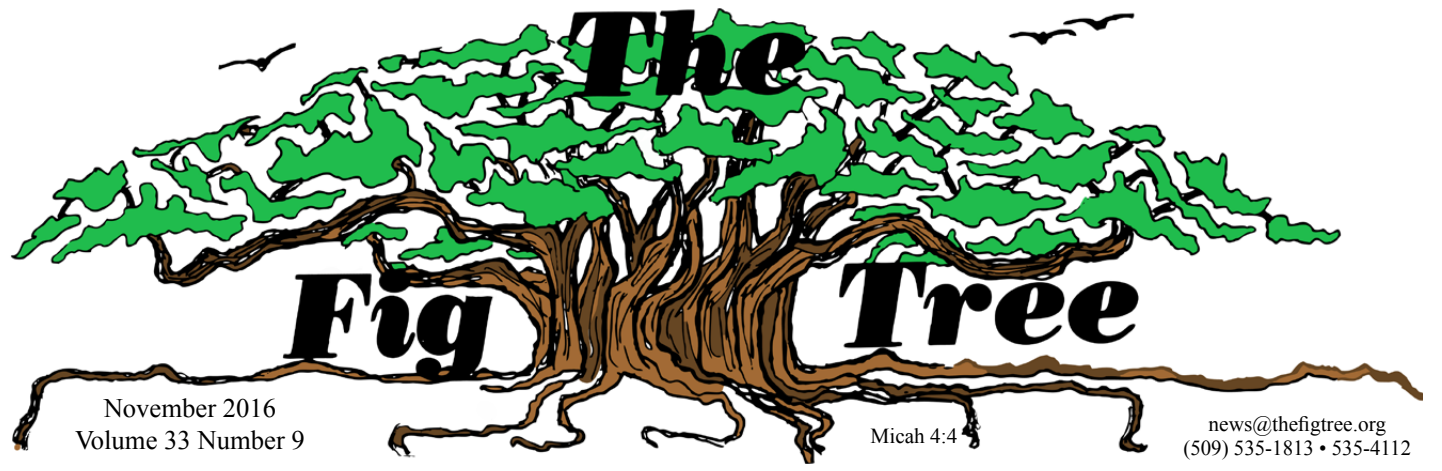


32ND YEAR OF PUBLICATION

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FEATURES 40 EVENTS



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

Fair trade morphs into caring ties

By Mary Stamp

Barbara Novak's dining room table is covered with Cambodian sculptures. One bed is covered with eco-friendly Nepalese wrapping paper made from Lokta bush bark. Tibetan singing bowls, sound implements and prayer flags are in her garage.

Barbara and her business partner, Kirk Richmond, moved the items from the Far East Handicrafts outlet in Seattle, where he worked, to Barbara's home in Spokane.

In August, he retired and moved to Nepal to carry on projects of the Stephen R. Novak Foundation, a nonprofit started in 1998.

Many crafters for Far East Handicrafts in Nepal are also retiring. Their children are educated and entering other careers.

Barbara will continue to offer Far East Handicrafts products at the Jubilee Sale Friday and Saturday, Nov. 4 and 5 at First Presbyterian Church, 318 S. Cedar.

Kirk will work with organizations in Nepal to be sure foundation funds go where they need to go.

Barbara, who earned bachelor's and master's degrees in music performance, in 1972 from Washington State University and in 1974 from Southern Illinois University,



Barbara Novak holds a singing bowl from Nepal.

played a year with the symphony in Evanston, Ind., before auditioning for the Spokane Symphony. She played bassoon and contra bassoon there until 1999, taught in the music departments of Gonzaga University, Whitworth University and Washington State University, and gave private lessons.

Her professional music career coincided with her ministry.

In 1978, Barbara, who grew up attending St. David's Episcopal Church in Spokane, was the first woman ordained to the diaconate at the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist. She studied three years under the former Dean Richard Coombs and took classes at Gonzaga University. She has done prison, hospice and drug rehabilitation ministries.

"As a deacon, I have one foot in the church world and one foot in the secular world, and I am to interpret to the church the needs, concerns and hopes of the world."

In 1981, she married Terry Novak, Spokane city manager from 1979 to 1991. Later he was vice president at Eastern Washington University and professor in the business and public administration master's program at the Riverpoint

Continued on page 4

Program on health care decisions starts

By Deidre Jacobson

Providence Health Care has begun a pilot program in Spokane to help patients and their families reflect on and share about their future desires related to health care and end-of-life decisions.

Patients express who they want to speak for them if they sustain an injury or have a disease that compromises their ability to speak for themselves, what their end-of-life-care wishes are, and they share this information with their loved ones so they can honor those wishes even if they differ from their own.

These questions and decisions around them are the work of

advanced care planning manager Kellie Durgan, with Providence Health Care's Advanced Care Planning program.

She uses Gunderson Health's "Respecting Choices" curriculum with a team approach. Health care providers invite patients to begin the conversation and then work with a trained facilitator—typically a medical assistant, registered nurse or social worker in outpatient settings—to choose a health care agent and complete a living will or Physician's Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment (POLST) form.

Respecting Choices began with a Providence Foundation grant

in April 2015 at Providence St. Joseph's Care Center, Providence Internal Medicine and Providence Family Medicine North.

At these sites, trained facilitators, who are not physicians, begin with questions about end-of-life planning, engaging patients and families in looking ahead.

"Many people assume families know what loved ones want, but they often don't. At other times, people designate a health care agent and never tell family they selected someone," said Kellie.

"It is difficult for families to make decisions without knowing their loved one's wishes. Families who are aware of the wishes suffer less and have less anxiety when they have to make painfully difficult decisions. Moving this conversation upstream, before the crisis, is important," said Kellie.

A focus of this advance care planning is facilitating a conversation between someone and the person chosen to be the health care agent—known as a durable power of attorney for health care.

This conversation allows the health care agent to hear directly from the person what they would

Continued on page 4

Rep. Maxine Waters is NAACP banquet speaker

Human rights advocate and California Congresswoman Maxine Waters is the featured speaker for the Spokane NAACP's 97th Freedom Fund Banquet beginning at 6 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 12, at Northern Quest Casino in Airway Heights.

Maxine, who has a reputation as a fearless, outspoken advocate for women, children, people of color and the poor, will speak on "Our Lives Matter—Our Votes Count."

Elected in November 2014 to her 13th term in the U.S. House of Representatives with more than 70 percent of the vote in diverse South Central Los Angeles, she is on the House Committee on Financial Services and the Steering and Police Committee of the Congressional Democratic Leadership, as well as the Congressional Professional Caucus and Congressional Black Caucus.

Through her 37 years of public service, Maxine has tackled difficult issues, combining her legislative acumen with grassroots organizing.

Before her election in 1990, she served 14 years in the California State Assembly, rising to be the Democratic Caucus chair.

Maxine helped promote divestment of state pension funds from South Africa, affirmative action legislation, a state Child Abuse Prevention Training Program and prohibiting police strip searches for nonviolent misdemeanors.

She has served on the Democratic National Committee (DNC) since 1980 and was a leader in five presidential campaigns: Sen. Edward Kennedy in 1980, the Rev. Jesse Jackson in 1984 and 1988, and President Bill Clinton in 1992 and 1996.

Continued on page 3

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WCC joins in concerns about mental health

Children are particularly vulnerable to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which lasts long after a conflict ends, said Ambassador Geert Muylle, Belgian representative to the United Nations in Geneva. He spoke at an Oct. 5 World Mental Health Day event, "International Campaign: Breaking the Chains of Stigma in Mental Health; Restoring Human Dignity for Persons with Mental Illness."

The event at the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva was sponsored by Frascarita International, the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Council of Churches (WCC), the Fondation d'Harcourt and the Belgium government.

"Mental health disorders are a global development issue," Geert said. "About 10 percent of the world's population, including 20 percent of children and adolescents, suffer some sort of mental disorder." Although mental health disorders affect both high- and low-resource countries they are critical in settings of conflict and violence, he said, adding that "human-made and natural disasters add to people's stress and mental instability." The focus of World Mental Health Day 2016 was on "psychological first aid."

Nyambura Njoroge, WCC project coordinator for health and healing, began with a prayer for persons with different kinds of mental health struggles and caregivers as they face stigma.

Speakers from the WHO and UN said human rights abuses are common in both developed and developing countries. Dainius Pūras, UN reporter on the right to health, said concerns remain about misuse and abuse of psychiatry that have different historical legacies in regions and sub-regions.

Isabel Apawo Phiri, WCC associate general secretary, said, mental health professionals and psychiatric services are "woefully inadequate to meet the growing need." She said that "the WCC and partners historically were and currently are committed to serve the mental wellbeing of the people and communities regardless of religion." In addition to "community-level accompaniment of the people in need, our members and healthcare networks provide a substantial proportion of the healthcare in the neediest parts of the world."

Shekhar Saxena, director of mental health and substance abuse at the WHO, said "mental health problems are an important issue worldwide because of their impact on the human rights and quality of life of those affected and their families."

René Stockman, of the Brothers of Charity, said, "Breaking the chains remains our task"—breaking the chains of stigmatization, exclusion and discrimination.

WCC joins Blue Community on water advocacy

On Oct. 25, the WCC joined the Blue Community of water and eco-justice advocates and urged member churches to join the quest for global water and sanitation rights. Maude Barlow, co-founder of the Blue Planet Project, noted the WCC could potentially reach more than 500 million Christians worldwide in advocating the right to access water and sanitation.

Isaiah Toroitich, global advocacy and policy coordinator of the ACT Alliance, said the human right to water and sanitation needs particular protection because it is challenged and under threat.

Rajendra Singh, "the water man of India," said water commercialization is creating a disaster.

David Boys, deputy general secretary of Public Services International (PSI), said PSI has been part of the WCC's Ecumenical Water Network since its inception.

Gidon Bromberg, an Israeli and a co-director of EcoPeace/Friends of Earth Middle East, said, "Water is being held hostage by the political process, particularly by the Oslo (Peace) Accords." For 22 years, Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations have been held hostage to the all-or-nothing approach, and solving water issues would benefit all.

Nader Al-Khateeb, a Palestinian and a co-director of EcoPeace, said, "Nobody should be denied access to water," adding that the Middle East is "blessed with sunshine" which can help with using renewable energy for water desalination "instead of fighting over limited resources."

REGIONAL ECUMENICAL & INTERFAITH NEWS

Legislative event theme is 'Taking Responsibility'

"Taking Responsibility: Acting Together in Faith" is the theme for the 2017 Eastern Washington Legislative Conference from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Saturday, Jan. 28, at St. Mark's Lutheran Church, 316 E. 24th Ave.

