

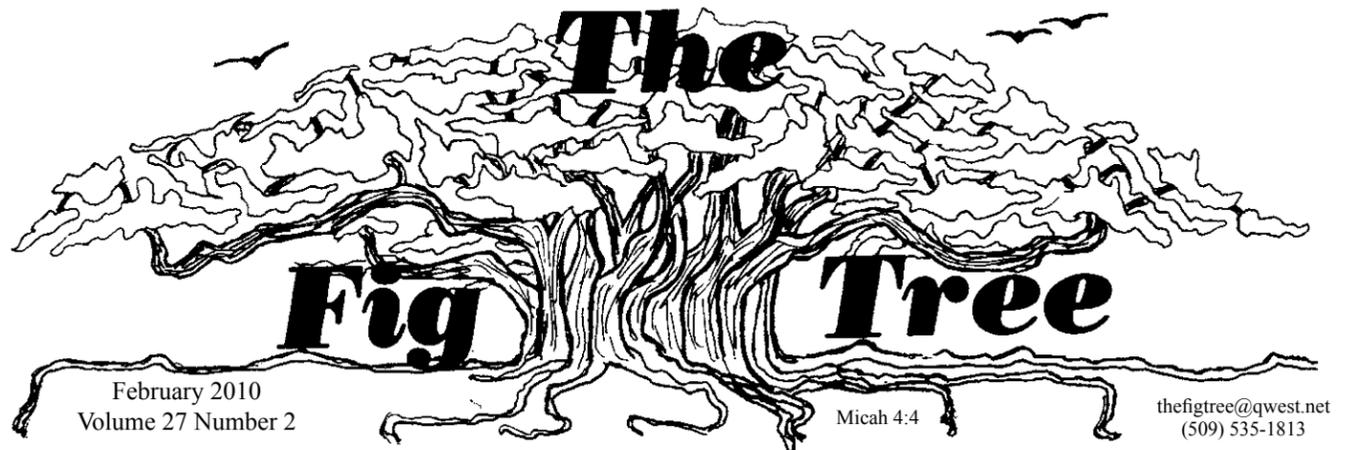
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Monthly newspaper and website covering faith in action throughout the Inland Northwest
online in color at www.thefigtree.org

Curiosity about cultures opens eyes

By Mary Stamp

While the United States was debating health care reform in January, Marilyn Wilson, a registered nurse and administrator with the Hyperbaric and Comprehensive Wound Care unit at Deaconess, participated in a 10-day Witness for Peace health care research delegation to Cuba.

On that trip, she found a third-world country with a first-world health care system that challenges assumptions about U.S. health care.

Three year ago, she had been surprised to read about the quality of Cuban health care outcomes. She mentioned her desire to learn more to former directors of the Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane (PJALS). Last year, they told her of the Jan. 8 to 18 delegation—eight days in Havana and two in La Esperanza.

“We may have the best health care in the world, but it’s for people who have good health insurance,” she said.

“I think we have a moral responsibility to take care of each other and to help those who do not have enough,” she said. “We need to spread the wealth.”



Marilyn Wilson stirs a pot of beans, gaining new appreciation for them in Cuba.

She also believes Americans should learn about other countries and people.

“Traveling in other countries, we see that people who are not Americans or Christians are happy and doing well,” Marilyn said. “We can learn from each other.”

“If we dislike Cuba’s government, we still need to go there and see what is happening,” she said.

While she is aware the 10-day trip planned by Cubans with interpretation may have been slanted, she still felt organizers at the Martin Luther King Center in Havana provided a broad experience.

On the visit, Marilyn confirmed her belief that the United States should not be afraid of universal, single-payer health care.

Growing up in the small wheat-farming town of Almira, Wash., she fed her interest in international issues by reading National Geographic.

After earning her degree in nursing in 1968 at Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma, she came back to Spokane to work, met her husband, Lew, and then spent five years in Seattle, while he studied at the University of Washington

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Yom Hashoah service, essay contest address Holocaust denial and hate

Hilary Bernstein, community director of the Pacific Northwest Anti-Defamation League (ADL) in Seattle, sees Holocaust denial as one form of hate to confront and counter through education.

Speaking on “Holocaust Denial in the Northwest” at the Spokane Community Observance of the Holocaust at 7 p.m., Sunday, April 11, at Temple Beth Shalom, 1322 E. 30th Ave., she will discuss the ADL’s concern about efforts to stereotype, dehumanize or deny human rights to any group of people.

“Holocaust denial is real,”

said Hilary, whose office in Seattle covers Washington, Idaho, Oregon, Montana and Alaska. “We see it occurring around the world—expressed recently by a world leader, by white supremacists, at revisionists’ conferences and through internet chatter.”

“Some say the Holocaust didn’t happen, and others think it is blown out of proportion or that it is used to guilt the world,” Hilary said in a recent interview.

The Pacific Northwest Anti-Defamation League pays attention to pockets of denial in the region.

“If these opinions are taken as facts, it can influence and confuse people,” she said. “Holocaust denial is related to hate that denies groups their dignity, history, humanity and rights.”

“Hate speech is protected in this country, even though it is ugly and hurtful,” Hilary said, pointing out the need to recognize it and challenge it.

The ADL is concerned about recent efforts to stereotype and dehumanize Hispanics, immigrants, African Americans, Native Americans, gays and lesbians.

“Founded in 1913, this civil rights organization fights prejudice and bigotry of all kinds and securing fair treatment for all people in three ways,” Hilary said.

First, it investigates and monitors hate and extremist groups and individuals that deny civil rights.

Second, it crafts and promotes legislation in the Northwest states and the federal government to secure hate crime laws to apply in crimes that target people because of their race, religion, gender or

Continued on page 3

Dialogue will uplift media barriers and opportunities

To discuss barriers to and opportunities for sharing wisdom through media, The Fig Tree is planning a community dialogue on “Wisdom and Media” at 7 p.m., Tuesday, April 27, at the Episcopal Cathedral of St. John, 127 E. 12th.

Organizers ask congregations, community groups, higher education, youth programs and media to recruit groups of eight to engage in table discussions in response to a panel presentation.

Steve Blewett of The Fig Tree Board and journalism professor emeritus at Eastern Washington University will give an overview of journalism and the faith community. Panelists will reflect on avenues for sharing information and understanding among groups, and between groups and the media.

The panelists are Susan English, associate director of journalism at Gonzaga University and member of the Northwest Alliance for Responsible Media board; the Very Rev. Bill Ellis of the Episcopal Cathedral of St. John; the Rev. Scott Kinder-Pyle of Latah Valley Presbyterian Church; the Rev. Joyce O’Connor Magee of Manito United Methodist Church and the Rev. Happy Watkins of New Hope Baptist Church.

After their presentations, table groups will discuss how media coverage empowers or disempowers faith communities.

