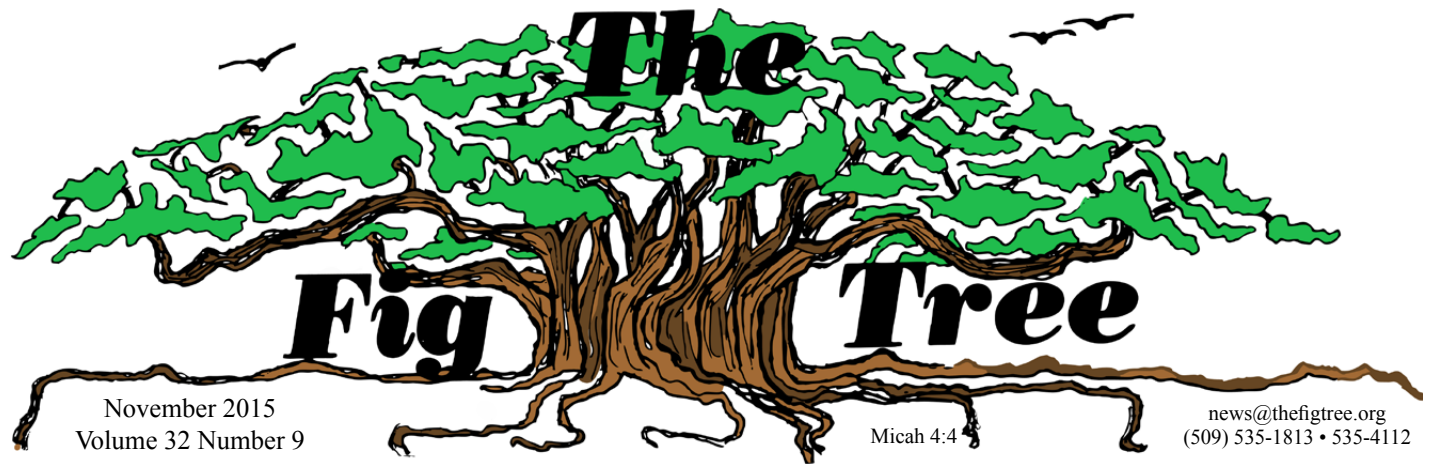


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- Pastor-musician starts Sandpoint church - p. 9

CALENDAR ON PAGE 11
FEATURES 40 EVENTS THAT
INFORM, INSPIRE, INVOLVE



Monthly newspaper and website covering faith in action throughout the Inland Northwest
online at www.thefigtree.org • check The Fig Tree Facebook page daily for news and links

Painting helps heal Liberian artist

By Mary Stamp

Peter Glanville had no idea when he and his wife, Amber, decided to adopt a Liberian child that they would become involved in fair trade, helping artist Wilson Fallah sell oil paintings.

They met him in 2008, when they first went to Liberia, because it had a pilot program for international adoptions.

They were impressed with carvings, baskets, jewelry and crafts of other artists, who were poor and could not make a living selling their work in Liberia. Peter started a nonprofit, Four Corners Markets, to help Liberian artists market their crafts.

They sold some of their art, but now focus on Wilson's paintings on canvas, denim and other fabrics, which can be rolled and easily carried in a suitcase.

His paintings reflect post-war Liberia, capturing and helping people focus on the innocence of everyday Liberian life so they have hope that they can have a peaceful society. Most show village scenes of people working or playing music, and of women grinding grain or carrying water.

Wilson, now 26, was 19 when they met and had won awards as a



Peter Glanville will offer paintings of Liberian artist again at the Jubilee Marketplace.

youth artist. Forced to be a child soldier at the age of nine, he fought against Charles Taylor, ex-Liberian president who was later sentenced to a British prison for war crimes.

At the end of the civil war 10 years ago, Wilson, who is Christian, was adrift and had a hard time until he started to paint as a way to cope and heal. He paints to help others heal, too.

He has won many awards in Liberia for his artwork and has paintings featured in government buildings, including the U.S. Embassy.

The first year Peter sold his art at First Presbyterian Church's annual Jubilee International Marketplace, they sent him the proceeds, \$1,500, quite a sum for someone living on \$45 a month. Wilson used the money to buy musical instruments and a sound system so he could play music at weddings and events to earn regular income to help support his wife and two-year-old child.

Peter will sell Wilson's paintings Friday and Saturday, Nov. 6 and 7, at Jubilee Marketplace at First Presbyterian, 318 S. Cedar.

In previous years, he also sold paintings at the Fall Folk Fest and weekend events. Now he just sells the paintings at Jubilee.

Continued on page 4

Interfaith Council's 'Meet the Neighbors' helps people learn about diverse faiths

Skyler Oberst and many others wear Spokane Interfaith Council's "prays well with others" T-shirt to express their commitment to dialogue, learning and action.

Recently the council received a Germanacos Fellowship grant of \$5,000 to promote interfaith understanding through its new "Meet the Neighbors" project, which will provide opportunities for people to visit diverse houses of worship to learn about them and to communicate about the experiences on YouTube, Facebook and other social media.

A year and a half ago, Skyler

became involved with the Spokane Interfaith Council and is now president of its board of trustees.

The board spent a year reorganizing the council. They worked with a consultant to bring their nonprofit status into compliance with federal and state regulations. The Interfaith Council's roots go back to 1948 when the Spokane Council of Churches formed. It has had several names over the years but has kept the same nonprofit number with the state. In about 2004, the Council of Ecumenical Ministries became the Interfaith Council.

Now the council is predominantly young people in the Millennial generation, Skyler said.

The seven board members include an Evangelical, a Catholic, an Episcopal, a Muslim, an Atheist, a Baha'i and a Buddhist. They seek more members, and have two candidates soon to join the board.

"The next generation is interested in interfaith dialogue, getting along and building bridges. Including their voices is essential to helping communities understand one another in the future," said Skyler.

Now the Interfaith Council is ready to do community outreach, focusing on religious literacy and partnering with other groups.

The council is launching its Meet the Neighbors series at 6 p.m., Thursday, Nov. 19, at Temple Beth Shalom, 1322 E. 30th.

The other visits will be at 6 p.m., Dec. 16, at the Sikh Gurudwara; Jan. 19, at the Spokane Islamic Center; Feb. 19, at a Baha'i Gathering; March 31 at the Spokane Buddhist Temple on Perry St., and April 2 at the

Continued on page 5

Tribes unite their voices to restore rights, environment

As John Sirois coordinates committee work of Upper Columbia United Tribes (UCUT) on salmon, wildlife, water quality, environment, timber and fish passage, he integrates his childhood of digging roots and picking berries, his degree in history and Native American studies, and master's of public administration, and insights from his career with the Colville Confederated Tribes.

He was influenced by strong teachings from his grandmother, Margaret Dick Condon, a Wenatchee basket weaver. While digging camas and bitterroot, and picking huckleberries in nearby mountains, he learned that nature is integral to life.

Like many in his generation, he grew up eating trout and only occasionally salmon. The Dick family, as many others, had a traditional fishing spot on the Methow River, Columbia River, Wenatchee River and Icicle Creek.

State Fish and Wildlife officers respected their right to fish there without need of a state issued license. As new Fish and Wildlife personnel joined the department, many did not understand historical fishing agreements, and jailed people for fishing without a license.

The Colville Confederated Tribes fought to win respect for the agreements and historical inherent fishing rights preserved in them. John worked for the Colville Tribes during that time of recognizing those inherent rights to the tribal first foods.

"Wenatchee River water is good quality. Tribal members would catch salmon that came up the Columbia," said John, who fishes and eats salmon three times a week.

John joined UCUT's staff of five in 2014, bringing his expertise in and commitment to cultural preservation, renewable

Continued on page 8

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Religion News Briefs

Around the World

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Churches help build peace in South Sudan

Churches continue to play a role in peace building for South Sudan despite the dashed hopes of many in the world's newest nation, Agnes Aboun, the moderator of the World Council of Churches (WCC), said at a regional meeting.

She was speaking at the inaugural assemblies of the Ecumenical Network Sudan and the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) in Nairobi, Kenya on Oct. 2 and 3. Agnes, a Kenyan Anglican, thanked God for the work of the Sudan Council of Churches (SCC) and the South Sudan Council of Churches (SSCC) in evangelism, education, health and advocacy for justice and peace over many years.

"During ecumenical visits, the churches have been encouraged to find internal solutions to strengthen the council's management and leadership," said Agnes.

The WCC reaffirmed its commitment as a partner to accompany both the SCC and the SSCC, she said.

"Apart from South Africa where global, regional and national churches coalesced to fight against apartheid, Sudan and South Sudan have received the highest moral and material support," she said.

"Although people's hopes seem dashed and return from exile has not been fully realized, the churches have played and continue to play a role of peace building, healing and reconciliation," Agnes asserted.

She cited the SSCC's consistently pushing for a stop to the "senseless war."

"The churches in the Council are encouraged to stay united and move together in order to tackle both cultures of privilege and indifference on the one hand, and the culture of hopelessness and suicide on the other," said Agnes.

Nigussu Legesse, WCC program executive, expressed the commitment of the WCC general secretary, the Rev. Olav Fykse Tveit, to support the peace and reconciliation process.

This support held firm, he explained, through the period when "the Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed and beyond, and likewise towards the referendum and independence of South Sudan."

WCC expresses concern over Syria

In an official statement issued on Oct. 12, the World Council of Churches (WCC) expressed grave concern over the dramatic escalation of the conflict in Syria.

The Council expressed strong condemnation of all foreign military operations, especially since hope has been raised for a political process in line with the proposals made by the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Syria, and approved by the UN Security Council last August.

The WCC, together with its member churches and ecumenical partners, has expressed on several occasions its deep conviction that "there will be no military solution" to the conflict in Syria.

"We call on all governments to put an immediate end to all military actions and to support and engage with a political process for peace in Syria through which a narrative for all Syrians can be generated," said the Rev. Olav Fykse Tveit, WCC general secretary. "We also reiterate our urgent call to the UN Security Council and the international community to implement measures to end the flow of weapons and foreign fighters into Syria."

"Only a political solution in Syria, leading to the establishment of a transitional national government, recognized by the people of Syria and the international community, can adequately address the existential threat posed by ISIS and other extremist groups and offer hope for the preservation of the diverse social fabric of Syria and the region," reads the statement. "The Syrian people deserve another alternative to what they face today, and a just peace now. We hope and pray that the suffering of the Syrian people will come to an end soon."

