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Monthly newspaper covering faith in action throughout the Inland Northwest

Tamales become high school educations

By Mary Stamp

By eating tamales, beans, rice, salads and desserts, having cars washed, buying valentines and giving to other fund-raising activities, people in Spokane have helped 24 local high school students support a high school in Huisisilapa, El Salvador.

Students from Lewis and Clark and St. George's high schools have helped raise more than \$40,000 in four years to provide for the school building, equipment, teaching supplies, books and teachers' salaries.

Some paid their own way to travel to El Salvador in 2005 and 2007 to take the supplies and to learn about life there.

Las Hermanas, a group of local women in solidarity with El Salvadoran women, helped start Los Hermanos, the student group. Some of the women have gone to Huisisilapa, too.

The groups are committed to building relationships and strengthening the solidarity between Spokane and Huisisilapa.

Laurel Fish was entering her freshman year when she went to El Salvador for two weeks in the summer of 2005. She went with 12



Lillian Dubiel and Laurel Fish watch Gloria Milla and Esther Orellana set out vegetables and meat to put in tamales for a recent fund-raising dinner.

other students and six adults.

Before they went, Phyllis Andersen, who helped organize the trip, provided Spanish language and cultural training.

Participants each stayed with different families and learned how to communicate about the basics of life. They spent the days with local students.

Huisisilapa is the only rural high school El Salvador not located in a town. Huisisilapa was pasture land repopulated by refugees, returning from Mesa Grande in Honduras, Phyllis said. It celebrates its 16th anniversary on April 1.

Salvadoran mothers wanted to start the high school because they did not want their children to grow up as ignorant as they felt they had been. So after building houses, they built the school. The El Salvadoran Ministry of Education funded schooling through ninth grade. The community, with volunteer teachers, started the high school program, and the government gave them conditional status, but no funding.

They needed science equipment, computers, textbooks and supplies. Through solidarity with Spokane,

Continued on page 5

Overlapping generations of members provide continuity over 100-year span

Overlapping generations of members in the century-old Manito Presbyterian Church in Spokane have provided continuity through tough times in the Depression, its heyday from the 1950s to 1990s and as a remnant through its split in 2001 into a period of redevelopment.

Retired journalist Jim Price, a member only three years, is working with Eunice Snyder, a member since 1956, applying his research skills and fascination with history to co-authoring the church's centennial history booklet.

While he is part of the church's present and future, he defers to long-time members for the legacy.

Jim told of the church's found-

ing in April 1908. That February, Bethel Presbyterian at 7th and Arthur bought three lots on the Southeast corner of 29th and Latawah for the mission church with 23 founding members. Many lived near 32nd and Perry and found it hard to go by car or buggy around the cliff to Bethel.

Eunice and he have identified 85 people who were church members for 50 or more years.

While many facts for the centennial book come from the 75th anniversary book, Jim and Eunice as editors must add 25 more years of information and photos that reflect church life.

"We seek a personal focus in stories of the church's development and its pastors," said Jim,

who researched Whitworth University archives for information on individuals and pastors to feature.

Because a list of living members, who were members more than 30 years at the time of the 75th, would not fit in the 100th book, they are listing people in any generation who were members for 50 years or more. They found that Burton Belknap was a member for 73 years, one month and 14 days from April 3, 1921 to May 17, 1994—probably the longest membership. He overlapped 36 years with the first recorded member, Emma Thompson, a member for 58 years from 1910.

That longevity, Jim said, is a sign of a healthy, viable organization, with continuity through overlapping generations, stretching in a stream from those who joined the first day to present members.

Among those still active in the church is Lloyd Lamb, 84, who joined as a teen in 1942. He and his wife, June, whose three daughters were married in the church,

Continued on page 4

Area communities plan events for Earth Day

Earth Day 2008 celebrations scheduled in Spokane, Coeur d'Alene and Chewelah will inform participants of ecological, energy-saving practices that spread "green" living.

The late U.S. Senator Gaylord Nelson from Wisconsin, who believed education was key to changing attitudes about the environment, started Earth Day on April 22, 1970, as a grassroots event that continues annually.

In Spokane, the annual celebration will include more than 50 informational displays by nonprofits and eco-friendly businesses, the annual Procession of the Species, a bicycle tour in downtown Spokane, recycling of athletic shoes, plus performances, music and children's activities from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., Saturday, April 19, at the Riverfront Park Gondola Meadows.

"Live Simply So That Others May Simply Live" is the theme for the event organized by The Lands Council.

The Earth Day film Festival will run from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., in the City Hall Council Chambers at 801 W. Spokane Falls Blvd.

At 9 a.m., Sunday, April 20, The Lands Council and REI Spokane are planning the second annual Earth Day River Restoration Project on the Spokane River, beginning at the Sandifur Bridge.

Participants will pull invasive species, remove trash and replant native species to prevent erosion and restore the shoreline. For information, call 209-2402.

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Read Bible with women’s eyes, says theologian

By Maurice Malanes - Baguio City, Philippines (ENI). The Bible needs to be re-read from the viewpoint of women so as to shatter “institutionalized patriarchy,” which is reinforced by “conservative” biblical interpretation, said a leader of a group of women theologians. “Many conservative Filipinos, both women and men, believe that women must submit to their husbands because Ephesians 5:22 says so,” Maureen Lose of the Association of Women in Theology told Ecumenical News International. “We must always read the whole historical context of the verse.”

The organization is an ecumenical group of women pastors and lay leaders in this predominantly Catholic country of 91 million people. She said she was exposed to feminist theology when she worked with a program of the National Council of Churches in the Philippines ministering to indigenous peoples in the 1980s and 1990s. Maureen described Jesus Christ’s example and teaching as being liberating to women.

Russian says human rights need moral norms

By Peter Kenny - Geneva (ENI). An individual must have a right to be safeguarded against the propagation of violence, use of drugs and alcohol, gambling and sexual laxity, a senior Russian Orthodox Christian leader has said at the United Nations Human Rights Council. Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad told a forum at the Human Rights Council in March he hopes that the concerns of religious organizations will occupy a worthy place among issues dealt with by the Geneva-based body. At the same time, he warned that human rights advocacy is being used to undermine Christian and religious values and ethical standpoints.

In many countries, freedom is used as a pretext for developing a commercial industry, filling society with propaganda of amoral ways of life, he said, referring to support for violence, drugs and alcohol, gambling and sexual permissiveness. “Human rights should not run contrary to the moral norms accepted by most people as a desirable form of behavior,” he said. “If human rights are used to support moral relativism in society they will become alien to believers.”

Kirill, the head of the external relations department of the Moscow Patriarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church, said human rights are indeed “an important institution in modern social order” and their appeal lies in their concern for the welfare of each individual.

UN, WCC heads partner on climate change

In a discussion at the Geneva-based World Council of Churches (WCC) the United Nations (UN) secretary general, H.E. Ban Ki-Moon and WCC general secretary, the Rev. Samuel Kobia found agreement for the two world bodies to work more closely on several global issues, particularly climate change.

“Global warming will only be resolved through a global common response,” Ban Ki-Moon said.

Kobia opened the meeting with a brief description of how WCC and its member churches are working to mobilize churches toward a better understanding of the impact of global warming and the need to follow through beyond the Kyoto Protocol. “Working on global warming is a matter of faith,” Kobia said.

REGIONAL ECUMENICAL & INTERFAITH NEWS

Signs tell CROP walkers hunger statistics

Signs along the Centennial Trail will educate CROP Hunger Walk participants about issues of global hunger as part of Spokane’s 2008 walk.

The event begins at noon, Sunday, April 27, with entertainment by the Voiceless Choir and registration at Martin Centre at Gonzaga University.

Walkers will begin their two-mile or 10-K walk along the Centennial Trail into Riverfront Park and back to Gonzaga, then on to Greene Street Bridge and back.

The 2007 walk raised about \$33,000. Sylvia Barney, chair, said this is the 62nd year of the walks nationally.

“It’s a way for people to express care and concern for people who lack food or water, or experience natural disasters,” she said. “We’re walking to do what they do daily, to walk for water, shopping, education and work.”

Spokane Valley United Methodist Church plans a pre-worship CROP benefit pancake breakfast from 7:30 to 10:30 a.m., Sunday,

April 20, at 115 N. Raymond.

