For information, call 557-4066 or email asociacion.hispana-spokane@gmail.com.

Flannery Lecture: ‘From an Economy of Secrets to the Synodal Way: What the Church Can Learn from #MeToo’

Natalia Imperatori-Lee

Catholic theologian, professor

5-6:15 p.m. • March 30

Cataldo Hall – Gonzaga

Religious studies @
gonzaga.edu

Emmanuel Family Life Center

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Volunteers drive in posts, weave branches

Continued from page 1
The Fig Tree

giving them the opportunity
does cultural resource reviews,
It is also partnering on a biochar
ation along Hangman Creek. It has
side in the natural world connects
said, noting that the balance of
people live better,” Kat
rous levels in the lake,” Kat said.
branches biodegrade gradually.
DNR and state parks on forest
ing with private landowners, the
forests for fuel reduction to pre-
Resources (DNR) effort to thin

Thompson Creek BDA Restoration Project paper
shows posts driven into the
creek and pine branches that
will be woven around them.
to participate,” she said.
Growing up outside New York
City, Kat did not want to live
there with traffic and shopping
malls, even though it was 10
minutes to the ocean. She had
eyes set on moving west.
After graduating in 1994
from Cornell University in Ith-
aca, she did a two-year agrofor-
esty project in Cameroon with
the Peace Corps, volunteered an-
other year and then backpacked
with a friend in Southern
and East Africa.
Back in the U.S., she took a
job with the Serve Alaska
Youth Corps in Juneau, maintaining
hiking trails and doing environ-
mental education. Then she did
short-term jobs in Alaska, work-
ing on a fishing boat one sum-
mer, doing trail maintenance,
working on a fish hatchery and
organizing outdoor therapy for
disturbed youth.
From 2001 to 2003, she com-
pleted a master’s degree in envi-
ronmental management at Yale
University and returned to work
three years with the Southeast
Alaska Conservation Council.
She came to Spokane to con-
tract with the Lands Council
and was hired in 2007 as staff for
the environmental health program.
That evolved into outdoor envi-
ronmental education with
middle and high school youth.
“We took them to do environ-
mental restoration as science
projects in classic outdoor-
education programs, including
planting trees, testing water
quality and hiking,” said Kat.
“When people are outside,
planting trees, they learn about
trees and how trees help rivers,”
she said. “The goal is for kids
to connect to the natural world
by getting their hands dirty and
feet wet. When they are off their
devices, we instill values as we

Volunteers drive in posts, weave branches

Thompson Creek BDA Restoration Project paper shows posts driven into the creek and pine branches that will be woven around them.
Continued from page 1

Roberta Wilburn returned to Whitworth to promote diversity, equity and inclusion. “The first two years are critical. Students need to work through the ‘imposter syndrome’—the belief that they are not belonging here,” Roberta said. “The administration, faculty and students to understand why they respond as they do,” said Roberta, “as we seek to live Whitworth’s mission ‘to provide its diverse student body an education of the mind and the heart, equipping its graduates to honor God, follow Christ and serve humanity.’”

“God calls us to love our brothers and sisters, and help as best we can,” she said. “While many students are Christian, many are not, but Christian faith guides our work.”

“Let’s talk.”

The 40th Roger Williams Symposium

ACHIEVING HEALTH EQUITY: THIS TOO IS OUR LANE

STRUCTURAL RACISM IN HEALTHCARE

Rachel Issaka, M.D., MAS
Kathryn Savage-Smith Endowed Chair in Health Equity Research, Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center

Issaka will discuss historical contexts that influence health outcomes for racial and ethnic minorities and low socioeconomic groups in the U.S. and a framework that healthcare professionals can use to ensure equity for patients.

Thursday March 10 | 7 P.M.
WEYERHAUSER HALL, ROBINSON TEACHING THEATRE

Co-sponsored by the Weyerhaeuser Center for Christian Faith & Learning, Speakers & Artists Committee, and Women’s Leadership Network.

For more information: dsoden@whitworth.edu, 509.777.4433

Whitworth University Annual Bioethics Symposium

TAIZÉ PRAYER
via Zoom
Thursdays at 4:15 p.m.

