



Cinderella dreams can come true

sheila hagar
home place



Sometimes, in a community like this, amazing things happen under the radar. People do selfless acts with zero expectation of publicity, praise or even a "thank you."

It happens more than you could imagine in our pocket of the universe.

That said, allow me tell you a little about Noe Garcia and a chain of people who worked to give this young woman a Cinderella evening.

Noe, a socialite if ever there was one, loves to be told she is beautiful, it's said. With her thick, black hair and luminous smile, it's an easy compliment for the giver. And Noe's delight in being surrounded by admirers adds frosting to the cake.

But not many folks get the chance to compliment her. The 32 year-old Walla Walla native has cerebral palsy and is profoundly retarded.

Lisa Watson runs Alternative Services, the agency that provides around-the-clock care for



Courtesy photo

Noe Garcia chose to model a tiara for her fashion show debut.

Noe and her three house mates. She's known Noe for several years.

Noe, she said, "is a particular person in my life that brings joy. She has a beautiful smile ... it's almost like her entire body smiles."

While living in a body molded by her physical disorder, Noe — which is short for Noella — has made her desire for beauty clear, despite being unable to talk. To begin with, she

See **Dream**, C3

Find best fit for volunteering

By Sherilee Coffey
for The Walla Walla Valley Weekly

We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.

—Winston Churchill

Volunteering.

A word, when I was growing up, that brought to mind candy strippers pushing magazine racks through the hospital or someone ringing a bell outside the supermarket during the holidays, asking for donations.

But looking around as a "grown up," I see volunteers everywhere. Volunteers sit on boards of local nonprofits, they give their time in our children's schools, they make cookies for the troops in Iraq. They give of their time and resources in so many unique and personal ways. And in our community, there are a myriad ways to give back. How to choose where best to put your time?

For me, the answer has come rather easily, over time.

While I have given of my time to the schools where my son has attended, as well as time and energy to the Blue Mountain Humane

See **Volunteers**, C4



Photo courtesy of Children's Home Society of Washington

Board member Jim Peterson appreciates a craft project in progress at a Family Fun Night for HomeTeam, a partnership between Children's Home Society and Exchange Club.



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Set down your snow shovel and plant seeds



bryce rugraff
your garden this month

Okay, it is still below freezing and maybe you're not quite ready to put away the snow shovel, but believe it or not you should be planning your spring seeds. No, I'm not crazy. Let's assume you want a slice of fresh garden tomato on your Fourth of July hamburgers. What will it take to make sure your seeds become tomato-producing plants by July 4? First, you'll need to decide what you're going to grow. You can find seeds locally at Bi-Mart and Home Depot, but for real variety you'll have to look to the Internet or specialty seed catalogs. Botanical Interests, Renee's Garden, and Totally Tomatoes have been some of my favorite seed companies. All have online websites. Once you've chosen your seeds, and the packets have arrived, it's time to plan the growing schedule. Look at the back of the seed packets to find the maturity date. It will be different for every variety of seed. The maturity date is the time it takes a seedling to grow into a mature plant capable of producing fruit or flowers. As an example, tomatoes can take 65 to 90 days to reach maturity. If you want tomatoes by July 4th, then you need to backtrack — say 90 days — to determine the date your plants will need to be in the ground. For a tomato with a 90-day maturity date that means getting your plants in the garden by the end of March. Before we can get plants in the garden, we have to take into account the

month or more it will take to grow a seed into a plant that is garden-ready. Again, we backtrack to late February or early March to find the planting time for our tomato seeds. Let's assume you purchased your seeds, then planted them in late February. They performed beautifully and you now have young plants that are ready for the garden. Stop right here! There are a few more things to consider before putting plants in the garden. Even though we planned our tomatoes for a late March garden transplanting, March is still a cold month in the Valley. So what do you do now? At this stage, there are two options. While cold weather plants like lettuce and spinach will do fine outside in March, warm weather seedlings, like tomatoes, melons and peppers will need protection from temperatures below 50 degrees. The other option is to transplant the seedlings into larger containers and let them continue to grow. Keep them inside or in a heated greenhouse until late April when the chance of cold-weather shock has passed. This Fourth of July, with just a little proper scheduling and attention to local weather conditions, you can bask in gardening glory as your guests rave about the fresh garden salsa, reach for the homemade bruschetta topping or pile garden tomato slices on top of your signature hamburgers.