The Rev. Gregg Sealey, the new Inland District superintendent of

the United Methodist Church, will offer theological reflections and there will be a panel on poverty, plus workshops on education, criminal and racial justice, housing, environment and integrating health care.

Planning meetings are alternate Thursday afternoons at Em-

manuel Family Life Center, 631 S. Richard Allen Ct.

Sponsors are The Fig Tree, Catholic Charities Spokane, the Faith Action Network of Washington, the Washington State Catholic Conference, Earth Ministry and the NAACP Spokane.

For information, call 535-1813.

Benefit speakers will look 'Beyond the News'

"Beyond the News: Revealing Community" is the theme for the 2017 Fig Tree Benefit events.

The Benefit Lunch is at 11:30 a.m., Friday, March 10, and the Benefit Breakfast is at 7:30 a.m., Wednesday, March 15, at Cataldo Hall at Gonzaga University.

The Fig Tree invites people interested in hosting tables to reserve tables from now through February. Hosts invite eight guests.

Speakers for the benefit events will be selected from among people featured in articles sharing their stories of making a

difference.

Planning meetings are at noon on first Thursdays. The next meeting is on Thursday, Nov. 2, at Emmanuel Family Life Center, 631 S. Richard Allen Ct.

For information, call 525-4112 or email mary@thefigtree.org.

Jubilee Marketplace features handcrafts

The Jubilee International Marketplace will offer fairly traded, sweatshop-free handcrafts, clothing, jewelry and pottery from Nepal, Guatemala, Chile, Thailand, Ethiopia and across the globe from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., Friday, Nov. 4, and 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 5, at First Presbyterian Church, 318 S. Cedar.

Each November, more than 100 volunteers present the marketplace with more than 30 fair-trade organizations, including Ten Thousand Villages and local vendors who work directly with artisans around the world.

Jubilee raises awareness of economic justice through fair wages for artisans.

More than 2,000 people attend the sale and proceeds support artisans as they provide food, housing, education and medical care for their families.

Since Jubilee's inception 28 years ago, almost \$1 million has been raised for people in need.

For more information visit their website at www.spokaneipc.org.

Lands Council announces Shell pullback

On October 6, Shell Anacortes pulled their permit to receive crude oil by rail at their refinery, according to The Lands Council, a member of the Stand Up To Oil campaign that had been preparing a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for hearings.

The announcement came after the Department of Ecology announced the hearings schedule.

"Organizing is never in vain," said Laura Ackerman, organizer and oil police director for The Lands Council.

She said that, while Shell claims they pulled their permit primarily for economic reasons with oil prices slowly rising, the real reason is the growing opposition to oil trains.

Shell was forced into a full Environmental Impact Statement

(EIS) and significant problems were revealed with the proposal.

The EIS meant a longer process with public scrutiny, and thousands of people across the Northwest were against adding another six unit trains of Bakken oil to the busy tracks through Montana, Idaho and Washington.

Laura uplifted the power of people coming together at seven hearings on coal, oil and climate in the Spokane area over the years.

There have also been victories at Benicia and San Luis Obispo, Calif., that stopped crude-by-rail facilities, plus many city council resolutions against fossil fuel transport and attempts by some cities and counties to stop the building of fossil fuel facilities.

"A recent oil train derailment at Mosier, Ore., is fresh in the minds

of Northwesterners," said Laura.

"The Shell Draft EIS warned of the potential dangers. It made the process transparent," she said. "Tribal opposition has also stopped several proposals."

Shell and rail companies also see the opposition in Spokane with the City Council's attempt to mitigate the dangers of coal and oil for its citizens with a ballot initiative that was set aside, but Laura expects will come back.

"Meanwhile, we have to make comments on the Army Corps DEIS for the Longview coal exporting facility proposal, to keep Gray's Harbor on our radar and to keep vigilant of Tesoro-Savage's Vancouver Energy proposal," Laura said.

For information, call 209-2404 or visit theLANDSCOUNCIL.org.

Shalom and SPEAR share Civic Theatre benefit

Shalom Ministries and SPEAR share a benefit performance of "Plaid Tidings" on Wednesday, Nov. 30, with reception and

silent auction at 6:30 p.m. and performance at 7:30 p.m., at the Spokane Civic Theatre, 1020 N. Howard.

SPEAR serves children and helps families in East Central Spokane to build a promising future by providing basic needs,

encouragement and mentoring. Shalom Ministries meets needs of the most vulnerable members of the community, regularly serving more than 4,000 meals a month and providing Pathways job and life skill training.

For information, call 710-0204.

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Biographies by Spokane Author Mary Cronk Farrell are the focus of a community conversation

'Courage for Our Time'
Thursday, Nov. 17 - 7 p.m.
Auntie's Bookstore • 402 W. Main



Fannie Never Flinched tells how Fannie Sellins galvanized workers to strike for fair pay and safe work, and confronted anti-immigrant prejudice.

Irena's Children records how Irena Sendler, World War II heroine, stood against Nazi genocide in Poland and saved 2,000 children.

Fannie and Irena risked their lives fighting some of the same injustices that plague us today.

Mary Cronk Farrell, author; Liz Moore of PJALS, Lara Estaris of KYRS, Taylor Weech, youth activist, and Jenny Rose, Spokane Education Association, will host a panel discussion and community conversation.

Agency on Aging seeks volunteer coaches

"A Matter of Balance" is a nationally recognized, evidence-based program designed to reduce the fear of falling and increase activity levels of older adults.

Volunteer coaches are needed to deliver the eight two-hour classes for groups of 10 to 12 participants.

Spokane County fall rates are greater than the Washington State rate and result in a high number of hospitalization and Emergency Medical Services calls by the City of Spokane Fire Department EMS. The average cost in the United States of falls in older adults is more than \$30,000, said Mark Haberman, ALTCEW planning coordinator.

A Matter of Balance was de-

veloped at the Roybal Center at Boston University. It has shown impressive outcomes in reducing the fear of falling—97 percent of participants are more comfortable talking about the fear of falling, feel comfortable increasing activity and would recommend it to others.

Aging & Long Term Care of Eastern Washington (ALTCEW) has offered A Matter of Balance to Spokane County this year and will increase program capacity by training more volunteer coaches.

Mark said coaches need communication and interpersonal skills, enthusiasm, dependability and a willingness to lead small groups of older adults. They also need to be able to lead low-to-

moderate level exercise. ALTCEW staff will train and support coaches. The next coach training will be offered from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 3, at ALTCEW, 1222 N. Post.

Volunteer coaches agree to participate in the training and provide leadership for two classes within the next year, Mark said.

ALTCEW helps older adults and people living with disabilities stay in their homes. It provides case management for people who need a caregiver, trains caregivers and answers questions about Medicare and Medicaid.

For information, call 458-2509 or email mark.haberman@dshs.wa.gov.

Speaker addresses poverty, justice

Continued from page 1

After the Los Angeles civil unrest in 1992, Maxine interpreted to media and the public the despair in cities across America.

She co-founded the Black Women's Forum, a nonprofit of more than 1,200 African-American women in the Los Angeles area.

She addresses issues such as poverty, economic development and equal justice.

Throughout her career, she has advocated peace, justice and human rights in South Africa, Haiti, Africa and Latin America, related to apartheid, political prisoners and canceling the debt of poor nations.

She is a founding member and former chair of the "Out of Iraq" Congressional Caucus. Expanding access to health care is another of her priorities, including HIV/

AIDS among minorities.

She has led congressional efforts to mitigate foreclosures and keep families in their homes during housing and economic crises.

Maxine was born in St. Louis, Mo., the fifth of 13 children of a single mother. She began working at age 13 in factories and segregated restaurants. After moving to Los Angeles, she worked in garment factories and at the telephone company.

She attended California State University at Los Angeles, where she earned a bachelor's degree and began her career in public service as a teacher and a volunteer coordinator in the Head Start Program.

She is married to Sidney Williams, former U.S. ambassador to the Commonwealth of the Bahamas.

For information, call 209-2425.

Episcopal Diocese elects its new bishop

The Episcopal Diocese of Spokane elected the Rev. Canon Gretchen Rehberg as its ninth bishop on Oct. 15 in Lewiston at its 52nd Annual Convention. She is the 59th woman elected bishop in the Anglican Communion and first in this diocese. She was chosen to lead the 40 Episcopal worshipping communities in Eastern Washington and North Idaho.

"I look forward to building on what we have to move forward into the future," she said. "I am convinced that with the diocese working together in partnership with God and one another we can take the next faithful step forward in following Jesus, in loving God and loving our neighbor, and in being creative and compelling

witnesses to Jesus Christ here in the Diocese of Spokane."

Gretchen will start as bishop-elect in February and, pending the consent of a majority of bishops with jurisdiction and standing committees of the Episcopal Church, will be ordained and consecrated as bishop in March 2017 in the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist.

She will succeed the Rt. Rev. James Waggoner, Jr. who was consecrated bishop in 2000.

Gretchen is passionate about proclaiming God's inclusive love and equipping the people of God for transformation and growth. Christian formation for all ages is also important to her.

She has served as rector of the

Episcopal Church of the Nativity in Lewiston since 2006.

With the diocese, she has been chair of the Commission on Ministry, a canon for Regional Mission, and a trainer for the College for Congregational Development, to equip people for ministry and help congregations be more faithful, healthy communities.

Gretchen has a master's of divinity from General Seminary, a doctor of ministries from Wesley Seminary, and a doctoral degree in chemistry. She was previously a professor of organic chemistry.

For information, call 624-3191.

Habitat-Spokane breaks ground for six homes

Habitat-Spokane recently held a ground-breaking ceremony in Deer Park with six partner families who will build their future homes in New Hope Meadows.

Angie Funnell, fund development and marketing director, said ground-breaking ceremonies may seem like "moving a little dirt" but they are the beginning of "generosity that moves mountains" for hard-working families needing homes.

She said community support to Habitat-Spokane helps it do its mission of putting "God's love into action" by bringing people together to "build homes, communities and hope."

Ivan Fedorovich Tanasov is head of one of the six families who broke ground in Deer Park.

Since immigrating to the United States in 2008, he has lived with six family members in a two bedroom,

one-bathroom home. He chose to partner with Habitat-Spokane to begin his dream of homeownership and a more stable life.

Qualifications for Habitat homeownership include the families' need, willingness to partner and ability to pay. Homeowner recruitment meetings are at 5:30 p.m. on first Thursdays at Habitat-Spokane, 1805 E. Trent.

The first annual Roof Raiser's Supper Club at 7 p.m., Friday, Nov. 4, at 1805 E. Trent Ave. includes a gourmet three-course meal, dancing and silent auction.