“In their coverage of issues, few media seek perspectives from faith communities,” said Steve. “Media rely on secular points of view from politicians, educators, special interest groups, interested and affected individuals and professional commentators, except when faith communities politicize their agendas or enter into the political or social arena.”

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REGIONAL ECUMENICAL & INTERFAITH NEWS

Easter Sunrise Service begins at 6 a.m.

The 2010 Community Easter Sunrise Service begins at 6 a.m., Sunday, April 4, at Greenwood Memorial Terrace, 211 N. Government Way, for the Ecumenical Community Easter Sunrise Service.

This year, The Fig Tree and the Coalition of Progressive Pastors are sponsoring and planning the event, said the Rev. Joyce O'Connor Magee, pastor of Manito United Methodist Church and primary organizer of the event

through the Interfaith Council in recent years. She is also on The Fig Tree board and is involved with the pastors' coalition.

The preacher on the theme, "If I Were in Charge of the Resurrection," the Rev. John Temple Bristol, who holds doctor of ministry and doctor of literature degrees, is the author of two books, *What Paul Really Said about Women*, published by HarperCollins and *What the Bible Really Says about Love, Marriage and Family*, pub-

lished by Chalice.

He is pastor of Country Homes Christian Church and an adjunct faculty member at Gonzaga University, teaching the synoptic Gospels—Matthew, Mark and Luke.

He previously taught at George Fox Evangelical Seminary in Portland and is a frequent lecturer on Pauline writings regarding women and faith.

For information, call 535-1813.

Folksinger, storyteller performs in Spokane

Folksinger and storyteller Rosalie Sorrells of Boise will perform at 7:30 p.m., Tuesday, April 27, at Spokane Community College's Lair Auditorium as a benefit for the Hagan Foundation Center for the Humanities.

The Grammy nominated folksinger offers common sense, es-

pecially when it comes to issues of sustainability and the environment, said organizer Myra St. Clair Baldwin, program coordinator for the foundation.

Rosalie hails from a long lineage of famed folk song artists, including Utah Phillips and others, who give voice to the aspira-

tions of the common folk through music.

"She brings a unique voice in the world of American folk music, one that embodies the spirit and character of living locally here in the Northwest," Myra said.

For information, call 533-8048.

Second Harvest recruits volunteers

Second Harvest is recruiting more than 150 volunteers to help with Help Stamp out Hunger as part of the Letter Carriers Food Drive to benefit Second Harvest on Saturday, May 8.

Volunteers will help at area postal stations including Airway Heights, Manito, Regal, Valley, Sunset, Northpointe, Hillyard and the Metro postal stations, collecting donated food from volunteer drivers and placing it in totes on trucks. About 10 volunteers are

needed per shift for site workers at the postal stations, said Julie Newbitt, coordinator.

There are morning and afternoon shifts. Volunteer driver and runner teams are needed to collect bags of food from area neighborhoods and return it to your designated postal station. Maps and driver identification are provided. Morning and afternoon shifts are also available.

Help the Hungry Warehouse Sort Nights - Join up to 30 com-

munity volunteers in sorting and boxing produce, bagging bulk pasta and frozen vegetables or sorting food drive items. These sort nights take place twice a week at the Second Harvest warehouse at 1234 E. Front Avenue from 5:30 to 7:30 PM. Volunteers must be 14 and older to participate in this event.

For information, visit www.2-harvest.org and click on Volunteer Your Time or call 252-6242 or email jnesbitt@2-harvest.org

Dialogue on media opens conversations

Continued from page 1

As gatekeepers of the public discourse, newspapers, TV and radio can influence conversations and perceptions, he said.

"That environment has changed with the internet," Steve said. "Now, any person or group can become a 'media' and promote their own agenda and perspectives. If anything, that has worsened by this cacophony of voices."

The small group dialogue will explore ways faith communities can break through barriers in traditional and emerging media that prevent sharing the wisdom. They will discuss opportunities in traditional and new media to share wisdom to add constructively to public discourse.

"We hope to start an extended dialogue among communities of faith in the region to help interested parties better understand how media shape our understand-

ing of wisdom and public issues and what can be done to more effectively shape that process in authentic ways," Steve said.

For information, call 535-1813.

GU-MATESL

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Inland NW communities plan celebrations of the 40th Earth Day

In Spokane, Earth Day 2010 activities will be held from 1 to 6 p.m., Saturday, April 17, on Main St., which will be closed between Browne and Division for booths, vendors and performers, followed by music, performers and vendors inside the Community Building, 35 W. Main, from 6 p.m. to midnight.

Organizations with booths will provide earth-friendly activities for children.

The program will include the Procession of the Species with children in costumes, a presentation by the Washington State University Raptor Club, veg-

etable planting, recycled arts and crafts, films at the Magic Lantern Theater, a tree-planting outside Kizuri, and tours of the Main Market, the Community Building and the certified-green Saranac Building.

On April 12, Mayor Mary Verner will proclaim Earth Day Week, April 17 to 24.

For information, call 879-9337. Other Inland Northwest Earth Day celebrations include:

Earth Day Coeur d'Alene on the theme, "Simplify Your Life," will be held from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Saturday, April 17 at Harding Family Center, 411 N. 15th St.

Coordinator Anissa Duwaik said they will promote simple concepts of reduce, reuse and recycle to deal with the "throw-away" culture. For information, visit www.earthdaycda.org.

The Palouse-Clearwater Environmental Institute is planning an aspen restoration, trail maintenance and weed control day at the Rose Creek Nature Preserve at Albion from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Saturday, April 17.

The University of Idaho Sustainability Center in Moscow has several events on sustainability the week of April 20 to 25, including a Zero Waste Vendor Show,

lectures, volunteer projects, vegetarian cooking, native gardening, a film festival, a tree planting, a debate on renewable energy and a wetland benefit concert.

For information, visit uisc.uidaho.edu/earthweek/ or call 208-885-0125.

Sandpoint Earth Day Festival, 4 to 8 p.m., Wednesday, April 22 at Sandpoint Events Center (for info call (208) 265-9565);

There will be a **Spokane Valley celebration**, "Spring Into Action," offering interactive ways to protect the environment from 10 a.m. to noon, Saturday, April 10, at Valley Mission Park Picnic

Shelter, 11123 E. Mission. For information, call 720-5408.

The fifth annual **Tri-Cities Earth Day Celebration** will be an Earth Rock Concert at 7 p.m., Friday, April 16, at the Fire Barn, and an Earth Day Parade and Fair from noon to 4 p.m., Saturday, at Central Park, with food, games, music, folk dancing and booths of environmental organizations, businesses, community and educational groups.

For information, call 616-842-6321 or email debriegel.

Emmanuel Family Life Center opens, Fig Tree moves into office there

Since a ribbon-cutting ceremony Feb. 12 opening Emmanuel Family Life Center, nonprofits and community services have been moving into offices.

