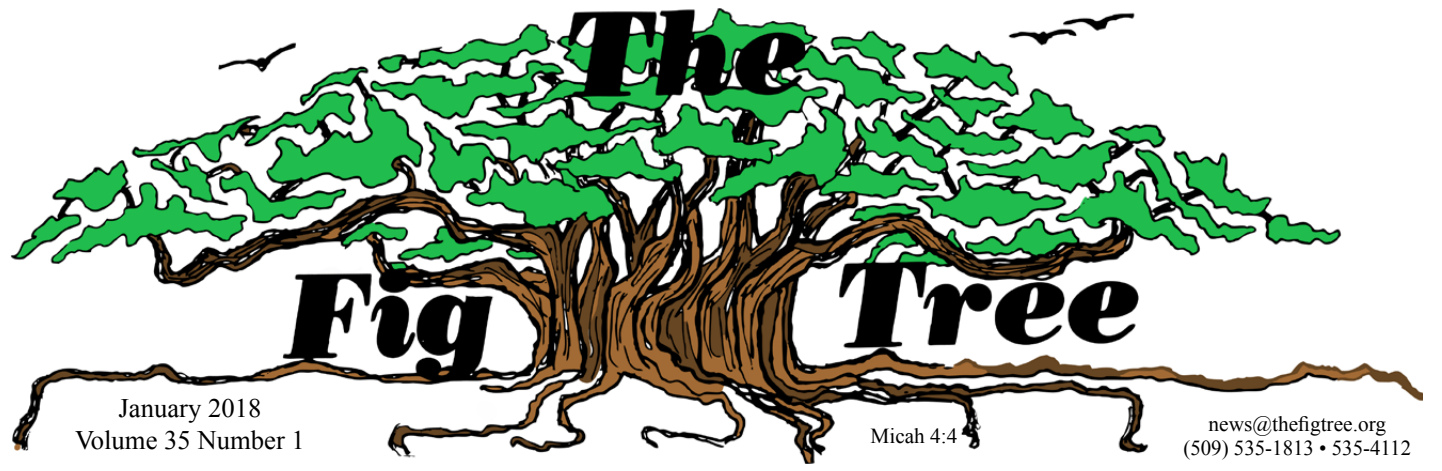


35TH YEAR OF PUBLICATION

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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

Music has powerful influence on lives

By Mary Stamp

Kay Heberling, SNJM, started taking music lessons from the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary (SNJM) because of their reputation for quality education in music.

Now she carries on the tradition started in 1888 when five Holy Names sisters came from Portland, Ore., to open an elementary school and soon began teaching piano.

Sr. Kay said the Holy Names sisters have long recognized the power of music and the arts in people's lives, so music has had a prominent role in their missions of education and justice.

The reach of the sisters' music education has continued through many generations to today in thousands of musicians, music teachers, performers, artists and patrons locally to globally.

Today's Holy Names Music Center, established in 1982, continues the music department that was part of Fort Wright College of the Holy Names. The college was strong in education, science, art and languages. Holy Names College had operated on N. Superior from 1938 to 1960, following Holy Names Normal School from 1907 to 1938.

Sr. Kay is the last Holy Names



Holy Names Sister Kay Heberling has brought music into the lives of many people.

sister teaching piano in Spokane. She teaches at Holy Names Music Center and at Trinity School.

She knows the impact of teaching piano goes beyond music, because most people she has taught did not become professional musicians, but went into many other professions. The music and the relationships she has established with her students have helped them understand life, take time to be quiet, and put their minds, hearts, souls and emotions into a different frame.

The relationships with her teachers were also important to Sr. Kay as she grew up in Spokane and attended Holy Names Academy. When she was a child, she often stayed with her grandmother, who had a piano. At 5 p.m., when her grandmother began to cook, she would play piano.

When she began studying piano, the sisters who taught her listened to struggles she couldn't talk about elsewhere. She carries on their example of building relationships of trust and caring with students, who share about other aspects of their lives.

"Now I treasure my time with students—from ages five to adulthood—working on music and

Continued on page 4

NAACP Spokane's president applies his firefighting skills to seeking justice

As president of the NAACP Spokane since May, Kurtis Robinson has found that his work as a firefighter, fighting wildland fires for Spokane and now for Spokane County Fire District 10, has similarities to fighting "fires" of oppression to bring social justice.

He also likened it to his experience of "fighting fires" of abuse, addiction, incarceration, violence and ostracism that had impact on his early life.

"I know from fighting wildland fires in overwhelming and seemingly impossible situations what we need to do to deal with person-

al, spiritual, social and political wildfires that seem overwhelming and impossible," he said.

"When fire comes at us, firefighters get out of the way, hook around and catch the tail to put it out, moving from the back and sides into the head of the fire," Kurtis said. "Or we back burn up to the fire to cut off the fuel."

"There is value in the struggle and chaos, and out of the ashes, there is opportunity for new growth, life that would not grow if it wasn't for the fire," Kurtis observed.

"Injustice is like a fire with

multiple heads. Rather than dealing with it head-on from the front where there is momentum, we need to break it from the back or burn towards it to slow and stop its momentum," he said.

Kurtis sees the NAACP as laying foundations to prevent and "slow the momentum of the dysfunction coming at us, so when it reaches us it does not go further," he said.

The NAACP Spokane works to ensure everyone's political, social, educational and economic equality through its committees on equality, education, youth, political action, the environment and criminal justice.

The executive board of the nearly 300-member local chapter recently grew from seven to 14. It revamped its website, reinvigorated its relationship with the American Civil Liberties Union, connected with the Black Student Union at Gonzaga University, streamlined its member database and social media, is developing its online calendar, and plans to recruit interns.

Continued on page 6

Faith leaders explore political polarization

Five bishops and regional church leaders will join in a panel discussion on "Framing Faithful Discourse for the Common Good" for the 2018 Eastern Washington Legislative Conference, from 8:45 a.m. to 3 p.m., Saturday, Jan. 27, at St. Mark's Lutheran Church, 316 E. 24th Ave. in Spokane.

Elise DeGooyer, co-director of the Faith Action Network, will moderate the panelists as they explore the involvement of faith communities in public policy in these chaotic, divisive times.

"How can we help people move past the intractable paralysis of government and polarized political opinions? How can we engage in conversations and faithful responses that help us move from hate, fear and power plays?" are among the questions they will discuss.

Panelists are the Rev. Walter Kendricks, president of the Spokane Ministers' Fellowship; the Rev. Sandy Messick, regional minister and president for the Northwest Region Disciples of Christ; Bishop Gretchen Rehberg of the Episcopal Diocese of Spokane; the Rev. Gregg Sealey, Inland District United Methodist superintendent, and Bishop Emeritus William Skylstad of the Catholic Diocese of Spokane.

There will be two workshop sessions with seven workshops:

- "Environmental Legislative Priorities for State and Region" will be led by Jessica Zimmerle and Tom Soeldner, both of Earth Ministry. Tom is also with the Sierra Club.
- "Impacts of Mass Incarceration on Communities of Color" will be presented by Kurtis Robinson, Devon Wilson

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Symposium on statelessness plans joint action

An "Interfaith Symposium on Statelessness" held Dec. 7 to 8 in Rome focused, for the first time in history, on joint actions from Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim, Christian and Jewish groups to address statelessness. The symposium was co-sponsored by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Council for World Mission and World Council of Churches (WCC).

The UNHCR estimates about 10 million people worldwide are not citizens of any nation, and in many cases that restricts their ability to move freely and enjoy civil rights, such as rights to education or property ownership. Statelessness is often passed down through generations, so it becomes a systemic problem.

Symposium participants reflected on childhood statelessness, resulting both from lack of birth registration as well as from gender discrimination in laws preventing mothers from conferring nationality to their children.

They affirmed principles in their faith traditions that hold them accountable to work to end statelessness. This does not mean that the faiths address the issue directly, rather that there are—at a minimum—teachings that relate to the issue indirectly and point to specific kinds of action. These teachings are to be explored by participants in the weeks following the conference and be included in a future joint declaration on statelessness.

"Without a nationality, a stateless person is excluded from enjoying the rights, freedoms and opportunities to which everyone should be entitled," said Peter Prove, director of the WCC Commission of the Churches on International Affairs. "Stateless people are invisible but they are among us—fellow travelers on the pilgrimage of justice and peace, and it is our responsibility to recognize them, name what complicity we have in their situation, and accept the gifts they have to offer within our communities."

"We must see further than our own issues."

At the Church Leaders Meeting from Dec. 4 to 8 at the Ecumenical Centre and Bossey Ecumenical Institute, representatives of faith communities across the world interacted with the WCC and with each other. In a series of interviews with WCC Communication, church leaders shared the challenges and rewards of their dialogue.

As he participated in prayers for peace on the Korean Peninsula and for a world free from nuclear weapons, Bishop Reinhart Guib (Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Romania) said when he visits the WCC, he sees the world as much bigger than he could imagine.

"We must see further than our own issues," he said. "I'm glad to learn about these other issues because we tend to think about our own country as our own world, our own social problems, our own Romanian problems. We don't have a vision of life further away, but the WCC has opened that for me."

By participating in the Church Leaders Meeting, his ecumenical family grew, he said. "We realize we are not alone with our problems, and many people have larger problems. We can contribute with prayers, knowledge, worship and communion."

Ultimately, he said, we must take part in the changes of the life of our neighbor, whether that neighbor lives next door or is across the world. "In Romania, we have a system that happens with the neighbors. At the beginning of your life, your child is baptized; all the neighbors come together and bring something to the young family. They make a celebration. They bring what they have."

Neighbors also help in times of need. "A friend's house was burned," he said. "The neighborhood came the next day and built a house. We could do a lot because everyone brought something."

The ecumenical family works that way as well, he said, "and this is our hope together. We feel it here in Geneva and Bossey. Faith and love exist here and go further. We take a stone and let it fall into the water to see the ripples."

Reinhart was glad to struggle with what churches can better do in the world. "So long as this earth exists we will have problems," he said. "After all," he said, "We are human."

REGIONAL ECUMENICAL & INTERFAITH NEWS

The Fig Tree recruits for directory, benefits

The Fig Tree still seeks funds to reprint more of the 2017-18 Resource Directory, while beginning work on the 2018-19 edition. After meeting immediate orders, few copies will be left.