Because Church World Service works in partnership around the globe, sponsors may designate their gifts to other partner agencies, such as Catholic Relief Services, Outreach International, Jewish Relief Services and other international organizations with faith communities are affiliated.

Sunnyside’s walk begins at 9 a.m., Saturday, April 19, at Chief Kamiakin School.

For information, call 888-297-2767 or 891-1045.

‘Preventing Genocide’ is Yom Hashoah focus

“Preventing Genocide: How Do Ordinary People Become Evil?” is the theme for the Spokane community observance of the Holocaust, Yom Hashoah, at 7 p.m., Thursday, May 1, at Temple Beth Shalom, 1322 E. 30th Ave.

Participants will reflect on lives of Nazis as people with ordinary lives who perpetrated the largest genocide in modern history.

Yom Hashoah is the international day of remembrance of the murder of 6 million Jews and 5 million others that the Nazis

deemed unworthy.

The observance will include reading the winning composition submitted in Spokane’s second creative writing contest and a response to that piece by James Waller, professor of psychology at Whitworth University and author of *Becoming Evil: How Ordinary People Commit Genocide and Mass Killing*.

The more than 50 students who submitted entries responded to a three-minute video from the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum

with pictures from a photo album from Auschwitz.

The border of the poster announcing the contest names some of the world’s other genocides before and since the Holocaust: Armenia in 1915; Bangladesh, 1971; East Timor, 1975 to 1999; Cambodia, 1975 to 1979; Guatemala, 1981 to 1983; An-Afal Kurdish villages in Iraq, 1986 to 1989; Bosnia, 1992 to 1995; Rwanda, 1994; Darfur, 2004 to present.

For information, call 747-3304.

Historian Martin Marty speaks in Spokane

Martin Marty, a columnist in Christian Century magazine and historian focusing on religion in America, will speak in April at Whitworth University, the Episcopal Cathedral of St. John and the Assembly of the Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

The Lutheran minister and retired seminary professor is author of more than 5,000 articles and 50 books.

He will speak at 7:30 p.m., Thursday, April 17 at Whitworth University’s Weyerhaeuser Hall on “A Global Local Faith, a Local

Global Faith: Christian Possibilities Today.”

As part of the Synod Assembly, at 8 p.m., Friday, April 18, he will narrate and assist with a “hymn sing” and litany at the Episcopal Cathedral of St. John, 127 E. 12th Ave., with Mark Sedio, cantor at Central Lutheran Church in Minneapolis, as organist.

On Saturday, April 19, Martin will address about 1,000 ELCA members at the Red Lion Hotel at the Park on “The Mission of the Church in Our Day.”

He also will preach at the 11 a.m., Sunday, April 20, assembly’s “Rejoice in the Mission

Worship Extravaganza.”

His books include *Righteous Empire*, winner of the National Book Award, and *The One and the Many: America’s Struggle for the Common Good*.

Born in 1928 in Nebraska, he was ordained in 1952 and served parishes in the suburbs of Chicago for 10 years before joining the University of Chicago faculty in 1963.

When he retired in 1998, the Divinity School renamed its Institute for the Advanced Study of Religion the Martin Marty Center.

For information, call 838-9871.

Speaker tells of school building in Pakistan, Afghanistan

Mountain climber Greg Mortenson, who has built 61 schools in Pakistan, will speak at 7:30 p.m., Thursday, April 3 at the University of Idaho Auditorium in Moscow and at 2 p.m., Saturday, April 5 in the 1912 Building in Moscow.

Greg, whose journey is docu-

mented in *Three Cups of Tea: One Man’s Mission to Promote Peace ... One School at a Time*, will be joined by journalist David Oliver Relin, co-author of the bestselling book.

Grateful when people from a poor, remote Pakistani village nursed him back to health after illness kept him from reaching the peak of K2, he promised to build

them a school.

Now the former U.S. Army medic’s schools educate more than 35,000 children in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The University of Idaho and several communities in the Palouse have been working to raise the \$12,000 it takes to build a school.

For information, call 208-885-7212 or 885-6796.

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Spring Compost Fair

Arbor Day Celebration
Saturday, April 26th
11:00 AM - 2:00 PM
John A. Finch Arboretum

Spokane County residents who complete this event may take home a new plastic compost bin. Bring proof of residency and arrive by 1:30 PM to complete all of the activities. Limit 1 bin per household. The Compost Fair is presented by the Spokane Master Composter Volunteers.

Recycling Hotline, 625-6800
www.solidwaste.org

Spokane Regional Solid Waste System

Seminar provides information on ‘Religion and Public Policy’

Bob Zinke, professor of public administration at Eastern Washington University, will lead a seminar on “Religion and Public Policy” from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Saturday, April 26, at the Cathedral of St. John, 127 E. 12th Ave., in Spokane.

The seminar will explore the selection of American political candidates, religious players in public policy, religious activism, historical uses of religious language by elected officials, the relationship of church and state, and challenges to faith by involvement in politics.

Bob, who has more than 30

years of experience in higher education, has a doctoral degree in public administration from New York University, a master’s in political science from Drew University in New Jersey, a bachelor’s in political science and economics from Washington State University and two years of seminary training at Iliff School of Theology in Denver, Colo.

He is writing a book on *Ordering the Chaos: Cosmology, Theology, and the Religious History of American Public Administration*.

For information, call 358-2256 or 979-6624.

Julia Esquivel will visit May 8 to 18

Guatemalan poet-theologian rescheduled

Julia Esquivel, Guatemalan poet and theologian, who was scheduled for the 2007 fall Fig Tree Dialogue, has rescheduled her visit and will be in Spokane for various presentations May 8 to 18.

Through her poetry and ministry of reconciliation, she shares the suffering and hope of Guatemalans, as she advocates for human rights, economic justice and political power for indigenous and poor people in her country.

Events in May will be offered by The Fig Tree in collaboration with Transitions, Whitworth University, Gonzaga University, Women Walking Together, Cooperating

Ministries in Higher Education at Eastern Washington University, the Inland Northwest Presbytery and the Kalispel Tribe.

There will be a public presentation at 7 p.m., Tuesday, May 12, at the Episcopal Cathedral of St. John, 127 E. 12th Ave.

Julia speaks often on the injustices in her land and how they have been tied to U.S. government policies and corporate interests.

As an educator, pastoral social worker and writer during 30 years of resistance to dictators in Guatemala, she has spoken on behalf of people who were threatened, traumatized and murdered.

While some took up arms,


she edited a magazine, Dialogo, to witness to God’s justice and compassion, and to bring healing to her land. In 1980, death threats forced her into exile, first in a monastic community in Switzerland, and then in Mexico and Nicaragua. She traveled in Europe and North America, telling of the “Guatemalan holocaust.” Returning to Guatemala in 1992, she started a ministry of reconciliation, expressing truth and compassion in her poetry to stir wisdom in the face of suffering and expressing a longing for love and hope to prevail.

For information, call 535-1813.

Help Us meet our 2008 benefit goal of \$10,000

READ THE TESTIMONIES ON PAGE 10

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Earth Day events set

Continued from page 1

Coeur d’Alene’s 2008 Earth Day Fair will be held from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Saturday, April 19, at the Harding Family Center, 411 N. 15th St.

Exhibitors’ displays will reflect the 2008 theme, “Taking Small Steps.”

For information, call 208-666-6757.

Chewelah’s Earth Day Fair will be held from 10 a.m. to noon, Friday, April 25, and from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Saturday, April 26 at St. Paul Lutheran Church, 202 N. 2nd St. W. and noon, Sunday, April 27, at the Chewelah Golf and Country Club.

The Rev. Ed Pace of St. Paul Lutheran said the event is a time to celebrate spring, launch the gardening season, learn to live green and feed the hungry.

On Friday, Second Harvest, Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, the Chewelah Food Bank and St. Paul will offer a free lunch as part of their Food Giveaway.

Saturday will include a fair with crafters, growers, farmers and earth-friendly vendors, plus opportunities to learn tips from environmental organizations.

Sunday includes a silent auction, dinner, golf and other activities to benefit the Chewelah Food Bank.

For information, call 935-7145 or 935-6311 or email naturwks@theofficenet.com.

St. Aloysius Parish will sponsor a “Caring for Creation Weekend,” on Saturday & Sunday, April 19 to 20 at the church, 330 E. Boone.

Educational activities and informational displays will include: Spokane aquifer model, free compact fluorescent light bulbs, Plant a Tree project (with free trees), Plant a Row for the Hungry (with free garden seeds), and recycling.