"This is a place for anyone to come to find access to resources that will help build our community in the Liberty Park and East Central neighborhoods," said Spencer Grainger, executive director of the new community center at 631 S. Richard Allen Court, beside Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church and part of the Richard Allen Enterprises campus of apartments, a day care, Interfaith Hospitality and other programs.

The Fig Tree is among the agencies that have moved in, along with Goodwill Mentoring Children of Promise South Perry Learning Center, Act Six, Community Colleges of Spokane-Running Start and the Inland Northwest Counseling Service (Responsible Renters).

Two offices available for rent, plus the community can rent the recreation center, activity center or multipurpose room for events, said Elisha Mitchell, program manager.

Recently the center held a gathering of the South Perry service providers and businesses to



Imani Green cuts the ribbon to open Emmanuel Center.

help the neighbors, who are busy running their operations, build relationships.

"We intend to be a hub for connecting people for community development," she said. "There are 40 businesses and organizations within a mile of the center."

Space built for the day care, which will stay in the lower level of the church, will be used as an activity center—a location for a teen after-school drop in center, marshal arts classes, fitness and conditioning classes, health screening and other programs run by neighborhood volunteers.

Center staff and neighborhood volunteers are producing the "South Perry Neighborhood

News" to raise awareness of neighborhood resources and community events.

The Emmanuel Center is owned and operated by Richard Allen Enterprises, a volunteer board that includes representatives from the neighborhood, Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church and the Spokane community.

The center is sponsoring an Earth Day South Perry Spring Pickup Day from 2 to 4 p.m., Thursday, April 22, meeting at the center, walking through the neighborhood to pick up debris and bringing it back to the center for disposal.

For information, call 534-1645 or visit eflc.org.

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with Fairmount Memorial Association

6 a.m.
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April 4



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2010 Fig Tree Dialogue



Wisdom & the Media

7 p.m., Tuesday, April 27

Cathedral of St. John - 127 E. 12th Ave.

Overview of Journalism:

Steve Blewett

EWU Journalism Professor Emeritus

As we deal with issues of our time and every time, media often ignore faith communities are often ignored as potential sources of constructive input.

What are avenues and barriers for sharing information?

How can we better address critical issues?

Panelists:

The Very Rev. Bill Ellis - Episcopal Cathedral of St. John

The Rev. Scott Kinder-Pyle - Latah Valley Presbyterian Church

The Rev. Joyce O'Connor Magee - Manito United Methodist Church

The Rev. Happy Watkins - New Hope Baptist Church

Susan English, associate journalism director, Gonzaga University

Recruit a table to participate in discussion and offer feedback:

What in media presentation of faith empowers you?

What in media presentation of faith disempowers you?

To RSVP, call 535-1813

Registered nurse finds first-world health care in third-world setting

Continued from page 1

School of Law, and she worked at Providence Hospital.

When they returned to Spokane, she was a field nurse in home health private duty for about six years, and later earned a master's in nursing administration at the Intercollegiate Nursing Center in 1987.

Marilyn, who attends Westminster Congregational United Church of Christ, has been involved with PJALS for many years.

When she learned about the trip to Cuba, Marilyn invited her daughter, Margaret Navarro, a registered nurse in Arlington, Va., to join her and 25 others.

Witness for Peace, which informs people about Latin American affairs related to U.S. policies, arranged for the health care delegation to enter Cuba legally, despite the U.S. travel ban, because groups can go to there for research.

The schedule was full, meeting with health care workers, judicial and education leaders.

With the health care debate going on in the United States, she wanted to learn how Cuba could provide health care on limited funding.

"The average Cuban earns \$25 a month, but life expectancy there is just six months less than the U.S. life expectancy," she said, "and infant mortality is equal to

or better than here."

Marilyn found that there is a primary-care doctor in every neighborhood, serving 350 families. Since the Soviet Union fell and Cuba lost its oil imports, fewer people drive cars. So doctors were moved to neighborhood primary care clinics and live above the clinics.

"Preventative care is encouraged, because it's less expensive than illness," she said. "People die of the same diseases we do: cardiovascular disease and cancers—breast and lung for women, and prostate and lung for men. Many smoke."

"I like prevention. In home health care, I worked with families to fix the cause of a problem, rather than just fixing a problem," she said.

While people die of malaria and typhus in nearby Haiti, Cuba prevents those diseases with clean water and treats them with medicines. Because of the embargo, Cubans make their own medicines, Marilyn said, adding that they also use alternative medicines. For example, a psychiatric clinic uses aromatherapy, essence therapy, massage and ballet.

How do people subsist on \$25 a month? she wondered.

"Education, housing and health care are free. Electricity and oil are subsidized. Everyone has access to the arts and baseball. People receive food vouchers for

rice and beans, which they eat for every meal. For dinner, they also eat meat and salad. They eat three meals a day, but do not have access to our sweets and carbohydrate snacks," she said.

Fifteen primary care clinics feed into a polyclinic, where people go for Xrays, MRIs, mammograms and other tests. In every metropolitan area there is a general hospital, plus an outpatient psychiatric clinic and outpatient physical rehabilitation. There are also maternity, pediatric and psychiatric hospitals, a lepersarium and an HIV sanitarium.

For leprosy and HIV, which still bear a stigma, health care workers teach people how to live with the diseases so they can be in the community, Marilyn learned.

She also learned that doctors are a commodity.

Cuba trains many doctors, so they "export" doctors, trading them for oil. The Latin American Medical School pays for anyone in Latin America to come there to study. Some North Americans are also trained there for free, so they are debt free once they graduate. They are expected in return to go to an area of high need.

"Here we have a pill for everything, but there the doctors listen, and offer prescriptions along with exercise and diet, believing that pills do not cure everyone. They also use herbal medicines, aware of proper dosages and the purity

of herbs," said Marilyn. "Some people who come to our wound clinic here are sometimes on 20 to 30 medicines."

She found that the quality of care there was a contrast to stark hospital facilities with chipped-enamel crank beds, bare walls and people bringing their own linen. The rooms needed paint, but were clean, she said.

The neonatal intensive care unit, however, had first-rate monitors, drips and lights, she said, noting that the latest model of equipment is not necessary to provide good health care.

"Health care here is big business," she said. "There it's a constitutional right. Because it is accessible, the Cubans may overuse it."

Marilyn shared some statistics:

- Government health care expenditures in Cuba are 10.8 percent of their national budget, but 19.1 percent in the U.S.

- Infant mortality in Cuba is 5.85 per 1,000, compared with 6.26 per 1,000 in the United States.

- Life expectancy there is 77.45

years, in contrast to 78.11 years in the United States.

- Cuba spends 9.1 percent of its budget on education, and the United States, 5.3 percent.