Staff are also reaching out to recruit community partners to sponsor the copies, said Malcolm

Haworth, directory editor.

Fig Tree editor Mary Stamp and planners for the 2018 Benefit Lunch buffet on Friday, March 9, and the Benefit Breakfast buffet on Wednesday, March 14, are recruiting people to host tables and people to speak.

Both events are in Cataldo Hall

at Gonzaga University. Speakers will discuss "Including Everyone: We Need Each Other" as the theme for the 2018 benefits.

The Fig Tree is also recruiting volunteers to help with deliveries, mailings, displays and at events.

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

Our Place raises funds to serve people

Our Place reported recently that it served 11,500 people in 2016, including 1,872 people over 55 years of age, an increase of 893 from the previous year, said Tracie Swanson, who has been part-time director for nearly 10 years.

"It's because seniors live on fixed incomes, and the costs in food, rent, utilities and medical care are going up," she said. "When they have no options left, they come to us."

To meet those needs, Our Place plans a benefit performance of "Coming Home: A Soldier's Project." It opens with a 6 p.m. reception and silent auction on

Thursday, Feb. 1, at Gonzaga University's Magnuson Theatre. "Our Soldiers Project" is an original work exploring experiences of students returning from war to study at Gonzaga, in transition from base to basketball, service to civilian.

Limited mobility affects seniors' ability to go to medical appointments and food banks, so Our Place, at 1509 W. College, provided 1,245 bus passes in 2016-2017.

"Lack of transportation prevents access to programs, services, medical/substance treatment, employment, child care and educational opportunities," she said.

The number of people with disabilities, experiencing homelessness and children in poverty also rose in 2017. They are two-thirds of the people Our Place serves.

Tracie wants to give back because there is so much need.

"Poverty does not affect people and families once a year but often lasts multiple years," she said.

Most affordable housing in the area is rental houses built before 1939 and partitioned into apartments with poor insulation leading to high utility bills, she added.

For information, call 326-7267, email ourplace@cet.com or visit ourplacespokane.org.

Civil rights organizer is keynoter for event

The ninth annual Peace & Justice Action Conference will focus on the theme, "Building Beyond the Moment," Friday and Saturday, Feb. 23 and 24, at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Spokane, 4340 W. Fort Wright Dr.

Eric Ward, a long-time civil rights strategist and director at Western States Center, will give a keynote address.

There will be an opening reception from 6 to 8:30 p.m. on Friday with food and performances.

From 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday, will be the Action Conference with three workshop sessions, a

keynote address and opportunities to connect with like-minded folks who are putting their values into action, said Liz Moore, co-director of the Peace and Justice Action League (PJALS), which is organizing the event.

Eric has worked in community, regional and national organizing and philanthropy. From 2011 to 2017, he was a Ford Foundation program officer for gender, racial and ethnic justice and a program executive for The Atlantic Philanthropies U.S. Reconciliation and Human Rights Program.

He began his civil rights career

when white nationalists were engaged in violent paramilitary activity that sought to undermine democratic government.

As an organizer with Community Alliance of Lane County, field director of the Northwest Coalition Against Malicious Harassment and a national field director of the Center for New Community, Eric designed campaigns to expose and counter hate groups and their violence. He was one of a few leaders of color working to counter organized hate.

For information, call 838-7870 or visit pjals.org/2018conference.

Youth are focus of Yakima Advocacy Day

"How are the Children? Advocating for Youth and Families" is the theme for the 2018 Yakima Advocacy Day, which will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 10, at Central Lutheran Church, 1604 W. Yakima Ave.

Breakout and report-back sessions are set on various topics, with the focus on youth including, youth and immigration, youth homelessness, issues facing LG-BTQ youth and indigenous youth, and community violence.

"Speakers will provide a framework on resilience and hope in advocacy," said the Rev. David Hacker of Christ Church in Zillah.

The event is sponsored by the Yakima Association of Churches

and Faith Communities and the Faith Action Network of Washington.

For information, call 509-961-4692, email davidhacker916@gmail.com or visit fanwa.org.

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Stay up to date with the details:
<http://fanwa.org/interfaith-advocacy-day/>

FAITH ACTION NETWORK
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Contact: fan@fanwa.org ~ (206) 625-9790

Faith community organizes interfaith service for MLK Day in Yakima

For the 33rd year, Robert Trimble, a retired pastor, Yakima's NAACP president and a community activist, has worked with Yakima's Martin Luther King Jr. Interfaith Commemoration Committee to plan events to remember and learn about civil rights.

"One Nation, One People" is the theme for the citywide memorial church service at 3 p.m., Sunday, Jan. 14, at the Greater Faith Baptist Church, 816 S. 6th St. Speakers will reflect on the community of love King talked about in his book, *Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?*

Robert said the service, in which the Yakima Association of Churches and Faith Communities participates, will include Catholics, Protestants, Muslims, Jews and people of other faiths.

At noon Monday, Jan. 15, Yakima's annual Justice, Peace and Equality March begins at S. 5th St.

The march follows Martin Luther King Blvd. to the Yakima Convention Center for a program of speakers and singing historical, spiritual and civil rights songs.

Robert said he and others went



Robert Trimble is a long-time MLK Day organizer.

Photo courtesy of David Hacker

to the Yakima City Council every year for 19 years proposing to name Martin Luther King Blvd. Every year he was turned down, but in the 20th year, 2006, they renamed the street.

At 2 p.m. Monday at Henry Beauchamp Community Center, 1112 S. 7th St., the soup kitchen will serve soup to anyone who

needs to eat.

"We also encourage people to read about the civil rights movements and to do community service to give the community love, not hate," Robert said.

The Police Department usually participates in an effort to build better relationship between police and young people to keep the dream alive, he said.

Every day from Jan. 8 to 15, the *Yakima Herald* will publish a quote from King that Robert has provided, along with a guest editorial.

During that week, Yakima schools will have educational assemblies planned with the Com-

memoration Committee, which has met Mondays since Nov. 2.

Robert, who has been retired as a pastor for 15 years, was in ministry since the 1980s.

He came to Yakima 35 years ago from Atlanta after serving in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War. After finishing college, he came to Yakima to teach school and, "seeing the needs of the community, I became involved and stayed," he said.

There are 10 African-American churches in Yakima, but instead of attending one of them, he goes to different non-African-American churches to share his vision.

"My next goal is to work to-

wards integrating the churches on the west side of town, rather than having black or white churches," he said. "A church should be the house of God. We are all one under God. We are God's people with many cultures.

"Therefore, I will continue to help build the love community King talked about in his Dream, for we are all brothers and sisters," Robert said. "On his last night King said he just wanted to have a committed life to make the world a better place for all of God's people."

For information, call 509-910-0251 or email rtrimble51@gmail.com.

Pullman plans worship and day of service

In Pullman, local faith leaders will lead the annual Martin Luther King Jr. Interfaith Service at 4 p.m., Sunday, Jan. 14, at St. James Episcopal, 1500 NE Stadium Way. It includes King's words on economic justice, poverty, worker justice, racial justice, civil rights, and war and militarism.

Washington State University's Community for Civic Engage-

ment (CCE) plans the MLK Day of Service. Opportunities at 379 agencies in Pullman, Moscow and the region are at <https://cce.wsu.edu/events/national-days-of-service>. The day honors King's life and accomplishments.

There will be a CCE Public Square Forum on Wednesday, Jan. 17 on "The Widening Generational Gap in Civil Rights and

Social Justice Activism."

Pullman's 2018 MLK Community Celebration is at 7 p.m., Thursday, Jan. 18, at the CUB Senior Ballroom with speaker Shaun King of the Black Lives Matter movement. He uses social media to highlight police brutality, racial discrimination and civil rights.

For information, visit mlk.wsu.edu/events-mlk-2018/.

North Idaho schools work with human rights task force

The Kootenai County Task Force for Human Relations (KCT-FHR) is organizing the 33rd annual Children's Program Honoring Martin Luther King Jr.'s Works on Thursday, Jan. 11, at Lake City Community Church, 6000 N. Ramsey.

About 900 fifth graders from 10 Coeur d'Alene schools will meet at the church at 9:30 a.m., and about 600 fifth graders from six Post Falls schools will be there at 11:30 a.m.

The program on "Don't Be Little, Be Big: Courage, Safety, Value and Kindness" is presented by Stu Cade, an educator and actor residing in Coeur d'Alene. Offices for his Ovation Company are in Denver. The students will be given bracelets with a big elephant and three little elephants, and the words of the theme.

One child from each school will read an essay about a dream or someone who is their hero—Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King Jr., a grandparent or someone else.

"It's an important age to teach children about kindness and respecting people," said Tony Stewart of the KCTFHR, noting that the school district has worked with the human rights organization for 33 years to coordinate a children's Martin Luther King Jr. program. "It's one of the task force's signature projects."

With more than 36,000 fifth graders introduced to human rights by this program over the years, Tony, who has gone to all 32 years of the events, noted that some of the first students are now in their 40s and have children attending.

For information, call 208-765-3932.

Bonner County task force presents student art show

The Bonner County Human Rights Task Force, which has been active since 1992, will hold an open meeting at 5:30 p.m., Monday, Jan. 8, at The Heartwood Center, 615 Oak St. in Sandpoint for people interested in volunteering, becoming a member or board member.

For its annual MLK event, the task force will present Student Art for Human Rights and honor MLK in the library of the Sandpoint High School starting Tuesday, Jan. 16.

For information, email Sharon McCahon at bchrtaskforce@gmail.com or visit bchrtf.org.



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Piano teacher treasures relationships developed with students over years

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building relationships," she said.

One student's father told her she is like a grandmother to his children: "They treasure you."

"I treasure them," she said. "When they want my opinion about problems that they share during lessons, they know they can talk about what is bothering them in the privacy and confidentiality of a lesson."

In 1961 after her freshman year at the four-year, liberal-arts Holy Names College, she helped the college relocate to 76 acres they purchased after Fort George Wright closed for military purposes. The college was renamed Fort Wright College of the Holy Names.

Sr. Kay spent three years at the Fort Wright campus studying music, graduating in 1964. She helped pay tuition by teaching private lessons for \$1 each and teaching music for \$10 an hour at Nine Mile Grade School.