The Benedictine Sisters from Cottonwood, Idaho, will have a display on their forestry project and will invite folks to plant a tree in their forest for 50 cents.

For information, call 323-5896.

Nonie Darwish plans talks on possibilities for peace

Author Nonie Darwish of Arabs for Israel will speak on “Possibilities for Peace: Breaking Barriers and Building Bridges in the Middle East” at 7:30 p.m., Monday, April 7, in Cataldo Hall at Gonzaga University.

She will share insights from her book *Now They Call me Infidel: Why I Renounced Jihad for America, Israel and the War on Terror*, which recounts her story of living in Egypt and Gaza for 30 years, and gives an analysis of Middle Eastern culture.

After studying sociology and anthropology at the American University in Cairo, she worked as a journalist, moving to the United

States in 1978 and becoming a Christian.

She founded Arabs for Israel in 2004 as an organization of Arabs and Muslims who reject suicide terrorism and promote constructive self-criticism and reform in the Arab-Muslim world.

She seeks to spread peace and reconciliation, to end the hate between Arabs and Israelis.

Hadassah in Spokane, a Jewish women’s organization that raises funds for a hospital in Israel, and Gonzaga’s Institute for Action Against Hate are co-sponsoring the event to promote peace, tolerance and understanding.

For information, call 323-6132.



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faithandenvironment@gmail.com

CROP Hunger Walk '08
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1:30 p.m. - Walk
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The Fig Tree’s Faith in Action Dialogue
in collaboration with
Gonzaga University, Whitworth University, Women Walking Together, the Inland Northwest Presbytery Peacemaking Committee, Cooperating Ministries in Higher Education, the Kalispel Tribe and CEDEPCA



Guatemalan poet, theologian & human rights advocate

Julia Esquivel
May 8 to 18
Sharing poetry and stories on human rights, poverty, justice
Sharing the power of words to challenge oppression

7 p.m., Tuesday, May 12
Episcopal Cathedral of St. John - 127 E. 12th Ave.

Books include *Secrets of God’s Reign, The Certainty of Spring & Threatened with Resurrection*

For information, call 535-1813 or 534-2307

The 33rd Annual Whitworth Institute of Ministry
July 7-11, 2008

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Steve Hayner, associate professor of evangelism and church growth at Columbia Theological Seminary and former president of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship


EVENING WORSHIP:
Craig Barnes, senior pastor, Shadyside Presbyterian Church, and the Robert Meneilly Professor of Leadership and Ministry at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary

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Oldtimers, newcomers share in ministry that’s missional

Manito Presbyterian ‘redevelops’ its congregation and worship style

Continued from page 1
were active in the Couples’ Club, and he helped establish Camp Spalding.
He spoke of the importance of working through the bumps of church life to be sure the church continues.

Eunice, 82, and her late husband, Robert, were drawn to Manito by the Couples’ Club. They moved from the North side to be nearer the church, where she served on the session and the women’s association, helped with worship services at Union Gospel Mission and nursing homes, taught Sunday school and delivered Meals on Wheels.

Having left for nine years before the split, she returned in 2003 to be part of redeveloping their church. She is committed to sharing the church’s history and roots with newer members to assure continuity.

Another long-time member, Barbara Top Rockwood, came in 1938 when she was nine and her father, the Rev. Evert Top, came as pastor.

Barbara played Manito’s organ from 1944 to 1948, from 1957 to 1988, and on occasion since, when she is home from retirement travels of the United States. Her mother had played off and on, and Barbara’s daughter, Elizabeth Gale, played for eight years.

Barbara said that the church’s music and its organ, dedicated in 1960, drew people to the church.

For years, Manito’s organ was used as a teaching organ. Organists who learned there now play all over the country, she said.

Evert came when the church was left with few members after the Depression, said Jim. Twelve of 21 voted in the spring to continue as an independent church with a budget of \$2,500 and called Evert in the fall.

When he arrived, the church was the 12th largest in the then Presbytery of Spokane. In a decade, it became the third largest and when he died in 1958, it was the second largest, according to church records.

For decades, First Presbyterian was largest and Millwood Community Presbyterian was second largest.

Records say Evert was beloved for his preaching, his relationships and being willing to do whatever



Early photo of people leaving church at Manito Presbyterian.

he asked others to do—dig the basement with a team of horses, pitch rocks or plant a garden.

“It was the Depression. Most were in the same boat—not well off,” Jim said.

Impressed by Evert’s energy, people invited friends and neighbors, Jim said.

“In World War II all churches grew, related to the stresses of war. After the war, growth escalated further when the men came back. Manito Presbyterian grew faster than and declined slower than the trends,” he observed.

Records attribute growth to Evert and his successors, Ray Moody (1959 to 1975) and Erv Roorda (1976 to 1988), who maintained growth while churches were declining nationally in the 1970s.

The church exceeded 1,700 members in the mid-1950s, with 700 children in Sunday school. It was about 1,200 in the 1970s, and remained over 1,000 in the 1980s and into the 1990s.

Like other large churches, Manito Presbyterian was an umbrella for men’s, women’s, youth and couples groups.

“Churches began to falter when they failed to keep up with societal changes,” Jim observed.

Formerly a sports writer and announcer, he noted the decline in part coincided with the National Football League airing games on Sundays during that decade.

“People began joining health clubs. Churches started to provide more small group activities in the 1980s and 1990s, he noted of churches like First Presbyterian, which he and his wife, Ann, attended since shortly after moving to Spokane in 1970 until they moved to a house in walking distance of Manito Presbyterian.

As people lost interest in being in a large organization, large churches began offering more retreats, Bible study groups and men’s prayer breakfasts, he said.

Doug Waggoner was pastor of the church for about 13 years from

1988 to 2001. He kept church membership at more than 700 members, by emphasizing programs for families and children.

“It was a healthy, multi-generational church, but split over Presbyterian Church USA polity, philosophy and social issues,” Jim said.

Members who disagreed with the pastor began leaving, but new members joined. Divided, 541 members voted at Saturday and Sunday services, Sept. 8 and 9, 2001, and 461 decided to leave the denomination. Eighty wanted to continue in the denomination.

In Presbyterian polity, the property belonged to the Presbytery of the Inland Northwest, and Manito Presbyterian continued.

Doug and most members formed South Side Christian Church, which still meets in the former Lincoln Heights Theater, but continued to run a school for K-8 grades in the Manito education wing until the school became independent in 2002.

“The Sunday after Sept. 11, 109 adults and three children came to Manito and, by the end of the year, there were 152 members.

For Jim, the nucleus that remained “speaks of the resilience and persistence of members.”

Now, more than six years since the split, there are more young families, but still a disproportionate number of older members, who invested years there.

The Rev. Scott Starbuck came as pastor a month after the split and led a two-year process helping the congregation discern why God wanted the church to survive.

They found that neighbors wanted a multigenerational church that would be engaged in serving the neighborhood and the world. So rather than dividing members into affinity groups based on age, gender and style, all generations gather for one worship service and a midweek gathering.

About 150 to 180 of Manito’s 230 members attend worship each

week. They have a blended worship with contemporary and traditional elements, music and styles valued by the different generations to speak to those generations and to the various social-economic groups in the church, said Scott, who also teaches Hebrew and Old Testament at Whitworth University, and has previously taught at Gonzaga University.

Another core value of the congregation is to be “missional,” which means the church has survived ebbs and flows through the years to exist for its neighborhood, city, region and the world.

Neighborhood outreach includes a Mothers of Preschoolers group, the Midweek at Manito gathering, a day-care center in the former library across the street and visitation of residents in the Manito Garden Apartments.

Over the years its outreach included a food bank and resettling about



Scott Starbuck

80 Hmong and Laotian refugees through Church World Service. In recent years, two to eight members have joined three presbytery delegations to Guatemala. Manito Presbyterian is also a host church for homeless families through the Interfaith Hospitality Network.

Scott said that instead of com-

mittees, the church has nine ministry units with half their responsibility within the church and half for mission. He mentioned a few of the nine as examples:

- Buildings and Grounds cares not only for the church’s property but also helps neighbors with needs for maintaining their homes and yards.

- Finance and Stewardship also offers neighborhood programs on debt relief and budgeting.

- Music and Worship also provides opportunities for people to join in worship outside the church’s walls.