"Growing up, I learned that we have 'stuff' in abundance. We are a rich, wasteful country. The United States is my home and where I want to live, but traveling abroad I learned there are good things in Cuba, too," Marilyn said, "just as there are in Japan, Turkey and Europe, which I have visited."

For example, she said there were some advantages to not being able to afford to drive cars. Cubans have a well-used bus system, walking more, ride bikes, use horses and carts, and use oxen to plow and fertilize fields.

"It's idyllic and a paradox. It's a beautiful country that takes us back in time. Because internet and cell-phone access is limited, I didn't see people with earphones in their ears. People were talking to each other. The boulevard was full of young people conversing at 1 a.m. We could hear the murmur of them talking."

For information, call 747-0659.

Anti-Defamation League helps people recognize students', educators' prejudices

Continued from page 1

sexual identity.

Third, it educates students and educators as a proactive way to fight bias, working with schools and colleges to give teachers and students tools and strategies to stand up against prejudice and create school environments that are inclusive and safe for learning regardless of ethnic background or ability levels.

"We help people recognize prejudices of students and educators who make assumptions about students and help them in non-threatening ways to examine their stereotypes and think about how that affects the learning environment," said Hilary.

In late March, she took a group of diverse high school students to

Washington, D.C., where they met with students from Denver to discuss standing up to prejudice and bigotry, and toured the Holocaust Museum.

"We used the lessons of that period to talk about what happens to people when they become bystanders and look the other way," she said. "We also asked students to consider how they can come to speak out and act, so they do not become bystanders."

When the students return to their home communities, they will continue to meet for at least six months to develop community projects that promote diversity and convert their ideas into social action.

While in Spokane for Yom Hashoah, Hilary also plans on April

12 to visit Spokane schools to discuss bringing ADL workshops to the districts.

As part of the Yom Hashoah service, Perri Greeley, 10th grader at Lewis and Clark High School, will read her essay on "Holocaust Denial," which was the winning entry in the annual creative writing contest.

Participants in the candle-lighting ceremony will include James Mohr, interim director of the Gonzaga University Institute for Action Against Hate, lighting the candle in honor of the righteous among the nations, and Tut Gai, a survivor of the Darfur genocide, lighting the candle in memory of victims of other genocides.

For information, call 747-3304.



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High school students learn about Holocaust as they film survivors

Media teacher wants filmmaking students to understand the power of media to shape perceptions.

Ferris High School media teacher Joan Conger found in her five years of teaching one student who did not know about the Holocaust and one student who denied that it occurred. That student later said his denial was a joke. He knew it happened. She told him his joking about the Holocaust trivialized it.

Concerned that students take the Holocaust seriously, she agreed when Yom Hashoah organizer Hershel Zellman invited her to have her students film the April 11 Yom Hashoah observance.

She went a step further, encouraging three of the 22 students in her advanced filmmaking class to do mini documentaries on the Holocaust. Two are interviewing local Holocaust survivors, Carla Peperzak and Eva Lassman and one is interviewing her fifth grade teacher who is Jewish.

Her assignment was for students to do something that would make someone think or cry.

Alan Cerimovic, who was born in Bosnia and left during the war when he was four years old, had not yet interviewed Eva, who has been a local Holocaust educator for many years. He was planning to ask her about her significant memories and what happened to her family.

Alex Quine had already prepared a five-minute video of his interview with Carla, learning that she was 16 when Nazis came into her hometown, Amsterdam. Although she grew up Jewish, because her mother was Catholic, she was able to get ID papers without being marked as Jewish.

She told Alex of being unable to go outside during her teen years and having her friends disappear—unsure if they were hiding or picked up. She also said she lived a block from Anne Frank's house and was a friend of her sister, Margo.

"I had heard about the Holocaust in school, but this was about real life," Alex said. "I realize that we tend to take our freedom as a joke."

Hearing about her use of ration cards, he realized how comfortable his life with and how much food he throws away.

It will air on the Ferris Information Network—an internal school



Alex Quine reviews the mini documentary he made of an interview with Carla Peperzak.

TV network that broadcasts programs three times a week—to help the student body understand about the Holocaust.

When Joan first began teaching media at Ferris, she offered a media literacy class. Because of limited enrollment, she now includes those lessons in her classes on TV broadcasting, filmmaking, English and cinema studies.

"I encourage students to be aware of the difference between their intention and perception, and what someone else may perceive in what they film," she said.

She encourages them to look at negative content that might produce stereotypes.

"Young people tend to see only what they perceive," she said. "A student may say, 'My Jewish or Hispanic friend was not offended.'"

Joan, who earned a masters in filmmaking in 1988 at Stanford, lets them know that what is true of one friend may not be true for a broad media audience.

"I want them to understand that media has power and they need to be careful what perceptions they broadcast," she said. "Every school has issues around stereotypes. It's important to open their eyes so they see stereotypes are not reality, especially when what we do in our TV class airs to 2,000 people in the school."

Joan worked 18 years in the San Francisco area as a freelance film director and worked from 1999 to 2001 with Independent

TV Services producing "Point of View" and "Independent Lens" programs for PBS.

When she first came to Spokane, she was a freelance consultant until earning her school teaching certificate in 2005 at Gonzaga University and beginning that fall at Ferris.

For information, call 354-6154 or email joanco@spokaneschools.org.

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Pastor stirs thinking about church values, biblical interpretation

As a pastor, author and teacher, the Rev. John Bristow appreciates the opportunities he has had to challenge people on theology and values to stretch their thinking, understanding and faith.

In a recent interview, the preacher for the 2010 Ecumenical Easter Sunrise Service, recounted how he has sought to clarify values, widen perspectives and open understanding of biblical interpretation in his ministry at Country Homes Christian Church in North Spokane, his two books on biblical issues and his teaching Gonzaga University undergraduate students on the synoptic Gospels.

His ministry reaches out to people with caring and concepts that drew him into the faith community.

John didn't go to church and didn't like preachers or churches during his years growing up in Oregon. That shifted after he decided to go to a church camp to meet girls.

At camp, he found that faith offered meaningful insights for his life and decided to enter ministry. His early alienation gives him understanding of people outside of churches and people at different places in their faith journeys.

As he prepares to retire as pastor at Country Homes Christian, where he has served since 2002, he hopes he has contributed to people finding growth, wholeness, a relationship with "the living God and faith that issues into action."

Although he will retire from the church in June, he will continue to teach the synoptic Gospels—Matthew, Mark and Luke—one more year at Gonzaga.

In the Gonzaga classes, where he teaches 120 Christian, Jewish, Muslim and atheist students each year, he finds some students comfortably familiar with Scriptures, some somewhat knowledgeable and others considering the Scriptures undiscovered territory.

After graduating in 1967 from Northwest Christian College in Eugene, Ore., with a major in New Testament, he earned a master's in church history in 1970 and a doctor of ministry in pastoral ministry in 1972 at Lexington Theological Seminary.