REGIONAL ECUMENICAL & INTERFAITH NEWS

Fig Tree receives grant from Rotary #21

The Fig Tree recently received a grant of \$2,760 from Spokane Rotary #21 to update three computers in its office so it can upgrade software for design, website, graphics, video and its database.

"We hope these funds help you with computer upgrades you need to continue your good work," said Suzy Greenwood, president.

In 2006, Rotary #21 had funded two new computers for The Fig Tree office. Those computers will be upgraded along with one other.

A \$500 grant from the Catholic Foundation, presented in June, will be used to fund a subscription to Adobe Creative Cloud software during 2015 to 2016.

In addition, Emmanuel Family Life Center has installed high-speed internet, which will improve the speed, particularly for internet searches for directory research and for uploading updates to The Fig Tree website.

"We hope these improvements will make it possible to staff the office regularly with volunteers and to improve opportunities for student interns who help with design, video and production processes," said Mary Stamp, editor.

"We need additional funding sources this year and into the future to support subscriptions to software we use and help us cover costs of the improved internet access," she added.

The Fig Tree has received nearly \$27,000 of its budgeted \$30,000 for the 2015 income from the benefit events. In addition, it has received just over \$6,300 of its budgeted \$15,000 from sponsors. Most sponsor donations come in through a year-end appeal.

The Fig Tree has scheduled two 2016 events:

- The Eastern Washington Legislative Conference will be Saturday, Jan. 30, at St. Mark's Lutheran Church.

- The Benefit Lunch will be Friday, March 11, and the Benefit Breakfast, Wednesday, March 16, at Cataldo Hall at Gonzaga.

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

Film looks at the final days of Mary's life

Outside da Box announces the release of the feature film, "Full of Grace," which examines the final days of Mary of Nazareth, the mother of Jesus. It will be released in early 2016, preceded by church screenings.

"Full of Grace," which will be released in multiple formats, will be shown on Cinedigm's new Dove Channel, a digital streaming service offering faith-based content vetted by The Dove Foundation.

One of the first screenings will be at 4:30 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 7,

at The Garland Theater in Spokane, hosted by local pastor, John Repsold, father of Joanna Hyatt. Her husband, Andrew Hyatt, the film's producer, will be at that screening to share his experience of making the film.

John said the film invites reflection on God's gift, Mary's freedom and Jesus' love for humanity.

Joanna said it tells the New Testament story from the perspective of Mary, the only person to live 30 years with Jesus, from birth through the Resurrection. In her

final days 10 years after the Resurrection, Mary reflects on her life with Jesus.

The Apostle Peter is arriving at Mary's home after years of traveling, preaching and narrowly escaping death. He expresses his responsibility to spread the Gospel in the midst of heresies and conflict. Mary helps Peter rediscover that he is not leading, but is following and walking in God's light.

For information, email info@joannahyatt.com.

'The Vatican Museums' will be shown

The Catholic Diocese of Spokane is sponsoring a showing of "The Vatican Museums," an Ultra HD film production by 40 professionals who were allowed inside the Vatican Museums and the Sistine Chapel.

The production will be presented at 10:30 a.m. and 1 p.m., Sunday, Nov. 22, at The Bing Theater, 901 W. Sprague.

The big screen will present art never seen before, some of the world's most rare, precious art

masterpieces that span civilizations and epochs.

James Cameron and Tim Burton use cutting-edge techniques to immerse audiences in admiring paintings of Caravaggio, "touching" Laocoön and the Bebevedere Torso, and enfolded by figures in the Sistine Chapel.

Also included are classic statues from the Cast of Michelangelo's Pietà, right up to Fontana's modern sculptures; from paintings by Giotto, Leonardo da Vinci, Van

Gogh, Chagall and Dali; from the extraordinary frescos in the Rooms of Raphael to the work by Michelangelo in the Sistine Chapel.

The audience will experience the journey guided by Professor Antonio Paolucci, director of The Vatican Museums.

Friends of the Bing are presenting the 1 p.m. showing.

For information, contact TicketsWest or visit friendsofthebing.org.

Flannery Lecture connects religion, science

Sr. Ilia Delio, OSF, will give the 2015 Fall Flannery Lecture on "Evolution and the Power of Love: Towards a Holistic Consciousness" at 6:30 p.m., Monday, Nov. 9, at Cataldo Hall at Gonzaga University.

The Franciscan Sister of Washington D.C., holds the Josephine

Connelly Endowed Chair in Theology at Villanova University.

Sr. Ilia, who is engaged in religion and science dialogue, has a doctorate in pharmacology from Rutgers University-New Jersey Medical School and a doctorate in historical theology from Fordham University.

She has written 16 books on Franciscan theology and spirituality, including *The Unbearable Wholeness of Being*. Her most

recent book is *Making All Things New: Catholicity, Universe*.

The Flannery Chair of Roman Catholic Theology, now offered in the spring and fall, is an endowed gift of the late Maud and Milo Flannery of Spokane, to further theological study and teaching at Gonzaga University.

Flannery Lectures are now offered in the spring and fall. For information, call 313-6782 or visit gonzaga.edu/religious-studies.

The Fig Tree is published 10 months each year, September through June.

Deadlines:

COPY - 3rd Fridays ADS - 4th Tuesdays
It is published by The Fig Tree, 1323 S. Perry St., Spokane, WA 99202, a non-profit 501 (c) (3) organization.

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The Lair - Spokane Community College
1810 N. Greene

Free Family Fun All Day!
Dance • Music • Workshops • Jam Sessions •
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New England Contra Dance 8-10 pm
Music: 8 stages • 100 performers
Folk, Bluegrass, Old-time Celtic, Hawaiian, Blues, Scottish,
Middle Eastern, Japanese, Native American, African

Fall Folk Festival
The Fall Folk Festival is sponsored by the Spokane Folklore Society
a non-profit organization serving Spokane since 1977.
For information call (509) 828-3683 or visit www.spokanefolkfestival.org

Fall Folk Festival marks its 20th year of showcasing music, dance, art

For 20 years, the Spokane Folklore Society has presented the annual Fall Folk Festival of traditional music, dance and arts reflecting the region's diversity.

The 2015 festival will be held Saturday and Sunday, Nov. 14 and 15, at Spokane Community College, 1810 N. Greene.

Vicki Ball, Carla Carnegie, Dave Noble and Leone Peterson helped organize the first Fall Folk Festival in 1996 at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Spokane. Despite a severe ice storm then, it was one of the few places in town that had power.

In four years, the festival outgrew the church and moved to Glover Middle School, supported by a federal Lights On grant encouraging use of schools. Outgrowing that space in 2003, it moved to its current location, Spokane Community College. For its 10th anniversary in 2005, the festival expanded to two days.

Mary Naber was the festival coordinator for many years. Sylvia Gobel has been festival director for 14 years.

Both are involved because of their commitment to share the kind of cross-cultural experiences they gained from travel and living abroad, and from their appreciation of the intersection of culture with music, dance and arts.

The free festival draws about 5,000 people and features about 100 performing groups, representing Celtic, bluegrass, blues, African, Asian, European, Middle

Eastern, and South American music, as well as other genres and cultures.

There are eight performance stages, 30 folk, traditional and ethnic craft vendors and artists, plus art workshops.

The main hallway becomes Music Jam Central with impromptu group performances and open sessions happening simultaneously. Often participants just meet each other a few minutes before sitting down and pulling out their instruments to play together.

The Saturday schedule features a live KPBX Radio show.

A traditional New England Contra dance closes the festival on Saturday and Sunday.

Mary and Sylvia told how their lives have intersected with their commitment to the Fall Folk Fest.

Mary, a special education teacher, was chair from the first years until about 2003 when she went to Japan to teach for two years with Spokane's Sister City program.

Since returning in 2006, she has helped recruit about 300 volunteers—from a pool of 450—for fund raising, set-up, sound, check-in, cleanup and more.

Her interest in different cultures emerged growing up in Sonoma, Calif. Her grandfather hired Mexican workers to help on his prune and grape farm. She went into the fields with them, learned Spanish, and appreciated their foods, music and family life.

Her curiosity about Mexican cultures and other cultures grew

from there. After completing studies in math in the 1970s at San Jose State University, she taught English in Mexico.

She moved to Spokane in 1984 and earned a master's degree in special education at Whitworth in 1995. For 18 years, Mary taught children with learning disabilities and did behavior intervention for Spokane District 81.

When she first came to Spokane, however, she worked a while repairing IBM typewriters.

After repairing the typewriter of the minister at the Spokane Buddhist Temple, she began attending. Now she facilitates a meditation group there to promote calming the mind and positive thinking. Noting that her favorite prayer is the prayer of St. Francis from her Catholic roots, she said, "If we did what our faiths taught, we would be better off."

In 1994, she bicycled with Bike Africa for two weeks in Zimbabwe. After teaching in Japan, she went two weeks with the group in Tanzania, Zanzibar and Kenya.

"I love culture. I like to go to areas and see what the rest of the world is like," she said.

Mary hopes that by presenting music, art, dance and songs from other cultures, people will gain appreciation of diverse ideas, rhythms and people.

Sylvia was library assistant for eight years with the Spokane Valley Public Library and since 1984 has worked at Spokane and Spokane Falls Community College libraries. Her passion for folk cultures started in elementary and junior high school in Spokane when international folk dance was part of the schools' physical education program. At the time, the Silver Spurs were sponsored by

the school district. She enjoyed their concerts in the schools.

Sylvia attended Western Washington University, where she earned a degree in French in 1972. She immersed herself in folk dance, which was popular in colleges then. She took classes and participated in college and community groups. During college summers, she encountered many foreign travelers, while working as a waitress at Yellowstone National Park, and wanted to visit their countries.

After graduating, she lived two and a half years in Europe, first in France, studying, living with families and tutoring their children in English, then in Finland and Norway. She also lived a month with a family in Algeria.

Returning to Spokane in 1976, there was no community international folk dance group, so she traveled to Pullman to participate in their group. In 1980, the Silver Spurs' new director, Cathy Dark, started a community folk dance group in Spokane and started Schastye, a performance group. Sylvia joined it when it performed at the Northwest Folklife Festival in Seattle, which is held on Memorial Day weekends. She performed in other folk dance groups and attended that festival every year.