- Congregational Care strengthens relationships within the church through empathetic listening and conflict resolution, and helps people in other churches and the community address conflicts in their lives and work.

“Today the church is thriving,” Jim said. “Members may disagree with each other, but we are a long-lived family of God.”

For its anniversary, Manito is inviting descendants of pioneer families, especially members for more than 50 years and church leaders. There will be a hymn singing at 4:30 p.m., Saturday, April 26, and worship and a reception at 10:30 a.m., Sunday, April 27.

Manito joins about 22 other more than 100-year-old churches in Spokane—including Spokane Valley Baptist Church, which celebrates its centennial April 11 to 13.

For information, call 838-3559.



Jim Price



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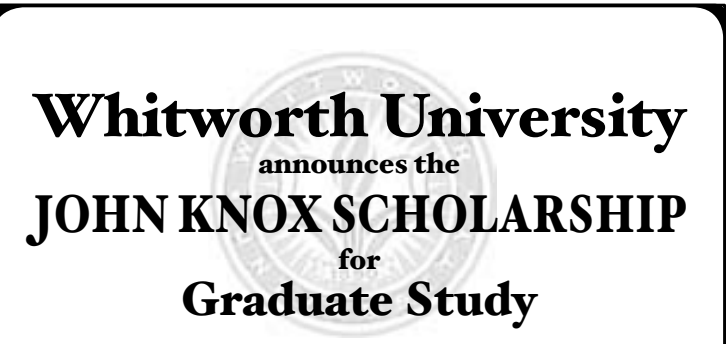
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Spokane high schools learn to value their educational opportunities

Continued from page 1
the community built the high school program, which is in its fourth year and has 45 students. They have outgrown the facilities and need to build.

Supporters in Spokane are helping with plans and looking for funding options to build new “green” classrooms.

Phyllis, who grew up in Minnesota and spent two years in the Peace Corps in El Salvador in the 1960s, learned about the need when she spent a year in 2001 at Huisilapa doing research for her doctoral dissertation in leadership studies at Gonzaga University.

Her study focused on the change in consciousness of women before and after the war. She learned that women resented the expectation that they silently take care of men and do what men, the church and the government said. That previous isolation kept them silent about the domestic violence they had experienced then.

Phyllis had been in El Salvador many times in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. She married and later divorced a Salvadoran. Her daughter, Juanita Andersen, who has also lived in and visited El Salvador several times, found going last summer with Los Hermanos stirred a sense of compassion and started friendships she continues.

When St. Ann’s welcomed the Orellana family from El Salvador into sanctuary in 1985, Phyllis, who came to Spokane in 1984, volunteered full time for a year and a half to help the program. Over the years, she has taught Spanish and since 1994 has taught at Whitworth University and Spokane Community College.

Laurel, Juanita, Lillian Dubiel and Sean Severt recently shared their experiences of visiting El Salvador in 2005 or 2007.

Lillian, who has been co-president of Los Hermanos for two years, graduated last spring.

“When I went in 2005, it was the first time I experienced the severity of poverty there,” she said. “The two weeks were no vacation, but I grew as a person, establishing community with the village. It was easier when I came back to raise funds.

“I knew that they needed and appreciated our efforts,” said Lillian, who goes to the Unitarian Universalist Church where Los Hermanos held the first dinner. The 2008 dinner was at St. Ann’s Catholic Church.

She is now at the University of



Mallory Whittaker, Amanda Long and Madelyn Greeley roll tamales.

Washington and wants to major in international relations. Enough other Los Hermanos students are there that they are building a community of university students eager to be involved in the world.

“Going to El Salvador gave me a different perspective. I realize how lucky I am growing up in an upper-middle-class family and how important it is to be involved in the world. We in America can’t be an island with our tremendous resources,” Lillian said, aware that the United States gave guns to El Salvador’s military government to use in their civil war in the 1980s. “The United States has a violent history related to El Salvador.

“I hope if people know the history of U.S. involvement they will be upset, realizing the U.S. is often a warmonger, not a peacemaker.”

Lillian, who studied Spanish three years in high school, hopes to go back.

Sean Severt, a sophomore at Lewis and Clark, went last summer and lived with a Salvadoran family.

“It was eye-opening to see how people there live, the difference between the wealth and poverty. I realize things I take for granted are privileges, such as going to

high school. Few go to school there,” he said.

Laurel, a junior at St. George’s, went in 2005 and returned last summer on her own.

“I met someone my age, and we have written letters. Last year, I stayed with her and her family,” said Laurel.

Although the living conditions are different, she found the people similar.

“At first I was shocked by the conditions, but I had fun hanging out with people my age. Here

friends feel El Salvador is far away, but I feel I have a second family there,” said Laurel, who has studied five years of Spanish.

“I now realize how every action here has a consequence. The products we consume do not come free,” she said. “Someone makes them. The Rio Saucio, the Dirty River, flows through the community, carrying chemicals used to make the goods we consume.”

Her visits interested her in studying economic development

and global issues.
“High school students there now have hope. We met with the school board and city council. They thanked us for giving their youth opportunities,” she said.

Las Hermanas and Los Hermanos are supporting four college students at the University of El Salvador.

“They see education as a way to change their situation, a means to self improvement and a tool to provide for their families. They now have dreams of going to college like we do here. The school has more girls because the guys are in the fields,” Laurel said.

Many students in Los Hermanos help with the fund-raising events, but have not gone.

Amanda Long of Lewis and Clark joined the group this year because a neighbor invited her to help raise money so others can go to high school. She also met an El Salvadoran teacher who visited. Amanda now hopes to go there.

“It’s important not just to take but to give,” she said.

“The idea is to help for the greater good,” said Mallory Whittaker of Lewis and Clark, whose sister, Erika, was among the founders.

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Parish nurse meets both medical and spiritual needs

By Virginia de Leon
As parish nurse for the Episcopal Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist, Marianne Harrington promotes healing in her church and the community.

She not only assists members with medical needs but also provides emotional support and educates them about the connections of body, mind and spirit.

“My job is to show the relationship between faith and healing and how important a healthy body is to a person’s spiritual life,” said Marianne.

For 10 years, she has volunteered her skills as a registered nurse and her aptitude for pastoral care to help meet the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of the cathedral’s parishioners.

She’s one of several nurses in the area with training as a parish nurse.

In the mid-1990s, the Most Rev. William Skylstad, bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Spokane, brought together people from various denominations as well as community leaders to discuss the possibility of a parish-nursing program.

Marianne was one of about 20 nurses who took the first parish nursing class offered in 1998 by Gonzaga University and the Providence Center for Faith and Healing.

According to the Providence Center for Faith and Healing’s website, the mission of the parish nurse is “the intentional integration of the practice of faith with the practice of nursing so people can achieve wholeness in, with and through the community of faith in which the parish nurse serves.”

In addition to her day job as a full-time nurse for Spokane Public Schools, Marianne volunteers about eight hours each week as the cathedral’s parish nurse—serving as health educator, personal-health counselor and also as a community liaison.

She provides health presentations at the church, trains volunteers who are new to pastoral care and connects parishioners with community organizations and social service agencies.

Whenever people have a question about nutrition and exercise, need help checking their blood pressure or are suffering from back pain or any kind of ache or illness, they may call Marianne at home or find her during coffee hour after Sunday worship.

As the parish nurse, she also visits the sick and elderly in the hospital, their homes or nursing homes—providing prayer and comfort in times of crisis.



Marianne Harrington by the Cathedral of St. John doors.

Photo by Virginia de Leon

“I always ask if they want to pray,” said Marianne, a member of the cathedral for nearly 25 years. “I’m there medically, but I’m also there spiritually. It’s hard to leave your faith behind when you’re dealing with a crisis.”

Faith is especially important to those who are at the end of life, she said.

“People are more humble and more open to spirituality when they’re dying,” Marianne said, noting their desire to know God is with them.

Over the years, people at the cathedral have depended on her presence and advice. She’s there for them when they are sick and accompanies them home from the hospital. When there’s a medical issue, many call her at home.

Some of the elderly have even asked her to be with them as they journey toward the end of their lives.

Older parishioners, especially those who don’t have children or relatives in the area, often turn to her when they’re in need. Some suffer from grief after losing a spouse. Others experience a sense of loss as they move from the houses they have lived in for decades and transition into nursing homes or assisted living facilities.