He served a church in Louisville two years, Lake City Christian in Seattle, 19 years; Murray Hills Christian in Beaverton, nine years, and Country Homes Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

"Each congregation has different personalities, traditions and values," he said, describing Country Homes Christian as "a creative, growing and healthy congregation."

John led that congregation through a two-year study of core values Jesus' followers were to embody, and distilled with them nine values he uses as the basis of his preaching and teaching. Those



The Rev. John Bristow is Easter Sunrise preacher.

values are:

- Action centered love;
 - Accepting all people, including those who are marginalized;
 - Healing relationships through peacemaking and forgiveness;
 - Success that is measured by service, humility, generosity, compassion and faith;
 - Salvation as deliverance from troubles to be whole persons;
 - Prayer with sincerity, honesty, brevity, humility and persistence;
 - Proclaiming the good news that God's kingdom—God's will done on earth—is within reach;
 - Wealth as a means to satisfy stewardship and ministry, and
 - Ministry using stories to teach and create a passion for ministry.
- Since the study, church members have sent thank you notes to businesses that reflect those values, regardless of whether they are Christian.

For example, they wrote to a dentist who did thousands of dollars of complicated work on a low-income woman with sinus cancer who couldn't pay him, and to a supermarket clerk who went out of his way to help mentally disabled customers.

Another way the church lives the values is through its annual "food fight," in which men and women of the congregation compete to see who will bring more food. The losing side honors the winning side with a dinner.

In 2010, John said the church donated enough to "feed the 5,000"—as Jesus' did—plus another 4,000.

John wrote his two books while serving as pastor in Seattle.

His 1988 book, *What Paul Said about Women*, published by HarperCollins, is still in print.

"Evangelical audiences tell me the book has helped them move from understanding Paul saying women can't do things, which they know women are capable of doing. Mainline audiences who gave up on Paul have said they would go back and look at what Paul said," John said.

"There's a disconnection on Scriptures. Mainline Protestants should rediscover the Bible," he said, "and Evangelical Protestants need to resist imposing orthodox views on the pages of Scriptures and read them afresh."

He began writing the book after a newly elected deaconess asked about the inconsistency of Paul telling women to obey their husbands and keep silent in church, but also saying that in Christ there is no male or female.

John checked it out by translating the English text into Greek, and found it different from the original Greek.

"The translation was technically correct, but nuances made a difference," he said.

Then he wrote *What the Bible Really Says about Love, Marriage*

and Family, published by Chalice in 1994, which he said was more radical and in print five years. It's a biblical study of seven models of marriage found in the Bible.

"Only the model associated with God's curse has the husband as boss and the wife having babies and manipulating the husband," he said. "God's design was Adam and Eve before the fall as companions."

After retiring from teaching at Gonzaga, John and his wife Christy plan to move to Bremerton, where they own a house.

While he looks forward to scuba diving, making custom jewelry and doing woodworking in retirement, he's aware that "telling your plans makes God laugh."

He said he has another book brewing on how some American Christians misuse Scriptures to wrap the Bible in the flag or bash each other for political purposes, rather than living a faith that promotes love and democracy.

"Scriptures are not intended to denigrate others and exalt oneself or one's group, but it happens all the time," John said.

To keep people humble about biblical interpretation, he summed up stages Scriptures go through:

- An event happens. It is interpreted, then told and retold with interpretation.
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- Subsequent generations of believers interpret the written material, which is translated into various languages.
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Spokane's Earth Day is on Main St. downtown to reach new people

Spokane's 40th anniversary Earth Day celebration will be on Main St. downtown rather than on grass at Riverfront Park.

Co-coordinators Paul Haeder, 53, a teacher, journalist and activist who came to Spokane in 2001, and Molly Callen, 24, a Spokane K-12 substitute teacher who grew up in Spokane, said they are "takin' it to the streets" because urban life is expanding and because grass uses water, fertilizer and herbicides.

Molly was involved last year with a children's activity, helping build 350 bird feeders and wanted to expand the educational component.

"I came to an early planning meeting. Few came, so I became a co-coordinator," said Molly, who attended Spokane Falls Community College and graduated in 2008 from Eastern Washington University with a bachelor's degree in reading and elementary education. "I want children to go home knowing they can grow their own food, plant flowers and make bird houses."

Along with studies for a master's in special education and her work substitute teaching, she has volunteered 30 hours a week for Earth Day planning.

Concerned since her teen years about animal rights, environment and human rights, Molly wants to educate people on these causes and finds Earth Day a means to do that.

There will be resources to help people learn how to live sustainably, such as alternative ways to commute without using fossil fuels—bikes, skateboards, long boards and roller skates.

To help meet a goal of draw low-income people, Second Harvest will be at Earth Day for two hours doing a food give-away.

"All we need to do is care," Molly said. "Then we can live intentionally and responsibly."

Paul was 14 and lived in Tuscon, Ariz., on the first Earth Day in 1970. He remembers addressing urban sprawl and organizing the religious community to challenge a law that allowed for unregulated trapping of "God's creatures"—kit fox, bobcats and coyotes.

He began to advocate for the three "E's"—equity, environment and economy. Now the movement had added two more five "E's"—energy and education.

As co-coordinator, he hopes to inspire a new "green generation" to be active, so the world "will not



Paul Haeder and Molly Callen stand on Main St., the 2010 venue for Earth Day.

be inundated in rising sea levels and surpass the tipping points into a collapse of the eco-systems."

Paul, who teaches English and journalism at Spokane Falls Community College, writes a column in The Inlander and does the "Tipping Points: Voices from the Edge" show on KYRS Thin Air Radio, believes the environment is tipping.

"We still have a chance to pull back and take weight off the structure, but we can't take for granted that it will not collapse," he said. "Young people need to reverse the course so the earth will be livable and equitable."

"Without education and social justice, we can't achieve energy efficiency needed to move into a post-carbon world and we can't have a sustainable economy," he said.

Paul lived in Paris, British Columbia, Munich and the Azores growing up, moving with his father in the military. He earned a degree in biology, journalism and English in 1979 at the University of Arizona and a master's degree in English in 1986 at the University of Texas. Between degrees, he worked for newspapers in Southern Arizona, Mexico, Central America, Europe and Texas.

Influenced by liberation theology and the Earth Charter as his ethos, Paul said his environmen-

tal and social justice activism involved him in fighting environmental injustice on the U.S.-Mexican border where major U.S. companies operate sweatshop factories. Those factories, machiadores, pay Mexican workers \$3 to \$4 a day to produce consumer goods using highly toxic substances, he said.

He is concerned that "many young people today are products of the corporate world and do not know how to live lightly."

"They need to gain a green sense and need to follow the operating instructions of Mother Gaia (Earth): We are not to pollute the water or air," he said.