She has traveled often, recently going on a folk dance tour of Greece, Bulgaria and Macedonia. Two years before, she went with the Unitarian Church to visit its sister church in Transylvania, Romania, and then to Budapest, Hungary. She visited Mary for two weeks in Japan; a friend who was working in Peru, and relatives of friends in Greece.

"Understanding and appreciat-

ing other cultures helps us understand and appreciate our own culture. Differences and similarities are fascinating," she said.

"The most common feedback on the Fall Folk Festival is that people had no idea there were so many talented performers and artisans in Spokane," Sylvia said.

Donations and \$5 buttons sold at the festival help cover costs of about \$20,000 for renting the space and sound equipment, and for security and publicity.

For information, visit www.spokanefolkfestival.org and Facebook.

26th Annual Japanese Food Festival



Traditional Japanese Ramen (\$10)

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Spokane Buddhist Temple
927 S. Perry, Spokane
509-534-7954
www.SpokaneBuddhistTemple.org

Art benefits Family Promise

Family Promise of Spokane recently started "Art for a Home" to support its work to help families move away from homelessness.

During its 18 years, Family Promise staff and volunteers have helped more than 400 families do that, said executive director Steve Allen. "More than 2,000 children in Spokane will be students today and homeless tonight."

"Over nine years, we have empowered 85 percent of the families served to return to a sustainable lifestyle," he said. "We do that with the help of more than 600 volunteers a quarter providing meals, overnight hospitality and love without strings."

Family Promise of Spokane has opened a webstore at artforahome.com to sell prints. Because underwriters have funded the costs, all proceeds will be used to assist homeless families with children.

Steve met Seattle artist Melinda Curtin at ArtFest last May. She has created city alphabets for several communities. He asked her to create "A to Z-the Spokane Alpha-

bet" to benefit Family Promise.

The Spokane Alphabet was unveiled on Oct. 15 at the Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture.

Spokane icons are featured in windows of the artwork. The original painting was raffled. Prints are being sold online.

For information, call 747-5487 or visit familypromisepokane.org.

Whitworth University International Club

Annual International Festival 2015



Friday,
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5 p.m. - Dinner
7 p.m. - Entertainment
Hixson Union Building
Call
777-3796

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Annual Bazaar
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BAZAAR
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Bazaar 10 am - 1 pm
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512 S. Bernard (5th & Bernard)
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Call the church office at 624-9233

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Saturday, Nov. 7
Coffee bar, bake sale,
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Day in Cheney
Saturday, Nov. 7
Loads of craft and baked goods
Come for breakfast, stay for lunch
Raffle prizes, White Elephant gifts
Visit all four churches!!!

Come Visit Our Christmas Bazaar!!
Cheney United Methodist Church
crafts, baked goods and a gift
shop designed for children
Saturday, Nov. 7 • 9 am-3 pm
4th & G St. - Cheney WA

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Fun!

The Fig Tree will run
another event section
in the Dec. issue
Cost: \$14/col. inch

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Lunch Available
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Raffles
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Join the celebration of
Fairly Traded Handcrafts
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Friday, November 6 & Saturday, November 7
10am-7pm & 9am-4pm
First Presbyterian Church | 318 S. Cedar
(located at the Maple St. exit from 1-90, downtown Spokane)
For more information, visit the Jubilee page at www.spokaneipc.org

Adoption leads to selling art and to medical training

Continued from page 1

The adoption, which was completed in 2009 when their son Henry was a year and a half, has changed Peter and Amber's lives in other ways. They also have two daughters, one 10 and one a baby.

Henry has a neurological condition with spinal and growth problems like cerebral palsy. They see doctors in Spokane and Seattle often.

Since they were about 12 years old, Peter and Amber had been living in a church community of 250 on a farm north of Colville.

His family had sold everything they had to move there from Phoenix. For 17 years, they lived in the community where Peter was a cabinetmaker.

They left the community a year after they adopted Henry to be closer to Spokane for his medical needs and so Peter could pursue a career in medicine.

Peter's father, a physician, now lives in Colorado, provides medical care for anyone who needs it, regardless of their ability to pay," he said.

First, Peter and Amber moved to Hayden, where he continued to run his cabinetmaking business. Five years ago, they moved to Spokane. They have been visiting different churches.

He started EMT training with AMR Ambulance to be a paramedic.

Then he was accepted to the University of Washington in Spokane as a full-time student to be a physician assistant (PA). He graduated in September and started in family practice with Family Health Center.

Peter would like to use his medical skills to help people overseas. He decided to be a PA rather than a MD because of his age and family.

"I like family practice because of relating with people in a breadth of conditions," he said.

Peter went to the speech by Liberian President Ellen Sirleaf Johnson at Gonzaga University in October.

She said that Liberia has 218 medical doctors and 400 nurses serving 3 million people. During the Ebola outbreak, Liberia lost about 150 of nearly 800 medical personnel. On Sept. 3, the United Nations declared Liberia Ebola Free.

Because physician assistants (PA) are recognized as medical professionals in Liberia, Peter would like to go there on short-term visits to volunteer to teach physician assistants and he plans

to sponsor people to go to a PA school there, where the cost of studies is one-tenth what it is in the United States.

"There is a desperate need for medical personnel there," he said.

When Peter and Amber went to Liberia in 2008, they knew nothing about the country.

"We learned that the colony that would become Liberia was established in 1816 by American slaves sent back to re-colonize the area in Africa," Peter said.

Ellen Sirleaf Johnson said that the Americans came to Africa Americanized.

Some had education and set up a government, but did not allow freedom or voting rights for indigenous people. That led to conflicts over the last nearly 200 years.

In 1980, there was a coup, and the first indigenous African leader came into power.

There were 20 years of civil war, which resulted in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Liberians and destroying the infrastructure.

Peter said there were horrific war crimes under the former president Charles Taylor.

"When we began the process of adopting Henry, Liberia was

recovering from the civil war and there was a heavy presence of United Nations peacekeepers," he said.

With the UN presence over the last 15 years and the leadership of Ellen Sirleaf Johnson, Liberia made progress from extreme poverty and rebuilt infrastructure—generating stations, roads and buildings.

Peter started Four Corners Markets to help struggling artists in Liberia market their crafts in Monrovia and abroad.

"The artists are poor. They make beautiful art, but cannot sell it and make a living," he said.

When he was first there, he connected with a woodcarving co-op, a basket weaver, a shoemaker and tie dyers, as well as Wilson.

Then he started studies to be a PA, and he could not afford to continue to help the other artists. He sold the items he had from them and sent the money to them.

He continues to work with Wilson.

"My goal is to bring him here for two months a year to paint, do exhibits and demonstrations, speak at schools and share his experiences as a child soldier," said Peter.

"He has never been out of Liberia and dreams of coming to America some day soon," Peter said.

"He had the fortitude to move beyond life as a child soldier and

Liberian artists need markets for their crafts and other creations

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Community rallies to stand in solidarity with Islamic Center of Spokane

When the Spokane Interfaith Council learned that anti-Muslim rallies were planned Oct. 10 at U.S. mosques and Islamic sites, they called for neighbors to stand with Spokane's Muslim community.

More than 100 people gathered on Saturday, Oct. 11 at the Spokane Islamic Center, 6411 E. 2nd Ave., to share food and stories, hear speakers, celebrate Spokane's diversity and meet people. No protesters showed up.

Skyler Oberst, the Interfaith Council president, said all Americans, not just the faith community, need to share the joys and sorrows of their neighbors who include Muslims, Sikhs, Jews, Republicans, Democrats and atheists.

"If we focus only on our own group, we are not building community, but risk building walls," he said.

Spokane County Sheriff Ozzie Knezovich spoke, saying that those protesting that day at mosques "have forgotten that America is based on principles we are not living up to."

He said the U.S. Constitution is designed to work for everyone,



Ayesha Malik

not just people in one category who hold the same beliefs. He is concerned about the deep divisions in America between right and left.

"America's principles are about creating a circle of inclusion of everyone's beliefs," Ozzie said, "We cannot live life in ignorance, fear, anger and hate and have America survive."

Ayesha Malik, who attends the Islamic Center, was born in Lahore, Pakistan, and came to



Admir Rasic with his wife Azra and daughter Najla.

Anchorage, Alaska, at one. When she was nine, she became a citizen, and her family threw her a typical American birthday party.

Two years later, after Sept. 11, 2001, she became afraid. She and her family began overcompensating to hide being Muslim. She bleached her hair. Her mother took off her hijab. Her father shaved his beard.

"No matter how I look, sound or walk, I am Muslim," she said. "Now I find hope realizing I'm not the only American Muslim with such a story."

Ayesha moved to Spokane in 2010 with her half-Irish, half-Filipino husband, who was in the Air Force. She began studying marketing and religious studies at Eastern Washington University in 2012, hoping in perhaps two decades to become the first woman imam.

Admir Rasic, a refugee from Bosnia who came to Spokane in 2000, said he wants his two-year-old daughter to grow up in a place that "will welcome her and celebrate her diversity, and where she can learn from others."

The gathering filled him with hope because much hate speech against Muslims in the United States goes unchallenged. He called for those gathered to speak up "when you hear bigotry and Islamophobia."

Admir, who attends the Spokane Islamic Center and works with the Interfaith Council, told of watching TV and seeing terrible things happening to people.

"I thought that someone needed to do something," he said.

Watching more violence reported the next evening, he realized he needed to do something.

"Now I have a platform. We need to stand with each other and make this a community of compassion," said Admir.

Former Spokane imam Yasser Shahin read a prayer from opening verses of the Koran for Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful, to guide people on the straight path.

In closing, Skyler invited people to learn about Islam and to challenge hate, noting that "it's hard to hate someone if they invite you in with a smile and a slice of cake."

Interfaith Council draws young adults into interfaith dialogue, action

Continued from page 1

Buddhist Sravasti Abbey near Newport.

"People interested in visiting a mosque, gurdwara, synagogue or temple usually don't want to go alone. Through Meet the Neighbors, they can go with friends to hear about Jewish, Sikh, Islamic, Baha'i and Buddhist faiths, and to make friends," Skyler said.