For more information, contact: Shonna Bartlett at bartlettsg@gonzaga.edu

For additional events and information, visit whitworth.edu/tribal-studies.

Continued from page 1

In early September, she hosted a delegation of five members of parliament from Kenya.

“Interested in diversity, equity and inclusion, they looked us up and found we were serious about it. They wanted ideas they could implement to apply it to cross-cultural conflicts among their tribes,” she said. “Most were women, so they were also interested in gender equality.”

They spoke to classes, met the mayor for a government perspective; met African American lead-
ers on city council, in churches and on the school board; met with Native Americans at North-
er Quest, and met with the Spokane Review to learn how they cover issues of diversity.

In February, she arranged events for Black History Month. A key part of Roberta’s role is diversity advocacy, which means she encourages campus committees look at diverse candidates and treat them fairly.

She also meets with the presi-
dent and provost’s monthly “courageous conversations,” because she believes diversity starts at the top.

“Leaders must understand di-
erity, equity and inclusion for the university to be effective,” Roberta said. “Before activities comes awareness, but I want practical implementation.

The president’s cabinet did an intercultural assessment of where they are, and then she talk-
ed to each to help them develop their own intercultural plan.

Recently, they read Sibley Acts of Exclusion by Tiffany Jana and Michael Baran on how to under-
stand, identify and stop micro-
aggressions. Then they discussed how to implement ideas.

“We always try to make sure we are sensitive to different groups, not just African Ameri-
cans,” said Roberta, who meets with different campus cultural groups to learn their perspec-
tives and how they are doing, what their concerns are and what changes are needed.

“Students should flourish and have good experiences on cam-
pus,” she said, noting that Sharon Washington, the associate dean of student success and equity, focuses on student diversity eq-
uity and inclusion.

In the summer, Whitworth of-
ers Buck Bridge, a weeklong orientation to acclimate incom-
ing BIPOC and first-generation students and parents to campus.

“Whitworth intentionally recruits diverse students. When I came to campus, I was one of very few African Americans on campus,” said Roberta, who raises funds for scholarships.

“We are intentional about recruitment and programs re-
cruiting students and faculty. It’s important but not enough to draw students and faculty. We want them to stay,” she said, know-
ing from years of working with students how hard it is for many to be away from home for the first time in a new environment.

Roberta told of encouraging an African-American student to apply early for the Act Six leadership program, which offers a full scholarship. The student thought she would have to enter the military to afford to go to col-
eges. Roberta helped her with the strenuous application process.

In their first year of college in Spokane, many students of color want to go home, so Whitworth’s diversity, equity and inclusion staff help them acclimate and overcome uncertainties about whether they can succeed. Dur-
ing students’ second year, Whit-
worth wants to be sure students feel included as they acclimate to the lifestyle on campus. All events are free. Zoom registration at interfaith-house.com or pullmanucc.org

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The Common Ministry
at WSU presents
The 40th Roger Williams Symposium
with Dr. Diana Butler Bass
March 26-28, 2022

Butler Bass is an American historian and advocate for progressive Christianity. She is the author of eleven books.

The lifestyle on campus.

students how hard it is for many to be away from home for the first time in a new environment.}

Some white students don’t want to deal with diversity, equity and inclusion because they don’t want to be blamed for slavery, residential schools or the Japanese incarceration. It’s not about blame, but going forward to build the beloved community in which we care for our brothers and sisters,” Roberta said.

When one student wrote in a paper that he was racist and didn’t like women, she said, “Let’s talk.”

The next year, they met month-
ty to talk about race and gender. It turned out he was afraid of being like family members who did not embrace diversity, she said.

“We move the diversity needle by building authentic relation-
ships with people of diverse backgrounds. I get to know you and you get to know me. It’s not as threatening as some think,” Roberta said.

For information, call 777-4215 or email gswilburn@whit-
worth.edu.
For Earth Day 2022, The Hope for Creation Conference will kick off a celebration to commemorate the approach of the 50th anniversary of Expo ’74, the first World’s Fair dedicated to the environment.