Paul wants young people to know that every bite they take, everything they do, every breath they take and every cell phone call they make is political. He wants to stop the slide into "a Holocaust of all people and genocide of all species."

He also hopes Earth Day 2010 will reignite the interest of colleges, churches, the city and county to join in planning future Earth Days, expanding interest beyond "conservation groups, hybrid-car drivers and kayakers."

Citing projections about global trends of population shifts to urban areas—59 percent urban in 2008 to 65 percent by 2030—he said sustainability will require

communities that are denser, polute less, have more mass transit and engage people in neighborhoods and politics.

"There's so much work to do,"

he said, pointing to challenges of global-warming denial and oil companies' readiness to exploit reserves in the Arctic after the ice cap melts in 30 years. "We must do more than the baby-step choices between Styrofoam or paper cups."

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In and from its green downtown building, market educates about food

Farm tours and educational programs connect rural and urban aspects of food production, marketing and consumption through the recently opened Main Market Co-op, an addition to Spokane's Community Building complex, across the street at 44 W. Main.

The programs help consumers and co-op members meet the people who supply the food and see what it takes to produce food for this "eco-grocery" and deli.

To minimize the market's carbon footprint, a rooftop raised-bed garden and greenhouse, plus its "green" architecture make it a model of ecological responsibility and sustainability, said owner-manager Jennifer Hall.

Green features include solar panels, recycled building materials, a system to capture heat generated by refrigeration to heat water and an industrial composter to turn waste into compost to fertilize the rooftop garden and sell to farmers. Rainwater, collected on the roof is stored in tanks under the parking lot, irrigates the garden and landscape. Raised beds help absorb sunlight and keep the building cooler in the summer.

Quarterly field trips provide an opportunity for consumers to meet local farmers, ranchers and food processors, who are the sources for products the market sells.

Jennifer said her emerging cook-from-scratch mindset gradually led her into this venture, where she can teach people the value of buying quality when buying food.

"People pay for quality for TVs, clothing, couches or shoes, but want low-cost foods," she said.

"Fewer think of paying higher prices for higher quality with food, but food is the one thing that goes in you, not on you," Jennifer said.

"We operate based on a holistic approach, providing sustainable food while preserving the environment, building social capacity and fostering respect for Earth and respect for life," she said. "While we don't promote a full retreat to the past, it is important to recognize the practices that worked well, combine them with today's technology where appropriate, and create solutions for the challenges we face today."

The co-op involves farmers in sharing their ideas on sustainable agriculture.

Main Market's mission includes providing the public "a reliable place to learn about food and intersect their values and health with their food purchases," she said.

Jennifer works with farmers, ranchers and fishermen who need to know about politics, agriculture and mechanical repairs to make their efforts profitable.

With just two percent of the U.S. population raising food, she said there is need for 50 million more farmers.



At Main Market, Jennifer Hall keeps mission visible.

In addition to the market's rooftop garden and greenhouse, where people can see food grow, she urges people to use vacant lots and rooftops to grow food in urban areas.

"While the rural lifestyle attracts some, there are opportunities to grow food in the urban setting," she said. "Our reality is both urban and rural."

Jennifer, who grew up in Spokane, studied finance at the University of Washington and earned a master's degree in health administration at Cornell University in Ithaca, N.Y., began to realize her interest was in food. Working in health care, she sought to help physicians take care of people. Gradually, her enjoyment of cooking for dinner parties edged her into catering and working in different restaurants in different states, aware that "everyone eats" and that "food prepared from scratch makes people happy."

She began to realize that cooking was more than a hobby. It was a way to serve people.

Cooking from scratch led her to relationships with local bakers, businesses and farmers, "people who put their hearts and souls into producing food."

By buying locally from farmers committed to sustainable practices and educating people about food, Jennifer believes she can make a difference in the local economy and food system.

Cooking from scratch assures the best flavor, she said. It also leads to concern about who grows the food and how they grow it. Locally, several restaurants, like the co-op, partner with local, small-to-medium farmers.

"Chain restaurants can't support that type of buying unless they have independent units authorized to buy locally," Jennifer explained. "Chains buy on such a large scale they bring prices down to the detriment of farmers and operations such as ours. Major retailers buy food worldwide."

Her appreciation of sustainable food comes not only from a health-care perspective but also from her affection for the outdoors. She knows that poor food production techniques are hard on the whole planet, as well as being detrimental for individuals.

"Outdoors is my divining rod and where I find rejuvenation. The first thing every day, I go out to run or walk my dogs. I relish the beauty outside," she said.

While she knows she is not responsible for creating the beauty of nature, she feels responsible to care for it.

Pesticide and fertilizer runoff has created dead zones in the Gulf of Mexico and off the Columbia River, she said. It will take hundreds of years to fix the environment.

"I want to help people understand the environment and not take food for granted," said Jennifer, who partners with Jim Sheehan, owner of the Community Building, Saranac and Main Market.

The mission of Main Market is to "nourish the community at the table," by contributing to a healthier and more resilient region "one bite at a time."

"We ask people to change their habits," Jennifer continued.

She likens the co-op to a faith organization: Both bring people

together voluntarily to meet common goals bigger than the individual. They help meet economic, social and cultural needs. Both have missions and encourage people to move past selfishness.

Money spent at the co-op has a positive impact, helping the planet and improving the community, she said.

"Our goal is more than moving things off the shelves," she said.

Because people are at different points in their attitudes about food choices, she said the coop is ready to help people improve their diets, eat organic, eat "slow" food, eat better quality food for less cost, eat food rather than supplements and choose diets that will help them recover from illness.

"I hope to encourage people to change their diets before they become ill," said Jennifer, telling about some of the classes.

One class series includes learning skills from how to sharpen knives, because dull knives are more likely to slip, to how to take a whole chicken and break it down, using all parts.

"It's a more economical way to eat, to use the whole chicken. The breast, especially an organic breast, is the most expensive part," she said. "The way many eat, relying on processed foods,

diminishes their ability to eat economically and healthfully."

Quarterly classes help members identify, prepare and enjoy seasonal foods under the guidance of "great chefs in the community, who share culinary secrets," she said.

The next class is May 10.

The 1,000 co-op members, who invested in the facility as it was built, will hold their annual meeting on April 17—Earth Day—to vote for board members and policies. They can decide if they want to open a new store or assess a new fee on themselves to raise capital. Members include people from Idaho, Spokane Valley and Cheney, as well as Spokane.

The co-op involves voluntary, open membership with democratic control, economic participation, educational programs, cooperation with other cooperatives and concern for the community.

Anyone can shop at the co-op and pay the same prices, regardless of whether they are members, she added. There is also a five percent discount for seniors.

For members, there will be tours, classes, discount shopping days, monthly emails and a quarterly newsletter.