The Germanacos project includes creating a series of three-minute YouTube videos on how to visit local houses of worship, including virtual tours, brief histories and interviews with leaders.

Skyler believes that presenting accurate, respectful information on religious traditions can build interfaith understanding.

Growing up in Portland, Ore., he came to Cheney and earned two bachelors degrees in 2012 at Eastern Washington University (EWU) in anthropology and philosophy with an emphasis on religion and history.

Several years ago after witnessing a Muslim student falling victim to an act of hate, he said his "true calling emerged."

He changed his major and helped found the Compassionate Interfaith Society at EWU. He sought to address religious intolerance by establishing ongoing conversations that could change hearts and minds.

The Compassionate Interfaith Society drew about 20 participants from 15 faith groups for interfaith dialogue and service.

In church shopping, he found that truth is everywhere.

"God is not concerned with which pew we sit in, but with what we do with our lives," said Skyler, who joined the Episcopal Cathedral of St. John last spring.

While at EWU, he worked two years with the Office of Global Initiatives, developing international student events.

Through involvement with Interfaith Youth Core training at different universities, he spoke at the White House on interfaith work on college campuses, contributed to the Millennial Values



Skyler Oberst visits with Karen Armstrong at the recent Parliament of World Religions in Salt Lake City.

Photo courtesy of Skyler Oberst

Project at Georgetown University and spent several months as a research associate mapping the religious landscape of the Inland Northwest with the Pluralism Project at Harvard University.

After graduating, he decided to stay in Spokane while others went to Boston or Los Angeles to change the world.

"I decided I could start in my neighborhood to help make the world a better place," said Skyler, legislative assistant for City Councilwoman Karen Stratton.

Last spring, Episcopal Bishop James Waggoner, Jr., invited him to speak on interreligious training for clergy in June at the national Episcopal Convention in Salt Lake City.

Skyler said the Interfaith Council also is a voice of compassion when a faith is attacked.

• He spoke last year when the community rallied at the syna-

gogue after a swastika was painted on the building.

• In July, someone spray painted "Death to Islam" on the outside wall of the Bosnia Herzegovina Heritage Association in Spokane while people inside were saying Ramadan prayers. The Interfaith Council along with many local religious leaders spoke out.

• When Knox Presbyterian was robbed, the Interfaith Council raised \$1,500 to replace a computer and printer through a Go-Fund-Me appeal.

"It is important that our community leaders have accurate, respectful information about those they represent. We need to meet with elected officials and community leaders to remind them that the people they represent and advocate for are very diverse," he said.

He is helping the City Council recruit people from Spokane's

diverse faiths to pray at meetings.

In 2013, Skyler was an ambassador from the Inland Northwest to the Parliament of World Religions. From Oct. 15 to 19, he took a delegation of nearly 40 from Gonzaga University, Spokane FAVS (Faith and Values) and other area groups to the Parliament of World Religions in Salt Lake City.

The Parliament started in 1896 after Swami Vivakananda visited the Chicago World's Fair and proposed a gathering for the world's religions. World religious leaders, Nobel laureates and heads of state were among thousands who gathered to hear speakers, panels and lectures, and join in workshops on climate and environmental issues, war, violence and hate speech, and economic inequity.

"How do we help people of different religious paths to agree? We get people together, because we all call the Inland Northwest our home. We may not agree on a specific doctrine or creed, but our commitment to our community, our love for this area and a hope for a better tomorrow are enough

to start conversations," he said.

"The 2015 Parliament of World's Religions was an amazing gathering. I'm proud to say as the Inland Northwest's ambassador to the parliament, that we had the second largest regional delegation," said Skyler

"There were more than 50 religious traditions represented, and each brought with them a unique perspective, a willingness to learn and a resolve to make a better tomorrow," he said.

Karen Armstrong, British author and creator of the Charter for Compassion, told participants during the final banquet, "As we leave this parliament, we should be prepared for action."

Skyler said that Spokane's delegation heard this loud and clear.

"We are coming home after having learned from one another with a renewed commitment to make Spokane a better place through our own faiths and our shared humanity," he said.

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Spokane Riverkeeper partners to help community clean up river

Every day Spokane Riverkeeper Jerry White, Jr., works on ways to make the river cleaner so it's more swimmable, fishable, floatable and accessible.

He educates, advocates and involves people in programs to maintain vegetation on river banks, monitor pollution, reduce storm water and sewage overflows, remove toxics, and clean up garbage in and litter beside the river.

Fly fishing with his grandfather on the Willamette River in Oregon imbedded his connection with rivers. So did his fascination with the Spokane Falls during Expo '74.

Since July 2014, he has applied his skills as a teacher and communicator, to speak to the city, nonprofits, schools and congregations.

After graduating in 1990 with a degree in anthropology from Western Washington University and earning a master's in teaching at Whitworth in 1996, he taught 13 years at Medical Lake, St. George's and then Shaw Middle School.

He wove his environmental and fish conservation ethics into his teaching.

"I have a strong sense of place and I tried to help students be aware of their attachment to the places where they live," said Jerry, who grew up in Cheney.

In 2008, he stepped out of teaching to be environment advocate with Save Our Wild Salmon for three years. He returned to teach at Shaw until the Riverkeeper job opened.

Jerry and his family moved in 1999 to the edge of the Spokane River in the West Central part of Spokane, where he can fly fish.

Spokane Riverkeeper is a program of the Center for Justice and part of the Waterkeeper Alliance Movement, which started in the 1960s when Hudson River fishermen found that PCB (polychlorinated biphenyls) pollution, the superheated discharge water from power plants and power plant intake pipes were killing fish.

Today, Waterkeeper groups have spread to 200 areas globally. There are chapters for Coeur d'Alene Lake and Lake Pend Oreille Lake.

Jerry said its specialty is education, community collaboration, watchdog activities and public advocacy for water, using litigation under the Clean Water Act. The Hudson River Waterkeepers were the first to have a boat that patrols the river for pollution.

Spokane Riverkeeper has two boats, a blue raft named the Blue Heron and a canoe to patrol the



Jerry White seeks to educate and involve community, faith groups

river for pollution from State-line through downtown and Long Lake to the Columbia River.

"We look at issues all along the river, but Spokane is the focus," said Jerry, who has learned how complex the issues are.

They partner with the City of Spokane, the Department of Ecology, Spokane County and nonprofits. Every week several volunteers go out in the boat for litter cleanups. They also schedule land cleanups along the shore with community, faith and school groups.

Spokane Riverkeeper offered activities for Love Your River Month in September.

They are also involved in the tributaries of the Spokane River.

The temperature of Hangman Creek, a tributary, is warm enough to kill fish. The Clean Water Act now recognizes that Hangman Creek is impaired by turbidity, PH levels, temperature and bacteria.

There is shoreline damage from people destroying shrubs, usually unaware of the science and the function of vegetation along rivers, Jerry said.

"Rivers incorporate vegetation as protective clothing. Willows and hawthorn trees shade the river, provide habitat for caddis flies and stone flies, which are critical to the life cycle of fish and native trout, which are critical to the survival of blue herons, otters and kingfishers," he said describing the ecological interconnections.

Vegetation holds the soil, keeping the water from being muddy or eroding the banks in high water.

If vegetation is stripped, sun overheats the water, soil washes into the river so biological systems collapse, Jerry said.

"Palouse soil erodes into Hangman Creek as farmers cultivate to its edge, and tillage practices mean soil and chemicals wash into it and flow into the river," he said.

Hangman Creek has become agriculture's industrial corridor. Soil runoff has almost killed the river, he said. Phosphorous and

nitrites bind to the soil, depressing the river's oxygen and creating algae blooms in Long Lake and downriver. Native trout are disappearing, replaced by invasive small mouth bass and walleye.

"We encourage long-term efforts to improve and reform agricultural practices and land use, holding land owners accountable for cleanup of Hangman Creek and the Spokane River," Jerry said.

Since the 1960s, industrial dischargers have worked hard to clean up. Now Spokane Riverkeeper is addressing more diffuse pollution sources.

"We need to connect folks upstream and downstream," he said.

For the last 10 years, the City of Spokane has sought to clean up storm water, investing in an Integrated Clean Water Plan, so storm water and combined sewer overflows (CSO) go through pipes to the waste treatment plant and through rain gardens to be cleaned before returning to the river.

"Right now if more than a quarter inch of rain falls in 24 hours, it sends untreated sewer and storm water into the river," Jerry said.

Spokane Riverkeeper is supporting the city's efforts to use green technologies, increase the capacity of the waste treatment plant, install high-end filtration, increase the capacity of CSO tanks, and cut storm water.

In the future, storm water will increasingly flow through grassy swales or into storm gardens, where plants filter out chemicals and absorb water, he said. These measures will reduce storm water by 2017.

Another issue is "legacy PCBs" created by Monsanto and used in transformers and machines oils at places like Kaiser. They are also found in electrical equipment, garden hoses and light switch plates.

Like asbestos, PCBs were a "wonder product" at the time, Jerry said, but they cause reproductive disorders and cancer, and they have resisted breaking down.

Even though PCBs were banned in 1979, there are still legacy PCBs in salvage yards, transformer oil spills, and oil in the soil around the aluminum plant. Spokane Valley soil is porous, so PCBs can leak into the ground water.

The state and Spokane River Regional Toxics Task Force seek to identify locations of PCBs and intercept their pathways into the river and aquifer.

There are also inadvertent PCBs found in pigments and dyes. These can be found in things like yellow paints and paper. They escape in the process of cleaning and recycling.

"It's not about vilifying people or companies for discharging, but educating people to take responsibility to figure out how to stop discharges," he said. "I want my children to see discharges eliminated."

To clean up garbage and litter, Spokane Riverkeeper, the City of Spokane, the Lands Council and others recently used a barge.

Divers used a barge to clean the upper section of the river, picking up a wagon wheel, bicycles, shopping carts, traffic cones, building supplies, pipe remnants, old machines and more.

"More clean-up is needed," he said.

They also worked this summer in the Blue Heron to pick up garbage once a week.

To increase access to the river for drift boats, rafts, kayaks, tubes, paddle boards, canoes and more, Spokane Riverkeeper also partners with recreational interests.

"There's a fine line related to safety and pollution and using the Spokane River for recreation. Some people fear interacting with the river. Although there are PCBs and heavy metals in sediments, the water is safe to swim and play in," Jerry said.