Habitat-Spokane invites congregations to join in building beside homeowners. Its Build Upon Faith is an ecumenical ministry with more than 30 churches.

For information, call 534-2552 or email afunnell@habitat-spokane.org.

SAVE THE DATE

2017 Eastern Washington Legislative Conference

Saturday, Jan. 28

9 a.m.-3 p.m. - St. Mark's Lutheran Church
316 E. 24th Ave. - Spokane

Presentations will be on justice issues before the Washington State Legislature

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The Fig Tree will run another event section in the Dec. issue

Bazaar & Bake Sale

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Coffee bar, bake sale, quality seconds and crafts

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St. John's Cathedral Home-Spun HOLIDAY BAZAAR

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9:30 am - 3 pm
Saturday, Nov. 12

Lunch Available
11:30 am to 1 pm

Raffles
Food & Crafts

Crafters retire, children are educated and choose other careers

Continued from page 1

campus. Terry's son, Steve, lived with them for five years before Barbara adopted him in 1985 when he turned 18.

Steve studied business and philosophy at Whitman College, beginning in 1986. After graduating, he took a nine-month spiritual journey, visiting Buddhist monasteries in Thailand and Nepal.

He came back with handcrafted items, clothing, handbags and singing bowls to start Far East Handicrafts in 1988—setting aside plans to become an environmental lawyer for later.

"Steve ran the business on fair trade principles, making sure crafts people were paid fair wages in their cultural context and could send their children to school," said Barbara, who helped the sister of a crafter through school.

The business grew, and Steve opened Far East Handicrafts in Seattle. In 1995, when he was 28, he died in an accident in an abandoned silver mine by Lake Pend Oreille.

Five months after the accident,

her father died. From 1990 to 1995, Barbara had stepped back from ministry to help her mother care for her father, who had emphysema.

In 1996, Barbara went to Nepal for the first time, meeting crafters and people doing medical projects and a reforestation program, planting trees to replace those cut by hill tribe people for firewood.

"I had never seen poverty like that," said Barbara.

She and Terry kept the business based in Seattle and continued projects to aid craftspeople. Barbara wanted to sponsor a school. Steve's agent in Kathmandu, Tula Shakya, president of the Nepal Handicraft Association, became their business partner there.

In their 1998 trip to Nepal, Barbara and Kirk decided to sponsor the Shree Mahankal Primary School in Tallu Nallu, the hill-tribe village of one of Tula's employees.

Visiting the "dirt poor," subsistence farming village southeast of Kathmandu, she found school children in tatters, and teachers in the one-room school without

books, pencils or paper. There was no road, so she and Kirk walked two miles to the village.

Walking back to the road overcome with emotion, they decided to take money they had planned to spend at a popular resort town and instead bought school supplies, chalk, maps, books and volleyballs. When they returned to the village, the people were amazed they had come back so soon.

Back in the U.S., they established the Stephen R. Novak Foundation in honor of Steve.

"Our relationship continued with the school, which we expanded to include three classrooms, toilets, electricity and running water—benefits that extended to the village," she said.

Teachers went to school to learn how to teach. Parents formed a school board and started going to school, too. They took pride in their children being educated. Barbara continues to help the school, which now has 150 students.

"As the school has progressed, the village's standard of living has risen," she said.

When she first went to the village there were about 50 families, but many were lost in the 2015 earthquake," she said.

In 2005, we had decided the school was in a dangerous spot on a hill above a river, so we relocated it. The first school became a clinic. The school's five buildings were built using UN earthquake codes with steel beams and rebar. It survived the 2015 earthquake with minor cracks that have been fixed. It was a shelter after the quake. Homes on hillsides collapsed and killed many people.

Barbara raised money to help with earthquake recovery. A strike in Nepal prevented her from going last October, so she plans her 14th trip in January. Caregiving for her father, then for Terry, who died in 2009, and her mother, who died in April at the age of 92, had limited her travel.

Work with the village is through the Stephen R. Novak Foundation, which also supports the Tilganga Eye Centre in Kathmandu. The clinic takes state-of-the-art laser equipment to remote villages to give people free eye care and cataract surgery.

"One day people are blind. The next day they can see," said Barbara, who has gone with three eye camps. "Blind people are a burden on their families. Many are depressed. Some commit suicide."

At the clinic in Kathmandu, people line up in the morning for eye care that is free or paid on a sliding scale.

Many have cataracts because of the elevation, no sunglasses and a

lack of vitamin A with their diet of rice and lentils, she said.

The foundation also works with Joy Foundation Nepal and Mountain People, organizations of business and professional people, in Kathmandu, as well as individuals and organizations globally. They work to improve the quality of life in many hill tribe villages, providing education, medical and eye care, sanitation and water systems, and, since the earthquakes, helping with food, water, clothing and reconstruction.

Kirk will work with Buddhist monks he met in 2014 to open an orphanage in Kathmandu.

"Since the earthquake, the number of orphans has exploded," Barbara said. "Village children who lost parents flooded into Kathmandu, needing education, health care and hygiene."

Now Barbara, 67, and Kirk, 65, will no longer bring new items to sell for the Far East Handicrafts. Sales of the remaining crafts will continue to help support the foundation and supplement Barbara's fixed income.

The Stephen R. Novak Foundation receives support as an outreach ministry of St. John's Cathedral, where she serves on the clergy staff and assists with Sunday services. It also has received grants from the Episcopal Diocese of Spokane, the Episcopal Diocese of Olympia and the Episcopal Church USA in support of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals.

For information, call 953-9053 or email bnovak2865@comcast.net.

Discussion important before a person is unable to decide

Continued from page 1

and would not want with respect to health care.

Kellie said it is important that the discussion happens before the patient is unable to decide.

If a person has a non-recoverable accident, the family may wish to stop aggressive treatment. When there is no durable power of attorney for healthcare, the first in line legally to make these complicated decisions is the spouse, then the adult children, she said.

In Washington, if there is not a chosen health care agent, all the children must agree before the treatment course can be changed. The tendency in medical settings is aggressive treatment.

Respecting Choices offers information to help people prepare to make health care decisions, including end-of-life decisions for loved ones in the event they are unable to make their own.

They may be asked to choose medical care, such as tests, medicine and surgery. They may be asked to discontinue treatment based on the person's instructions or what is in their best interest. They may also need to decide what organization or health care professional should provide care.

Statements such as "I just want to die with dignity," "don't keep me alive if I'm a vegetable" or "just make me comfortable," can have different meanings for different people, Kellie said.

The emphasis is on "The Conversation" between patients and



Kellie Durgan guides discussions.

their agents or surrogate decision-makers, she said. As health care agents understand why patients would choose aggressive treatment, comfort care or somewhere in between, they are better able to be a patient's own voice when directing care at end of life.

For more than 19 years, Kellie as a nurse at Holy Family Hospital said her "most meaningful role was as a patient advocate and empowering patients to make informed choices about the care they receive, especially when they cannot speak for themselves."

Kellie attends St. Thomas More Catholic Church and has served six years on the Catholic Cemetery Board. Her service on the Providence Ethics Committee engaged her in conversations around end-of-life work.

"How can we do a better job of encouraging, helping and inviting

patients and families to engage in the process?" said Kellie. "They need good information and time to work through decisions with people who will walk beside them as they make them. Families who do this work in advance seem more peaceful about these decisions."

Providence Visiting Nurses Association and Adult Day Health and most Providence primary care clinic locations have been added to the initial three sites.

Providence sees this work as an expansion of their mission to care for the poor and vulnerable. They are working to grow the service within their ministries, said Kellie. Training has begun for nurses and social workers to assist with the more clinical POLST conversation.

Providence Health Care is involved with a state-wide organization, Honoring Choices Pacific Northwest, which works in state health care organizations using the Respecting Choices model to provide a common language around advance care planning.

"One man had DNR tattooed on his chest over his heart. That shows you how important these decisions are to some people" said Kellie. "The force for Respecting Choices is empowering patients to make choices about care they receive through all of life's stages."

For information, call 474-2296 or email Kellie.Durgan@providence.org.



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Listening and empowering are key to new district superintendent

From his first career as a physical therapist, Gregg Sealey carries a commitment to heal people into his ministry as a pastor and now as the new Inland District Superintendent of the United Methodist Church, succeeding Dale Cockrum.

During his seven years as pastor at Covenant United Methodist Church (UMC) in North Spokane, he was certified as a professional coach to come alongside individuals and groups, asking questions to provoke transformation.

He will apply those skills as district superintendent.

In July and August, he visited the district's 47 churches from Ritzville to Montana, the Canadian border to the Oregon borders, and in Idaho south to White Bird.

This fall, he is meeting with each church to discover its directions and pastoral leadership needs. Gregg brings three questions for congregations to consider:

1) Who are we as a church community? 2) Who are neighbors around the church and what are their needs? 3) What is our sense of call?

"Some can readily answer those, but answers for others are less clear," said Gregg. "I hope to help churches gain clarity on their answers to those questions."

As a judicatory official, he's aware some may see his input as a top down, professionalized role, rather than as coming alongside churches with resources for their work. When he converses with people in churches, he seeks to equip ministry, rather than bringing an answer for a congregation.

"The district's churches are diverse theologically, and there are people on both sides of hot-button social issues," Gregg said.

In addition to people on the right and left views of theology and issues, there are people with multiple perspectives. Some are entrenched. Some are evenly split. "It's a challenge, but when communities embrace one another it looks a lot like God's Kin-dom," he said. "Each church needs to do its best to recognize issues, and look at the larger picture of what unites us—the love of God in Jesus Christ—so we can be true friends at the end of the day."

He believes churches need to engage in difficult topics, disagree and still love each other because that's how God's Kin-dom looks.

"It's counter to the culture that divides us into red and blue, black



The Rev. Gregg Sealey brings insights from therapy to ministry.

and white, old and young, gay and straight," he said. "The church's beginnings were countercultural."

Gregg is aware some churches are more preference driven, and others are more purpose centered.

"Our focus has to be on our mission, not what we like or don't like," he said. "Churches focused on preferences rather than purpose may split over a decision about worship style or the green shag carpet. Some focus on maintaining their building, while others see the building as a tool for mission."

By asking questions, he hopes to help people see possibilities, so a building doesn't become an albatross. Some congregations are already discovering what it's like to do mission in the world without a building.

Recently Gregg was at the closing worship service for Central United Methodist Church. He is helping the congregation explore possibilities of what they can do for ministry with funds from selling the building.

Shalom Ministries continues in the building and is discerning what to do, depending on what happens with the building.

The Rev. Stephen Johnson, the last pastor, helped members connect with other churches. A congregation with members from African countries that worshiped there is now worshiping at Fowler United Methodist Church.