Sometimes when people have experienced medical problems in church, Marianne has come to their assistance, assessing the situation and calling the paramedics, said the Very Rev. Bill Ellis, the

cathedral’s dean.

“Once paramedics arrived, she was able to speak knowledgeably with them about the symptoms and set them on the right course of treatment immediately,” he said.

On two occasions, she identified when an individual was experiencing dementia and quickly sought help.

Bill has also accompanied her when she has assessed whether a person could continue to live at home without assistance.

“She is more able to know what to look for in situations like that than I,” he said.

Growing up in a Catholic household in Springfield, Mass., Marianne never imagined she would become a nurse.

“I never liked blood or vomit or anything like that,” she recalled.

After volunteering at a Catholic hospital in her senior year of high school, she was moved by the selflessness of nuns and nurses who cared for the sick and dying.

“Everyone was loving, compassionate and prayerful,” she said. “It was this warm, nurturing place where people were taken care of both physically and spiritually.”

She wanted to be part of that.

Marianne attended Mercy Hospital School of Nursing and took classes at Northeastern University in Boston. As a nurse over the years, she worked in obstetrics, in operating rooms, as an assistant to a neurosurgeon and with cancer patients.

When she moved to Spokane in 1982, she took a break from her job to rear two children. When they became teenagers,

she started working for Spokane Public Schools.

For the last few years, she has worked with medically at-risk children in several Spokane elementary schools.

Marianne, who became a member of the Episcopal Church in 1976, said her faith compels her to work as a nurse—both at St. John’s and in the schools.

She begins and ends each day with a prayer, asking God for guidance as she serves in the medical field and at her church.

“My work is so fulfilling,” Marianne said. “It’s an honor and privilege for me to be there for these people.”

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Faith and Environment Network builds cohesive ‘green’ voice

As the new outreach coordinator for the Faith and Environment Network of the Inland Northwest, Shelli Pitner seeks to connect people in the faith community to build “critical mass” around creating “a cohesive green voice in the region.”

“Many think they will do something some day, but all we have is this moment,” she said.

“People in generations X, Y and Z are all busy, but we all need to learn to live with the earth. We are the disposable ones. The earth will be here after we have gone,” she said. “The least we can do is leave the earth better for the next generation.”

She is ready to infuse energy into the newly independent non-profit, which was started in 2006 under the Interfaith Council of the Inland Northwest.

Her commitment to simple living meant not seeking a full-time teaching position and committing to live on income from AmeriCorps through the Palouse-Clearwater Environmental Institute and the network.

Her first task has been helping several agencies and churches plan an event for Earth Month, “Are You Called to Care?”

From 11:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Saturday, April 5, at Salem Lutheran Church, 1428 W. Broadway, resource leaders will offer congregational leaders practical advice on how to make their lives and buildings more earth friendly through energy-efficiency inspections, repairing leaks to reduce water bills, using compact fluorescent light bulbs and planting drought-tolerant plants that require less watering.

Courtney Rush, volunteer coordinator with the Palouse-Clearwater Environmental Institute, is keynote speaker.

Shelli said the network seeks to “break down barriers that keep people recreating the wheel, spinning their wheels, staying caught in ruts” by providing resource sharing and networking opportunities.

For example, she said congregations can connect to barter skills of members who are plumbers, electricians, or landscapers, so they can share skills with other churches and in the community.

To facilitate such contacts, the Faith and Environment Network website will be launched by April 15 to serve as a clearinghouse for congregations and nonprofits to



Shelli Pitner

network and share ideas.

The group will also prepare traveling exhibits and slide shows that can be set up and shown in congregations, schools and community centers.

Shelli said the network encourages recycling, green building and low-maintenance, water-smart landscaping with indigenous plants, and simple actions, such as using cloth grocery bags and low-energy light bulbs.

During 17 years in Coeur d’Alene, she was administrator of Coeur d’Alene’s Children’s Peace Camp and Neewahlu Environmental Education Center on Kidd Island Bay from 1989 to 1993.

With community volunteers, she helped develop a curriculum that was later adapted for teams of high school teens in the Interfaith Council’s Camp PEACE (People Everywhere Are Created Equal) to challenge bullying and bigotry.

Through Neewahlu, which was started through Unity Church of North Idaho and later became independent, she led environmental educational programs. As an employee of the Coeur d’Alene

School District, she worked at Kelley Creek Environmental Center to provide environmental education for sixth graders.

To grab the attention of children, Shelli often started environmental education dialogue by holding up a bottle of water and saying it was the same water dinosaurs drank. Her point was that there is no new water on earth: “Water keeps recycling, so we need to

keep it clean,” she said.

“We need to live with the earth, not just on it,” she said. “We need to think about seven generations. It’s our job and privilege to care for the earth, to live as an example for others to follow.”

Shelli, who grew up in a Lutheran church in Lewiston, began attending a Unity Church in Walla Walla and now attends Unity Church of Truth in Spokane. She holds an associate degree in business management from Lewis and Clark College in Lewiston, a bachelor’s degree in education from Gonzaga University and a master’s degree in education from Lesley University.

She was also involved in environmental education in King County through the Green Team and People for Puget Sound.

When her mother had a stroke and her father needed help in Lewiston, Shelli moved to Spokane. She began doing substitute teaching and private tutoring, and served on the board of the Faith and Environment Network.

Her son’s health sensitivities helped stir some of her awareness about the need for responsible living that honors “who we are, who is around us, our different beliefs and respect for the earth.”

Her faith through Unity Church

emphasizes “the Christ within as motivating, authenticating and empowering each person. Unity encourages us to take responsibility for our personal beliefs,” she said.

“We are involved in the world, providing healing, peace outreach and environmental responsibility,” said Shelli.

“We need to stop constantly doing and listen through our hearts,” she added, telling how her involvement with the homeless at The Lord’s Table in downtown Seattle opened her heart, mind and arms.

Shelli calls for intersecting concern about environment with concern about the economy and homeless people under bridges.

“If we are stewards of the earth, each of our actions affects everyone in every instance of daily life,” she said.

The Faith and Environment Network is developing “A Covenant of Commitment” for congregations to answer the “call to care” by being living examples of environmental stewardship.

For information, call 294-3944 or email faithandenvironmentnetwork@gmail.com.



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Through global travels, weaver-writer builds human relationships

By Virginia de Leon

Like the tapestry she weaves using wool from the sheep that graze in her yard in Valleyford, Meghan Nuttall Sayres intertwines her experiences with those of people she has met around the world.

Through tapestries, as well as through poetry, essays and books, Meghan delves into a myriad of issues—from ancient traditions and the nuances of culture to the value of diversity and the power of women’s voices.

A weaver and award-winning writer, Meghan is author of *Anahita’s Woven Riddle*, an historical novel for young adults set in 19th-century Iran. The book explores the art of weaving while telling the story of a nomadic Muslim girl who weaves a riddle into her wedding carpet.

The American Library Association named it one of the top 10 books for young adults last year.

In addition to writing books and weaving tapestries, this mother of three has gained expertise in international rural development through her world travels. Through relationships she establishes, Meghan seeks to be an ambassador of peace.

In her trips and her day-to-day life at home in Valleyford, Meghan builds relationships to foster understanding among people of different countries, faiths and cultures.

“Although I celebrate the differences, I look for similarities among people,” she said. “Too often, we focus on the differences.”

Especially on recent trips to Iran and Uzbekistan, Meghan sought to “reveal the richness of these cultures” through her writing, weaving and artistic ways of celebrating differences and commonalities.

Meghan’s openness to the world gives her the opportunity to reach out, make friends and see past stereotypes.

“It’s like being a child again,” she said, describing her experiences abroad. “Traveling allows me a break from routine, I experience the unexpected. Everyday I feel so alive, so in the moment.”

Wherever she travels, she feels a connection with people. With each visit to Turkey, Ireland, Iran and other countries where she has befriended weavers, writers and others, she has immersed herself in their lives and cultures.

“Familiarity breeds understanding,” said Meghan.

She traveled to Turkey several times while working on the story that became *Anahita’s Woven Riddle* and traveled to Iran in 2005 to speak about it for the country’s



Meghan Sayers

Photo by Maeve Sayers

first international children’s book festival.

“In Iran, especially, because they’ve been painted as demons and part of the “axis of evil,” it’s amazing how quickly I’ve bonded with people there. I met other writers in Iran and I realized that we were so much alike,” she said.