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Chin refugees help each other as they adapt to new life in Spokane

By Virginia de Leon

After escaping abuse as a minority in Burma and a struggle for survival in refugee camps, Chin refugees settling in Spokane find support from World Relief, local churches and their own community in meeting needs of adjusting to a new way of life here.

Refugees from Burma who have formed the Spokane Chin Church come from, connect with and have been resettled by a variety of churches, including American Baptist, Catholic, Church of the Nazarene and Pentecostal.

Despite their differences, they gather weekly for an evangelical-style worship led by Duh Ceu, the pastor, and others in the church.

The Chin community, refugees who fled their homeland, support each other and find ways to help each other meet their needs.

For example, because few have cars, they found volunteers help transport the 80 members to church Sunday evenings using two vans and five cars.

On a recent Sunday, the first group of families arrived at First Church of the Nazarene in North Spokane about half an hour before the 7 p.m. service. Gradually, the crowd grew as vehicles made their rounds. After setting up chairs in one of the church's classrooms, the people began to sing and pray in their native language.

This growing congregation started out with half a dozen people two years ago.

First, they met at the local office of World Relief, a Christian organization that responds to humanitarian crises around the globe and assists with resettling victims of war and persecution as they seek refuge in the United States.

The Chin are among dozens of ethnic groups in Burma, called Myanmar by its military leaders.

The Chin, who are Christian—mostly Baptist—are the second largest ethnic group in Burma, which is predominantly Buddhist, said Duh Ceu.

"We have suffered because of our religion," he said, explaining one reason they left their homeland.

According to a 2008 U.S. State Department report, the authoritarian regime in Burma has committed severe human rights abuses



Duh and Biak Ceu both have master of divinity degrees.

against the Chin and other ethnic minorities, especially those who want democracy.

The government's abuses include the killing, disappearances, rape and torture of citizens, she said. The army attacks villages of ethnic minorities—burning down their homes, destroying their farmland and forcing people, including children, to labor without pay or join the military.

Hundreds of thousands of people have fled the persecution. Spokane is now home to more than 500—about 340 from the Karen ethnic group, two Karenni families and about 186 Chin, said Linda Unseth, director of World Relief's Spokane office.

Unlike the Karen, who went to refugee camps in Thailand, the Chin had no place to go when they fled their native home of Chin State in Burma. Some sought safety in India, which shares a border with Chin State. Others escaped to Malaysia, she said.

There, they spent many years as urban, undocumented refugees, competing for jobs in poverty-stricken communities and enduring daily harassment and abuse.

Although unrecognized by the governments of India and Malaysia, some of the Chin in those countries have gained refugee status and documents through the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, enabling them to resettle in Spokane and other communities in the United States, she explained.

According to Linda and Duh Ceu, many of the Chin in Spokane

lived in Malaysia two to six years after fleeing Burma. Because the journey to freedom is arduous and fraught with danger, only the strongest survive. Often, they are younger people who leave parents and other loved ones behind.

As a result, none of the Chin here is over the age of 50. In fact, only four members of the Spokane Chin Church are over 40, Linda said. The majority are 20 and 33. Those who are married but arrived alone have filed petitions for visas for spouses and children. They may wait many years, she said.

The Chin community in Spokane quickly doubled, then tripled. Since late 2006, nearly 200 people from the Chin ethnic group have moved here, said Linda. More are expected in the coming year.

After a few months, the local Chin population could no longer fit in World Relief's office. So Linda and her husband, the Rev. Stan Unseth, turned to their own church community to help the Chin people.

First Church of the Nazarene opened its doors to the refugees, providing worship space and a church van for transportation.

Every Sunday, Stan volunteers

as a van driver. He also enlisted a friend, Jerry Deatherage, to drive a second van owned by Westside Church of the Nazarene, where Stan was pastor for several years.

They and a few others drive to apartment buildings in North Spokane to transport members of the Chin community to and from First Church of the Nazarene.

"When a church becomes involved, it's usually a process," explains Linda, who spends many hours each week doing volunteer work to support the Chin church. "We start by seeing what the needs are and then respond to them."

First Church of the Nazarene first offered its children's ministry room as worship space. Now, a few of its members are bringing groceries, clothing, bedding, coats and other items to help the Chin.

Some come to the refugees' Sunday evening service and participate in their celebrations.

"The people at First Church are supportive," Linda said.

The Chin are grateful to be here, said Duh Ceu, who moved here nearly two years ago and works as a caseworker for World Relief.

Life in Spokane poses its share of new challenges with difficulty

finding jobs, adjusting to a new lifestyle and learning English.

The Chin language and its many dialects uses a Latin script, like English, but its structure differs significantly from the language they are trying to learn. Because many have focused on survival for many years, few have attended school, which makes second language acquisition more difficult.

However, Duh Ceu and his wife, Biak, who are expecting their first child in June, both have master of divinity degrees and are leaders in the local Chin community.

"We try to help each other," said Biak.

A few months ago, the Chin community pooled their money to buy an old van they use to assist new Chin refugees. They use it to drive to the Spokane Airport to welcome new arrivals.

Along with volunteers from World Relief, representatives of the Chin community escort newcomers to their apartments and provide them with a hot meal of traditional Chin delicacies and enough food to eat for the coming days.

For information, call 232-2818.