"Water is a powerful natural force, so if people float on the river, they must follow local laws and wear personal flotation devices. Unless expertly trained

in whitewater, they must stay off the river when it is high and cold in the early spring and summer.

"People have been swept into trees and pinned under water by limbs, even if they wear life jackets. We lose several people each year. People must learn about healthy, safe, responsible river use," he said.

Jerry reaches out to youth. He talks at schools and universities, and also seeks to speak to congregations.

Emerging issues are low water levels from climate change, oil and coal trains running along and over the river, and stabilizing bridge structures.

Jerry, who attended Shalom Mennonite/United Church of Christ Fellowship for several years, then turned to Buddhist meditation and teachings of compassion, now finds a spiritual connection when he is on the river and in nature.

Eco-justice, he said, is a concern for faith communities: "The wealthy can buy clean fish from Alaska. Immigrants, low-income folks and native Americans often eat fish from the river tainted with PCBs and methyl mercury. The risk of eating chemically tainted fish falls on them."

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City and Spokane Tribe open access to lower falls, name new park

Both at the naming ceremony for the Gathering Place plaza on Sept. 21 and through her Council Connections cable TV program, Spokane City Councilwoman Candace Mumm uplifted the significance of the site that gives access to the Lower Spokane Falls between the City Hall and Avista buildings on Post St.

The plaza is on the Spokane Tribe ancestral lands, used for century upon century as the annual gathering place for them and for people from other tribes to trade, have contests and share the salmon harvest.

"This river, these falls, this gathering place does not belong to us. We belong to it," she said. "The spectacular falls have always been an attraction to our city and were the centerpiece of the 1974 World's Fair."

Candace recalled Chief Seattle's words in the U.S. Pavilion, reminding visitors of the Native American understanding: "The earth does not belong to man. Man belongs to earth."

Also at Expo '74, Chief Dan George of the coastal Salish urged people to help clean up the earth, conserve water and protect trees and fish.

Nearly a million salmon a year used to collect at Spokane Falls. Summer Chinook kings—50 to 80 pounds—drew about 10,000 Spokanes, Coeur d'Alenes, Kalispels, Colvilles, Palouse and Columbias to fishing camps.

Early white settlers saw the encampments 200 years ago, Candace said.

Aware of that, the City Council sought a process to choose a name that revered the river and its history.

The Plan Commission, which names public places, reached out to the Spokane Tribe and others, who submitted hundreds of ideas for the name. A Salish, Spokane tribal name was chosen: The Gathering Place "snt'el'emin'tn."

Mayor David Condon said that today the plaza is a place for the community to "congregate, communicate and celebrate."

City Council President Ben Stuckart said it "honors our city's lifeblood—our river. It is a place where everyone can reflect on and celebrate Spokane, tribal sovereignty and the return of salmon to the river."

Carol Evans, chair of the Spokane Tribal Business Council,



Carol Evans speaks at ceremony naming The Gathering Place.

Photo courtesy of the City of Spokane

said a name gives identity. She introduced herself in her language, naming her parents and grandparents, and saying where she is from.

"My people are inclusive and welcoming," she said. "When we do naming, we do it with a ceremony."

"The Gathering Place is on our historic homeland, where the Salmon Chief gathered all tribes. Some salmon runs were so thick we could walk across the river on salmon," she said.

"The salmon sustained my ancestors, who fished and hunted here. They gathered roots in the prairie and picked berries on Mt. Spokane," she said. "Now we live 30 miles from here."

"We did not lose connection with the land when we were relocated. We remain connected to it," Carol said, grateful that city leaders "see we are part of the community" and partner to clean up the river.

Scott Morris, CEO of Avista, appreciates being in a city where he goes to elected officials with a vision and they respond, "How can we do it?"

For decades, Avista has related to the Spokane Tribe on the river, cultural issues and economic partnerships, he said. Avista has owned the land that was transformed into a plaza as a gathering place and an access point to Huntington Park and views of the Lower Falls.

"For the 125th anniversary of

Avista, we are giving this gift back to Spokane to leave a legacy," Scott said.

Next to the plaza is an annex building Avista has given to Mobius Science Center for its new home.

"This was and is the homeland for the Spokane Tribe," Candace said in the Council Connections cable production, in which she interviewed several people.

"So much of their history, language, culture and traditions have been lost," she said, noting that being part Cherokee she identifies with that loss.

Her great-great grandparents came by covered wagon in the 1870s and started a wheat farm near Palouse. Her family moved to Spokane once it became populated. The Anderson family farm still exists in Palouse.

Candace earned a degree in broadcast journalism in 1982 at Pacific Lutheran University and a master's in business administration in 2010 at Gonzaga. She was managing editor and a radio and TV news anchor and reporter with KXLY and several other stations.

A member of Whitworth Presbyterian, she said her faith encourages her to honor other cultures and faiths.

"We can learn from Native American Spirituality," she said, noting that the gathering place was a cultural, business and spiritual center.

Candace, who had served on the city's Plan Commission, knew it

was important to have a name that revered the history, the partnership of the tribe and utility, and efforts to clean up the river.

In a Council Connections interview, Carol said, "We were salmon and river people, sustained by salmon and the river, and living off the land."

"When we moved to our reservation, we were surrounded by three bodies of water—Tshimikan Creek, the Spokane River and the Columbia River. Water, rivers and land are important."

"We do not see that this is mine and that is yours. We're all part of the land, environment and whole area. Our Creator gave it to us, and we are to take care of, respect and share," Carol explained.

"My ancestors welcomed others, because there was plenty to share. We never took more than we needed to sustain our lives," she added.

"If we went to homelands of other people, they welcomed us, as we welcomed them," Carol said. "The tradition was passed down for thousands of years from grandmothers to their children, until the wars came, and we relocated."

"For four generations, we have not had salmon. We did not know we were salmon people."

Grand Coulee Dam was built and stopped the salmon," Carol said.

The Spokane Tribe had to change their lifestyle.

Some ancestors were put in boarding schools where they could not speak their language or share their customs.

Now the tribe is working to restore the language, beginning with its 10 fluent speakers teaching Salish to small children in an immersion school.

Half of the Spokane Tribe's 2,800 members live on the reservation, and many live in Spokane.

Spokane Tribal Business Council vice chair David Brown Eagle, who drummed and sang at the naming ceremony, is learning Salish to teach his children, grandchildren and great grandchildren the history and value of the river, the place and the people.

Candace summed up what the City of Spokane is doing to clean up the river: reducing PCBs, phosphorous and storm water flowing into it, protecting and cleaning up the shoreline and bottom," she said.

Full interviews on Council Connection are at youtube.com/watch?v=zORYez4xqjs.

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Colville tribal leader continues pressure to address dams on Columbia

Continued from page 1

resources, the Columbia River Treaty renewal and fish passage up and down the Columbia.

"All are tied to taking care of the environment, which is really about taking care of ourselves and all people," said John.

UCUT member tribes—the Spokane, Coeur d'Alene, Kalispel, Kootenai and Colville—send technical experts to five committees to develop projects, set policies and create a larger voice.

The Colville Confederated Tribes is the largest in land and people—1.4 of UCUT tribes' 2.4 million acres. Its more than 9,900 people are from 12 tribes—the Moses Columbia, Entiat, Chelan, Methow, Nespelm, Sanpoil, Lakes, Colville-Kettle, Palouse and Chief Joseph Band of Nez Perce.

Like many members of those tribes, John has relatives from Yakima into Canada—in addition to relatives on his father's side in Boston. His wife is Cree First Nations from Kelowna, B.C.

Upper Columbia United Tribes and First Nations in Canada cooperate to strengthen their voice on fish passage and Columbia River Treaty renewal.

With new technologies, John is hopeful about fish passage along the Columbia River.

The Whooshh Salmon Cannon uses negative air pressure—like pneumatic tubes—to move salmon up a river. It has been tested in some areas with good results.

Grand Coulee Dam's height, however, makes it hard to use there. At other dams it can be a cheaper way to move fish than hauling them by truck, and outcomes for fish are better.

The Bonneville Power Authority (BPA) is also exploring ways to move juvenile fish down river by changing turbines, structures and passage systems to be safer for fish. On the Willamette and Deschutes Rivers, fish netting directs fish into a tube that shoots them downstream. The success rate is increasing and costs in overall fish passage systems have dropped considerably in the past few years, he said.

"No mitigation is implemented, however, for Chief Joseph or Grand Coulee dams, the largest on the Columbia," John said. "These dams need equal funding for it with smaller dams. We want the BPA to put mitigation where 60 percent power generation is, but there continues to be severe resistance to the idea of fish passage."

The tribes also call for the Federal Energy Regulation Commission (FERC) licensing requirements for mid-Columbia dams to change turbines to apply. While many mid-Columbia dams com-



John Sirois coordinates work of Upper Columbia United Tribes.

ply and invest millions of dollars in their fish passage systems, the Bureau of Reclamation and the Army Corps Operator say federal dams do not need to comply.

UCUT, which formed in 1982, connects science and culture. It exists, as their mission statement says, "for the benefit of all people."

When the Colville Tribes' new fish hatchery at Brewster meets its goals for brood stock and escape-ment, they have invited members of all tribes to share in a harvest as tribes did at Kettle Falls.

Recently John joined a Colville Tribes fishing crew to cull wild fish from hatchery fish, which have their back adipose fins cut off.

"The Colville Tribes use the latest science to preserve native fish and remove them from the harvest in order to spawn," he said.

John learned about fish wars, the formation of the Colville Confederated Reservation, Indian education and law, and other aspects of Washington Native American history in his bachelor's degree studies at Dartmouth College in New Hampshire.

After graduating in 1991, he returned to Omak for two years as Title 9 Native American advisor to help Indian children in local schools succeed.

The next two years he helped Dartmouth develop its Native American program, then he came back to Omak to work with the tribe's Planning Department.

In 2002, he completed a master's degree in public administration at the University of Washington, where classes covered how city, county, state and federal governments operate, but did not cover tribal governments, until he and another Native American student developed a class.

John worked briefly for the

Indigenous Language Institute in Santa Fe, NM, and then headed the Colville Cultural Preservation Division, responsible for the museum, history, archaeology, language, archives and cultural programs. He learned Salish.