"I teach music to children to strengthen them as they go on into careers in math, science, medicine, teaching and more," she said. "I encourage students to become what they want to be."

"Because of the strength of the music program, Holy Names Music Center continues as a community music school for students to come for private lessons in

all instruments, but particularly strings, voice and piano," said Sr. Kay, who also studied violin and voice.

Twenty years ago, the center began the New Horizons Orchestra for senior citizens, to socialize and keep their brains active. It's now independent, and its 50 members practice at Salem Lutheran Church. Sr. Kay plays violin.

In 1964, she went to Marylhurst College south of Portland, Ore., where she spent two-and-a-half years in novitiate training.

In the fall of 1967, she returned to teach a semester at Holy Names Academy, and then taught at Holy Names grade schools, two years in Richland and five years in Tacoma, where she helped establish a guitar folk Mass.

Because she worked on the Pierce County Education Board to merge three Catholic high schools, Holy Names Academy asked her to come to help during a time of struggle.

She came in 1974 and taught, but the model of merging schools did not work in Spokane, so Holy Names Academy closed in the spring of 1975.

When the academy closed, they moved pianos, music and archives to the college music department.

During those years, she established junior high choirs at St. Pascals, St. Patrick's, St. Francis

of Assisi and St. Aloysius and worked with the St. Aloysius' liturgy committee.

She spent summers completing a master's in piano performance at the University of Southern California and then taught at Marylhurst College for two years. From 1981 to 1995, she taught at Holy Names Academy in Seattle and headed the fine arts department. That school continues today with 700 students.

There, she participated with other priests and nuns in a Marriage Encounter program, "an eye-opening and healing experience" that helped not only with relationships in the convent but also in her family, as she soon began a stint in parenting.

Her mother died suddenly on Memorial Day 1995, so Sr. Kay moved to Spokane to be closer to help her brother, a single father of three children, raise his family. She took in his middle son from seventh grade through college.

While a part-time parent, she taught students in her home, the house her mother left her, and at Holy Names Music Center.

Now Sr. Kay teaches about 20 students at the Holy Names Music Center, accompanies programs at the school, and has accompanied the Mukogawa Women's Ensemble for 13 years.

She began helping with liturgy

at St. Thomas More Parish and was music director there from 1996 to 2005, when she left to do liturgy with St. Joseph's Parish on Dean, where several sisters have served as parish pastors.

Sr. Kay has taught for eight years at Trinity Grade School and does Sunday liturgies at St. Anthony's or St. Joseph's, which also have Vietnamese and Spanish parishioners. An English liturgy at St. Joseph's is at 9:30 a.m. and the Spanish one at 12:30 p.m. At St. Anthony's, there are two English liturgies and a 1 p.m., Vietnamese Mass.

She also plays for Sunday liturgies at Brookdale where retired Holy Names sisters now reside.

"Sundays, Catholics come to liturgy to be fed, so the music must be meaningful and rich to give another dimension to understanding the Scripture along with the priest's homily," she said.

Sr. Kay chooses and plays music, directs choirs and plays for children's liturgies.

"People participate in a liturgy by singing. Words of hymns are often words of theology that stay with people, because they are repeated over and over," she said. "Choosing good music is important, because it's what the church teaches and it builds a relationship with Christ."

Sr. Kay enjoys classical music and the Big Band music she heard growing up. She also teaches folk, Disney, patriotic and popular songs and songs from musicals.

With many of her students, she

uses the Suzuki method, designed for children before they can read, teaching them by hearing notes and rhythms.

For her golden jubilee, from May to August, she celebrated at Marylhurst, Seattle and Spokane with seven other women who took their vows when she did, one of the first groups after Vatican II, when the liturgy was translated from Latin to English.

The Holy Names Music Center, at 3910 W. Custer, has 30 faculty. They teach piano, cello, clarinet, double bass, fiddle, flute, guitar, percussion, saxophone, trumpet, violin, viola and voice to students of many ages, abilities, income levels and ethnic origins.

The center serves more than 200 private students and small ensembles, as well as the Music Together program for toddlers and parents.

In addition, 120 Adult Ensemble members in Project Joy Orchestra and the Lilac City Community Band rehearse there. The center has outreach to 30 families through Music for Vets and the Catholic Charities CAPA (Childhood and Parenting Alone) program.

Sr. Kay said Holy Names Music Center at Fort Wright is a non-profit community music school, "providing quality instruction and performance opportunities for all."

For information, call 475-1956 for Sr. Kay or 326-9516 for the music center, or email kheberling@comcast.net.

Conference plans seven workshops on issues

continued from page 1

and Layne Pavey, who represent NAACP Spokane, Smart Justice Spokane and I Did the Time.

- "Breaking the School-to-Prison Pipeline" leaders are Jeanne Baynes of EWU/NAACP, James Mohr of WSU/NAACP, Doreen Keller of Whitworth and Pavel Shlossberg of Gonzaga.

- "Challenges of and Responses to Homelessness" will be addressed by Nadine Van Stone of Catholic Charities Spokane.

- "Challenges of and Responses to Affordable Housing" is the focus of a workshop led by Terri Anderson of the Tenants Union of Washington and Kay Murano of the Spokane Low-Income Housing Consortium.

- "Doctrine of Discovery and Implications for Issues for Northwest Tribes Today" is a workshop led by David Hacker of Between the Ridges in Yakima and a representative of the Upper Columbia United Tribes.

- "Faithful Response to Hate" will be a dialogue with Kristine Hoover of Gonzaga's Hate Studies Institute, Walter Kendrick of Morning Star Missionary Baptist Church and Aaron Henderson, civil rights professional for 30 years, and moderated by Jim CastroLang of the Faith Action Network Board.

After lunch prepared by Transitions' New Leaf Bakery, there will be legislative briefings on issues before the 2018 Washington State Legislature. They will be led by Paul Benz, co-director of the Faith Action Network and Donna Christensen, lobbyist for the Washington State Catholic Conference.

Admir Rasic and Rasheed Belamy, who are part of Spokane's Muslim community, will lead an opening prayer.

Courtney Stange-Tregear, minister of church vitality for the

Pacific Northwest Conference of the United Church of Christ, will offer closing reflections.

There will be displays with resources from more than 20 area agencies. There is time to view them during breaks and lunch.

The event is presented by The Fig Tree, Catholic Charities Spokane, the Faith Action Network, the Inland District of the United Methodist Church, the NAACP Spokane and the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia.

Those attending are asked to

RSVP and give a suggested donation of \$20. For groups of five or more the suggested donation is \$15 each. Scholarships are available.

The organizing team includes The Fig Tree, Catholic Charities of Spokane, the Faith Action Network of Washington, the Inland District of the Pacific Northwest United Methodist Conference and NAACP Spokane.

For information, call 535-1813, 535-4112 or email info@thefig-tree.org.

Whitworth lecturer discusses role of 'allyship' in civil rights

There will be a Martin Luther King Jr. Day Public Lecture on "Allyship: Why We Teach the Movement" from 7 to 9 p.m., Monday, Jan. 15, at Weyerhaeuser Hall at Whitworth University.

"The historical moment requires coalitions built across historical fault lines of race, class and gender," said Whitworth program director Joshua Adam Fauth. "The success of the civil rights movement depended, in part, on

coalitions and their power."

The lecture by Kate Shuster, president of Shuster Consulting and author of *Teaching the Movement: The State of Civil Rights Education*, will review best practices in allyship, making the case for coalition-building in the context of teaching and learning about the history and lessons of the civil rights movement.

For information, call 777-3583 or email afauth@whitworth.edu.

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MLK Center expands programs into East Central Community Center

The Spokane City Council voted on Oct. 16 to award a four-year contract to the Martin Luther King Jr. Family Outreach (MLK) Center. It will assume operations of the East Central Community Center on Jan. 1.

The contract pays the Center \$350,000 the first three years and \$325,000 the fourth year.

Freda Gandy, executive director, who has been at the MLK Center for 16 years, recognizes there is a need to repair some relationships to build community unity and support around serving the neighborhood, because some had supported continuing the contract with the East Central Community Organization.

She plans to involve the community in designing programs and services.

When it was clear the MLK Center was outgrowing its current facilities in two buildings on Sherman, it had planned to tear down the two structures and build a two-story building there.

Last spring, however, when the City of Spokane issued a request for proposals for nonprofits to manage and operate the East Central Community Center, Freda and the board developed a proposal to sustain their existing programs and bring them together with the services at the ECCC, including continuing Women, Infants and Children (WIC) and the Spokane Neighborhood Action Program (SNAP) as tenants.

"We make referrals to WIC and SNAP regularly, so being there gives our clients more access to those services and others," she said. "The more we offer under one roof the more services people can access with less time and without added transportation."

The MLK center will collaborate with the Community Colleges of Spokane Head Start/ECEAP program to offer Early Head Start as another service to serve children from birth to three years old, along with serving children from three to five years old in the ECEAP program, which will expand from serving 40 children half days to serving 60 all day.

"For working parents, it's not practical for the program to be



Freda Gandy said artist Erica Roscoe donated her services to paint something beautiful to cover racist graffiti put on the house.

three hours just four days a week," Freda said.

The after-school program for children from five to 12 years old will be moved from Grant Elementary School, and will be able to serve 120 children instead of just the 60 now involved.

The teen program will expand to year round, rather than just summer.

"Our vision is to serve multiple generations," she said.

The ECCC's senior program, food bank and program for people with disabilities will continue.

There are plans to add a dental clinic, and there is a goal to open a health clinic in the future.

Another plan is to have an office for an officer from the Spokane Police Department, and eventually to have a precinct housed there. This will give officers access to the community to build relationships and trust with youth, and for officers to know neighborhood people, particularly people of color, as human beings.

After the Martin Luther King Jr. Family Outreach Center has the building on Jan. 1, it will keep

its services in the present location through late spring while it does renovations to make more classrooms in the 30,000-square-foot building.

During the winter and spring, Freda plans to "hang out" at the ECCC to meet seniors, food bank operators, WIC and SNAP staff to learn about gaps and needs.

The playground at the present MLK site will stay because it is used by so many neighborhood children and families, Freda said.

The MLK Center will keep the Sherman buildings and move the ECCC day-care for adults with disabilities there, giving that program, which is now in one room at the East Central Community Center, space to grow with access to a classroom with computers, space for quiet time, and space to do arts and crafts.