The Hope for Creation event will include experts in care of the land, discussion groups on the intersection of faith and secular actions, a street fair, music, art, exhibits and food trucks on Friday and Saturday, April 22 and 23, at the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist, 127 E. 11th Ave.

With Expo ’74, Spokane instantly became a global leader on the environment, said John Wallingford, coordinator of the event.

“People loved living here because we had clean water and clean air and the land was unspoiled,” he said. “We knew then that the burgeoning global population would stress the environment, and it has. Not a day goes by that we are not bombarded with reports of the effects of climate change.”

John sees that Spokane is still responding.

• Last fall, the city adopted a Sustainability Action Plan.
• Gonzaga became the first U.S. university to join the Lauto Si Action plan.
• Area wheat farmers are adapting agricultural practices to changing precipitation.
• Avista is modifying retention and release of runoff.
• Area foresters are adapting forest management to address increased wildfire risk.
• Spokane’s motto is “Near nature, near perfect.”

John realizes that people feel stressed about the environment.

Some are emotionally overwhelmed. Some suffer physically. Some are in denial.

Despite that, he said that faith teachings provide guidance and give reason to Hope for Creation.

He cited Gen. 2:15 in the King James version that God put man “into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.”

Other translations use the words “work it and take care of it” (NIV) or “cultivate it and guard it” (Good News), or “to tend and care for it” (Living Bible).

“The need to care for the land became a central theme in the Promised Land, which was hilly and dry, not the rich vegetable garden of the Nile Delta in Egypt,” he said. “The need to care for the land reflected the need to depend on God to provide, because of assurance in Deut. 11:12, that God cares for that land.”

John Wallingford organizes creation care event.

John also cited Chief Seattle: “Will you teach your children what we have taught our children? That the earth is our mother? What befalls earth befalls the sons of the earth. This we know: the earth does not belong to man, man belongs to the earth. All things are connected like the blood that unites us all. Man did not weave the web of life; he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the earth, he does to himself.”

This year, John said, is a shmita year in the Jewish calendar, the seventh year when the land is to lie fallow and rest.

The 50 years since Expo, are a biblical jubilee, when the land debts are to be forgiven.

“Humanity’s debt to the land the last 50 years is immense,” he said. “We need a new course, a fresh start.”

The Episcopal Church—which is the Anglican Church in England—sits between Roman Catholics and Protestants, sharing beliefs with each and finding each holding beliefs the other does not accept, but still are part of the same family.

“We know some folks believe care for the environment is only a human responsibility, and some believe the wellbeing of the Earth is only in God’s hands,” John said. “There is truth in both of these views, and that each has value for the other.

“The Episcopal baptismal covenant asks seven questions. The answer to each is ‘I will, with God’s help.’ That position of human responsibility, in proper relation to God, is our Hope for Creation,” John said.

“We had Expo, we have the Sustainability Action Plan, and we need to imagine together how to care for the land in the future,” he said.

For information, visit whitworth.edu/hopeforcreation.
Carl Maxey Center opens doors and opportunities for Black community

Sandy Williams, who has been editing The Black Lens, is turning her focus for the next year to developing the Carl Maxey Center in East Central Spokane as a neighborhood cultural center and gathering place to provide programs and services for the African American/Black community.

Reopening a 3,000 square-foot, 1920s building at 3114 E. 5th Ave. was set for completion in February and then postponed opening—pending COVID—when it’s finished. That is the first of four phases for developing the center.

Even while construction was under way, the center began offering services.

The Carl Maxey Center seeks to change lives of Spokane’s African American/Black community by expanding educational, economic and cultural opportunities. Its programs address 1) racial/social justice and equity; 2) business/workforce development and economics; 3) education and advocacy, and 4) cultural and community engagement.

“The center seeks to uplift, empower and transform our community to design solutions that address challenges,” Sandy explained. “We are doing a lot with a few folks.”

The nonprofit board includes Betsy Wilkerson, chair; Walter Kendrick, vice chair; Curtis Hampton, treasurer; Terrie Ashby-Scott, secretary, and members at large, Wilhelmenia Williams and Sy YBSTB. Brianna Rollins is program coordinator; Dorothy Hood is bookkeeper; and contract consultants provide rental and utility assistance.