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Calendar of Events

- April 3 • "Behold Jesus," Spokane Dream Center's Easter Drama, INB Performing Arts Center, 334 W. Spokane Falls Blvd., 1 p.m. and 6:30 p.m., 924-2630
- April 4 • Ecumenical Community Easter Sunrise Service, "If I Were in Charge of the Resurrection, Rev. John Temple Bristow, Greenwood Memorial Terrace, 211 N., Government Way, 6:30 a.m., 535-1813
- April 7 • "Giving Up What I Really Want, So I Can Find What I Really Need: Following Jesus from the U.S. to Haiti," Kent Annon, Haiti Partners, Weyerhaeuser Hall, Whitworth University 300 W. Hawthorne Rd., 7 p.m., 777-4263
- April 8 • "Iceland in the Global Financial Crisis," Hjalmar Hannesson, Iceland ambassador to the U.S. and past vice president of the United Nations General Assembly, Weyerhaeuser Hall at Whitworth, 300 W. Hawthorne Rd., 7:30 p.m., 777-3270
- April 8 • "The Haunting Realities Women Face in Tlaxcala, Mexico," Monroe Hall, Eastern Washington University, Cheney, noon, 359-2898
- April 10 • Lands Council Dinner and Auction, The Lincoln Center, 1316 N. Lincoln St., 4:30 p.m., dinner at 7 p.m., 838-4912
- April 10 • "Spring Into Action! A Celebration of Environmental Awareness, Valley Mission Park Shelter, 11123 E. Mission, 10 a.m., 720-5408
- April 11 • MS Walk, Spokane Falls Community College, 3410 W. Fort George Wright Dr., 8:30 a.m. check in, 10 a.m. walk, 482-2022
- April 11 • Holocaust Remembrance, Temple Beth Shalom, 1322 E. 30th, 7 p.m., 747-3304
- April 12 • Kootenai County Task Force on Human Relations Annual Human Rights Banquet, Coeur d'Alene Inn, 506 W. Appleway, Coeur d'Alene, 5:30 p.m., 208-292-2359
- April 14 • Hispanic Business Professional Association, Agave Restaurant, 830 W. Sprague Ave., 11:30 a.m., 473-9180
- April 14 • Hagan Foundation Center for the Humanities lecture, "Diet for a Hot Planet," Anna Lappe, Spokane Community College Lair, 7 p.m., www.scc.spokane.edu/hfchevents
- April 17 - 25 • Japan Week, http://www.japanweekspokane.com
- April 16 • Tri-Cities Earth Day, 616-842-6321
- April 17 • Takin' it to the Streets," Spokane Earth Day, Main Street between Division and Brown, 11 a.m. to midnight, earthdayspokane.org
- United Methodist Inland District Rocks and Ripples leader training, Simpson United Methodist, 325 NE Maple, Pullman, 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.; Spokane Valley United Methodist, 115 N. Raymond Rd., 2:30 to 7 p.m., 838-3085
- Earth Day, "Simplify Your Life," Harding Family Center, 411 N. 15th, Coeur d'Alene, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m., www.earthdaycda.org
- Susan Komen Race for the Cure, Convention Center, Spokane Falls Blvd. 7 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- April 20 • Hate/Bias Forum, Spokane Crime Victim Services Center, 1011 W. First Ave., 5:30 - 7:30 p.m., 343-5039
- Northwest Fair Housing Alliance Basic Fair Housing Workshop for Landlords, West Central Community Center, 1603 N. Belt, 1:30 to 3:30 p.m., 325-2665, Ext. 4
- April 22 • Sandpoint Earth Day Festival, Sandpoint Events Center, 102 Euclid Ave., 4 - 8 p.m., 208-265-9565
- "China's Great Unity: U.S. China Relations on the New Global Horizon, Anthony Clark, Weyerhaeuser Hall at Whitworth, 7:30 p.m., www.wacspokane.org
- April 27 • Fig Tree 2010 Dialogue in Action, "Wisdom and the Media," Cathedral of St. John, 127 E. 12th Ave., 7 to 9 p.m., 535-1813
- Northwest Fair Housing Alliance Advanced Fair Housing Workshop for Landlords, West Central Community Center, 1603 N. Belt, 1:30 to 3:30 p.m., 325-2665, Ext. 4
- Evening Prayer & Retreat, "The Church/Four Marks of the Church/Mary," Deacon Chalo Martinez, Immaculate Heart Retreat Center, 5 to 9 p.m., 448-1224
- April 30 • Catholic Charities Annual Gala, Davenport Hotel, 358-4254

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Furniture warehouse increases success of newly housed families

When a homeless family moves from a shelter to an affordable apartment or house, having basic household furnishings increases their chance of success, said Sheila Morley, program coordinator at Catholic Charities of Spokane.

"We believe everyone deserves to have a safe, secure, affordable home, and part of that is having furnishings and household items to make them feel comfortable. Basic needs such as a couch, table, chairs, beds, dishes, appliances, bedding and towels make a difference in people's lives," said Sheila, who also coordinates programs and staff at St. Margaret's Shelter.

A single disabled person receiving \$339 a month on General Assistance for Unemployed (GAU) or a family with children living on \$500 a month on Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) would not have enough money to buy furniture.

"We found that just putting people in housing was sometimes not enough. If people do not have the basic necessities—a bed to sleep on, something to sit on and items for cooking, they are not able to retain the housing. If people come from a shelter where their basic needs are met, it is not reasonable to expect them to succeed in housing without those basic needs," she said.

Volunteers delivering furniture to one woman saw a blanket on her floor where she had been sleeping while waiting for furniture.

"For donors, it's the green thing to do to recycle furniture, rather than having it end up in a landfill," Sheila added.

Seeking both to provide furniture to people and to help donors recycle "gently used" furniture and household items, 10 agencies formed the Spokane Community Warehouse in 2009 as a drop-off location, storage space and pickup site for transporting furnishings to their clients.

Until it closed in 2008, St. Vincent de Paul Society provided that service. Since then, St. Margaret's Shelter surveyed Spokane Homeless Coalition agencies to learn of the need for such a program. A central warehouse to receive



Ashley Sprecher and Sheila Morley show an example of a couch in good condition for families.

donations and arrange deliveries was still their dream.

Several agencies had tried to provide furniture on their own. St. Margaret's kept donated furniture in their basement to give to women as they moved out.

Sheila, whose office is at St. Margaret's, said they found many agencies lacked the capacity to accept donations and deliver them to clients because of a lack of storage, transportation or staffing.

Along with St. Margaret's, members are the ARC of Spokane, Interfaith Hospitality, Martin Luther King, Jr., Family Outreach Center, Salem Arms, Spokane County Community Services, Volunteers of America, Transitions, Coalition of Responsible Disabled, YWCA and Spokane Neighborhood Action Programs.

In a "leap of faith," the Spokane Community Warehouse formed under Catholic Charities. Nine other agencies have joined the program. Organizational meetings began in January 2009, when participants proposed a budget and applied for an AmeriCorps position.

A Jesuit volunteer with St. Margaret's visited the Portland Community Warehouse to learn about their operations.

The planning group then developed bylaws and policies and found a temporary site in a 2,300-square-foot space through the YWCA, a partner agency.

AmeriCorps member Ashley Sprecher began in September as manager of the Spokane Community Warehouse, working from an office at St. Margaret's.

After it opened in mid November, the warehouse offered membership to other homeless coalition agencies. Members pay \$250 a year and refer clients. Member agencies also provide 24 hours of volunteer assistance a year.

So far, the warehouse has set up 38 households, said Sheila.

Member agencies send a case manager for training at the warehouse, so they know how to determine a client's furniture and

household needs. They fill out a form and email Ashley, who sets a delivery date and arranges volunteers to help move the furniture.

Case managers with the different agencies follow-up with the clientele, who earn from 0 to 30 percent of area median income.

"When we drop off the furniture, people are excited and

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happy," said Sheila, who began working with homeless families in Spokane when she served as coordinator for her church, Prince of Peace Lutheran, when they sheltered families through Interfaith Hospitality.

She worked for Interfaith Hospitality from 2002 to 2005, then with Spokane Valley Community Center until 2007 when she began working at Catholic Charities.

Currently, the warehouse has use of the SNAP moving van on Wednesdays, so they schedule many deliveries and have volunteers all day.

It needs volunteers to receive items, clean them and deliver them. Sheila said the warehouse also needs a truck and a permanent location.

For information, call 624-9788 or email spokanecommunitywarehouse@gmail.com.

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