The house will be used for storage and therapy services.

The two sites will operate as the Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center, Freda said, once the name change goes through.

In her years in the nonprofit field, Freda continually has

Community forum set on mental health care

Eastern Washington University and Providence Health Care are presenting a community health forum, "Making Mental Health Essential Health" beginning at 5 p.m., with a keynote and panel from 6 to 8 p.m., Wednesday, Jan. 31, at the Spokane Convention Center, 334 W. Spokane Falls Blvd.

The keynote speaker is Patrick Kennedy, a former member of the U.S. House of Representatives and founder of the Kennedy

Forum, which connects the mental health community, and co-founder of One Mind, a global leader in collaboration on brain research.

He is also co-author of *A Common Struggle*, which outlines his personal story and a plan for the future of mental health care.

The advocate for health care reform related to preventive care and treatment of mental illnesses will discuss why the health-care system needs to improve mental health care, why public policy

needs to establish parity and why the nation needs to invest in innovative care.

For information, call 279-7000, info@thekennedyforum.org.

Spokane celebration includes rally, march, ribbon cutting

Plans are underway to celebrate Martin Luther King Jr. Day in Spokane with a community service, a rally and march, and a ribbon cutting to recognize Martin Luther King Jr. Family Outreach Center as the new nonprofit to run the East Central Community Center.

The Spokane Ministers' Fellowship is planning the Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration. It will be held from 4 to 6 p.m., Sunday, Jan. 14, at the Holy Temple Church of God in Christ, 806 W. Indiana.

The Rally and March begin at 10 a.m., Monday, Jan. 15, at the Spokane Convention Center old ballroom, 334 W. Spokane Falls Blvd., said Freda Gandy, executive director of the Martin Luther King Jr. Family Outreach Center. Unlike previous years, there will be no Resource Fair after the march.

At noon, at the East Central Community Center (ECCC), 500 S. Stone, there will be a ribbon cutting, open house, lunch, children's activities and tables for people to sign up and be involved as volunteers and staff, as the Martin Luther King Jr. Family Outreach Center begins the process of moving many programs from 845 S. Sherman to the community center.

sought to "stay in tune with services needed by Spokane's most vulnerable populations," she said.

Hiring a recreation manager will allow the after-school program to identify recreation activities and sports the grade school students want. The gym may be open for six days, rather than just five.

To accommodate the expansion in programs, the MLK Center board plans to expand from 17 staff to 35, with the additional funding from the city to manage and operate the center.

They will hire managers for 1) the ECEAP program, 2) the before- and after-school programs, and the teen summer and leadership program, 3) family support services, 4) programs for people with disabilities, seniors and the supervised visitation program for children in foster care to visit biological parents, 5) the nutrition team to serve meals to infants, toddlers and seniors in the commercial kitchen, 6) the recreation program and 7) custodians. The managers will design and staff their programs.

The MLK Center has leased the building for 15 years and has a contract to operate it from the City for four years. It must demonstrate success for funding to be renewed.

"Our success with the MLK center is rooted in best practices and identifying long-term funding for quality programs," she said. "We have to prove ourselves."

The MLK Center brings a unique approach, serving people of various backgrounds, based on the life and legacy of Martin Luther King Jr.

"His dream is for more than the African-American community," she said. "We want all to feel welcome and to increase the diversity of those the ECCC serves."

Freda cares about the community, children and families, and will rely on her relationships within the city and community to make the visions reality.

The MLK Center has community support from its 40 years and will continue to ask for support.

For information, call 455-8722 or email fgandy@mlkspokane.org.

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Chapter addresses inequities, promotes healing, galvanizes people

continued from page 1

"We have many moving parts," said Kurtis, who is completing Phil Tyler's term that ends in 2018.

"We have been going through soul searching, hungering not only for healing as an organization but also to be a viable, meaningful, energetic organization," he said.

Kurtis described fires in his early life and interventions that led him to this leadership role.

"I was born in Idaho, but lived six years in the Bronx, where I was beat up as a mulatto boy. In the 1970s and 1980s, I moved from Oregon through to San Diego, the son of a single, white woman concerned about social justice but married abusive men," he said. "My school years were filled with dysfunction, abuse, addiction and violence, leading to suspensions and expulsion."

He was 18 when he learned he was also African American and Native American, and the man he'd grown up thinking was his father wasn't. Lacking a healthy adult role model, he sought to meet his needs with drugs and gangs.

"I became a cocaine-addicted adult and was arrested when I was 24," said Kurtis. He was in and out of jail for three years until a probation officer released him to Hope House, a long-term drug treatment program in Anaheim. Over two-and-a-half years, he moved from addictive behavior to pro-social behavior.

"Victims who do not process their abuse may become perpetrators," he said, glad he and his mother have worked through their trauma.

Kurtis maintained recovery for several years, even though his felony conviction was a barrier to finding employment. Eventually he began working in plumbing in Orange County, Calif., and then Arizona.

He married and divorced, then married a second time in Arizona. His older sister's suicide and the miraculous survival of her daughter drew his attention to spiritual questions about life and God, which he explored through Native American communities.

Then a mountain bike accident crippled his right arm, leaving him in pain and ending his career in plumbing. He was told it would never heal.

In 2004, Kurtis came with his second wife to Keller, Wash., to be near her family on the Colville Reservation.

During the chaos in his second marriage, when he wanted to die, he cried out to God for help. He had been suspicious about religion, because he had seen people



Kurtis Robinson shares story of overcoming "fires" in his life.

of faith harm people.

"I heard God say, 'Kurtis, I'm here.' I told God I wanted to go 'home,' but God said, 'I understand, but you're not done,'" Kurtis said.

He asked God to heal him and began to read the Bible, pray, meditate and talk with the Keller Community Church pastor and other pastors.

One invited him to surrender his life to God. As Kurtis did, he realized he was no longer the "illegitimate son" he had considered himself, but he was "a child of the living God," he said.

He stopped taking the medicines for his arm, grew stronger and felt called to reach out to people. He entered a tribal program to gain work experience.

Kurtis began asking God, "What do you want me to do next?"

After his divorce in 2007, a fire almost burned Nespelem, so he took wildland fire training.

When complaining about humanity, he felt God call him to "go down off the mountain and do something to help humanity. What do you think I saved you for?"

He came homeless to the Union Gospel Mission (UGM) shelter in Spokane, "open to the experience spiritually and mentally," Kurtis said.

He returned to Keller, planning to go to North Dakota for the oil boom, but a woman in the church suggested he become a nurses' aide. He felt God speaking to him through her.

In 2011, he brought his belong-

ings, and returned to UGM while being trained as a certified nurses' aid and working at two nursing homes.

Summers he fought wildland fires.

Kurtis met Pastor Danny Green at Celebrate Recovery and moved into its Reaching Out Advocating Recovery (ROAR) House. In 2012, he began managing ROAR House and the ROAR Project of Family of Faith Community Church. He helped build up the program, which added more houses.

Then in 2014, he re-married and joined the Spokane County Behavioral Health Advisory Board, through which he met Layne Pavey with I Did the Time, a group challenging discrimination against people with arrest and conviction records.

"I realized impacted communities need to gain healthy voices to speak for themselves," Kurtis said, explaining that by "impacted communities," he means those suffering from poverty, trauma, violence, addiction, incarceration and other societal ills.

In 2015, he became involved with the NAACP Spokane. He joined and then chaired the Criminal Justice Committee, which put him on the Executive Committee. In May 2017, he was elected president.

Kurtis believes it's what God wants him to do for right now.

To fight fires of inequality, injustice and oppression, he seeks to help the NAACP Spokane:

- address local to national racial

disparities in criminal justice and education systems;

- use solutions-based approaches to address health care, help people be self-advocates and heal relationships;

- galvanize people to stand against the increase in racist behavior with information and awareness of how to be politically involved, and

- institute solutions-focused restorative changes for communities of color and all communities.

"The NAACP nationally has been a hallmark of advocacy for the oppressed and ostracized. It's called to be that again," said Kurtis, who is guiding the local chapter to respond to needs "of God's children crying out for help."

"Communities of color are traumatized. We need to come to terms with our trauma and seek

restorative processes and restorative justice for ourselves, our communities and our society," Kurtis said.

"White people are traumatized by the same dynamics that traumatize communities of color," he pointed out, calling "for soul searching and social dialogue on the capitalist caste system.

"How is it that some have more and some have less? How do we manifest classism and racism? How do we dismantle classism and restore democratic ideals?" he asked.

"If we are our brother's keepers, we must help liberate those who suffer and are oppressed. The future of humanity depends on it," Kurtis said.

For information, call 509-631-2506 or email kurtisrobinson@live.com.

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Retired couple have an impact as long-term care ombudsmen in Idaho

Mark Kinney
Contributing Writer

Lew and Gloria Hinshaw's observant eyes, empathetic ears and inquisitive nature make a difference to residents living in a long-term care facility in Post Falls where they volunteer as long-term care ombudsmen.

When they moved in 2015 from Kansas to North Idaho to be closer to their daughter, Brynn, and her family, their chief goal was to serve their new community.

Gloria, a retired special education teacher, decided to apply through the Retired Senior Volunteer Program to help as a reading tutor at a Post Falls elementary school. While she was applying in the Area Agency on Aging office, Lew, a retired United Church of Christ pastor, browsed literature in the waiting area and noticed a pamphlet for the Idaho Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program.

It piqued his interest as something he and Gloria could do together.

After discussion and prayer, the couple decided to explore the possibility of serving as ombudsmen.

They recognized the need when they learned only one other North Idaho couple was serving in the volunteer program. After being accepted and completing a seven-week training program in September 2015, they began serving as qualified volunteer ombudsmen that November.

According to Lew, an ombudsman is an advocate for residents and a problem solver.

"We first try to help residents solve any problems they may have," Lew said. "If necessary we can ask the resident for permission to investigate the problem and share findings with the facility administration."

If a resident won't give permission to investigate a problem, Lew said, ombudsmen may anonymously survey other residents to see if they are experiencing a similar problem.

"We are even given access to a resident's medical chart to explain any changes in their physical condition," Lew said.

He and Gloria can elevate more serious issues to an ombudsman employed by the state.

"We would do so, if warranted and after relaying the allegation to the facility administrator," he said.