One of Meghan’s first trips overseas was to Ireland when she was 15. While there, she and her sister and some friends went on a month-long bicycle tour of the country where Meghan’s grandmother grew up and raised sheep.

Meghan returned many times and lived there with her family in 1998.

Her passion for weaving and writing began in 1984 with her first trip to Turkey. During that eight-week tour of the country, she fell in love with Turkey’s oriental carpets and intricate tapestry.

“I loved the idea of how the rug told stories,” she said, recalling the journey she took shortly after graduating from college.

Her Irish grandmother instilled an appreciation for weavers’ work as they cared for their sheep, dyed the wool and spun their own yarn.

“I liked the idea of creating something from nothing,” she said.

Tapestry is a practical use of art, Meghan said.

“Weaving a tapestry is like building a stone wall. You have to build up your base constantly

to create a certain image,” she described, adding that the weaving process not only creates something of beauty, but also can be meditative and therapeutic.

“It gives you time to think,” she said.

Over the years, she also became involved with Taipeis Gael, a tapestry-weaving cooperative in Donegal, Ireland.

Her experience with weavers and spinners eventually led to another labor of love, *Weaving Tapestry in Rural Ireland: Taipeis Gael, Donegal*, a book of essays, oral histories and photographs of the work of tapestry weavers that was published last year.

Before moving to Spokane County in 1992, Meghan lived in Salt Lake City, where she worked as a recreational therapist.

After establishing the Department of Recreation Therapy, Physical Rehabilitation Services, at the University of Utah Health Sciences Center, she left the field to devote more time to her three children and pursue her interest in creative writing.

Meghan continued to write after settling just south of Spokane in Valleyford, a rural community where her children had enough room to play and where her family could raise sheep.

When she’s not traveling and conducting workshops, she spends most of her time at home—writing, raising her sheep and enjoying the outdoors.

In the evenings, she sometimes weaves for a few hours at her tapestry loom. She uses yarn that she

spins from her sheep’s wool with a wheel or a hand spindle.

Meghan also dyes yarn by using plants and other natural materials—just like the weavers she met in both Turkey and Ireland.

Just as she has gained insights from weavers around the world, she has also gained understanding from various religions.

“All religions have something to offer. Many of us are striving toward the same goal,” she said.

Meghan, who grew up Roman Catholic in Pennsylvania, became immersed during her mid-30s in Celtic spirituality—a way of being in the world that revels in nature and honors the sacredness of even the most ordinary moments of life.

Her exploration of the history, traditions and spirituality of the ancient Celts eventually sparked her interest in the Middle East and the Muslim world.

As she has observed the spirit and teachings of the ancient Celts continue to thrive in the British Isles, she also sees that the distant past in countries such as

Turkey and Iran remains alive in the present. This reality is evident not just in the old buildings, pillar stones and other physical remnants of history, but also in the ways people see the world and the traditions they continue to live out today, she said.

For example, in Ireland, people still leave devotions at the holy wells and sacred trees of the pagan Celts, which have since been transformed into symbols of Christianity.

That practice is similar to a custom that’s observed at the Tomb of the Prophet Daniel in Uzbekistan, where people tie personal belongings to a tree, Meghan explained.

Last fall, she went to Uzbekistan to travel by train along the ancient Silk Road.

“There is so much more than what meets the eye,” Meghan said, describing the mysticism surrounding people’s stories, rituals and lives.

For information, email meghan-sayers@qwest.net or visit www.meghannuttallsayres.com.

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Birthmother's Luncheon to follow, 1:00 P.M., St. Joseph's Parish Hall, RSVP to 325-7667

Questions?
Contact Sandy Maher at 358-4258
or Bonnie Deabler at 325-7667

Catholic Charities Spokane

Should media, politicians decide when people should leave a church?

Do we agree with everything our pastors say? If not, should we leave the church when a pastor offends us, mis-speaks, uses hyperbole or exaggerates to make a point? When and how should we challenge and be challenged? What about our being part of a congregation’s community and ministry?

Based on several quotes repeated endlessly as sound bites without the context of a full sermon or ministry, a newspaper columnist and a few pundits suggest a political candidate *should have* left his church.

A cartoon counter-challenges, suggesting a “pre-approved” sermon title: “God Is Good and So Is America.”

Do we agree with everything we read or hear in media? Should we stop taking a publication or watching TV every time someone mis-speaks or exaggerates?

Should media or politicians decide what is right or wrong, based on what may or may not be selective quotes?

There might be few 100-year-old churches. There also might be little freedom of speech in the pulpit or the press.

Media sometimes share tidbits out of context, repeating a bias that fits a political slant. How do media balance agendas of divisive politicians or faiths? These times call for responsible journalism. Media need to examine beyond sensationalized words to the content of ministry. Media need to present more than “both sides” of issues and present values in depth, so people can think beyond the surface, aware of nuances. Media need to inform people so they are aware and understand more than their limited world views.

Should pundits tell churchgoers to leave their churches?

How much overstatement is geared to gain attention? How much is a destructive half truth? How much is hate? How much is prophetic and true? We need context.

Other questions are: Is there an overriding message of hate from a church? Is the church more than the pastor? What fruit is born by ministries of love within the church, in the neighborhood and around the world? Should a pastor be judged or

dismissed by only the most extreme things selected from a sermon?

How much searching and sifting were done by whom and why to find the words chosen to quote from the Rev. Jeremiah Wright at Trinity United Church of Christ in Chicago? What positive things has he said? I have not read all his sermons or even the sermons excerpted to know, but I did visit the website at www.tucc.org. It presents an extensive ministry of caring. Was that ministry inspired in part by the now-retired pastor?

Are some churches silent, because it’s not about their church? Should media examine the sermons of all pastors of all candidates for President?

Should we repeat the 1950s fears of guilt by association? Should we be judged by what our pastors say?

We know that repeating a few words out of context is a propaganda technique. We may be weary about the gossip level of campaigns, uncertain what to believe.

Even in dogmatic churches, people dis-

agree. Church history is rife with splits, departures and new members, rising and falling with times, conflicts, ministries and opinions, but is it the place of media pundits to tell folks who should stay in what church, who should leave and when?

Media and religion have much in common in maintaining free speech. Each has a crucial role in the society. Each may sometimes raise uncomfortable issues. Each may challenge the other, but the two watchdogs of government and of moral, economic and societal values should be wary of being pitted against each other or used as puppets for political purposes of parties or pundits.

Should we let fear silence the prophetic voice of faith speaking truth to power?

Must pastors be cautious not to preach God’s word of justice for fear some member might one day be a political candidate?

Are media and clergy to be watchdogs of power or lapdogs of one form of patriotism or religion?

Mary Stamp - Editor

What ever happened to the idea of taxes supporting the common good?

What happened to the idea of the common good?

A recent full-page newspaper ad featured a picture of a concerned looking father with slightly rumpled hair comforting a crying baby. The headline was, “Who really pays when Congress taxes oil companies?”

The main body of the text began, “We all do...in more ways than one.”

The website listed was EnergyTomorrow.org

It was signed, “The *people* of America’s Oil and Natural Gas Industry.”

The “.org” also caught my attention.

Some time ago, I read about fake grassroots organizations that have convincing sounding, just-us-folks names but are financed and run by various special interests. Some of them are run from lobbyists’ offices. Visits to websites proved interest-

ing but not informative in any reliable way because of inflammatory or insinuating prose styles.

They were meant to manipulate people by leading them to think that people just like them were highly concerned about something that was not receiving enough attention.

After reading the text of this ad, I began wondering, “Who wants me to believe that the oil-rig workers, pipeline maintenance workers and secretaries are worried about gas and oil companies having to pay taxes?”

So I went to the website, which features a lot of light blue print on white, which is not the easiest text to read for finding information quickly.

The initials API appeared a number of times, with no indication of what they

stood for. It was possible to click on it at one point, and the connecting website was headed with those initials.

Clicking the “history” heading on the home page allowed me to confirm my suspicion that API is the American Petroleum Institute, an oil and gas industry association that does a good deal of lobbying.

A number of oil and gas companies reported record earnings last year, and there has been talk of eliminating some of the tax breaks that had been given as incentives for their exploration, research and development.

Ignoring the record earnings, the ad indicates that if the industry has to pay more in taxes, it will result in “taxing Americans’ economic futures.”

Don’t the oil and gas companies make any use of the nations’ infrastructure?