“We have provided more than $70,000 in rental and utility assistance so far. It is specifically targeted for Spokane’s BIPOC (Black Indigenous People of Color) community. We received additional grant funds from the City of Spokane to continue the work,” said Sandy.

“It’s a big lift for a little organization,” said Sandy.

The Carl Maxey Center has also received funds to provide technical assistance and support to Black businesses, because COVD has had an impact on businesses, especially Black ones. They formed the Black Business and Professionals Alliance in winter 2020 to provide networking opportunities, address barriers to success and connect them with financial resources.

“In spring 2020, we created the Black Business Directory, listing more than 50 businesses at blacksplashone.com, so people would know what businesses were available and are better able to support them,” she said.

“It’s exciting to discover businesses I didn’t know and help others find them, she said.

The alliance has held three online round tables offering information on what people need to start a business.

With COVID, there have been many grants to help businesses succeed, but local Black businesses had difficulty accessing them, so they created a program to provide one-on-one support.

“The Black Business Support Team consists of community members who assess what a business needs—a bank account, business cards, record keeping, a logo or business license—and we find grants to cover the costs. We helped 20 businesses move to the next level to be sustainable,” she said.

In 2021, the Carl Maxey Center joined with the Hispanic Business and Professional Association, Multiethnic Business Association/AHANA, the Inland Northwest Business Alliance (the LGBTQ+ Chamber of Commerce), the Spokane Independent Metro Business Association (SIMBA) and the Native Business Center.

The center partnered with Comcast to create a student tech fund, providing students with access to technical equipment or knowhow for remote learning, helping 25 families buy computers, headphones, desks and equipment for hot spots.

“We have been doing that while finishing the first phase of the center,” she said.

“We started the Carl Maxey Center because people wanted a place to come and feel at home, a place that reflects them, a place to do programs and hold events,” Sandy said, describing four phases for developing the center.

Phase one: a meeting room for speakers and workshops.

Phase two: a cultural library, with research and reference offices, an art exhibit area and coffee shop.

Phase three: shared office space—like the Community Building downtown for nonprofits—with computers, fax machines, copiers and mailboxes for starting businesses.

Phase four: a multimedia center with equipment to produce videos, a radio station and the newspaper, to give people access to media to find and help others find them,” she said.

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Three Gatsby Gala, Fundraiser and Auction events will feature entertainment and gourmet food in a benefit for the work of the Spokane Regional Domestic Violence Coalition (SRDVC) and Stop the Silence Spokane to end the violence in Spokane.

An Inaugural Event will be at 6 p.m. Friday, March 11, with Chef Dan from Kismet. An evening Gala will be at 6 p.m., Saturday, March 12 with Chef Michael from Wiley’s Bistro. A brunch at 11 am, Sunday, March 13 will be with Chef Alex from South Perry Lantern.

“As Spokane County residents bear a disproportionate burden of the many forms of violence, we are committed to ending that violence. County law enforcement receive domestic violence calls at a rate nearly twice the state level. The trend has worsened over time,” said Annie Murphey of SRDVC.

Spokane has the highest rates of domestic violence in Washington state, with more than 3,300 reported cases annually, 25 percent of all criminal cases, she added.

With COVID, the event is both online and in person with seating following health district protocols of social distancing and less than 50 percent occupancy.

For information, call 481-3522, email amurphey@srsvc.org or visit endtheviolencespokane.org.

“Events raise funds to end domestic violence”

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Are you willing to share your story to help save lives?
Become a Spokane County DUI Victims Panel speaker

Contact the Greater Spokane Substance Abuse Council
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Are you ready for Spring Cleaning?

Remember to add these to your list for better health!

Organize your medicine cabinet and ask your pharmacist how to dispose of any outdated or unused medications.

Make sure plumbing is working properly to avoid any health issues from mold growth.

Remove objects and cords from walking areas, secure loose rugs, and store necessities in easy-to-reach areas for anybody who is at risk of injury from falling.