The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program was instituted as part of the Older Americans Act of 1965 because of concerns with the quality of nursing facilities, the care provided in them and the government's ability to enforce regulations in these facilities,



Lew and Gloria Hinshaw sought a way to serve as retirees.

Lew said.

Unlike regulators, whose role is to apply laws and regulations, the mission of ombudsmen is to help identify and resolve problems on behalf of residents to improve their overall well-being.

The Act mandates that states create monitoring programs, he said. Idaho's Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program is chartered to protect the health, safety, welfare and rights of long-term care residents who are 60 years or older.

Lew and Gloria are assigned to a 100-bed facility with four cottages and with memory care. They typically visit twice a week for one-and-a-half to two hours at a time. Their visits are unannounced.

"We visit with residents and try to sense how they are doing and if they are properly dressed and clean," Gloria said. She said those two factors are often indicators of care issues.

She and Lew enjoy working together as a team.

"Doing it as a couple gave us more confidence at first," she said. "We have a second set of eyes and each other to consult with, and we can achieve twice as much in the same amount of time."

She said there is an additional benefit to their team approach.

"It's good because sometimes a resident may be more comfortable speaking to a man or a woman," she said.

Gloria said they try to reach out to all residents, including those with severe memory conditions.

"Despite their condition, they can see we care," she said "and we

can tell when there is a connection being made."

The Hinshaws meet with other volunteer and state-employed ombudsmen every six weeks to hear from speakers directly involved in elder care. They report on their visits, including the hours served, relevant observations and lessons learned.

They leave business cards with their contact information in the facility for residents or family members who may want to contact them to discuss care-related issues, Lew said.

"We feel it's important to be accessible," he said.

When asked, Lew and Gloria will pray with residents. At home, they also pray together for the residents they serve, often by name.

The Hinshaws were inspired to serve others by the example of their parents, who were active volunteers in retirement.

Lew's father was a volunteer music leader and choir director in several congregations, and his parents had music ministries in several local nursing homes.

"My mother played piano, and my dad sang and played violin," he said.

Gloria's father transported people in need to appointments, was a volunteer tax preparer and served as a Big Brother to an inner city child for many years. Her mother knitted mittens for children and durable cotton leper bandages for people suffering from leprosy.

Gloria said that in the early 1960s her mother stood up to segregation in their community when a young African exchange student was not allowed to swim

at the local swimming club.

"They told us they could accommodate us after the club closed because they did not want other members to be uncomfortable. My mother let them know it was wrong and our family canceled our membership," she said.

Lew graduated in pre-med and psychology in 1965 from the Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Mo., and graduated in 1971 from the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, Calif.

Gloria began her undergraduate degree in sociology at Illinois Wesleyan in Glen Ellyn, Ill., but moved with her parents to Tucson, Ariz., and completed it at the University of Arizona in 1971.

Realizing she would need a master's degree to work in her chosen field, she enrolled in the University of Arizona's guidance and counseling program, where she met Lew, who was also enrolled in the program. They were married in the Congregational Church in 1977.

After working together as outpatient mental health counselors in Tucson, Lew explored entering pastoral ministry and applied for ministerial standing in the United Church of Christ. After he was accepted, Lew and Gloria began serving together in ministry at a Congregational church in Phoenix.

They served at three more

congregations in Overland Park, Lawrence and Baldwin, Kansas, until Lew retired in 2015.

Gloria worked as a paraprofessional in special education classrooms during their time in ministry before she decided to become a certified special education teacher.

Then she returned to graduate school at the University of Kansas in Lawrence, Kans., to earn certification in special education. She worked as special education teacher until retiring in 2012.

Lew and Gloria alternate between worshiping at Community Presbyterian Church in Post Falls and at Westminster United Church of Christ in Spokane. They also attend weekly Taizé services at Gonzaga's Ministry Institute.

They noted there are more than 70 long-term care facilities in the five counties of North Idaho with one full-time and two part-time state-employed Long-Term Care ombudsmen for those counties.

The Hinshaws said there is need for more volunteer ombudsmen like them.

"We encourage others to become ombudsmen. The need is great and so are the rewards," Gloria said. "It's a wonderful feeling helping to make a difference in someone's life."

For information on volunteering in Idaho, call Jan Noyes at 208-667-3179 or in Washington, call Erin Riley at 509-456-7133.



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Therapist believes parents need to offer children connection, security

By Kaye Hult

Brenda Hammond, the mental health specialist at three Mountain States Early Head Start (MSEHS) centers in Bonner, Kootenai and Shoshone counties, believes strong families begin with secure attachment and relationships between parent and child.

As a teacher in the 1980s and 1990s, she found that in order to help children, she needed to work with their families.

After helping organize the Community Action Agency in Sandpoint in 1999, she became more aware of poverty and that there was “no such thing as a level playing field for children. So much depends on resources families have.”

Since earning a master in social work degree in 2004 at Eastern Washington University, she has worked at MSEHS. She stopped working as a mental health therapist in 2016.

After teaching, social services and therapy, Brenda realized she wanted to focus her energies on working with a program that would have an impact on children.

Instead of pulling people who were drowning out of the water downstream, she said—using a metaphor about charity and human services work—she wanted to find out why people were falling in the river upstream.

“Having a secure attachment to parents, grandparents, foster parents or guardians is the greatest protective factor for children to grow to their fullest potential,” said Brenda, who grew up in Michigan, and lived 25 years in New Mexico before settling in Idaho in 1987.

While Mountain States Early Head Start offers free comprehensive child development, health, nutrition and support services to low-income families from pregnancy through a child’s first three years, Brenda said that the Circle of Security (COS) stands out, so they are seeking funding sources that will make it possible for them to share it with the wider community.

“Working with COS has been my way of going upstream,” Brenda said.

The Circle of Security helps the adults better understand and respond to their child’s needs, she said.

It fits the Early Head Start mission to promote healthy pregnancies, healthy babies and healthy families, and to enhance the development of very young children, she said.

The goal is to have impact on school readiness, child development, family development and



Brenda Hammond shifted from therapy to teach parents.

community development, building on values of honesty, hope, trust, integrity, strengths and compassion, she said.

A child’s readiness for school begins with a healthy pregnancy, Brenda said.

So MSEHS provides pregnant women with family consultants who visit parents and other family members for more than an hour and a half each week to discuss child development, health, mental health and school readiness.

Consultants try to make sure children are up to date on well-child visits, and on vision and hearing screenings.

They teach parents about child development, describing what comes next, so the parents can support their children’s development in the physical, cognitive, social and emotional areas.

“We also connect families with community resources,” she said. “We support their goals, such as a mother earning a GED, a father finding job training so he can take

a better job.”

MSEHS serves families in Bonner, Kootenai and Shoshone counties.

“We offer socialization opportunities for parents and children to get together. The children socialize with other children, and the parents with other parents,” she said.

In the eight years they have used the Circle of Security for parents, family consultants have noticed positive changes in the parent/child relationships at home, Brenda said.

Developed by Glen Cooper, Kent Hoffman and Bert Powell from Marycliff Institute in Spokane, and Robert Marvin at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, COS teaches parents about attachment.

The Circle of Security program strengthens parents’ ability to observe and improve their own caregiving skills, which then allows them to offer a secure relationship to their children, Brenda said.

This promotes their children’s current and future well-being.

Trained facilitators offer eight classes. A DVD and handouts provide content that invites parents to talk about their challenges in a safe environment, she said. For those not interested in group learning, the information can be shared at home.

“I learn so much every time I teach a class,” she said. “I see parents opening up and understanding more.”

“When parents participate in a class, they see others struggle too,” Brenda said. “They see that struggle is normal, and parenting is just plain hard.”

Parents learn to be self-reflective. When they are more able to look honestly at their own feelings, thoughts and behaviors, they have more control over how they interact with their children, she explained.

As parents look back and develop a coherent life story, Brenda said, it frees them from unconscious reactions and makes them able to offer connection to their children more than correction.

“Parents learn that their children’s behavior tells them what they need,” she explained. “Parents also learn to validate their children’s feelings by being with them in their feelings, which helps them learn effective ways to regulate those feelings.”

“Parents come to understand there is no such thing as a perfect parent,” Brenda said.

One mother commented, “I used to think my son was really being a pest.”

“Now I understand that he’s trying to tell me something. If I can meet his need, we’re both much happier,” she said.

Brenda said it’s never too late to strengthen the connection, the relationship, between parent and child.

“According to attachment research, if a parent can ‘get it right’ 30 percent of the time, that individual is a good parent,” she said.

The Early Head Start speech therapist observed that when one mother began to understand her child, the quality of their relationship became more harmonious.

Having seen changes that come

from using the Circle of Security, MSEHS has committed to send all of its staff that work directly with families to be trained to teach it.

It is also taking the Circle of Security beyond their enrolled families.

“We applied for grants to offer the program in the communities,” Brenda said.

“In Sandpoint, we received funding to offer three series. We will be offering classes in Kootenai County in February, and in Shoshone County after that,” she said.

Brenda said parents come eager to learn and share. Their feedback is positive, and parents are grateful.

“We see how great the need is. We think we have something to offer that answers their need,” she said.

Mountain States Early Head Start just received a grant from Idaho Children’s Trust Fund for another series of classes.

That trust fund, whose mission is to prevent child abuse, sees the Circle of Security as a way to prevent child abuse by helping parents understand their children and meet their needs.

MSEHS wants to remove barriers to attending the COS program, so they do not charge for classes. They also provide refreshments and small stipends for child care and transportation.

Working with MSEHS and COS fits with her Methodist upbringing and her Baha’i faith.

“A basic belief in both is that everyone is here to make the world a better place,” she said.

For information, call 208-263-2569, ext. 419, email bhammond@jannus.org or visit the website at 222.msehs.org.

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Communication professor promotes responsible media consumption

**By Austriauna Brook
Intern from Whitworth**

Trust between the public and media has grown more skewed since the rise of the term, “fake news,” said Nichole Bogarosh, Whitworth University communication professor. So she believes it’s important for the public to be responsible consumers of media.

She also promotes responsible media consumption through classes and involvement with the Northwest Alliance for Responsible Media (NW-ARM) Board.

Skepticism about what is being reported makes media consumers suspicious of anything journalists report. Many take on an “us versus them” mentality with media, which can make the job harder for journalists, she said.