Recently Trinity UMC closed and members joined Fowler, merging officially on July 1. Fowler is selling the Trinity building, Gregg said.

Like small urban churches,

small rural churches are trying to discern their mission.

Towns vary in size but most struggle as young people move elsewhere for jobs, rather than staying as part of multigenerational families. Farming now requires fewer people.

As young people leave, and rural communities with low-cost housing draw low-income people who have problems and need services, small towns now deal with urban issues, but lack resources.

Gregg, whose parents grew up on Nebraska farms, earned a bachelor's degree in 1993 at the University of Washington and a master's in physical therapy in 1996. From 1996 to 2003, he practiced physical therapy at an outpatient clinic in Snohomish County.

Having grown up United Methodist, he connected with a vibrant church in Marysville with young families, children, small groups and community ministries. At a retreat on worship, someone told Gregg he should be a pastor. Someone previously had told him that when he was in high school.

"I began to wonder if I was called to be a pastor," he said. "Then I had a dramatic encounter with God and felt called."

From 2003 to 2007, he was at St. Paul School of Theology at Kansas City, Mo., and served a church in Leavenworth, Kans. From 2007 to 2009, he served a church in Hoquiam before coming in 2009 to Covenant United Methodist Church, a 275-member church with 120 at worship each week.

After study for a certificate as a professional coach from 2012

to 2015 with Coaches Training International at San Rafael, Calif., he began to put his agenda aside and ask questions to find church members' agendas.

The training shifted him from being a pastor with clear ideas about what a church should do to asking open-ended questions to help people discern what they want to do. At Covenant, he worked with and listened to the community of faith and the community around the church. It increased interactions among members, and more happened.

About three years ago, the church shifted its governance from multiple committees to a single board focused on "the big picture." Instead of committees, there are ministry teams.

The congregation shifted to focus on their call to have an impact on the world, Gregg said.

That approach is part of a shift from paying a professional pastor to do ministry to equipping members to do ministry.

For example, a member saw an article about using bubble wrap to help keep homeless people sleeping outdoors warmer. Two met, applied for a grant and started a ministry to prepare bubble wrap.

"A ministry team can be born out of someone's passion," he said.

Passion and interest continue for the church to do its long-term ministries with a sister church in El Salvador, the Spokane Alliance and a community garden, as well as church tasks of worship, finance and maintenance.

"Someone's passion may lead to looking at how to live their faith in the world. As a pastor, I asked questions and encouraged members to ask what God is calling them to do," he said.

One role as district superintendent is to work with the Pacific Northwest Conference United Methodist Bishop Elaine

Stanovsky, and others from the conference and district to make prayerful decisions about placing pastors, based on interviews with pastors and churches.

Depending on the situations, pastors now move every four or more years, rather than every two years. One pastor has served the Elmore UMC for 29 years.

"Our founder, John Wesley, did not want pastors to stay so long that moss grew under their feet. He believed laity would be more engaged if pastors were not there too long," Gregg said.

He believes professional ministry, which has a purpose, may mean some lay people wait for the pastor to do the ministry. If members are not engaged, a church can become just something to do on Sunday morning, rather than a way of life.

Today, he said, pastors' terms have lengthened because it takes time for a leader to have an impact on a community. Previously most church members were born, raised, lived and died in a community. Pastors came and went.

"Now church members move with multiple careers, so longer terms for pastors gives stability and continuity, helping keep momentum for ministry," Gregg said.

He feeds his spiritual life by contemplative meditation and prayer. He meditates as he practices mindfulness, does physical exercise, eats well and engages with people. While he sets aside time to pray, he seeks to "be mindful as I move around each day."

"Physical therapy heals one person at a time. A pastor can help one at a time and help the faith community be God's healing presence in the world," said Gregg, who as district superintendent will help 47 congregations "be God's healing presence in the world."

For information, call 720-4366 or email revgreggsealey@gmail.com or visit fb.com/gregg.sealey.



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Lutheran agency finds foster families for unaccompanied refugee minors

Three youth from overseas—Myanmar and Eritrea—resettled during July in Spokane as part of the new Unaccompanied Refugee Minor (URM) Program of Lutheran Community Services (LCS).

In September, a boy from Guatemala and a boy from Mexico came. This fall, they hope to have a total of 10 youth placed in care and 30 by September 2017.

In 2016, Spokane joined 22 programs in 15 states offering Unaccompanied Refugee Minor foster care programs through Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services.

According to Lisa Johnson, the foster parent recruiter, the United States is the only country that offers a program like this, in which “youth are removed from dangerous situations and placed in local foster homes where they can become productive members of society.”

Spokane Lutheran Community Services models their program after the URM program in the Seattle-Pacific area.

Although the URM program has existed since just after the Vietnam War, Seattle has been placing youth since the 1980s during the crisis in Sudan.

“We hope to mirror their program here,” said Shelly Hahn, director of the Child Welfare Programs at LCS in Spokane.

“Unaccompanied Refugee Minor” is a legal status of youth under the age of 18 who for various reasons are unable to return to their home countries (repatriate) and cannot stay in the country where they currently reside because of persecution. Their status is different from an immigrant who just desires to move to a different country.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees attempts to find family and friends through various means, but if they are unsuccessful and a youth is not able to be resettled in the country where he or she resides, then the youth is given the opportunity to begin seeking the URM status.

“Sometimes the parents are found, but it is too dangerous for them to take the child back, so they sign papers relinquishing their rights, allowing their child to come permanently to the United States,” she said. “These youth are between the ages of 12 and 17. They have the opportunity to age out of care by 21.

“They have hopes and dreams that are unfulfilled in the midst of a refugee camp, and they need stable homes in the Spokane area,” she said.

LCS is recruiting foster parents who can provide a safe, supportive home environment that



Lisa Johnson and Shelly Hahn coordinate program for unaccompanied refugee minors.

provides emotional support and long-term relationships.

Because the youth are coming from Central America and other areas of the world, Lisa said they want foster parents who are interested in other cultures, and willing and able to incorporate the youths’ cultures into their homes.

“There is a need for stability when people have no place to call home or belong,” said Lisa. “A foundation of belonging is important.”

LCS has experience in and insights from placing domestic children in foster care. It offers screening, training and support for families and youth.

It will offer parental support, including a 24-hour crisis line, a social worker to provide guidance through the legal and education systems, skill development, and counseling and psycho-pharmacology support as needed.

Lisa said the youth benefit from those services, as well as ongoing therapy with a LCS therapist, who has additional training in the specific traumas refugees experience.

“Trauma symptoms are the same across cultures: nightmares, flashbacks, hyper-agitation, seeing or hearing things that remind them of the traumatic event,” Shelly said. “The main difference between domestic and refugee trauma is the type of exposure they have had.”

The Lutheran Community Service Unaccompanied Refugee Minor team comes from various religious backgrounds. It includes Lisa, who attends Real Life Ministries in Post Falls.

Each youth will have a social worker to help with appointments, documents and home visits.

Foster parents and program staff will work together to provide a safe haven for the youth. Refugee youth receive support as they share about past trauma,

learn English, gain an education and prepare for their future of independence.

Lisa has been with Lutheran Community Services in Spokane since December 2015. For 10 years, she has been engaged with foster youth, both personally and professionally.

Over the last seven years, she has had a variety of youth in her home and adopted one. She has also worked in the reunification process with families, facilitating family group decision-making meetings through the Department of Health and Welfare.

Lisa, who earned a bachelor’s in education in 1992 at the University of Idaho, taught for several years while studying social work at Eastern Washington University.

Shelly, who has a bachelor’s degree from the University of Montana in 1999 and a master’s in education in 2003, has been with LCS since 2006, previously as a case manager.

Lisa said that the youth have to seek the status of unaccompanied refugee minor, and it’s a two- to four-year process to apply.

Shelly said all refugees accepted to come to the U.S. go through an intensive screening process that takes several years. She said that World Relief resettles those over 18.

Some of those who come will be from Eritrea, Burma/Myanmar, Congo, Central America and, eventually, Syria.

“Foster families come in many

shapes and sizes,” said Lisa, who sees a variety of those interested in fostering the URM youth.

“Often the parents interested are active in a faith community and have traveled overseas, but there are many whose children have left home, and the house now seems empty,” she said. “Other families are looking for a way to enrich their already growing

families with a youth from another country.”

“Religious conviction motivates many to help the poor,” said Lisa.

To help generate interest, Lutheran Community Services has informational meetings from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., on second Tuesdays each month at their building, 210 W. Sprague.

For information, call 343-5018 or email ljohnson@lcsnw.org.

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Roberta Wilburn reports on increase of diversity at Whitworth

Diversity among Whitworth University faculty, staff and students has increased in Roberta Wilburn's nearly 10 years at the School of Education.

Now more than 23.6 percent of domestic students are from "underrepresented" groups, and there are 80 international students. "Underrepresented groups" include immigrants, Hispanics, African Americans and Asian Americans.

"We have come a long way, but we have not arrived," said Roberta, associate dean for graduate studies in education and diversity initiatives.

Recognizing her work, the YWCA recently presented her with the Carl Maxey Racial and Social Justice Award at its Woman of Achievement Luncheon in October. Whitworth has also received the 2016 Higher Education Excellence in Diversity award from Diversity, Inc.

Roberta serves on Whitworth's Institute for Diversity Committee, the U.S. Diversity and Global Perspectives Task Force and chairs the Diversity in Education Committee.

When she first came in 2007, she said she was the only African American on the faculty and administration. Rhosetta Rhodes was hired four months later as director of service learning. She is now the vice president for student life and Title IX coordinator dealing with sexual harassment and violence against women on campus. Roberta is also a Title IX investigator.

Now there are also African-American professors of history and psychology, and an African professor teaching English.

Before she came, there was a Middle Eastern and two Asian professors. Stephy Nobles-Beans, who started as an administrative assistant in 1996, is now coordinator for diversity, equity and inclusive ministries.

Five years ago, Roberta was on the search committee that brought Lawrence Burnley to Whitworth as assistant vice president for intercultural relations. Now the university is doing a search to fill that position again.

For the graduate program, which has a daytime class and 14 evening classes, she has hired a Samoan and an African American as adjunct faculty, and a full-time marriage and family therapy faculty member from Guyana in South America.

Helping her recruit students is her assistant director, a former student from Ghana.

"We recruit students through the Spokane NAACP, Spokane



Roberta Wilburn recently honored for diversity initiatives.

Public Schools and more," she said. "It helps just to be a face—a person of color."