Replace batteries in smoke and CO2 detectors.

Clean ducts and vents and replace filters in your home for cleaner, healthier air.

Spokane Regional Health District issues this information in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. For a complaint or to request more information, reasonable accommodations, or language translations, contact 509.342.6495 or www.srhd.org. Created: January 2023

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Three housing advocates offer solutions to housing-homeless issues

By Catherine Ferguson SNJM

A workshop on Housing and Homelessness at the Jan 22 Eastern Washington Legislative Conference featured three advocates for solutions to different aspects of the housing crisis in Spokane.

Terri Anderson, co-executive director of the Tenants Union of Washington State, said the best way to decrease homelessness is to keep tenants in their housing and, to do that, Spokane needs laws to protect tenants. Currently landlords can displace tenants with no formal process or declared reason by issuing a 20-day no-cause notice to vacate to terminate a month-to-month rental agreement.

“It is nearly impossible in Spokane’s tight market for a tenant evicted this way to find housing and pay move-in costs in 20 days because in this market more than 99 percent of affordable housing is unavailable,” she said.

The 2022 legislature is considering a bill to require landlords to provide 180 to 220 days’ notice for rent increases over a certain amount, allowing tenants to terminate a lease for a rent increase over a certain amount and limiting late fees to $75.

Other reforms needed, Terri said, include removing a box on rental applications that asks about incarceration history, limiting conditions under which a landlord can retain a damage deposit and providing more tenant recourse if a landlord does not properly maintain the property.

Kristine Hoover, director of the Gonzaga Institute for Hate Studies and professor in the School of Leadership Studies, presented a workshop on “Securing Our Democracy.”

She told of groups who migrated to the Inland Northwest to create an ethno-state of Aryans as part of the Christian Identity Movement. Their Declaration of Independence said Aryans ought to be free and independent as a nation with no ties to the United States. They declared themselves anti-Semitic and anti-government.

The Kootenai County Task Force for Human Rights bankrupted that group in 2001 and turned their land into a peace park. They recently sold it to fund the Greg Carr Endowed Chair of Human Rights at North Idaho College, she said.

Kristine showed hate maps prepared by the Southern Poverty Law Center and the Anti-Defamation League and clarified nuances between labels for stereotyping, bias motivated violence and more.

She also said the Spokane County Human Rights Task Force has a Hate Documentation Project for Spokane through which individuals can report hate crimes at www.reporthatebias.org.

Kristine celebrated the formation of Spokane’s first Office of Civil Rights, Equity and Inclusion in December 2021.

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To help people deal with change, resistance and threat, she uplifted the power of story to encourage communities and individuals to take action for the good.

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By Kaye Hult

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One restricts the retention of damage deposits in rental housing (HB 1300). Another provides tenant protections during and after public health emergencies, provides legal representation in eviction cases and authorizes landlord access to state rental assistance programs (HB 5160).

A third requires landlords to accept rent payments by mail or on site and to allow various forms of payment, not just electronic payment (HB 5749).

For information, visit fanwa.org or see the workshop at thefigtree.org/ewlc2022videos.html.

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The Olympics offers a contrast to saber rattling over Ukraine

The spirit of the Olympics, the gathering of athletes from many nations provided quite a contrast to the pending or not so distant crisis by Russian troops into Ukraine.

The standoff with distrust, animosity, fear and anger and enemy images played in the background as athletes swooped down slopes, flew through the air and cartwheeled on the floor. The athletes fear, ice, wind, temperatures and other conditions may vary on the same slope or track when they compete. There is chance, as well as expertise. There are also the judges’ varying perceptions. There are mini hundreds of a second difference in time for 100-meter sprinters. In Table tennis the scores are often needed to determine whose skate or ski crossed the finish line first.

The Olympics is no perfect example of international relationships—as evidenced by the doping crisis and others for years. While much is also about the Olympic sports industry, it’s also an opportunity for international relationships that can build relationships among young athletes on the international stage, superseding international boundaries. From studies at the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey near Geneva, Switzerland, I knew a Greek Orthodox leader in the World Council of Churches (WCC) who worked with both the WCC and the International Olympic Committee because of his role in fostering dialogue beyond normal political boundaries.