Because boarding schools traumatized many in his mother's generation about speaking their language and following traditional ways, he had to ask elders in the previous generation to help teach his children's generation.

"Many people converted to Catholicism on the Colville Reservation despite the harsh treatment at boarding school," said John, who grew up learning Catholic ways, but prefers the traditional practices of his tribal people.

"When we look at the Bible, there are many things that are similar to our traditional teachings that we are to take care of one another, our foods and our families," he said.

"When we take roots or berries, we are to leave the ground as it was when we found it. We are responsible for first foods, which give up their lives for us. We are not to pollute or do harm," said John, who hopes adherents of all world religions live according to their teachings.

In the five years he worked with the tribe's Renewable Energy Program, he worked on a plan to collect and burn forest slash piles in a steam powered electrical generating facility. It was not implemented because of the economic downturn in 2008.

John served on the Tribal Council for two years, one year as chair. After the tribe won a \$193 million settlement for mismanagement because of BIA actions on the tribal lands, he helped put half of it in a trust to improve

forest health, clear culverts and maintain streams.

John focused most of his two-year term on the Columbia River Treaty renewal process. The first treaty between the U.S. and Canada, he said, was designed to produce cheap hydropower, create post-Depression jobs and control flooding downriver near Portland.

"Our traditional lands are flooded every year," he said. "We are asking the Corps of Engineers to consider tribal lands that need protection from flooding and ensuring there is water for salmon."

John finds "experts" often offer complex "solutions," when better solutions may be simple. To avoid flooding damage, he said people should not build in flood zones.

"Our people knew floods came every year, so we moved our teepees out of the way," he said. "I do not want to sound flippant about flood control efforts, but we

need to live in connection with our environment, not artificially disconnected."

John said elders warn that complicated plans are often like coyote "entering our minds and tricking us to think we are smarter than we are and getting us in trouble. We need to listen less to our inner coyote and focus on the ways to be in balance and take care of one another."

For information, call 209-2414 or email john@ucut-nsn.org.

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MY BROTHER'S KEEPER

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New Sandpoint church shares faith through conversation, communion

By Kaye Hult

The Rev. Bob Evans' passion is to teach the way Jesus did, in conversation and communion—not necessarily from the pulpit.

In Sandpoint, he started the Emerge 'N See United Church of Christ (UCC) with help from Susan, his wife of 26 years. The church was received into standing with the Pacific Northwest Conference of the UCC at its Annual Meeting in April.

The church supports the outreach of individual members. Many were doing social work before they began attending the church.

Some work with Habitat for Humanity. Others help those needing assistance with rent. Some write for a local paper called, "The Reader."

"We support each other in what we're doing," Bob said. "We're small, but salt in the community."

As the church evolves, he expects it may become more liturgical, but a seminar remains central to their gathering.

At 9:30 a.m., Sundays, Emerge 'N See UCC meets at the Heartwood Center at 615 Oak Street in Sandpoint.

At 9 a.m., some gather in the kitchen, set up coffee and snacks, and catch up with each other. Others sit in silence in a circle in the worship room.

At 9:30, the group gathers in the circle. Bob opens the service by introducing the day's topic. For example, one Sunday in July, he played his guitar, accompanying his wife Susan as she sang a children's song to help the group grapple with meanings of "sacred" and "spirit," and how they relate to each other.

After a gathering prayer, the congregation discusses the topic for the rest of the hour. When he refers to biblical stories, he does not quote chapter and verse, but invites people to delve into the Bible to find the stories themselves.

After the service, worshipers



Bob Evans, left, performs with his band at Pacific Northwest United Church of Christ Annual Meeting.

mingle for a while, help clean up and leave for whatever else their day holds.

Bob feels compelled to share the Christian message through conversations, which he said is the way the Gospels depict Jesus teaching.

Born in Bonners Ferry, he grew up in Sandpoint. His spiritual journey began early with asking questions like "Who is God?"

His mother recited the prayer, "Now I lay me down to sleep," and he asked, "What does THAT mean?" She said it was about resting in a safe place.

"That prayer is a perfect introduction to the Mystery ... of Being, of God. I don't want to define it for anyone else," Bob said.

Music plays a major role in his life.

Since he began playing violin in the fourth grade, he always wanted to play the guitar. Eventually, he learned by watching musicians who played in bars.

"I began playing with them when I was 14," he said. "I had a chance to grow into who I was as a musician. It doesn't happen that way today. It's too commer-

cial now."

Bob took an interlude to serve in the Marines during the Vietnam era, but he did not go overseas.

"It opened my eyes to the political system," he said. "I try to see the yin and yang. I hope we are waking up to lessons we learned there and in Iraq."

Back from military service, Bob went as a musician from Sandpoint to Portland to Nashville in two years.

"Often I was in the right place at the right time. I played bass with actress and country music singer Barbara Mandrell," said Bob, who played with many others in the music business.

"It was the time in my life when I experienced the deepest and steepest spiritual growth, seeing life from both sides of the stage," he said. "I had the chance to be a star, but I had a sense that would be dangerous for me."

Bob did commercial fishing and logging during his teen years. When he left the music business, he went to Alaska to fish with his father and stayed for 17 years.

Not agreeing with ideas of conservative churches he encountered, and not knowing about progressive churches, he considered himself Buddhist.

In Wrangell, Alaska, however, he began attending a Presbyterian (USA) church, where the pastor addressed his questions. When he didn't have an answer, he would say so. He suggested Bob take a lay pastor's course in Sitka. The next pastor guided him to Bangor Theological Seminary in Maine, with Presbyterian sponsorship.

After seminary, Bob returned to Alaska to the Presbyterian church, "but my heart wasn't there," he said.

He returned to Sandpoint and joined the Newport United Church of Christ. The then UCC Conference Minister arranged for him to preach at the UCC church in Wallace and American Baptist church in Osborn. He was ordained in the United Church of Christ in 2008 and called to serve there.

Much as he loved these churches in the Silver Valley, he wanted to return to Sandpoint, where his parents lived.

He advertised a seminar on the Kingdom of God at the Gardena Center, a spiritual center in Sandpoint.

That was the beginning of Emerge 'N See UCC.

Bob reflected on his ministry.

"I teach from the depth of the myth that people are hungry for," he continued. "That's what the church is supposed to do."

He said he started the congregation intentionally, but casually, believing the church should be a reference point for people's spiritual journey. From there, they reach out into the community.

For information, call (208) 920-3077, email emergensee_ucc@yahoo.com or visit www.emergensee-ucc.org.

Warriors Heart to Art show set

There will be a Warriors Heart to Art display of 30 drawings, paintings, poems and sculptures by veterans from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., Sunday Nov. 1, at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 4340 W. Ft. Wright Dr.

The display will present art by a group of veterans who spent four

days, Oct. 28 to Nov. 1, in retreat at Immaculate Heart Retreat Center in Spokane.

The intensive retreat focuses on using creative arts to help veterans remember, understand and reshape their war trauma.

For information, visit Warrior-HeartToArt.org.

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Civil rights speaker James Meredith offers reminder to persist

James Meredith, 82, came to North Idaho in October to speak out about racism and hate, and how today's young people have the chance and the ability to make racism and hate something of the past.

As part of the day-long program called "Walk the Talk: James Meredith," he spent time at the Human Rights Education Institute (HREI) at a press conference, then speaking with students at a workshop.

In the evening, he participated in a panel discussion at North Idaho College with two other Mississippians, Robert Lee Long, a reporter for the DeSoto Times Tribune and Brian Hicks, the director of the DeSoto County Museum. Two panelists from North Idaho College (NIC) were Al Williams, athletics director, and Phil Hagen, a sophomore studying electrical engineering

and active in working for human rights on campus.

The audience watched a video presentation about James when he helped integrate the University of Mississippi (Ole Miss) in 1962 and when he was shot as he led the March Against Fear to encourage black people to vote in 1966.

The panelists attested to the importance in their lives of what he had done. His bold insistence on the equal treatment of African Americans then and since has had a major influence on many lives.

James focused on the need of young people, particularly African Americans, to learn to live out of the right and the good.

He believes there is "a moral character breakdown, because we have not been teaching our young people good and right,

the Ten Commandments and the Golden Rule."

Even now, 40 years later, he sees that the two major issues in our country are in the divisions between rich and poor, and in the black/white racial divide.

James said that leaders and communities are used to maintaining the status quo.

"Every study in the last two years says there is more segregation now than 40 years ago," he said.

James wants every child, particularly from birth to five years old, to be taught right from wrong. He encouraged the college students from North Idaho to call the college students from Mississippi with that message.

"I may be out of my mind," he said, but if they get a call from a 19-year-old, they'll

think about it, and if you think about anything long enough, you'll do something."

After the panel discussion, James signed copies of his book, *A Mission from God*, as well as other books he had brought along to sell.

On Saturday, he spoke at the University of Idaho in Moscow in a program called "Finding the Center." He went from there, on Sunday, to Lewis-Clark State College in Lewiston.

His presence in our region is a powerful reminder of our continual need, as communities of faith, to work for racial and economic justice. The work is not done. We must persist as James has persisted, each doing our part right here where we are.

Kaye Hult
North Idaho editor

Mass violence exacerbated by media, mental health, family breakdown

The mass violence we have been experiencing in the country these past few years wears on us all. "Oh my God, not again." "What do we do?" "What does this mean?"

Where do we start? We can start with listening, accepting and paying attention to signals. Maybe there is something about the need to be in a community, family or group that cares.

The conversation frequently begins with gun control and the constitutional right to bear arms. Since the constitution was signed, we have a national army, a national guard, state police, county police, city police, FBI and private security firms.

We need a serious discussion regarding guns.

Besides use to kill animals for food or protect family from wild animals or enemies, some want guns to protect themselves and their families from potential violence.

Guns express power that began with fists, then clubs, knives, swords and spears.

The basic issue behind the desire for guns today is fear—fear of the unknown; fear

of people who are different, who we don't know or who don't believe like us; or fear of governmental intrusion on personal rights.

Much has changed in our culture and world. We are not in control. Guns make some think they are in control and safer, yet they only escalate fear and violence.

From a Christian perspective, guns are the antithesis of how Jesus spoke and lived.

However, guns are not the main issue we face when we consider the violence in Roseburg, Ore., Ferguson, Mo., Sandy Hook, Conn., Charleston, S.C., or Seattle.