Income is a factor in drawing and retaining students. Scholarships and graduate assistantships help students with tuition. As a private university, Whitworth depends on tuition to sustain its work. In graduate studies, there are scholarships based on diversity, disability, leadership, church work and financial need to help draw diverse students.

Last year, Roberta trained more than 300 chemical dependency professionals, mental health counselors and social service workers on diversity and cultural sensitivity in workshops with Spokane County Regional Support Network.

"Many white students, like professionals in the community, may lack knowledge because of having few interactions with people of color," she said. "The training helps them understand interactions with behavior as a cultural difference not pathology. It's important to understand 'the other'."

Roberta builds awareness among students in several ways, including partnerships with World Relief and Mukogawa Fort Wright Institute and Mukogawa Women's University in Japan.

For seven years, Whitworth students have gone through a simulation of what refugees experience. They learn of problems refugees encounter, fleeing their homes because of persecution or war, spending 10 or more years in refugee camps and settling in a new culture.

Many refugees experience trauma, rape, language barriers and no previous schooling for girls. World Relief supports refugees for three months. Then they are on their own to adjust, unless congregations or agencies walk with them.

Whitworth's one-month January Term is designed to expose students to diversity, but graduate students often have jobs, so few can leave work to travel elsewhere.

Roberta connects them with Japanese students at Mukogawa. Every fall, a professor brings 25 to 45 students from Japan. Whitworth hosts an International Education and Diversity Forum bringing Whitworth students together with Japanese students for a speaker, cultural entertainment and workshops. This year it is from 6 to 9 p.m., Thursday, Nov. 17. Mukogawa students practice English, and Whitworth students learn about Japanese culture.

She increases student cultural awareness by inviting guest speakers to classes, people from the many cultures in the Spokane area—Iranian, Hmong, African Americans, Native Americans, Hispanics and Slavs.

Along with celebrating cultural events and heritage months, Whitworth is infusing diversity into its curricula.

Roberta said it's hard to recruit African-American faculty because candidates see few African Americans living in the area. "It's a small population, but bigger than many think," she said.

When Larry came to learn about Spokane, she invited African-American leaders to meet him. In recruiting and retaining faculty and students of color, it's important to have faculty and staff of color, Roberta added.

"Many need to feel connected," she said. "So there is a Black Student Union, as there are Hawaiian and Hispanic clubs."

In education, Roberta said the goal is to provide safe spaces to encourage students and faculty to have "courageous conversations" they might otherwise shy away

from having.

She also meets with human resources staff and search committees on best practices in recruiting diverse candidates for positions.

Roberta was teaching at LeMoyné Owen College, a historic black college, and did not have Spokane on her radar when Whitworth reached out to historic black colleges to recruit.

"I had asked God to enlarge my territory, and I was obedient to going where God sent me," said Roberta, an ordained nondenominational minister. She wanted a position where she could do both ministry and higher education. She had felt limited to share her faith in secular college contexts.

"Whitworth's mission and vision on educating mind and heart integrates faith in education," she said. "I did not want to compartmentalize faith to the weekend. At Whitworth, I can be myself as a Christian every day all day."

"God created us to be different. Through diversity, we can listen to each other, learn from our perspectives and be better for it," said Roberta, who has faced ageism, sexism and racism in her career.

"Few women or people of color serve as higher education administrators," she said. "Most are male, and some may discredit someone like me because of gender and race, regardless of my credentials and experience."

She will speak in November to faculty and staff at Gonzaga University on challenges of being an African-American woman in higher education.

At Whitworth, there are women

faculty, and women deans in education, and in arts and sciences. Men are deans in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math), theology, business and administration.

In Spokane Public Schools, she said most elementary teachers are women; most principals and administrators are men, but the superintendent, Shelley Redinger, is a woman. Roberta encourages schools to find mentors with whom students can identify.

This year's campaign demonstrates that the United States is not in a post-racial era.

"Now what was hidden has surfaced so we know there is more to do, and we know the importance of mandates for cultural, racial and gender sensitivities in higher education. As a society, we need to live with people of different races, religions and cultures. Everyone deserves respect," said Roberta. "We need to celebrate diversity, not see it as a problem. We need to look at our gifts. We all have something to learn from each other and to give to each other. As we bring people together, it makes us all better."

"We need to start with preschool children, because racism and sexism are not inherent in children. They learn those attitudes. If we want people to accept and respect others, we need to teach and model it. We need to challenge racist, sexist and anti-cultural jokes that demean," she said.

"We need education that reinforces respecting and helping each other," Roberta said.

For information, call 777-4603 or email rwilburn@whitworth.edu.

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Model United Nations program introduces students to global issues

Members of the Model United Nations (UN) at Gonzaga University engage in action-based learning as they prepare to represent different countries, research issues, give speeches and write papers for simulations of UN processes for class, a regional conference and the national conference.

The 19 students involved in 2015-16 shared last spring how they gained through intensive research, social justice awareness, and the intersection of knowing, caring and acting.

Stacy Taninchev, professor of political science and advisor for the Model UN at Gonzaga for seven years, said, "If students know about international issues, they care about them and are inspired to act to make the world better."

For the class, students study and represent different countries for weekly simulations. She is now interviewing students for the next Model UN class and team.

At the Northwest Conference in March at Portland and the National Conference in April at New York City, the students simulate the work of global leaders, portraying representatives of assigned countries and learning how those countries might address issues before the United Nations.

Last year, they represented Rwanda at the national conference, and this year, they represented Ethiopia, the United States and Sierra Leone at the regional conference and Egypt at the national conference.

The national conference draws more than 5,000 college and university students, half from outside the United States, from such countries as Germany, Italy, China, Japan and Chile. Delegates come prepared to solve three issues relevant to each of the 21 simulated UN committees. They also visit the United Nations Headquarters.

For more than 48 years the Model United Nations has sought to prepare participants to be global citizens, use cooperative resolution and understand contemporary international issues.

As Model UN members simulate the work of global leaders, they gain skills in international diplomacy. Students do research and write brief position papers, in order to learn to understand a country and how it stands on issues. They may have to advocate for positions they disagree with.

"We develop skills in critical thinking, teamwork, research and public speaking," said Rachael Gantz, head delegate. "We learn to create something out of nothing. We build an identity as members of the global community and consider what the world would look like in the future."

The program taught her to live without certainty, motivating her to continue to learn, aware she could be wrong.

Students learn how important cooperation is for politics, said



Emily Hintsala, a Model UN student. She is a sophomore from Renton, Wash., majoring in economics and minoring in Spanish and international relations.

She learned about Model UN at Gonzaga's fall Club Fair.

"I was surprised by the work involved in research, writing and speaking," said Emily.

Going to the Model UN conferences made her want to learn more and gave her appreciation of the time, effort and research needed to learn what Egypt would think on rights of indigenous children, rights of children in the digital age and preventing child marriages.

"I had no idea where to start as I went through UN documents on Egypt," she said. "Model UN is an opportunity for me to learn about international relations, how countries develop policies and interrelate. The research has helped me develop opinions and decide what I believe about issues."

"Sometimes, however, I had to argue for the polar view to my own as I took on the perspective of a country. I sometimes had to do a topic that's not my first choice," Emily said.

For example, she hoped to discuss the rights of Egyptian children in the digital age, but the topic chosen was child marriage as a human rights violation.

"Defending an opinion that is not mine is hard. I had to step back and ask what the Egyptian leaders would say," Emily said. "I learned that in Egypt, there are many child marriages."

While many Americans think the United Nations does nothing, Emily is impressed by the quantity of issues it addresses. It opens dialogue so leaders hear different perspectives, she said.

Emily has also discovered how religious and cultural norms are ingrained in a country's laws, so it's important to be aware of how those norms affect issues.

"I always had a heart for human rights and humanitarian feelings. In the Bible, Jesus says we are to serve the poor and to serve others. He preaches that we are to make ourselves less and if we have money we are to give to the poor. We are to use what we have to help others," said Emily, who attended a nondenominational church before coming to Gonzaga, where she feels she is growing in faith. She attends New Community Church in Spokane.

"In Model UN, we learn to understand the different situations of different countries, why there is poverty and why there are human rights violations," Emily said.

Stacy said Gonzaga's UN group started a year before she came, inspired by a Nigerian student who transferred from Miami Dade College, which had a program.

Stacy came to Gonzaga after graduate school at the University of Pittsburgh, where the focus of international relations was on theory and debates about international organizations, which did not prepare her to know the daily rules and procedures of the UN.

She has also learned more about



Gonzaga student Emily Hintsala, top, and GU political science professor Stacy Taninchev, left, share about Model UN experiences.

Portland for three years for the regional conference.

In the spring, she lectures and students do weekly simulations on different UN committees. Students chair the committees, because Model UN develops leadership skills. The committees do research and write resolutions.

Stacy believes the Model UN is "the best vehicle to achieve learning objectives of political science. Students learn about UN countries, negotiation, speaking and writing skills. They learn to interact and discover difficulties and rewards of working with others. They also learn how to propose solutions to global problems."

Stacy continually seeks funding for the program.

"I relate this program to Gonzaga's mission of social justice, creating men and women for others, caring about other countries," said Stacy, who grew up Catholic and is now Bulgarian Orthodox.

"It gives me faith in humanity that students care, want to help disadvantaged people and make a difference," she said.

For information, call 313-3610 or email taninchev@gonzaga.edu.

how the UN works through advising Model UN students.

"It has enriched my teaching and research," she added.

Since 2014, she has taught Model UN as a course and advised the student organization. Students apply in the fall and are interviewed before the team is chosen.

They study UN bodies, the General Assembly and Secretariat. Stacy has taken students to



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Couple hope to make their footprints by educating people on faith

By Britt Pierro

Mead High School Student

Through practicing the Bahá'í Faith, David Gregory and Pat Sanders believe they have gained a concept of their footprints on the world and what they want their footprints to be.

They want to educate people that all religions "are cousins" and to overcome divisions among religions.

They seek to spread the love and unity of their faith through everyday encounters, elevating ordinary conversations to a spiritual level.

The Bahá'í Faith originated in the land of Iran in the mid-1800s, and has been spreading globally ever since. The Bahá'í have a multitude of texts and teachings, the focal point of which is the unification of humankind with each other and with God, said David, who retired recently as a medical social worker with the State of Washington.

Bahá'í believe that all religions in their original state have the same goals and governing rules for people, and "are progressive chapters in the same One Book," he added.

The Bahá'í Faith has seven core principles:

- the oneness of humanity and dignity of every human being;
- freedom from prejudice;
- equality of men and women;
- spiritual solutions to economic problems;
- commitment to education and the search for truth;
- harmony of faith, reason and science, and
- high moral standards.