“It’s hard to strike that balance in news decisions: ‘Is this interesting, engaging and going to draw people’s attention, and am I also serving the public good?’” Nichole said. “It’s easy to slide into the sensational stuff if we’re not doing the work we’re called to do as journalists.”

In addition to being on the communication faculty, she is director of the women and gender studies department at Whitworth.

Nichole entered communication because she loved writing at an early age. She did not know the specific job she wanted to do but she has always been drawn to communication.

“Part of the reason, beyond my love of writing and creating, is the potential impact media can have,” she said. “This led me to teach communication. I wanted to reach out to people and have an impact on how they look at things, giving voice to the voiceless, highlighting injustices and celebrating the



Nichole Bogarosh chose journalism to have an impact on how people understand current events.

breaking down of barriers.”

Nichole said her faith background also influences her view of media, and makes her aware of how media view certain faiths and religions.

She was raised Catholic and attends St. Thomas More Parish in Spokane. She spent time around Jesuits, who are strong advocates of social justice.

“They emphasized thinking about the marginalized in the world community,” Nichole said. “This is part of why I began studying representations in the media with a critical eye.”

Her undergraduate degrees are in communications and political science from Washington State University and Whitworth’s evening program in humanities.

Nichole also worked in marketing, communication and public

relations prior to doing some graduate work at Gonzaga University in communication leadership in 2008. She earned her doctorate at WSU in American studies in 2013, while working part time as an adjunct at Whitworth. She has worked full-time there since 2011.

Nichole incorporates media literacy in Whitworth courses she teaches. For spring semester, she will teach a class called “Media Criticism.” Her goal is for students to understand messages media give their audiences.

“We’re going to look through different lenses and at different theories to view media critically,” she said. “Because my background is so intertwined with women and gender studies, ethnic studies and LGBTQ studies, I will introduce those perspectives.”

According to Nichole, media

are one of the most influential and powerful institutions in society. Media influence the public, even people who avoid television, movies or listening to music.

Those people still interact with people who consume media, so they consume media indirectly. They also see billboards while driving or a TV playing in the background at a doctor’s office.

“It’s influencing us even when we think we do not consume that much media. It’s impossible not to consume it,” she said. “It has a big impact on our own world views, who we think we are and who we think other people are, particularly if it’s a group we have little exposure to.”

From women and gender studies, Nichole pays attention to how pop culture and media portray gender, and how that affects everyone’s lives. Media messages convey about what men and women are supposed to be like and how they are to act are reflected through cultural norms. If someone is told he or she is not living up to those cultural norms then it could have profound psychological impact, Nichole said.

“Women are taught that their worth comes from how they look, but there is only a narrowly defined way to look to be considered beautiful and be valued. That can be an incredibly damaging form of ‘othering.’”

It can be life threatening if it leads to eating disorders or complications from cosmetic procedures. It can be costly for someone who spends money and time buying and applying those cosmetics, rather than engaging with the community, she said.

Nichole joined the NW-ARM Board in part because of her time in graduate school at Gonzaga University. John Caputo, the director of NW-ARM, was her adviser when she attended. The board includes professionals, educators and others who have a passion for media literacy.

Once a month, they meet to discuss what they see in media, and ways to educate schools and the community.

“We brainstorm ways to involve the community,” Nichole said.

NW-ARM teamed up with Whitworth’s women and gender

studies department in November to help bring Jennifer Stuller, author of *Ink-Stained Amazons and Cinematic Warriors: Superwomen in Modern Mythology*, to the Whitworth campus.

Having the public interact with what it means to be a responsible media consumer helps them use that power to make changes.

Nichole encourages students, community members and others to use their voices if they find perspectives are overlooked, specifically with entertainment media.

“Sometimes we are not aware of the power we have as consumers,” Nichole said. “Stop watching a show and tell other people why you’re not watching it.”

“We can let our opinions be known, telling the newspaper we don’t like the way they covered something by writing the editor or submitting an opinion piece so they hear from the people they’re supposed to serve,” she said.

A vital part of being civically engaged with what powerful institutions do is to pay attention to the messages they are sending, Nichole said.

One assignment she gives in her “Representations of Women in Popular Culture” course is for students to keep a weekly media and popular culture journal. They write about what they see in the media in terms of gender.

“This makes them stop and reflect on types of media they don’t even think about—billboards, background songs in stores, magazines in waiting rooms and more,” she said. “I ask the students: What messages are being given? Do you support them? Why or why not? If you don’t, what can you do as an individual?”

There are many ways the public can be more informed consumers. Nichole encourages people to be active rather than passive media consumers by taking advantage of educational opportunities.

NW-ARM gives tools to help consumers analyze the media they interact with. It also offers media salons for people to discuss media topics and shows movies that build awareness of media issues.

For information, call 777-3511, email nbogarosh@whitworth.edu or visit <https://nwaresponsible-media.org>.

‘Faith over Fear’ Tour seeks sponsors in Eastern Washington

Lutheran pastor Terry Kylo and Faith Action Network board colleague Aneelah Afzali seek sponsors and hosts to bring their anti-Islamophobia workshop, “Faith over Fear: Standing with Our Muslim Neighbors Roadshow,” to Yakima, Tri-Cities, Walla Walla, Pullman, Spokane, Coeur d’Alene, Moses Lake, Ellensburg and Wenatchee in March.

“Each year the Islamophobia industry spends more than \$30 million dollars to make people afraid of Islam and American Muslims,” said Terry, “turning people against each other toward a divided, fearful future.

“We don’t have to live in that future. Together we can build a future based on our shared values and vision for America,” he said.

He seeks faith leaders from all churches, mosques, synagogues and temples, as well as civic, education and community leaders, to join in learning about the threat the Islamophobia industry poses to the nation and civil liberties, and what communities of faith together can do about it.

Aneelah, a Muslim woman who wears a hijab and has a Harvard law degree, is the founder and executive director of the American Muslim Empowerment Network

(AMEN), an initiative of the Muslim Association of Puget Sound (MAPS).

Terry is director of Neighbors in Faith, an interfaith effort to recognize Muslims as neighbors and partners in building a more peaceful world, authorized by the Episcopal and Lutheran churches in western Washington.

Their event includes time for questions and interaction with faith, political and education leaders in the communities.

For information, call 360-770-2774, email terry@neighborsinfaith.org or visit neighborsinfaith.org.

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Poor People's Campaign is a way to continue to reach out to those who fall

Many thanks to the strangers who rushed to help me when I fell flat on my face in a puddle while stepping from a chain-store parking lot onto the sidewalk. Spokesman Review columnist Paul Turner recently addressed the experience of strangers reaching out on impulse to help people get up when they fall. He observed that in these times, when people don't want to talk about differing political opinions, those helping don't ask about politics, but react in a split second to help, asking, "Are you all right?"

As we enter the new year, with a new tax structure, ongoing natural disasters, festering hate across racial and religious lines, threats of nuclear war, let's hope we continue to ask each other, across our political, economic, social and racial divisions, "Are you all right?" Let us hope we continue to help each other stand up again.

There are many ways people fall through the cracks of our society every day. There are many people in our nonprofits, gov-

ernment agencies and faith communities, reaching out to help those who fall to stand up and walk on in their lives.

The rules are changing for those in the caring communities. As those who receive the greatest breaks in taxes reap their benefits from a bill that eliminates tax deductions for charitable giving, let us hope those who benefit the most, and everyone else, will increase their undergirding of the faith and nonprofit sectors, which may be called on to pick up the slack as government will likely seek cuts to reduce the new deficits.

Let us hope that those who benefit the most will generously, as promised, pass on their fortunes, bringing home offshore profits, assets and jobs to be taxed at the new lower rates, to bring the economic growth that is promised to offset the deficits and improve the economic well being of all.

The more funds put into circulation through the economy, the healthier it is. That's more than buying locally or buying

American. It's about hiring people, paying them just wages and salaries with benefits, and about donating generously so all can consume, invest and share in the wealth.

Let us hope that will happen so two parents working full-time don't have to live with their children in their car because their affordable housing became unaffordable.

Let us hope Congress will respect that people have paid into programs of Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid, so they receive the promised income and services.

Aware that might not happen, faith leaders have launched the "Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival," for the 50th anniversary of Martin Luther King Jr.'s Poor People's Campaign in 1967.

The campaign will coordinate civil disobedience by more than 25,000 people in 25 states, resurrecting King's ethos of non-violent, confrontational love for today.

Organizers seek to address the plight of more than 45 million Americans who live

in poverty and confront environmental destruction, white supremacy, unchecked militarism and voter suppression.

The campaign is sharing commonplace stories of poverty—like the family living in their car, a young woman dying of cancer because of being denied Medicaid or a man breaking the window of a building housing homeless people.

Since 1967, there have been efforts to undo hard-won gains, said organizers, weakening unions, reducing the value of minimum wages, suppressing votes of poor people and enriching corporations.

One organizer, the Rev. William Barber II, president of Repairers of the Breach, quoted Isaiah: "Woe to those who make unjust laws, to those who issue oppressive decrees to deprive the poor of their rights and withhold justice from the oppressed of my people."

Mary Stamp - Editor

It is our obligation to keep hope alive if we are to be fully human

Hope... the word, the challenge, the feeling, the invitation—it is all circling within my mind, my heart.

Winter is a good time to reflect on hope. The trees are bare, no leaves to slow the wind, catch the rain, shelter from the sun. Flower beds are mostly empty of anything that looks like life. The air is sharp, maybe even harsh.

In our country good news is only found by a deep search in the media, buried under "complicit," "harassment," "divisiveness," but hope is circling within me. It does not go away.

I decide to be hopeful.

The challenge is to nourish it, keep it alive, rejoice in every tidbit that feeds

it: good news, a friend who loves me, an invitation to be in community with others whose lives reflect that they, too, allow hope to continue circling within them.

The invitation is to offer hope to others and receive it from them, to act on behalf of hope to make the world one that instills hope more easily.

It is to notice when something changes for the better—name it, talk about it, celebrate it, support those who made it happen, be one who makes it happen, invite others to be change agents, too.

In the fall, we plant bulbs. Is that hope? Or an act of faith?

Winter is a good time to reflect on hope, but we have been here before. We believe,

we know, that those bulbs will shoot up in green and astonishing color and design in the spring.