Bryce Rugraff is owner of The Plant Company and Plant Company Landscaping in Walla Walla.

YWCA exec. director visits Poland

By Karlene Ponti
of the Walla Walla Union-Bulletin

Anne-Marie Zell Schwerin, executive director at the local YWCA recently enjoyed a trip to Poland. She spent 10 days there, networking with people involved in World YWCA and the YWCA of Poland. World YWCA is a network of about 150 countries across the globe working on many issues such as health, empowering women and eradicating domestic violence. "The No. 1 focus of World YWCA is AIDS and AIDS education," she said. The concern covers the consequences for women and children and for the AIDS orphans. Another priority is ending violence against women. "Domestic violence is definitely an international problem," she said. According to Zell Schwerin, in the U.S. the YWCA's foremost mission is to empower women and eliminate racism. Internationally, women are involved in starting YWCAs and helping their communities. In Poland, people living in rural areas are getting together to create positive change in their towns. In one area, several towns had been devastated by floods and people pitched in to help in whatever ways were necessary. "It's really up to the women in those communities to do the things that work for them. There's no one way to deal with the problem. It's not 'this is the problem and you solve it this way.' It's helping women to become leaders in their own lives and their communities," she said. Zell Schwerin, whose family is of Polish origins, enjoyed the trip, the networking, workshops and the culture of Poland. "In mid-November, there are no tourists, you can see everything. It's beautiful. Right after getting on the bus you feel totally immersed in history. Poland has been around since about 900. Its culture was kept alive while it was occupied by many other

powers. They kept their language alive, they kept their incredible religious faith, they kept their culture and history alive through all of this," she said. "It was the mothers and the women of Poland mostly at home, caring for the children, who did this. It's the women who kept the culture alive under centuries of war. "Everything was destroyed. All the historic buildings you see have been rebuilt. In the 1950s, Warsaw was 85 percent destroyed. Architectural students and faculty knew they would be rebuilding at some time after the war, so they put together comprehensive drawings, then hid them in mines and other locations. The Poles are very future focused. Without that they wouldn't exist. They know the children are the future so they focus on building the community." Because Zell Schwerin is Polish it all made sense to her and tugged at her heart. The trip provided her with many insights. Through an awareness of the struggles of others, we gain more appreciation for the bounty and freedoms we enjoy. "...Things that we take completely for granted in the United States; we've always had our institutions of law and government. We have elections. They may be contentious but nobody dies, nobody gets killed. Cars aren't being burned out in the streets," she said. The Polish people have only had those freedoms since 1989. She said they are building democratic institutions and increasing voter education and registration. Her visit to the country coincided with an election, so she got to watch the voting process first-hand. "I actually got to go with them when they voted. Free speech. Contrast this to 25 years ago, when they couldn't assemble in public. World YWCA wants to help them become aware of their rights as citizens and their ability to make a difference



At left, Walla Walla YWCA executive director Anne-Marie Zell Schwerin and Polish YWCA president Alina Kozinska Baldyga, second from right, discuss citizen education with other YWCA leaders in Poland.

in their communities." She attended many workshops, mainly in Warsaw. People from remote villages came to the city for two and a half days of workshops, on all kinds of topics. Recently the Polish government has been looking for ways to save money. They began closing and consolidating schools, especially in rural areas and small communities. Citizens said transporting children to other communities for school and losing their own small schools was unacceptable. So they worked together to keep small local schools operating. According to Zell Schwerin, the Polish people grew up under communist rule where everything came from the government to the community. So learning to create on a local, grassroots level is a relatively new experience. Many of the communities received help from Alina Kesinska-Baldyga, president of Polish YWCA.

"She made it her mission to help women in rural areas change their world," said Zell Schwerin. "In true YWCA fashion that's going to look differently in every community." Zell Schwerin credits Kesinska-Baldyga with having a natural ability to network and bring people with compatible needs and skills, together. Another emphasis she brought to the Polish YWCA, is her belief that "education will change the world." Older women who lived through communist control and some who lived through World War II are reminding younger Poles who've grown up with freedom what it was like to live without it.