These core principles are the guidelines David and Pat, who retired in 2008 after a career as a counselor and advisor in higher education, live by every day, and the key to what they believe will eventually be a peaceful society.

Being recent retirees, the pair spend most of their time with family or giving to the community.

They engage in Bahá'í core activities that include facilitating courses, supporting community members, hosting devotional meetings and assisting with children's



Pat Sanders and David Gregory believe all faiths are cousins.

classes, where they teach virtues such as love, kindness, patience, generosity and compassion.

"In the Junior Youth Spiritual Empowerment Program for youth from ages 11 to 14 and youth/young adults from ages 15 to 30, we engage youth in the two-fold moral purpose of developing their God-given potential and services to others and society," she said.

In addition to this, Pat and other community members volunteer at Spokane Community College and Spokane Falls Community College, and they participate with their fellow Bahá'ís in community-oriented events like Unity in the Community and the Compassion Games. By investing time in their town, Dave and Pat fulfill the duty they are called to as Bahá'ís.

The couple were among the Bahá'í followers who spoke at a "Meet The Neighbors" gathering in April in the Marie Antoinette Room of the Davenport Hotel. This room holds historic significance for Bahá'ís in Spokane because it is where Queen Marie of Romania held audience in 1926 when she traveled through Spokane on a trip sharing the Bahá'í Faith.

Followers of the Bahá'í Faith have met in Spokane since 1907. They meet monthly in community member homes for "the Feast," a monthly gathering for spiritual sharing, business and social encounter. Dave and Pat host many

of these events in their own home.

In an interview the couple shared about their journeys and lives as Washington Bahá'ís.

David became a Bahá'í in 1973. As a 27-year-old, David, who was born in Spokane but grew up in Montana, said he didn't like religion. He saw it as a breeding ground for opposition among those of different beliefs.

From the way he saw it, religion was pure in intention, but tainted by human construct. After his sister gave him a set of three Bahá'í texts, his perspective changed.

Dave said that the first of these texts "blew off" his cumulative understanding about all religions, and suddenly it was clear to him that the major religions were "nine identical diamonds."

The first book, rather than referring to its story as the only path to God, concluded all religions were part of the same story. He began studying more and soon became a Bahá'í, and began to see religion as part of one unified journey with people and with God.

David, his first wife and two young daughters settled in the Omak-Okanogan area, where he worked as a disability social worker, first from 1975 to 1977 and again from 1979 to 1985.

During that time, the Bahá'í community there grew.

He moved back to Spokane in 1985 and completed a master's

Baha'i celebrate founders' birthdays in November

On Tuesday and Wednesday, Nov. 1 and 2, the Baha'is of Spokane and surrounding communities joined with more than five million others around the globe to observe the "Twin Birthdays" of the founders of their faith.

Baha'is take these days off work and school and hold events in their communities, said Joe Urlacher of Spokane.

Nov. 1 commemorates the Birth of the Bab, the Herald of the Baha'í Faith. Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammad, who later took the title "the Bab," meaning "the Gate," was born in 1819 in Shiraz, Persia, (Iran). He called for

spiritual and moral reformation, saying humanity was on the threshold of a new era and "a divinely-inspired educator would soon arise whose teachings would transform civilization, and begin an era of justice and peace in all the world's religions."

That teacher was the founder of the Baha'í Faith, Baha'u'llah, Joe said. Nov. 2 commemorates the birth of Mirza Husayn-'Ali, in 1817 in Núr, Persia. His title, Baha'u'llah, means the "Glory of God." In 1863, he began to share teachings that are the basis of the Baha'í Faith, calling for eliminating prejudice, and recognizing the

equality of women and men, and the unity of all humanity.

He proclaimed that "God, the loving creator, sends divine messengers or manifestations" every 500 to 1,000 years with teachings that enable humanity to know and worship one God, said Joe, and bringing civilization to higher levels of spiritual and material advancement. Baha'u'llah was the latest in this line of divine messengers, which include Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Muhammad, Krishna, Buddha, Zoroaster and the Bab, he said.

For information, call 326-0152 or visit www.bahai.us.

degree in education, guidance and counseling in 1994, continuing his career as a medical social worker for the state. All but one of his five children graduated from North Central High School.

Pat became a Bahá'í in 2001.

Having been raised in a religious household, she had seen the ins and outs of organized beliefs.

"From a young age, I questioned how it was possible for only one religion to govern the fate of all humanity, for God to favor those in my family's religion and not anyone else's," she said. "I felt that a pathway to the creator should be available equally to all people."

After years of focusing on raising her six children—involved with hosting sleepovers to leading a Girl Scout troop—Pat began working as a beauty school instructor in Portland, Ore.

Later she moved with her family to Spokane and started studying evenings at Spokane Falls Community College while working full time.

When her oldest child went to college, she and her daughters moved to Olympia. Pat, whose father is Cherokee, returned to college to complete bachelor's degrees in Native American studies and psychology, and a master's in public administration at Evergreen State College in Olympia.

While completing her degree in an evening and weekend program, she was director of Indian education at Shelton School District.

Pat then became an Upward Bound counselor at Evergreen State College for many years.

She continued her career as a counselor and advisor at community colleges around the state—

Walla Walla, Port Angeles and Moses Lake.

While in Clarkston, serving a branch of Walla Walla Community College, she went to Lapwai on the Nez Perce reservation to a weekly talking circle held in the Bahá'í center and came to know many of the Bahá'ís.

"I had been hearing about the Bahá'í Faith for 10 years intermittently and recognized that my beliefs were Bahá'í beliefs. Those beliefs are that we are all one human family, there is unity in diversity, there is only one God, men and women are created equal, there should be universal education, we should love everyone and we should serve others. So I declared my faith," she said.

After that she began to share with others her love of humanity and the Bahá'í faith.

Pat moved back to Spokane in 2008 after retiring.

In Spokane, Pat's story and Dave's story merged. Though they had known each other for 15 years from regional Baha'i meetings a few times a year, living in the same area brought them together more often.

After moving back to Spokane, the pair began to see each other regularly at Baha'i meetings and realized they shared a love for teaching children's classes. They got married just over two years ago, and their paths as Bahá'í merged into one.

They view their enlightened perspective on life as a gift.

"The job of the Bahá'ís, having received that gift, is to share it with everyone else," they said.

For information, call 326-0152 or visit Spokane Bahá'ís on Facebook.

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Struggling in divisive times to celebrate the diversity that enriches our lives

As I read reports and see photos on Facebook about the 70th anniversary of the World Council of Churches (WCC) Ecumenical Institute, established in 1946 at Chateau de Bossey, I am heartened that the program and people, who so powerfully influenced my life 46 years ago, are still nurturing ecumenical relationships.

"It's still a meeting place for the world's agenda in addressing issues of peace and globalization, of interfaith encounter, and of the care for God's creation and eco-justice," said Robert Welsh, a classmate and Disciples of Christ ecumenical leader who has been involved with Bossey for 30 years.

I worked with him over the years related to Bossey and the WCC.

Robert recently updated *The Story of Bossey: A Laboratory for Ecumenical Life*

authored by the Rev. Hans-Ruedi Weber, a professor when I was there.

Why mention this in the midst of a political campaign where hate has received more attention than compassion about issues?

Robert's words speak to me about why it is important for us to rise above this moment in history: "The message of Bossey is finally borne out in the lives of persons who have been touched and marked and shaped by this place and its programs - persons scattered across the whole world: proclaiming a vision of what it means to be 'God's people' beyond the boundaries of nation, class, race, gender, and denominational or confessional identity."

We each—whether we encountered people at Bossey or anywhere in our lives—as people of faith are to be the voices, hands,

arms, feet and bodies bringing reconciliation and healing into the church, among the faiths and in the world.

We each—as we did in that diverse community of faith—fall short, struggling with our relationships, struggling with media-saturated lives, struggling with the inequities that limit, struggling with voices of hate emerging, struggling with feeling hopelessness, struggling with wars end lives, struggling to live sustainably.

We struggle, because we believe there is cause for hope; because we seek to create peace, justice and sustainable communities; because we believe that we, though many, are one. We struggle to be God's children and to be God's love.

We see a "monster storm" flatten Haiti,

and then it disappears from the news, giving way to the next natural or human-made disaster. My heart aches for Haiti, Nepal and places and people devastated by hurricanes, earthquakes, tsunamis, mudslides, flooding, wildfires, wars, shootings, terrorist attacks or enemy image.

As we see a campaign rip apart the beauty of multi-cultural, multi-gender, multi-racial, multi-faith, multi-age, multi-ability diversity, we know we have much work to do to overcome our torn relationships, communities, society, nation and world.

Because of Bossey, faith communities and stories in this Fig Tree, we know people work tirelessly to bring healing in the midst of devastation. May we trust God will walk with us, empowering us to walk with each other.

Mary Stamp - Editor

'Spin Room' in living rooms can reflect respect for relationships

This election season, I have become more aware of the Spin Room, or perhaps more accurately, the "spin process."

Many of us enjoy hearing what the pundits think about debate performances or statements or events. They have the ability to contextualize statements within history or broader realities in ways that provide a richer canvas for me to view the whole. That is the role of the talking heads: pundits, journalists, newscasters, right? So I am grateful for the likes of Michael Beschloss, David Brooks and Mark Shields, to name a few favorites, revealing as that may be.

Voters look for information that will assist them, with some quite biased opinions, to find a degree of balance, objectivity. It

helps us to know what others think about the implications of events, proposals, policy statements. We can be energized by respectful, open discussions of politics.

I am a Democrat. My brother is a Republican. I have learned so much from him because he thinks deeply about our country and its direction, as do I, and even though we favor different paths, strategies and goals, we converse with an openness that I treasure. Neither of us feels compelled to change our views, and we are both careful of our respect for the other. Occasionally we even find common ground.

The "spin process" often does not offer those enrichments so much as it defends one side against the other, often at the expense of objective truth. Each side seems

to be able to "spin" a story to the advantage of its side or candidate while questioning the credibility of the "other."

So Spin Rooms are filled with bright people who listen with a preparatory ear for sound bites that can be fed to the airwaves to the benefit of their candidate, and possible ways of turning any negatives into strengths, or even offering an explanatory interpretation of what the candidate meant.

Then the news programs offer air time to members of the Spin Rooms on both sides, and fantastic as it may seem, it often sounds as if each of the candidates bested the other! That is their role. What if there were only one Spin Room, complete with fact checkers, and we could hear that lively discussion.

The bottom line, for me, is this: I am committed to being a Gospel woman. I know my values. I know what I hope for in my country.