Isn’t the sorry state of our infrastructure one of our major problems?

If these companies don’t participate in financing the building and maintenance of the infrastructure they use, isn’t the public going to have to be taxed more for it?

The ad tries to make the concern about taxes sound like a justice issue, but it seems more like a scare tactic.

We’re supposed to think that concerned young father could lose his job because his company couldn’t afford to keep him after paying its taxes.

Shouldn’t all parts of our economy contribute to support the wellbeing of out entire nation?

What ever happened to the idea that taxes might be used to support the common good?

Nancy Minard - Editorial Team

Benefit Testimonies

Sounding Board

Stories Bear Fruit

Stories Bear Fruit: Sustenance for the Journey testimonies for The Fig Tree Deepening Our Roots Breakfast on March 12:

Ann Frerks, pastor of Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Cheney:

Congratulations to The Fig Tree and thank you for bearing fruit. I liken your mission in our community to an experi-



ence of my own in Nicaragua in a small village devastated by Hurricane Mitch.

When asked what the people ate each day, one man said: “For breakfast, we have beans and rice. For lunch, we have rice and beans. For supper, we have rice and beans mixed together.”

One afternoon as I was trying to get some time away, a boy about 10 years old, whom I had observed to be a nuisance, sought me out. He had in his dirty hands something very unusual and precious. It was an orange. I watched him peel it, annoyed that he was invading my space. Then he pulled off the first section and offered it to me. It was sweet and juicy, and somehow transformed me and the way I saw this boy.

The Fig Tree is that unusual and precious fruit offered to others that can, through the stories of diverse people, transform us all.

Scott Cooper, director of Parish Social Ministries with Catholic Charities for the Diocese of Spokane:

It is crucial that we surprise people with

what faith can actually do.

Theologian Megan McKenna has observed: “All stories are true. Some of them actually happened.” She goes on to say: “All stories are about you and me.”

I find that particularly true about The Fig Tree. Its stories are all about you and me, whether our names are actually featured. They are also all true, not merely in the journalistic sense—we hope, at a minimum—but certainly in a broader, community sense.

They transmit elements of what it is to belong to a community, not just any community, but one that is aware of itself and inclines itself toward the common good, knowing that getting to that elusive place called “the common good” is a life journey with twists and turns, recognizing prophets are not called to be successful. They are called to be faithful.

We are blessed to have an organization dedicated to that journey, journeying with us. Most telling, I believe we will rarely, if ever, know the fruits of these stories. Inspiration can lie dormant for many years before sparking new growth.

The Fig Tree is about planting those seeds, providing regular applications of water and sunlight—I’ll avoid the temptation to extend the metaphor as far as fertilizer—and waiting in hope that is not naïve, but considered and genuine.

We are grateful for these stories, for the seeds and fruit they provide. Remember,

“all stories are true, some of them actually happened, and all stories are about you and me.”

Virginia de Leon, now a freelance writer in Spokane, former religion writer for the Spokesman-Review:

I’ve been a newspaper reporter now for more than a dozen years and one thing I’ve learned working for newspapers in Seattle, Spokane and other communities is that news, sometimes by its very nature, can often be overwhelming. Sometimes reading the news, and especially gathering the news, can often be a paralyzing experience for me, because the solutions aren’t always present, the problems of the world feel so enormous, and I am too little, too weak, too insignificant to make a change.

That’s where The Fig Tree can make a big difference. The goal of those who work and volunteer for this publication is more than just presenting news. It’s also to connect people, to share ideas, to stir compassion, to foster respect, to open dialogue and to seek solutions together.

With that in mind, I quote Eudora Welty, an award-winning writer and photographer from Mississippi.

This is what I think journalism should be about and what I think The Fig Tree tries to do every month:

“My wish, my continuing passion would be not to point the finger in judgment, but to part a curtain—that invisible shadow that

falls between people, the veil of indifference to each other’s presence, each other’s wonder, each other’s human plight.”

The Rev. Happy Watkins, pastor of New Hope Baptist Church and co-organizer of the annual Martin Luther King Day events:

When I think of The Fig Tree, I think of the lady who started it. I was on the Spokane Christian Coalition Board. This lady who came up with a dream to start a newspaper about people in action, faith people in action, I think of this lady—on a small scale—as a David facing a Goliath of journalism, as a Rosa Parks who stood up when others sat down, as a Martin Luther King who had a dream. Twenty-five years later that dream is flourishing.

The first Psalm says it adequately: A fig tree is like a tree planted by the rivers of water that bringeth forth its fruits in season. Its leaves shall not wither and whatsoever the fig tree doeth shall prosper.

I continue to support Mary Stamp. She’s everywhere, in the community, in all the activities, in the home and she writes accurately. I thank her for her presence.

I don’t know who wrote this, Confucius, Aristotle, Plato or it could have been Redd Foxx. I think that this speaks eloquently of her and all of us: “Work to make a difference until making a difference don’t make a difference no more.”



Churches host AIDS awareness

First Presbyterian Church, St. Aloysius Catholic Parish, Whitworth Community Presbyterian and Life Center are co-hosting a lunch and a dinner on World Vision’s “Step into Africa: Experience AIDS” program on Wednesday, April 23, at noon at Life Center, 1202 N. Government Way, and at 7 p.m., at the Davenport Hotel.

Steven Haas of World Vision and Moses Pulei of Whitworth University will speak on the “Step Into Africa: Experience AIDS” program.

For information, call 747-1058.

Community safety is City Forum topic

Spokane Chief of Police Anne Kirkpatrick and Pat DeVries, president of DeVries Business Records Management, will be the featured speakers at the Spokane City Forum at 11:45 a.m., Wednesday, April 16, at First Presbyterian Church, 318 S. Cedar.

They will discuss, “What It Takes to Keep a Community Safe.”

Anne has been in law enforcement for more than 25 years, in Federal Way, Ellensburg, Auburn and Redmond before coming to Spokane.

Pat is president of Crime Stoppers of the Inland Northwest.


For information, call 777-1555 or visit spokanecityforum.org.

Anti-racism training set


Using national training materials, “Seeing the Face of God in Each Other” adapted to the racial makeup of this region, the Episcopal Diocese of Spokane’s Anti-Racism Task Force is sponsoring 15 hours of training from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., Saturdays, April 19 and 26, at St. Andrew’s Episcopal Church, 2404 N. Howard.

Organizers say the event is designed to foster partnerships across racial, faith and community lines that challenge roots of racism.

For information, call 208-983-9334 or email djames@camasnet.com.



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Calendar of Events

- April 3

- **Great Decisions**, “Iraq End-Game,” Timothy Carney, former ambassador to Haiti and Sudan, Weyerhaeuser Hall, Whitworth, 7:30 p.m. - 777-3270
- April 3
April 4-5
April 5

- **Greg Mortenson**, University of Idaho Auditorium, 7:30 p.m. - p. 2
 - **Institute for Congregational Leadership** workshop, 4624 E. Jamieson
 - **“Called to Care,”** Faith & Environment Network Workshop, Salem Lutheran, 1428 W. Broadway, 11:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. - 294-3944
- April 7

- **Hans Moldenhauer Lecture**, “Tragic Art of Hugo Distler,” Donovan Johnson, Music Building Recital Hall, Whitworth, 7:30 p.m. - 777-3280
 - **“Possibilities for Peace:** Breaking Barriers, Building Bridges in the Middle East,” Nonie Darwish, Cataldo Hall, Gonzaga University, 7:30 p.m.
- April 7-12

- **YMCA Healthy Kids Week**, Downtown Spokane and Spokane Valley YMCA - call 838-3577
- April 10

- **Non-profit Leadership:** Executive Director Roundtable, Anne Marie Axworthy, Avista Foundation, Washington California Room, Gonzaga University, 8:30-10 a.m.
 - **Great Decisions**, “Alternative Energy in the U.S. and Global Implications,” Jan Kreider, professor, University of Colorado-Boulder’s Department of Civil, Environmental, and Architectural Engineering, Weyerhaeuser Hall at Whitworth, 7:30 p.m. - 777-3270
 - **“The Crusades and Us:** Medieval and Modern Perceptions of Christendom’s Holy Wars,” Thomas Madden, professor at St. Louis University, Gonzaga’s Jepson Center, 7:30 p.m. - 323-5973
- April 12