Karlene Ponti can be reached by calling 509-526-8324 or by e-mail at karleneponi@wwub.com.

Remember When will return next week.

Volunteers: Helping can take many forms

Continued from Page C1
Society Board, I have probably spent the bulk of my volunteer time with Children's Home Society of Washington. Knowing the struggles of parenting and raising kids to be their "best selves" in our current culture, I have found within CHS's core programs and services a fit with what I value and see beneficial in the conversation about what it means to create a world where all children thrive. CHS services provide for the support of parents through the partnership with the Exchange Club in the HomeTeam parent aide program, the concrete helpfulness of individual counseling and parenting classes, the after-school program at the Farm Labor Homes and a focus on early

learning through the Early Head Start program. Combined, these services (and more) reach more than 1,100 children and families each year in our Valley. Volunteering, for me, is a way to bring my particular skill set to an organization and help impact lives. And the beauty is, anyone's skills can find a home, if you just look for it. I don't have to be on-site at the Farm Labor Homes or involved in mentoring with HomeTeam to make an impact. I know that the decision making, fundraising and staff support provided by my being on the local council impact the organization and help move it forward in its mission. The annual CHS SweetHearts for Kids luncheon is the first way I became acquainted with CHS. A friend who was on the

for more info

SweetHearts for Kids Luncheon
Feb. 16, 11:00 a.m.
Call Debi Allesio at 529-2030 for tickets or business sponsorships. Tickets are \$40 each. All proceeds go directly to helping children and families in our community.

Sweet, sweet words to a nonprofit organization's ears. This year our SweetHearts for Kids luncheon at the Marcus Whitman Hotel & Conference Center features the Valley's own Lawson Knight, executive director of the Blue Mountain Community Foundation, a vibrant speaker and true humanitarian. You'll hear about the programs and services of CHS and how they have touched the lives of individuals and families, and have an opportunity to give to the cause. If you've always wanted to help children in the community, CHS is one of several organizations in the Valley that can use your time and talents, wherever they lie. Sherilee Coffey volunteers on the CHS Board of Trustees.

Lessons: Both size and sentiment matter

Continued from Page C2
I didn't, but said, "Yes ma'am." I thought and thought some more about what was in my heart. I wasn't coming up with much, but I had to put something on paper. This is what I wrote: Dear Amy, Will you be my Valentine? Sam Not very original, but heartfelt. Amy's was the only card I wrote a note on, so it was the most special one. On Valentine's Day, Mrs. Benson let us walk around the classroom and dole out our cards. Everybody gave out better cards than

mine. It was sort of embarrassing, but I remembered what Coco said: girls don't care about the card. They care about the note. I was relying heavily on her say-so. When I got to Amy's desk, Sarah was waiting for me. "I'll take that," she said, snatching the card out of my hand, looking it over, and rolling her eyes before running to Amy. Every girl in the class stopped to watch. Amy took the card and read it. She looked at me, but didn't smile or blush. She put the card in her skirt pocket. Sarah glared at me. That was the end of my relationship with Amy Barnhart.

It wasn't until the next day that Sarah found me on the playground and told me Billy Williams had written a better note. He wrote "I Love You" which, according to Sarah, was way better than "Will You Be My Valentine?" "And," she said. "Billy's card was one of the big ones. It folded and came in a real envelope. And Mrs. Williams drove Billy over to Amy's house yesterday after school. And Billy gave Amy a Whitman Sampler with a red bow on it. It cost 49 cents." "How would you know that?" I asked. "That's what Billy told Amy." "That's not fair," I said. "Mrs. Benson said..."

"Amy says love conquers all and Billy couldn't help himself. He gave her chocolates because that's what boys are supposed to do on Valentine's. He didn't care if he got in trouble. Amy says that's true love. So now she likes Billy better than you." "Oh, brother," I said. Sarah stood staring at me, shaking her head. "Maybe you've learned something from all this," she said. "But I don't think it's gonna do you any good." "Why not?" I asked. "Because I've checked around and none of the other girls want you for a boyfriend either. Amy dumped you and now everybody else has, too."

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