Many people of faith listen for statements of inclusion, justice, compassion, mercy, communities of concern, anti-war sentiments, collaboration for the common good of every citizen, not just in our country, but in our world. Jesus articulated these values clearly in the Beatitudes. So in my living room, my Spin Room, that is what we listen to hear and cheer.

To keep alive the ideals of the Gospel, of our country and of our humanity is our role as people of faith.

**Mary Ann Farley, SNJM
Contributing Editor**

Standing Rock Protest

Sounding Board

Denominations Speak

With Standing Rock Sioux pipeline protest

Area tribes, local groups, national denominations express solidarity

Compiled from news reports, online sources, national and regional denominational websites and FaceBook.

Members of Inland Northwest tribes and leaders of national denominations have expressed solidarity with and gone to North Dakota to join the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's peaceful protest of the 1,170-mile Dakota Access Pipeline—carrying fracked oil from the Bakken shale fields of North Dakota to Peoria, Ill.

The pipeline would pass over sacred, ancestral land just north of the reservation, and under Lake Oahe on the Missouri River, the source of drinking water for the tribe and millions of others.

Protesters began gathering on federal land in April. Members of about 300 indigenous tribes from around the world have come, with at times 8,000 at the Oceti Sakowin Camp south of Bismarck.

On Oct. 25, the Texas-based developer told protesters, who set up a new camp on company land, to leave. Police and National Guard in riot gear evicted them on Oct. 27.

• **Dave Archambault II, tribal chair** of Standing Rock Sioux, said the creator instructed them to care for the land, water and all creation. Their rallying cry is "Water is life." He is among 140 "protectors" who have been arrested, strip-searched and released.

• **The Spokane City Council** voted five to two on Oct. 4 to support peaceful protesters of the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAP).

• **Democracy Now! editor** Amy Goodman was arrested for trespassing while covering a Sept. 3 protest and response of DAP security guards with pepper spray and dogs. After her report went viral online, she was charged with rioting, but on Oct. 17 the judge dismissed the case, which Amy said was "a win for freedom of the press."

• **Twa-le Abrahamson-Swan** of the Spokane Tribe has provided coverage on Facebook of her visits there.

Members of the Coeur d'Alene, Spokane, Colville, Kalispel and other area tribes have traveled there to join the protest.

Inland Northwest tribes also gathered to pray for and support the Standing Rock protest. Indigenous leaders and community groups met in downtown Spokane on Friday, Sept. 9. That day the U.S. District Court of the District of Columbia ruled on whether construction on the pipeline could continue. The march began at Canada Island in Riverfront Park—recently symbolically transferred to the Spokane Tribe. Marchers passed the City Hall, Federal Building and banks funding the pipeline.

• Later that day, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the Justice and Interior Departments temporarily blocked construction on part of the pipeline just after the federal court denied the tribe's request for an injunction to block construction.

The federal entities said they would reconsider the decision to proceed under federal laws. They called for discussion of nationwide reform on considering tribes' views on infrastructure projects. The government will invite tribes to consultations on making federal decisions about tribal lands.

• **Christian Justice Ministries**, formerly the National Council of Churches' Eco-Justice Program, offers access to statements of Christian communities supporting the tribe at www.creationjustice.org.

Statements included are from Episcopal Presiding Bishop Curry, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, the General Board of Church and Society of the United Methodist Church and the UMC Dakotas-Minnesota Conference Bishop Bruce Ough, the Mennonite Central Committee, the Orthodox-Catholic Church of America, the Presbyterian Church (USA), Quaker Earthcare Witness, several Friends Meetings, the United Church of Christ, the World Student Christian Federation North

American Region, and Young Evangelicals for Climate Action.

• **Episcopal Presiding Bishop** Michael Curry on Aug. 25 said the action "joins the fight for racial justice and reconciliation with climate justice and caring for God's creation." He called Standing Rock the new Selma, a moment when nations and peoples of goodwill "come together to transform this world from the nightmare that it often is into the dream God intends so that clean water is available to everybody."

Episcopal and other congregations have joined hundreds to thousands at the protest, and have raised the issue in sermons, prayers and liturgies in North Dakota and nationally.

Episcopal sources said Standing Rock Sioux leaders, in their lawsuit opposing the pipeline, cited treaties from 1851 and 1868 with the U.S. government, recognizing that tribal lands are north of the reservation.

• **The Presbyterian Church (USA)** issued a statement Aug. 29 supporting the protest and calling for discussion in churches on challenging the "Doctrine of Discovery."

• **UCC leaders urge people** to engage in online advocacy to challenge the Dakota Access Pipeline.

Byron Buffalo, a licensed lay minister of the Dakota Association of the United Church of Christ, said: "Water is sacred to the Tribe, which relies on the river for drinking water, irrigation, fishing and recreation, and for cultural and religious practices."

The South Dakota Conference UCC expressed concern "that we keep treating the sacred as though it is expendable."

• **United Methodist Bishop** Bruce Ough of the Dakotas-Minnesota Area, has said: "United Methodists hope to work in a continued relationship to fulfill God's commandment to be stewards of creation."

• **The Central States Mennonite** Central Committee (MCC) said the project was

fast-tracked using a "Nationwide Permit No. 12" process, which allowed Texas oil company Energy Transfer Partners to circumvent environmental reviews required under the Clean Water Act and the National Environmental Policy Act by treating the pipeline as a series of small construction sites rather than a multi-state project.

On Aug. 31, the MCC Central States executive director, said, that mining, fracking, logging, water theft, plantation agriculture, and other extractive industries continue to take resources from indigenous communities to benefit the wealth of those descended from Europeans."

• **The Unitarian Universalist** Association president on Aug. 30 called for opposition to the DAP and encouraged members to financially support the water protectors.

• **Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton** of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), expressed on Sept. 9 the church's concern for respecting tribal nations and called for prayer to express solidarity and build relationships, recognizing there are members on both sides of the issue. "We need initiate and/or continue local efforts to strengthen and expand partnerships, and deepen cross-cultural understanding."

• **Young Evangelicals for Climate Action** (YECA) stands with the Standing Rock Sioux and other tribes in their pursuit of justice for their people and their lands.

"As young evangelical Christians, we believe climate change is one of the greatest moral challenges of our time," they said.

YECA added that "the inheritance of future generations is being squandered, while the worst impacts of a warming world continue to be felt most acutely by the poor and the vulnerable around the world. Urgent action is needed to quickly transition our economy away from the extraction and combustion of fossil fuels and toward zero emission renewables."

Calendar of Events

- Weds to Nov 16 • Spirituality 101 Series**, "Reflections on How Spirituality Connects to Our Daily Lives," Kathy Finley, 405 E. Sinto, 6:30 to 8 p.m., 484-4668
- Nov 3**
- **China Film Series**, Lindaman Chair Anthony Clark, Weyerhaeuser Hall, Whitworth University, 6:30 p.m., 777-4368 or aclark@whitworth.edu.
 - **James Banks, Lecture** on the Inclusive University Classroom, Weyerhaeuser Hall, Whitworth, 7 p.m., 777-4603, rwilburn@whitworth.edu.
 - **Holocaust Center for Humanity** presentation by Spokane Holocaust survivor Carla Peperzak, Trent Elementary School, 3303 N. Pines, 7 p.m., 206-582-3000, julia@holocaustcenterseattle.org
- Nov 4**
- **"From China to America: Merging Cultures,"** Spokane Symphony and local chefs, Martin Woldson Theater at the Fox, 1001 W. Sprague, 624-1200
 - **SpoLang Annual Lantern Parade**, German language students parade with handmade lanterns, Loeff Carousel, Riverfront Park, 6:30 p.m., 981-1155
 - **Habitat-Spokane Roof Raisers Supper** Club, 1805 E. Trent, 7 p.m., 534-2552.
- Nov 4-5**
- **Jubilee International Marketplace** Fairly Traded Handcrafts, First Presbyterian Church, 318 S. Cedar, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Saturday, www.spokanefpc.org
- Nov 5**
- **Holistic Fair**, Unity Spiritual Center, 2900 S. Bernard, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., unityspokane.org
- Nov 6**
- **"We are LCS,"** Inland Northwest Annual Fundraising Luncheon, Mukogawa Ft. Wright Commons, 4000 W. Randolph Rd., 12:30 to 3 p.m., 343-5020, cmckee@lcsnw.org
 - **Aki Matsuri Japanese Fall Food Festival**, Spokane Buddhist Temple, 927 S. Perry St., 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., 534-7954, spokanebuddhisttemple.org
- Nov 8-9**
- **PFLAG Spokane**, 7 to 8:30 p.m., call 593-0191 for location, spokanepflag.org
- Nov 8-Jan 27**
- **Sage Paisner: "My Family Is Everything: Mi Familia Es Todo"** Art Exhibition, Bryan Oliver Gallery, Lied Center for Visual Art, Whitworth, opening reception 5 p.m. and lecture with the artist 6 p.m., 777-3258 or wuart@whitworth.edu
- Nov 9**
- **Inland NW Death Penalty Abolition** Group, 35 W Main, 5:30 p.m., 838-7870
 - **Veterans for Peace**, 35 W. Main, 6:45 p.m., 838-7870
- Nov 12**
- **NAACP Spokane Freedom Fund** Banquet, "Our Lives Matter—Our Votes Count," Congresswoman Maxine Waters, Northern Quest Casino, Airway Heights, 6 p.m., social hour, 7 p.m., banquet and program, 209-2425
 - **KYRS Annual Silent Auction Gala**, Hamilton Studios, 1427 W. Dean, 7 p.m., krys.org, 747-3012
- Nov 10-19**
- **"Mr. Burns: A Post-Electric Play,"** Gonzaga Magnuson Theatre, 502 E. Boone, Nov 10, 12, 17 and 19 at 7:30 p.m., Nov 13 and 20 at 2 p.m., 313-6553
- Nov 12-13**
- **Fall Folk Festival**, Spokane Community College Lair, 1810 N. Greene St., 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Saturday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday, spokanefolklore.org
- Nov 13**
- **Salish School Fall Dollar Auction** Fundraiser, Philanthropy Center, 1020 W. Riverside Ave. 2 to 4 p.m., salishschoolsofspokane.org
 - **Women Composers Concert**, Cowles Music Recital Hall, Whitworth, 8 p.m., 777-3280, music@whitworth.edu
- Nov 15**
- **Silent Day of Prayer** on the Communion of Saints, "All Saints-All Sinners," Fr. Mike Savelesky, Immaculate Heart Retreat Center (IHRC), 691- S. Ben Burr Rd., 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., 448-1224, ihrc.net
 - **"On Mission: China and the Bible** as the Story of Mission," Weyerhaeuser Hall, Whitworth, 7 p.m., 777-4437, oce@whitworth.edu.
- Nov 16**
- **Coffee and Contemplation**, "Stone Soup and Other Holiday Gifts of Gratitude," IHRC staff, IHRC, 6910 S. Ben Burr Rd., 9 to 11 a.m., 448-1224, ihrc.net
 - **Meet the Employers**, WorkSource, 130 S. Arthur Dr., employers 2:30 to 4:30 p.m., job seekers 3 to 4:30 p.m., 532-3134 or 532-3186
- Nov 17**
- **Peace & Justice Action Committee**, Post-election Discussion Night, 35 W. Main, 5:30 p.m., 838-7870
 - **International Education and Diversity** Forum, Hixson Union Building, Whitworth, 6 to 9 p.m., 777-4603, rwilburn@whitworth.edu
 - **"Courage for Our Time" Panel**, Auntie's Bookstore, 402 W. Main, 7 p.m.
- Nov 17, Dec 1**
- **Eastern Washington Legislative** Conference Planning, Emmanuel Family Life Center, 631 S. Richard Allen Ct., 2 p.m. on 17th, 3 p.m. on 1st, 535-1813
- Nov 18**
- **International Festival**, Whitworth University International Club, Hixson Union Building, Whitworth, 5 p.m. dinner, 7 p.m. entertainment, 777-3796
- Nov 18-20**
- **Global Day of Jewish Learning**, "Under the Same Sky: The Earth Is Full of Your Creations," Temple Beth Shalom, 1322 E. 30th Ave., 747-3304, spokanetbs.org
- Nov 21**
- **NAACP General Membership** Meeting, Community Building, 35 W. Main Ave., 7 to 9 p.m., spkncbr@gmail.com
- Nov 23**
- **Spokane Police Accountability** and Reform Coalition, 35 W. Main, 5:30 p.m., 838-7870
- Nov 24**
- **Thanksgiving Dinner**, Veradale United Church of Christ, 611 N Progress Rd., 1 p.m., 926-7173
- Nov 25-27**
- **Festival of Fair Trade**, Fair Trade products from Nepal and around the world, 35 W. Main, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., 464-7677
- Nov 30**
- **Plaid Tidings**, Benefit Performance for Shalom Ministries and SPEAR Ministries, Spokane Civic Theater, 1020 N. Howard, 6:30 p.m. reception and silent auction, 7:30 p.m. performance, 710-0204
 - **The Fig Tree Distribution and Mailing**, St. Mark's Lutheran, 316 E. 24th Ave., 9 a.m., 535-1813
- Dec 1**
- **Silent Advent Day of Prayer**, the Most Rev. Thomas Daly, IHRC, 6910 S. Ben Burr Rd., 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., 448-1224, ihrc.net
 - **The Fig Tree Benefit Planning** at noon, Board from 1 to 3 p.m., Emmanuel Family Life Center, 631 S. Richard Allen Ct., 535-1813
 - **"A Matter of Balance,"** Aging and Long Term Care of Eastern Washington, volunteer coaches training, 1222 E. Post, 5 p.m., 458-2509
 - **"The Voice of Our Prayers**, first of three classes, Temple Beth Shalom, 1322 E. 30th Ave., 7 p.m., 747-3304
- Dec 2-3**
- **Weekend Advent Retreat**, "Traveling through Advent with the Quiet Strength of Joseph," Fr. Gary Caster, IHRC, 6910 S. Ben Burr Rd., 448-1224-ihrc.net