Both can build understanding even without interpersonal encounters, challenging international forces that allow those in power to divide.

Joan Liguori discussed research from the fall 2021 Gonzaga Conference on Hate Studies. Jackson Liguori worked with both the WCC and the International Olympic Committee because of his role in fostering dialogue beyond normal political boundaries. Educator warns of far-right influence seeping into spaces like skate or ski crossed the finish line first.

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Holy Names Sisters grant helps support newspaper, directory, interns

By Catherine Ferguson SNJM
Since the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary (SNJM) began their Ministry Grant Program, they have been supporting the Fig Tree with funds ranging from $2,000 to $5,000.

From 2002 to 2005, The Fig Tree received SNJM Ministry Mini-grants before her death in 2006. She saw it as a way to help mini-grants before her death in 2006. She saw it as a way to help.

In 2006, when the Sisters eliminated their four United States and Ottawa Canada Province mini-grants, the Sisters wanted to continue to offer support to the many good ministries being done by Sister volunteers or by Sisters carrying out special projects. This was the beginning of the Sisters of the Holy Names Ministry Grant Program.

Sister Rosemary Delaney from Oakland, Calif., chair of the grants committee explained, “Each year the province sets aside about $100,000 for grants to Sisters connected with the SNJM community. Even though the grants are relatively small—up to $5,000, they make a big difference in people’s lives.”

The grant is simple to obtain and requires little in the way of reporting. Each year in the fall, an application form is sent out to community members and in the spring, another form to report how the funds were used is returned to the grant committee.

There are only two criteria for the grant: a Holy Names Sister has to be connected with the organization some way, and the work has to be in line with the mission and vision of the Sisters.

Sister Bernardine Casey, one of the founding members of the Fig Tree, began applying for the mini-grants before her death in 2006. She saw it as a way to help provide support for the Fig Tree. She filled out applications for the mini grants, explaining how the work of the Fig Tree supported the mission and vision of the Sisters.

Each year since then, a Holy Names Sister connected with the Fig Tree in some way has followed Bernardine’s footsteps by submitting the grant application. The Fig Tree has received between $2,000 and $5,000 each year for particular needs as identified by editor Mary Stamp, including capacity building, training writers and editors, supporting stipends for freelancers and interns, and resource directory community partnerships.

Because of COVID restrictions, many programs had special needs this year. Twenty-two programs from Spokane to Peru and Haiti received grants to help support their ministries.

The grants assist programs for the homeless in Oregon and California, a community center for women, children and gender diverse people in Portland, and food pantries in Portland and Blue River, Ore. They enabled schools to offer scholarships and educational materials to needy students in Spokane, Portland and Oakland, and those offering spiritual retreats to make them available to some who can’t afford them.

In Peru, because many schools were online in COVID, the grant helped support needs of children in the poorest areas of Lima and its suburbs. It provided transportation for children cut off from education to areas where they could be tutored.

Testimony from those who received grants demonstrates how important a small boost is to the work of these ministries. In California, Sister Lois Mac-Gillivray, an active member of the Association of Faith Communities (AFC) and a member of Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic Parish writes: ‘The AFC works to feed and house the persons living in the community without shelter. This year it is working to secure Safe Spaces for people living in vehicles. It is partnering with the Warming Center, a low threshold program, taking in anyone who comes. It has added storage, laundry services and showers to its services.’

She said that when homeless people have storage, they can move around the community without being identified as homeless. We believe one’s own clothes are an extension of the concept of ‘home.’” Lois said.

At Our Lady of Refuge parish, a project of Sister Nicki Thomas provides scholarships for technology assistance that helped one beneficiary help in the community and another prepare a better life for her children.

In Haiti, a ministry grant is used at Santa Clara Children’s Center clinic, a refuge and a safe harbor from the violence and hunger that exists every day in Haiti.

“The Sisters are happy to be able to provide this support and encouragement to so many worthy ministries,” said Rosemary.

For information, call 535-1813 or email mary@thefigtree.org.