For decades, I have been concerned about glorified violence that has grown in society:

- Consider the volume of apocalyptic, violent movies filled with mass killings and "end of the world" fear.

- Consider the television shows based on killing or violent sex crimes.

- Consider graphic detail of video games based on killing opponents before they kill you. If you are killed, you hit the reset button and get another life. Kill or be killed.

There is fascination about this kind of

violence. Some like to be scared or pushed outside their normal lives to experience the edge, the psychotic.

There is a line between reality and fantasy we are taught growing up. For some today, that line can easily disappear. People with social or emotional problems may do what they live in the fantasy world.

In addition, there are challenges in homes with single parents trying to raise teens or both parents working long hours. Drug addictions or alcohol abuse can lead to spousal or child abuse, incest or rape. Some escape into gangs, drugs or alternative life styles to survive. Youth try to figure out their sexual identity in a family that is not open to honest conversation.

Where are conversations around the dinner table? Going to church together? Visiting a museum or park together? Is reality lived in fantasy worlds or texting on cell phones?

Added to this is media that focuses on ratings, thinking they need to spend 24/7 covering violence in detail to make more

money. It adds to copycat behavior.

In Christian faith, we talk about sacraments of baptism and communion/Eucharist being "outward and visible signs of inward and spiritual grace."

What we experience today is an outward and visible sign of inward and spiritual brokenness, pain and suffering.

The violence is an outward sign of desperate young adults experiencing brokenness, not being heard or seen. It may be immaturity, rejection, racism, bullying, hormones, depression or mental health issues.

Each case differs but involves making a permanent decision (homicide/suicide) for what may be a temporary conflict, despite other options.

The two great commandments are to love God and love your neighbor as yourself.

Some youth have a hard time loving themselves, so it is hard for them to love others. To love ourselves, we first have to experience unconditional love.

The Rev. David Helseth
Yakima - Contributing editor

Faith communities have moral obligation to advocate for migrants

Migration has been part of human history from the beginning of human life. Scholars and historians have identified the time after World War II as the age of migration. It was when the largest population was on the move from one place to another.

In the biblical story of Abraham in Genesis 12, we read that he was an immigrant in the land of Canaan. Migration happens for many reasons. One is that early people were primarily explorers, like many who came to America. Second, people moved into this land looking for opportunities. Waves of migration continue.

Some came here, not of their own free will, but because of political or economic circumstances or because they were forced into slavery. Slaves gained freedom through the Emancipation Proclamation. Because they no longer had ties to their former homelands, this became their home.

News reports cover how the people in

Syria and other parts of the Middle East are fleeing from their homelands and becoming refugees in Europe and elsewhere because of war and genocide.

Every day people cross the U.S. border from Mexico and other parts of South and Central America looking for opportunities for work or for a non-violent place to live.

Migration and immigration continue to happen.

We all have a moral obligation, because many face different difficult experiences. Some are welcomed. Others are rejected. Some died trying to cross the border. The government is trying to reinforce the border patrol and build higher fences to keep people out.

While we appear to be protecting people inside the fence, a wall or fence also can keep people from going out and learning more about other people and cultures.

Some immigrants or refugees are able

to find a home, work and education, while others discover that there is little difference in the level of violence, given gangs, guns and crime, between the place they were and this new place. Others realize, perhaps too late, that they should not have left.

Migrating populations often face political, social or economic strife in their new locations, such as in the struggle for resources—jobs, land ownership, food and clean water.

In response, there are a growing number of aggressive legal attempts to limit immigrants' movement and rights by laws to restrict every aspect of their lives—housing, education, employment and opportunities. There are also efforts to deny them due process under the law, which leads to illegal deportation, abusive detention and hate crimes.

Many restrictions lead to marginalization and dehumanization, so immigrants often

face racial discrimination and human rights violations both from citizens and from other immigrants who arrived before them.

The best advice comes from words given to the Israelites in the Bible: "You shall not oppress the sojourner. You know the heart of a sojourner, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt." (Exodus 23:9)

Religious and humanitarian organizations are advocating for Americans to accept more refugees and immigrants.

Religious communities, churches, organizations, groups and individuals who stand up for immigrants from the local to national to international levels, help reveal the realities migrants are facing. Then they can move to advocate on their behalf and to call for the protection of all migrating people, knowing we were all once migrants in this land.

Ikani Fakasiieiki
Contributing editor

Reflections on
Parliament of World
Religions

Sounding Board

Letters to the Editor

Sonorous chants, colorful attire from around the world, prayers in many languages and styles punctuated the massive and diverse gathering of people of faith at the Parliament of World Religions Oct. 14 to 19 in Salt Lake City.

For me, the common denominators were calls to compassion, hope and service, all generated from the love of God—in whatever way we know and worship God.

The hardest part was selecting from the hundreds of sessions that seemed a bit like an "all you can eat buffet" of learning.

I was enriched by the Plenary on Women, a thoughtful and energetic group of wise

women that blew the roof off.

I welcomed opportunities to step out of the comfortable and familiar patterns of my own faith tradition.

Sometimes, as in a lunchtime presentation on confronting terrorism, tensions surfaced, but that is a part of dialogue.

A favorite experience was sitting on the floor of a giant hall with a multitude of people enjoying the Langar, a daily lunchtime feast that was a gift from the Sikh community.

My "take-home" from this incredible Parliament was a sense of hope, gratitude and commitment, generated by sharing

prayerful space and time with this interfaith community.

The Rev. Kristi Philip
Retired Canon – Episcopal Diocese

I am always amazed that you can put these articles together so well and under so much pressure and in such a short time. The article on the Conscious Connections Foundation's team going to Nepal to evaluate the effectiveness of funds sent and future needs is a great article and so accurate. The Fig Tree is the ONLY newspaper who has ever gotten it right. Cameron Conner and Grant Gallaher are

in Nepal, their journey is underway and they are blogging. Thanks for all you do.

Anyway, I can't thank you enough for your integrity and perseverance in the path of justice and love. You rock my world!

Denise Attwood
Ganesh Himal Trading

Thanks for sharing The Fig Tree with me by email. Good luck with your important ministry. Best wishes from Geneva,

Marianne Ejdersten
World Council of Churches
Director of Communication

GU campaign raises funds for scholarships and more

Gonzaga University recently announced a \$250 million campaign with five priority areas, primarily to increase scholarship support to students.

Other priorities relate to GU's commitment to develop leaders to shape communities for the common good through academic innovation, global engagement and community-building.

Supporters have already contributed \$183 million, leaving \$67 million to reach the goal.

At the campaign's launch,

GU President Thayne McCulloh announced a \$55 million gift from the late Myrtle Woldson, a Spokane resident and lifelong community philanthropist.

Her gift will build the Myrtle Woldson Performing Arts Center at Gonzaga University and establish a scholarship fund, the largest for high-need students in GU history.

The gift is the second-largest from an individual to a college or university in Washington state history, according to data from the

Chronicle of Philanthropy.

Thane expressed gratitude for the gifts of more than 23,000 contributors who have already given to the campaign, which will also foster interdisciplinary programs, experiential learning, student research; modernize science labs, libraries, athletic facilities and creative spaces; build sustainable communities across the globe and encourage international engagement.

For information, call 313-6095 or visit www.gonzagawill.com.