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Retired peacemakers continue their commitment to build just, peaceful world

For 20 of the Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane's 40 years, Rusty Nelson was director and for many years co-director with his wife Nancy, both working nearly full-time for one salary.

They educated people on Central America, the School of the Americas, Cuba, the Iraq war, death penalty, police accountability, criminal justice, racial justice, LGBTQ rights, military recruitment, veterans' struggles, civil disobedience and nonviolent resistance.

They taught people through writing, public speaking, workshops, protests, partnerships and civil disobedience.

Nancy worked with the Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane (PJALS) from 1985 to 1988, then with the Central America Solidarity Association (CASA) until former PJALS co-director Kathleen Donohoe quit in 1990 because of health.

Rusty began editing the "Handful of Salt" newsletter when he joined the staff in 1988.

He worked full-time with KXLY radio from 1981 to 1987, and for many years worked half-time with PJALS and half-time with KXLY, so he had benefits PJALS could not provide. They were insured when Nancy had successful treatment for fourth-stage breast cancer for four months in Seattle.

Rusty and Nancy, who met in Croatia in 1971, had moved to Spokane from Minneapolis in 1981. Nancy stayed home with their children, Nate and Lara.

Nancy graduated from Mankato State University in 1967 and received her master's in French in 1972. Rusty, the son of a Presbyterian pastor, graduated in 1966 with a bachelor's in English from Presbyterian College in Clinton, S.C., where he was in ROTC.

He worked in Washington, D.C., for Senator Richard Russell of Georgia before beginning his two-year obligation in the Army. He was assigned to the Army Signal School in Fort Gordon, Ga., near his parents' home in Thomson, then to a year in Vietnam.

Rusty returned to start a radio career in Gainesville, Ga., in 1969. Laid off in 1971, he joined his brother, who was studying in Lyon, France. Traveling around Europe with a rental car, they picked up Nancy and a friend in Croatia who were hitchhiking, and drove them to Amsterdam.

Rusty and Nancy married in November and moved to Georgia. She struggled teaching in a school system that questioned offering foreign languages and resisted integration.

In 1975, they moved to Minneapolis. Rusty worked in radio and Nancy sold insurance until the



Nancy and Rusty Nelson live out tenets of Mennonite faith.

arrival of their adopted son, Nate. They moved to Spokane with a group from the Presbyterian Church they attended.

Using the "Mennonite Your Way" network, they stayed more than a month with Nick Kassebaum, a Mennonite pastor and PJALS director. They visited other churches but were drawn by Mennonites' taking the Bible "seriously and literally on Jesus' call to love neighbors and enemies." They became pacifists.

Wanting another racially mixed child, they adopted Lara in 1983.

As they began at PJALS, they saw their role as being prophetic voices, helping people stand apart from "the general malaise toward righteous violence that cripples our society," said Rusty.

"We feel called to point out travesties and injustices, and to lead people to rectify the situations," said Nancy.

Over the years, Rusty has seen the most measurable shift in public attitudes on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities.

"After the first Gay Pride March, I found our involvement empowering and life changing," he said.

He would like to have the same impact on war and racism.

"Much has been baby steps because people are so set," he said.

"Civil disobedience is just one of many ways to call attention to issues," said Nancy. "Many changes happen in the United States and around the globe because people engage in civil disobedience and are willing to be arrested."

When Rusty and Nancy engaged in civil disobedience, they did it as individuals, not as PJALS staff.

For Nancy, the first of 12 times she was arrested was in 1985 after a PJALS retreat, when Daniel Berrigan invited participants to consider civil disobedience.

She stood on railroad tracks to block the White Train that took nuclear missiles for Trident submarines at Bangor, Wash.

"I felt called to stop the trains," said Nancy. "We had no training. We were clueless on what to expect. Now we insist people be trained. We were cited, but not booked in jail. For the trial three months later, the judge allowed us to prepare a 'necessity' defense. Experts planned to fly in to testify, but the judge dismissed the case because the prosecutor didn't identify me as a woman."

On Aug. 31, 2016, she was arrested again on railroad tracks.

This time she was with the Raging Grannies, blocking a train carrying oil through Spokane, because oil worsens climate change and its transport poses threats. On Sept. 22, Rusty was arrested on the tracks with three members of Veterans for Peace.

Both actions were sponsored by Direct Action Spokane.

He has been arrested seven times. When their children were young, they took turns.

His first arrest in 1987 was at a Marine recruiting station challenging the war in Nicaragua. He was charged with trespassing and sentenced to community service, which he did by volunteering with PJALS,

before he was hired in 1988.

Several arrests for Nancy related to Central America—twice at Rep. Tom Foley's office after Jesuit priests and housekeepers were killed at the university in San Salvador.

Other times were after Washington reinstated the death penalty in 1981, during the Gulf War, Desert Storm, at the School of the Americas (SOA) and about National Guard recruiting.

In 2003, they joined others blocking the entrance of Fairchild Air Force Base before the war in Iraq. Nancy spent a day in federal prison. Rusty was there overnight.

At the SOA in Columbus, Ga., they were arrested separately and together over several years.

"My first time there, I stepped over the line with Paddy Inman, who had been detained the year before and had invited me to help him train peacekeepers. Because it was his second time, he spent six months in jail," said Rusty, whose mother was among 605 stepping over the line.

The next year Rusty did not cross with 2,000. No one was charged, because there were so many.

"Direct action is one way to share my faith in the Gospel of Jesus Christ," he said. "For me, it means standing up for civil liberties and against unjust laws and corporatism."

For Nancy, it was a natural progression from calling and writing public officials, marching in protests and going to public hearings.

"In the last 10 years, they did not put us in jail because they did not have the time or room. Jails are full with many held on old charges, drug charges or breaking parole," said Rusty, adding that they now advocate for alternatives to jail—like drug or mental health treatment. Concern about criminal justice arose from spending time in jails and experiencing the powerlessness prisoners feel.

"We can't talk about criminal justice without talking of racism," said Nancy, hoping awareness of recent arrests, police killings and sentence disparities make more people aware of racism.

In 1986, Nancy and three activists in Western Washington established the Washington Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty.

Rusty recently resigned after 17 years on the Center for Justice Board, helping to expose more local people to the experience of justice.

In 1989, he helped start and is still active in Veterans for Peace.

"I had some combat experience in Vietnam and luckily survived without PTSD," he said. "It has been helpful in peace work to bill myself as a veteran. It opens doors."

Rusty said PJALS members are diverse, coming from many faiths or no faith.

"The word 'peace' is considered suspect or unpatriotic by some. We have a long way to go to teach it in schools," he said. "We will be a stronger country if we learn not to use military power to bully the world. War is an abomination."

PJALS has also advocated for economic justice, addressing the minimum wage, livable wages, unemployment and underemployment. Rusty said he has lived an upper-middle-class life on a lower middle class income, benefitting from white privilege. In Georgia, he had respected blacks, but did not work for integration.

"We were naive when we adopted black children," said Rusty. "I thought racism would disappear, but we have experienced the racism our African-American children faced and have seen how our children have been bridges."

The hate in the 2016 campaign shows there is much work to do, they said.

In retirement, they continue their activism, but do less, sometimes just sending an advocacy email.

"Working with PJALS, we saw the interconnection of issues," Nancy said.

In 2000, they built a sustainable, passive-solar, straw-bale home north of Rockford.

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