We believe, we know, that those bare branches will produce buds which will burst into life, beautiful flowers which promise fruit, leaves which shelter us and dance in the spring breezes.

Those are the seasonal signs that give rise to hope.

If we choose to hope through every season, then we find that our hope does not depend on external signs, stories or events. It is within each of us, and it is within our power to keep it alive. No, it is our obligation to keep it alive if we are committed to being fully human in this world, not yet

a community of justice, peace, love, joy.

If we hold firm to hope, then those dreams and desires that we have for our world will continue to show themselves, along with possibilities to make them real.

We must persevere and hold fast to our dreams, nothing less. We can be transparently supportive, respectful of each other, a community of concern for the common good. We can live out the compassion that is integral to being human. We can.

The circling, the challenge, the invitation, and our Yes will take us through season after season riding on the wings of hope.

Mary Ann Farley, SNJM
Contributing Editor



Breaking the chain reaction of evil calls for turning around, resilience

Light in the Darkness

Oh, how dark the journey of the Wise Ones to Bethlehem! The story of them is one of people using the science of their day to understand the direction of the world. They longed for peace. They hoped for "Goodwill Toward All." In the story, they were not alone in the darkness, a light was their guide. While many of us have known winters that seemed dark and dangerous, this winter seems even darker. We need a strong light to lead us away from what feels like the edge of a cliff.

In the Book of the Revelation to John, the writer has a vision that pulls away the veil of illusion to show things as they are and as they can be. In our world today, the veil of the illusion of civility, respect, humility, compassion and goodwill toward all has been pulled away.

The question now is: What will we do with this exposed truth?

There are some individuals with great power today just as Herod and Pontius Pilate had in the days of Jesus. Those two did not like each other, yet they worked together to increase their wealth and power. It happened then and it happens today.

We need not go that far back to find the ugly realities of greed. Our own history of racism, violence, oppressing the poor, and financing the military at the expense of our society continues. Read again the words of the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., in "Strength to Love" in 1963:

"Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that. Hate multiplies hate, violence multiplies violence, and toughness multiplies toughness in a descending spiral of destruction...."

"The chain reaction of evil — hate begetting hate, wars producing more wars—must

be broken, or we shall be plunged into the dark abyss of annihilation."

Many times people have wished that God would destroy the Herods, Pilates and those like them so we could start anew. The problem is, we have a story that says God tried that and in time, people went right back to pushing their power and filling their greed. Destruction from God is not the answer, although we may bring destruction upon ourselves if we do not change.

The only answer is to turn around. That's what repentance means, turn around from concern only for personal gain and turn toward compassion that is mindful of all. In the fullness of time, Jesus entered to show us the way of compassion. Let us embrace the love revealed in God who comes not to destroy but to be with us and teaches us to be with one another.

We must practice being lights filled with civility, respect, humility, compassion, and good will toward all. Then our journey through the darkness will be lit with the light that the darkness cannot hold back. Then will we arrive at the way of peace and Goodwill to All.

Pastor Gen Heywood
Veradale UCC

"Resilience" was the word of the year for 2017 We heard it everywhere—from our faith leaders, to foundations offering grants and workshops for nonprofits, in our social media feeds, yoga classes, and in conversation with friends. How do we build resilience to sustain our work?

There were many examples of resilience-building in the Faith Action Network's work this year: We marched and marched until our shoes wore thin, for women, for immigrants, for science (something we never thought we'd have to march for)! We

marched against white supremacist hatred displayed in Charlottesville and in the constant attacks on our Muslim, Jewish, and immigrant neighbors. We found solidarity and strength in our marching together, some for the first time.

We continue to raise our voices together at the federal level against the current tax bill that favors wealthy interests and harms low-income and middle class neighbors.

We share with you breaking information as we hear from our national coalition partners what action is needed in both Washingtons.

We celebrate wins like halting the Muslim ban through the leadership of our Attorney General and defending healthcare and the Affordable Care Act. Our celebrations of those moments build resilience.

Our FAN network continues to grow and build resilience at the local level too: This year, we welcomed 22 new faith communities to our network: the first Catholic church—St. Leo's Parish in Tacoma—Herzl-Ner Tamid Congregation on Mercer Island, and Lakeridge Lutheran Church in South Seattle. Seattle Mennonite as our first Mennonite community, new communities from the north with First Congregational Church in Bellingham, to the south with Unitarian Universalist Church of Vancouver, and the Muslim Association of Puget Sound. We connected with communities to the east in Spokane, Pullman and the Tri-Cities, and west to Port Angeles and the Olympic Peninsula in 22 cluster gatherings this fall. Crisscrossing the state, we connect for resilience.

We have a robust state legislative agenda for 2018. We will continue to be attentive to action in Congress, with budget concerns, protection of civil and human rights, and care for our planet. We also hear the con-

cerns of faith communities on local issues. Rooted locally and acting at the state and federal levels, we build resilience.

As the meme goes, while the arc of the moral universe is long, it's not going to bend toward justice by itself. Raising our moral voices, living out our beliefs and acting in community, bends the arc. Resiliency allows for the bendability of our individual lives, our strategies and our communities to arc toward justice.

Elise DeGooyer and Paul Benz
Co-directors Faith Action Network

Thank you for your continued approach of a community open to all faiths who are working toward living together in a world seeking hope.

Berlena Brock – Seattle

I really appreciate and enjoy The Fig Tree. It renews my faith in humanity by reminding me that not all people who claim to be religious are only concerned with themselves and insuring their spot in heaven. I love reading about all the good works being done by so many people of faith. Thank you!

Kerry Masters
Liberty Lake

Great to be in touch after all these many years.

I am afraid the exchange control laws of Sri Lanka will not permit me to send you a gift in cash. But we do appreciate The Fig Tree, which we read online, and your efforts to share information about so many people.

Thanks for all you do,
Kenneth Fernando
Retired Anglican Bishop of Colombo,
Sri Lanka



Calendar of Events

- Jan 2** • **Police Ombudsman Commission Meeting**, City Council Chambers, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.
- Jan 2, 16** • **Showing up for Racial Justice**, 35 W. Main, 6:30 to 8 p.m., 838-7870
- Jan 4** • **Café Affogato Community Day** Benefitting the Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane, 35 W. Main, 7 a.m. to 8 p.m., 838-7870
- Jan 4, 18** • **Peace and Justice Action Committee**, 35 W. Main, 5:30 p.m., 838-7870
- Jan 10** • **Hispanic Business/Professional Association Monthly Luncheon**, Bob Lutz, Spokane Regional Health District, Perkins Restaurant, Division and Olive, 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., hbaspokane.net
- **Fuse Spokane Club**, books on Martin Luther King Jr., Spokane Public Library, 906 W. Main, 6 p.m.
- **Spokane Regional Law and Justice Council**, Spokane Regional Health District, 1101 W. College Ave. noon to 1:30 p.m., 838-7870
- **Inland Northwest Death Penalty Abolition Group**, 35 W. Main, 5:30 p.m., 838-7870
- **Veterans for Peace Meeting**, 35 W. Main, 6:45 p.m., 838-7870
- Jan 11** • **"Don't Be Little, Be Big: Courage, Safety, Value and Kindness,"** Children's Program Honoring Martin Luther King Jr.'s Works, Kootenai County Task Force on Human Relations, Lake City Community Church, 6000 N. Ramsey, Coeur d'Alene schools at 9:30 a.m. and Post Falls schools at 11 a.m., 208-765-3932, idahohumanrights.org
- * **Justice Night: Talk to a Lawyer for Free**, Center for Justice, 35 W. Main, 5:30 p.m., cforjustice.org
- Jan 11, 18, 25** • **Taizé Prayer Service**, The Ministry Institute, 405 E. Sinto, 4:15 to 5 p.m., 313-5765
- Jan 12-13** • **24-Hour Cancer Retreat**, "To See Another Sunrise: How to Survive and Thrive When Cancer Hits," Jim Morrison, stage 4 cancer survivor, Immaculate Heart Retreat Center, 6910 S. Ben Burr Rd., 448-1224
- Jan 14** • **Yakima's Martin Luther King Jr. Interfaith Memorial Service**, "One Nation, One People," Greater Faith Baptist Church, 816 S. 6th St., Yakima, 509-916-0251
- **MLK Community Celebration**, Holy Temple Church of God in Church of God in Christ, 806 W. Indiana, 4 to 6 p.m., 455-8722
- **Pullman MLK Interfaith Service**, "Our Human Unity," St. James Episcopal Church, 1500 NE Stadium Way, 4 p.m., mlk.wsu.edu/events-mlk-2018
- Jan 15** • **Spokane's MLK Rally and March**, Convention Center Ballrooms ABC, 334 W. Spokane Falls Dr., 10 a.m., 455-8722
- **MLK Family Outreach Center** ribbon cutting at East Central Community Center, 500 S. Stone, noon, 455-8722
- **Justice, Peace and Equality March**, going from S. 5th St. along Martin Luther King Blvd. to Yakima Convention Center, noon, 509-916-0251
- **Henry Beauchamp Community Center** Soup Kitchen, 1112 S. 7th, Yakima, serving soup at 2 p.m.
- **Day of Service**, Washington State University Community for Civic Engagement, cce/wsua.edu/events/national-days-of-service
- **"On Allyship: Why We Teach the Movement,"** Kate Shuster of Shuster Consulting, Weyerhaeuser Hall, Whitworth University 7 to 9 p.m., 777-3583, whitworth.edu/news/index.aspx
- **NAACP Monthly Membership Meeting**, Community Building, 35 W. Main Ave., 7 to 8:30 p.m., spkncpbr@gmail.com
- Jan 17** • **"Restoring the Lower Snake River: Restoring a River for Fish, Wildlife, Recreation and Economic Development,"** Sam Mace of Save Our Wild Salmon, Center for Justice's Justice Lunchbox Lecture, Magic Lantern, 25 W. Main, noon, 835-5211
- **Day of Reflection**, "Loving People Who Bug You and the Art of Journaling," Catherine Reimer, Immaculate Heart Retreat Center, 6910 S. Ben Burr Rd., 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., 448-1224, ihrc.net
- **Pullman's MLK Community Celebration**, Shaun King, voice in the Black Lives Movement, CUB Senior Ballroom, 7 p.m.
- Jan 17, 18** • **Annual Jewish Film Festival**, Hemmingson Center at Gonzaga University, 7 p.m. Thursday and Saturday—"The Last Laugh" and "Past Life"—and 2 p.m. Sunday, "A Quiet Heart," sajfs.org/our-program/sjcff
- Jan 19-21** • **Weekend Retreat** for Men and Women, "Dusting Off the Catechism: Everything You Wanted to Know But Didn't Want to Ask," Fr. Michael Maher, SJ, IHRC, 6910 S. Ben Burr Rd., 448-1224
- Jan 20** • **Register for the 2018 Winter Organ Academy** in May, American Guild of Organists and Musicfest Northwest, 624-2980, williamclose@comcast.net
- Jan 21** • **Women's March on Spokane**, "Washington Women Move Mountains," Spokane Convention Center, 1 p.m.
- Jan 24** • **Police Accountability Coalition Meeting**, 35 S. Main, 5:30 p.m., pjals.org
- Jan 24-Mar 7** • **"Spirituality 101 series** with Kathy Finley, The Ministry Institute Chapel, 405 E. Sinto, 12:30 to 2 p.m., 484-4668
- Jan 25** • **Spokane Homeless Connect 2018**, Salvation Army Community Center, 223 E. Nora Ave., multiple services in one location, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., 710-1471
- **Poetry Reading**, Yusef Komunyakaa, Hemmingson Center at Gonzaga, 7 p.m.
- Jan 27** • **Eastern Washington Legislative Conference**, "Framing Faithful Discourse for the Common Good," St. Mark's Lutheran Church, 316 E. 24th Ave., 8:45 a.m. to 3 p.m., 535-1813, info@thefigtree.org
- Jan 31** • **Fig Tree delivery**, St. Mark's Lutheran, 316 E. 24th Ave., 9 a.m., 535-1813
- **Community Forum**, "Making Mental Health Essential Health," former U.S. Rep. Patrick Kennedy, Spokane Convention Center, 334 W. Spokane Falls Blvd., 5 to 8 p.m., 279-7000, info@thekennedyforum.org
- Feb 1** • **Fig Tree Benefit/Development Planning and Board Meetings**, Emmanuel Family Life Center, 631 S. Richard Allen Ct., noon for Benefit and Development Committee, and 1 to 3 p.m. for the Board, 535-1813, mary@thefigtree.org
- **"Coming Home: A Soldier's Project,"** Our Place Benefit Performance, Gonzaga's Magnuson Theatre, 6 p.m., 326-7267, ourplacespokane.org