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Calendar of Events

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| <p>Oct 30 • Media Literacy Salon, "The Media Circus Covering Campaigns: Is There Room for Democracy?" facilitators Jim McPherson and Mary Stamp of the Northwest Alliance for Responsible Media, Community Building, 35 W. Main, 5:30 p.m.,</p> <p>Nov 1 • "Soaring into New Tomorrows," Lutheran Community Services Northwest Fundraising Luncheon, 1:30 to 3 p.m. luncheon and program, Mukogawa Ft. Wright Commons, 4000 W. Randolph Rd., 343-5020, cmckee@lcsnw.org</p> <p>Nov 4, 11, 18 • iPad workshops for people with memory loss, Episcopal Cathedral of St. John, 127 E. 12th Ave., 833-4277, dodds.debby@gmail.com</p> <p>Nov 4 • Support Smart Justice at Spokane Regional Law & Justice Council, Spokane Regional Health District, 1101 W. College Ave., noon to 1:30 p.m.</p> <p>• Cynthia Chandler, Golden State University, "Unstuck: Resisting Slavery, Eugenics and the Prison Industrial Complex," CUE 203, Washington State University, Pullman, 5:30 p.m.</p> <p>Nov 5 • The Fig Tree Benefit and Board Meetings, Emmanuel Family Life Center, 631 S. Richard Allen Ct., noon, benefit, 1 p.m. board, 535-4112</p> <p>Nov 5, 19 • Peace and Justice Action Committee, Community Building, 35 W. Main, 5:30 p.m.</p> <p>Nov 6 • Jean-Paul Wiest, research director for the Beijing Center, University of International Business and Economics, Beijing, "The Making of an Indigenous Church, as Told by Chinese Christians," Weyerhaeuser Hall, Whitworth University, 300 W. Hawthorne, 5:30 p.m., 777-4368</p> <p>Nov 6-7 • Jubilee International Marketplace, First Presbyterian Church, 318 S. Cedar, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, jubilee page at spokaneipc.org</p> <p>Nov 7 • NAACP Spokane Freedom Fund Banquet, Hilary Shelton, Northern Quest Casino, Airway Heights, 7 p.m., 209-2425 ext. 1141, spokanenaacp@gmail.com</p> <p>• "Full of Grace," The Garland Theater, 4:30 p.m., info@joannahyatt.com</p> <p>Nov 8 • Japanese Food Festival, Spokane Buddhist Temple, 927 S. Perry, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., 534-7954, www.SpokaneBuddhistTemple.org</p> <p>Nov 9 • Flannery Lecture, "Evolution and the Power of Love: Towards a Holistic Consciousness," Sr. Ilia Delio, OSF, Villanova University, Cataldo Hall, Gonzaga, 313-6782, www.gonzaga.edu/religious-studies</p> <p>Nov 10-Jan. 29 • "John Holmgren Selected Works," Lied Center for the Visual Arts, Whitworth, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday-Friday; 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Saturdays. Reception and talk Nov 10, 5 to 7 p.m., 777-3258</p> <p>Nov 10 • Native American Heritage Month lecture, Randy Woodley, Keetoowah Cherokee teacher, poet, activist, former pastor, missiologist and historian, Weyerhaeuser Hall, Whitworth, 777-4215</p> <p>Nov 11 • Police Accountability Coalition, Community Building, 35 W. Main, 5:30 p.m.</p> <p>• Veterans for Peace, Community Building, 35 W. Main, 6:45 p.m., 838-7870</p> <p>Nov 12 • "Knit Together in Prayer," Sandy Krause and Sr. Christiana Marie, SMMC, Knitting/Crochet Retreat, Immaculate Heart Retreat Center, 6910 S. Ben Burr Rd., 6 p.m. Tuesday to 1 p.m. Thursday, skrause@ihrc.net. Hats and mittens will be donated to St. Margaret's Shelter.</p> | <p>• "The Eucharist and Justice: Practicing Jesus' Radical Table Manners," Patrick McCormick, The Franciscan Place, 1016 N. Superior, 7 p.m., 483-6493, sifconline.org</p> <p>• Palestine-Israel Human Rights Committee, Liberty Park United Methodist, 11th & Helena, 6 p.m., 838-7870</p> <p>Nov 13 • Farm-A-Palouse-A, Spokane County Conservation District, Spokane Convention Center, www.SCCD.org</p> <p>Nov 13-15 • Tilth Conference, Spokane Convention Center, www.tilthproducers.org</p> <p>• "Women's Cancer Survivor Retreat," Franciscan Place, 1016 N. Superior, 483-6493, sifconline.org</p> <p>Nov 14-15 • Fall Folk Fest, The Lair, Spokane Community College, 1810 N. Greene, 747-2640, spokanefolklore.org</p> <p>Nov 15-21 • Poverty Awareness Week, Center for Civic Engagement, 335-7708, emciraith@wsu.edu</p> <p>Nov 18 • Soul Collage® as Spiritual Practice, Heather Berndt, Coffee and Contemplation, IHRC, 6910 S. Ben Burr Rd, 9 to 11 a.m., 448-1224, ihrc.net</p> <p>Nov 19 • Interfaith Council's Meet the Neighbors Series, Temple Beth Shalom, 1322 E. 30th Ave., 6 p.m., 360-989-8217, r.s.oberst@gmail.com</p> <p>• "Why Do the Arts and Faith Matter to Each Other?" Jeremy Begbie, research professor in theology at Duke Divinity School, Staley Lecture, Weyerhaeuser Hall, Whitworth, 7 p.m. 777-3280</p> <p>Nov 20 • International Festival 2015, Hixson Union Building, Whitworth University 5:15 p.m. dinner, 6:30 p.m. entertainment</p> <p>Nov 21 • Power of 5 Fundraiser, Nyne Bar and Bistro, 232 E. Sprague, 2 to 5 p.m., 448-6561</p> <p>Nov 22 • "The Vatican Museums," ultra HD film of the Vatican Museums and Sistine Chapel, The Bing Crosby Theater, 901 W. Sprague Ave., 10:30 a.m., 1 p.m., TicketsWest, 227-7404</p> <p>Nov 23 • Spokane NAACP meeting, 35 W. Main., 7 p.m.</p> <p>Nov 25 • Death Penalty Abolition Committee, Community Building, 35 W. Main, 5:30 p.m., 838-7870</p> <p>Nov 27-29 • Festival of Fair Trade, 35 W. Main near Kizuri, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., 464-7677, festivaloffairtrade.com</p> <p>Nov 26 • Thanksgiving Service, Spokane Ministers Fellowship, Unspeakable Joy Christian Center, 12215 W. 13th, Airway Heights, rwilburn@whitworth.edu</p> <p>Nov 29 • "Global Climate Rally Spokane," Riverfront Park near the Rotary Fountain, 1 p.m., 981-2307, jleecitizen@gmail.com</p> <p>Dec 1 • Thomas Merton's Advent Series, The Franciscan Place, 1016 N. Superior, sifconline.org</p> <p>Dec 2 • Silent Day of Prayer, the Most Rev. Thomas Daly, IHRC, 6910 S. Ben Burr Rd., 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., 448-1224, ihrc.net</p> <p>Dec 4-6 • "Christ in the Cradle-Manger of Our Hearts, Advent Weekend Retreat, Fr. Curtis Seidel, IHRC, 6910 S. Ben Burr Rd, 448-1224, ihrc.net</p> <p>Dec 3 to 6 • "Nutcracker," Spokane Symphony, The Fox Theater, 624-1200, spokanesymphony.org</p> <p>Dec 5 • "The Gifts of Advent: A Retreat Day," The Franciscan Place, 1016 N. Superior, sifconline.org</p> <p>Dec 6 • South Hill Christmas Tree Lighting, Manito United Methodist, 3320 S. Grand, 6:30 p.m., 747-4755</p> |
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Filipino school fosters understanding among Christian, Muslim students

Eufemia Tobias Munn, retired principal of Blair Elementary School at Fairchild, generated funds to build classrooms and develop programs at a small private school in the Philippines by teaching four years in Qingdao, China, and two years in Chile. Now she is using proceeds from two books related to her experiences.

Shalom Science Institute, a nonprofit Christian school, was founded 20 years ago in her hometown of Balabagan in the Lanao del Sur area of Muslim dominated island of Mindanao, 600 miles south of Manila. Balabagan is 40 percent Christian and 60 percent Filipino Muslims.

Her grandparents moved to the Muslim area in the 1930s, responding to a request for Christians to show Muslims how to farm.

"The school, which offers quality education from kindergarten to high school, serves as a bridge between Christians and Muslims across cultural and religious barriers. The program promotes understanding, peace and harmony," Eufemia said in a recent interview.

"Christians and Muslims play and study together. We can't tell which is which. School begins with prayer. Muslims hold their hands up and out, and Christians put their palms together," she said.

When a group of Christian clergy called on the mayor to engage in a Christian-Muslim dialogue, he said "Dialogue is good, but it is all words. What we want Christians to do for us is show us a better way to improve our lives, like what Shalom School is doing in offering quality education to our children. That is why many Muslim students are enrolled."

"We do not teach religion but teach core values as part of edu-



Eufemia Munn supports a school in the Philippines.

cation. Classes have fewer than 30 students, compared to 50 to 70 in public schools," Eufemia said.

The Philippines requires the addition of 11th and 12th grades to the existing 10 years of school. Shalom is working to comply to this mandate by June 2016. It means raising funds for more classrooms, computer labs, computers and personnel.

Her next dream is to help build a health clinic.

Eufemia, a member of Whitworth Community Presbyterian Church since 1969, is directing all proceeds of her memoir, *Bridging the Gap between Christians and Muslims*, to raise funds for these projects. The book tells her story as a child at the start of World War II, through to her commitment to build bridges between these faiths.

With World War II veteran

Lester Ames, she co-authored his memoir, *Happiness Is Life*. They collaborated on this project based on Eufemia as a child survivor of the war and Lester as a U.S. liberator of the Philippines.

Eufemia was four in 1941 when the Japanese occupation began. She survived leeches in the jungle, where her family moved to hide and stay away from Japanese and Muslim raiders.

Eventually they moved to a sultanate where the sultan protected them from Muslim raiders. They later moved on to a coconut plantation of a Spanish family who had fled the Japanese.

There, her grandparents cared for the sick and delivered babies during the occupation. There, they witnessed bombing of the Japanese garrison across the bay when American liberation forces came.

After the war, they returned to their homestead. Because the nearest school was nearly seven miles away, in 1948 her family donated about five acres to build a public school for up to the fifth grade. It continues today.

Eufemia studied business and accounting at Silliman University, founded in 1901 by Presbyterian missionaries at Dumaquete City, Negros Oriental, Philippines. After graduating in 1960, she was assistant dean of women until 1966, when she married Merton Munn, who was vice president of academic affairs.

He was called back to New York, and Eufemia joined him as his secretary on an Appraisal of the Protestant Effort in Christian Higher Education in 11 countries. It was a project of the United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia. She helped write reports on 84 colleges and universities.

From 1941 to 1953, Merton had served as dean at Whitworth College and from 1954 to 1957 was a dean at Carroll College in Waukesha, Wis., before the Presbyterian Church USA's Board of Foreign Missions sent him to Silliman University, where he met Eufemia.

Merton returned to Whitworth in 1969 to head the education department until he retired in 1974. Eufemia earned a teaching certificate, a master's degree in education and principal's certificate at Whitworth. She started teaching at Lakeland Village, a residential community for 1,000 developmentally disabled children and adults in Medical Lake.

In 1974, Merton retired from Whitworth and was appointed president of Sheldon Jackson College in Sitka, Alaska. After three years, he retired, and they returned to Spokane.

When Medical Lake School District hired Eufemia, they moved to Silver Lake. She taught special education, and later was special education coordinator at Lakeland Village until February 1987, when she became principal of Blair Elementary School on Fairchild Air Force Base.

In 1993, she retired early. Merton died two years later. As a 57-year-old widow, she decided to go back to the Philippines, seeking what Christ wanted her to do.

She decided to help build and develop the Shalom Science Institute, founded a few years earlier in a two-room, thatched-roof, cement floor former Sunday school building. There were not enough funds for classrooms or the teacher's salary from parents' donations.

She started the school library with books donated by Medical Lake School District and other local sources. It's the only school library in a community with more than 5,000 school-age children.

Eufemia, who is now a volunteer president at Shalom Science Institute, is planning a Peace Concert in December in Balabagan.

Because of her travels, Eufemia can be contacted through her literary agent, Cora Horder of Spokane. Eufemia is available to speak about her mission.

For information, call 468-5136 or email chorder51@yahoo.com.

EMO event explores Gospel and Conquest

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon presents the 2015 Collins Lecture on "The Gospel of Conquest: Native Americans, Christianity and the Doctrine of Discovery," Thursday, Nov. 19 at Trinity Episcopal Cathedral, 147 NW 19th Ave. in Portland.

This year's event offers a day-long seminar from 10 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. of experiential learning about the 15th century basis for European claims to the Americas, led by three visionary Native American scholar-activists: legal expert Robert Miller, theologian George "Tink" Tinker, and cultural historian Kim Recalma-Clutesi.

They will challenge participants to reflect on the question of Christian responsibility for the displacement of indigenous peoples.

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