- **National Paddling Film Festival**, Spokane River Project of the Center for Justice, Magic Lantern Theatre, 25 W. Main, 7:30 p.m.
- April 14

- **“Guided Tour of UN Operations in Ghana,”** Amowi Phillips, adjunct professor at Whitworth University, United Nations Association, Unitarian Universalist Church, 4340 W. Ft. Wright Dr., 7 p.m. - 456-2382
- April 16

- **Spokane City Forum**, “What It Takes to Keep a Community Safe,” Chief of Police Anne Kirkpatrick and Pat DeVries of Crime Stoppers, First Presbyterian, 318 S. Cedar, 11:45 a.m. – 777-1555
- April 17

- **“A Global Local Faith, a Local Global Faith:** Christian Possibilities Today,” Martin Marty, scholar of American religion, Weyerhaeuser Hall at Whitworth, 7 p.m. - 777-4433
- April 18-19

- **“Keeping the Garden, Restoring Creation”** retreat, Peacemaking Network of the Inland Northwest, St. Joseph’s Family Center, 1016 N. Superior, 5 p.m. Friday to 4 p.m. Saturday - 216-1072
- April 19

- **Earth Day Celebration in Riverfront Park**, Gondola Fountain Meadows, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. - www.earthdayspokane.org
 - **Sunnyside CROP Hunger Walk**, Kamiakin School, 9 a.m. - 837-4314
- April 19-20

- **“Caring for Creation Weekend,”** St Aloysius Church, 330 E. Boone - 323-5896
- April 19-23

- Japan Week, **“Dolls of Japan Exhibit,”** Japanese Cultural Center, Mukogawa Fort Wright Institute – www.mfwl.org/jcc
- April 19, 26

- **Anti-Racism Training**, St. Andrew’s Episcopal, 2404 N Howard, 8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m. - 208-938-9334
- April 20

- **The Lands Council Spokane River Restoration Day**, Sandifur Memorial Bridge in Peaceful Valley, 8:30 a.m. to noon - 209-2852
 - **Whitworth Choir spring concert**, Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist, 127 E. 12th Ave., 3 p.m. - 777-3280
 - **Komen Eastern Washington Race for the Cure** of Breast Cancer, downtown Spokane – 363-8788
- April 23

- **“Step into Africa: Experience AIDS,”** noon lunch, Life Center, 1202 N. Government Way; 7 p.m. dinner, Davenport Hotel - 747-1058
- April 24

- **Great Decisions**, “China’s Economic Rise: Challenge & Opportunity,” Walter Hutchens, associate professor of economics and business at Whitworth, Weyerhaeuser Hall, Whitworth, 7:30 p.m. - 777-3270
- April 25-27

- **Chewelah Earth Day**, St. Paul’s Lutheran
- April 26

- **Spokane Regional Solid Waste Spring Compost Fair**, Finch Arboretum, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
 - **“Religion and Public Policy,”** Bob Zinke, professor of public administration at Eastern Washington University, Cathedral of St. John, 127 E. 12th Ave., 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. - 358-2256
- April 26-27

- **“Peacemaker Principles Workshop,”** Jake Swamp, Twin Eagles Wilderness School, Sandpoint - 208-265-3685
- April 27

- **Spokane CROP Hunger Walk**, Martin Centre at Gonzaga University, walk along Centennial Trail, noon register and entertainment, 1:30 p.m. walk - 891-1045
- April 28

- **An Evening with Jim Hightower**, benefit for KYRS-Thin Air Community Radio 92.3 & 89.9 FM, Lewis and Clark High School Auditorium, 521 W. 4th, 7 p.m. - 325-SEAT
- April 30

- **School of Theology and Ministry Lecture**, “Great Theologians Vatican II: Fanning the Flame,” Evelyn Eaton & James Whitehead, “Recovering the Passion of God: Eros, Compassion, Grace,” Pigott Auditorium, Seattle University, 7 p.m.
- April 30
May 1

- **Fig Tree distribution**, St. Mark’s Lutheran, 316 E. 24th, 9 a.m.
 - **Fig Tree Board**, Manito United Methodist, 3220 S. Grand, 1 p.m.
 - Yom Hashoah, “Preventing Genocide: How Do Ordinary People Become Evil?” Temple Beth Shalom, 1322 E. 30th Ave., 747-3304
- Wed-Sat
Thurs

- **Habitat-Spokane** work days - call 534-2552
 - **PJALS street vigils** on Iraq War, Riverside & Monroe 4:30 p.m.-838-7870.
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- **Colville Peace Vigil** - 675-4554
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- **NAACP** - 467-9793

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Stephanie Blumhagen hopes care of creation might permeate churches

By Julie Lauterbach
Stephanie Blumhagen's mother taught her names of native grasses and plants in North Dakota on long walks through pastures and forests collecting wild berries and plums. Her father reserved a plot of his farmland for a family field garden where Stephanie helped plant long rows of potatoes and squash. A hunter, he taught her animal tracks and markings.

Growing up close to the land, she has had insights to share in the planning process for the Presbytery of the Inland Northwest Peacemaking Network's annual retreat focusing on conservation care.

"Keeping the Garden, Restoring the Creation" is the theme for the retreat, set for 5 p.m., Friday to 4 p.m., Saturday, April 18 and 19, at St. Joseph's Family Center, 1016 N. Superior.

Presentations include "Slow Food Spokane," "Eating Locally in the Inland Northwest" and "Caring for Creation in Your Congregation."

Stephanie, who graduated in music and piano in 2004 from Minot State University, volunteered summers as a counselor at a Lutheran Bible camp. She worked on its staff for a year before coming to Spokane as a missionary to live at Westminster House and serve in West Central Spokane.

She now works with AmeriCorps VISTA as coordinator for Spokane County's United Way CASH (Creating Assets, Savings and Hope) Coalition, where she helps low-income persons with financial assets, bank accounts and financial education.

Since arriving in Spokane, she has been working with the Presbyterian Peacemaking Network.

She attended its 2006 retreat on peace between Israelis and Palestinians and helped with the 2007 retreat worship. This year, she is helping coordinate the overall event.

The peacemaking network is a response to God's call for peacemaking through advocacy, education and human connections, she said.

"Our network is trying to connect people committed to issues of peace and justice," Stephanie said, and this year, it will use eco-justice as the root of conversations.

Care of creation is logical to Stephanie, who grew up with a



Stephanie Blumhagen Photo by Julie Lauterbach

"conservation ethic." Faith was integral to her family, which attended a United Methodist Church. They were dedicated to live simply and care for the environment.

These influences shaped Stephanie's ethic that, "If you love God and understand that God created the earth we live in, it makes sense that you would care for that earth."

For the faith community, Stephanie sees the environmental crisis as fundamentally a crisis of values.

She pointed out that the phrase, "dominion over all the earth" has become misconstrued, giving humans a sense that the earth is only for their use and enjoyment, without a responsibility for its care and conservation.

Stephanie would replace that phrase with the word, "stewardship," which is about caring for something that belongs to someone else.

"From this word we can emphasize

size that the earth is not ours, but God's," she said.

The workshop will delve into stewardship and spiritual themes to help participants gain "understanding of tangible things they can do to care for creation" and start to see conservation as a spiritual issue.

Care of creation for Stephanie extends into the moral realm.

"If you have concern for your fellow human being, you should have concern for the earth," she said.

Stephanie said that the idea of change, especially related to eco-stewardship, can be daunting and overwhelming.

When people go to the grocery store, however, she said that they can make a decision about whether to buy organic.

"There are simple changes you can do in your daily living," said Stephanie.

She noted that she refuses to buy bottled water as a simple way to cut down on energy and material waste.

For communities, specifically

church communities, there are abundant conservation ideas:

- Replacing styrofoam cups with ceramic mugs for coffee hour to reduce waste.

- Providing recycle bins where churchgoers can place bulletins after worship.

Stephanie advocates for consuming less as a suggestion spanning local to global commitments.

As a video to be shown at the retreat, "The Story of Stuff," says, with consumption comes more waste—shoeboxes, tissue paper and boxes, silicon gel packets, cardboard insoles and more.

"Learn that it's okay to do without the latest, greatest thing," Stephanie said. "We need to readjust our thinking to value people for who they are, and not what they have."

Because conversations on eco-justice leave Stephanie hopeful, she believes the April retreat is one way to expand the existing dialogue.


For information, call 216-1072 or email sblumhagen@gmail.com.


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