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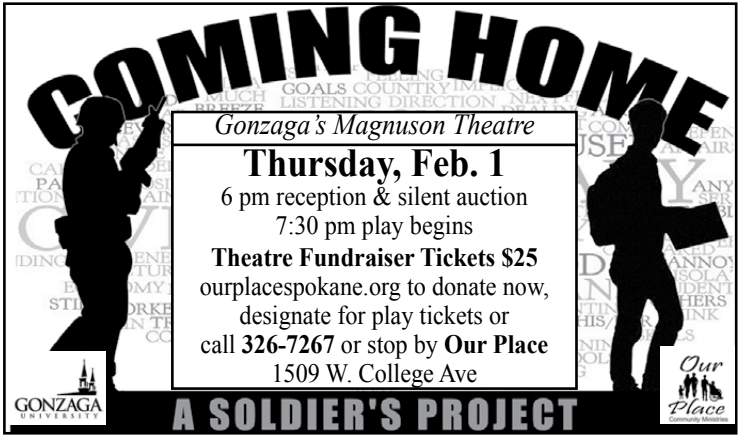
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Artist creates sculpture for local destination site for healing from war

From her childhood and early years in Szeged in southern Hungary, living under a Cold War dictatorship, Ildikó Kalapács understands suffering and cares about human rights.

She conveys those concerns both in her art—acrylic paintings and sculptures she exhibits in the Inland Northwest, Central Europe and Japan—and in her folk dancing and folk culture research.

In an upcoming exhibition, “Unwanted Journeys,” Ildikó shares images of the physical movement of refugees from their homes, their arrival in another culture and their need to adjust.

“Refugees face physical, language, cultural and psychological hurdles when they lose their home and start in a new place,” she said.

The exhibit begins with an open house from 5 to 8 p.m., Friday, March 2, at the second floor of the Object Space Gallery, 1818 1/2 E. Sprague. It is open by appointment through March.

“Unwanted Journeys” includes video, multilingual stories, poetry, drawings, sculpture, mixed media, embroidery and textiles, some by her and some from refugees.

For the exhibit, she also compiled old photos of Hungarian villages in Romania to show how they present themselves to convey their cultural and ethnic identity.

Ildikó’s other art venture is “The Bearing Public Sculpture Project,” a nonprofit organization raising funds to create, cast and install a life-size, eight-foot by nine-foot bronze statue, called “Bearing.” She created a model of the statue to promote the project.

She plans to install it in 2021 in Sunset Park at the west end of Kendall Yards beside the Centennial Trail, as a destination site for individuals and groups to visit for healing. The project also includes articles on healing from veterans and refugees.

“Bearing” celebrates the strength of women around the world, especially civilian women in war. It depicts a woman carrying, in a food basket on her head, a young man, a soldier with a gun.

While women are often the food makers and nurturers, Ildikó said that more women have died and been injured because of wars since World War I than soldiers.

“The ratio is increasing, but women are invisible in war,” Ildikó said. “We need media to cover stories of women who bear the physical and emotional load in the aftermath of wars.”

UNICEF reports that civilian fatalities have climbed from 15 percent in World War I to more than 90 percent in the 1990s with aerial bombings and door-to-door combat in villages and cities, rather than there being clear battlefields and civilian areas.

“The burden of war on society is a multi-generational trauma, especially for refugees and veterans who do not have ways to process issues,” Ildikó said. “When they arrive at their new home or return home, there is no healing place. They are ashamed to talk about what happened to them and what they have done.

“I hope people—tribes, veterans, women and others—come to the statue as a destination site, a place to deal with and heal from traumas of war and loss,” she said.

Ildikó also told how her commitment to art, folk dance, folk lore and human rights intersect.



Ildikó Kalapács shows model of the “Bearing” statue she plans to create and cast in bronze.

Unable to attend an art university in Hungary, she studied from ages 14 to 18 at a special art school. Then from 1983 to 1987, she made a living as a stone carver and folk dancer.

Because she wanted to be an art historian, she moved in 1986 near Budapest, where she met her husband Wayne Kraft, a German professor at Eastern Washington University (EWU), at a folk dancing event. He was there on a one-year Fulbright scholarship to study folk dancing and the Hungarian language.

“During the Cold War, Fulbright scholarships were important ways for people to build connections,” she said.

Ildikó came to the United States in 1987 to study at EWU. She earned a bachelor’s degree in studio art in 1992.

Since graduating, she has created art works, as well as performing, choreographing and teaching folk dances, and doing folklore research.

For more than 20 years, she and Wayne, who grew up in Arizona and Alaska, have done research on folklore and folk dancing. Both are fluent in Hungarian, so they have visited Hungarian-speaking villages in post-Communist Romania for their research. They also do translation to build communication between Americans and Hungarians.

In interviewing villagers, Ildikó gathers information to share at anthropological conferences in the U.S. and forums on how non-Western societies function and how traditional culture is often tied to farming.

“When farms fail and are swallowed up in large-scale, capitalist farms, villages break up, and the people lose their culture,” she said. “Some farmers are able to keep their land and cultivate it to sustain their families.”

People were tied to the land in feudalism. Hungary was an agricultural country until 1945. The culture, economy and lifestyle of peasants was about caring for the land from birth to death, she said.

“Today, people try to continue the non-GMO, manual farming because it’s better for them and the environment,” Ildikó said. “If they can stay in the community they can sustain their language and culture.”

In Romania, the minorities are Hungarian, Roma, Germans and a small number of Jews, so staying on the land is not just about how they treat the land, but also about human rights as minorities.

“We cannot separate healthy

food production and rights of access to safe drinking water,” said Ildikó, noting that the issues of sustaining land, water, language and culture apply on any continent.

Ildikó said the Hungarian Folk Dance movement going to isolated villages in Transylvania strengthened peasants living under dictatorship 40 years ago to now, helping them realize the issues they face are global issues for minorities.

“Native Americans and African Americans in the U.S. also struggle to keep their cultures,” she said. “It’s a long-term fight everywhere.”

Ildikó said it raises villagers’ self-esteem for academics to come to study their culture, assuring them that there is something valu-

able in their way of life.

Today, teachers, priests, pastors, doctors and judges have major roles in the villages of Central Europe, helping maintain strict cultural values but also helping children rethink options for their future, beyond farming tasks.

“They know most of the people and have authority, both positive and negative,” she said.

In her art, Ildikó captures different dynamics, metaphors and images of peasants’ lives, as well as her concern about minority rights and water rights.

“Western culture is invasive, and communities have lost much through wars. They cling to what is tangible and enduring,” she said.

When Ildikó exhibits her art in Central Europe and Japan, in particular, she hopes to start a dia-

logue and hear reactions of viewers there to images she creates.

Ildikó said her parents and grandparents saw war and had no way to address it. Her grandparents were peasants with limited education, and her parents were blue collar workers.

Because they experienced wars and life under a strict dictatorship, they lacked control over their lives. What they read, saw and listened to were censored. That abuse and strictness were passed on in their family.

“Growing up like that was not healthy, but it was how I became sensitive to suffering, which I convey in my art,” Ildikó said.

“I saw damage because people did not have a way to talk about the pain and trauma they experienced so they could digest it and have a healthy society,” she said.

Ildikó grew up atheist and humanist in the Communist society, so she is not religious, but believes it is important for refugees, veterans and others to forgive themselves, their families and others.

“Forgiveness is important,” she said. “For me, it’s important to forgive my family, forgive others and forgive myself. Too many people carry guilt and anger.

“My values are to care for the poor, marginalized and sick,” she added, noting that the marker for a strong democracy is in how it treats marginalized people.”

That’s why art, folk dance, folklore research and human rights come together in her life.

For information, call 747-0979, email Ildiko@ildiart.com or visit www.thebearingproject.com.



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