

Valley Life



Shelley Smith Jones

Mazama

My mother was not a huge fan of sports, but she enjoyed watching figure skating on television. She loved the female skaters who were so smooth on the ice; she said they were like poetry in motion. Over the years, Peggy Fleming, Dorothy Hamill, Michelle Kwan and Kristi Yamaguchi won my mom's poetic title.

Pair teams the likes of Gordieeva and Grinkov won double her poetry praise. She could tell when the skaters were a "real" couple because she said they skated as one. (Tragic end:

read "My Sergei.")

Johnny Tillotson most likely first coined the phrase "Poetry in Motion" for his 1960 hit single titled the same. I have a personal affinity for Johnny Tillotson. His 33-RPM vinyl record was the very first album I purchased with my babysitting money. It went round and round on my hi-fi, every word memorized.

Words of inspirational poems can both uplift and motivate. It was like that for Nobel Prize winner Bob Dylan and the Scottish Bard of Ayrshire, the 18th century poet Robert "Rabbie" Burns. Dylan identified the verse that had the greatest impact on his life as Burns' "A Red, Red Rose," written in 1794.

"O, my luv'e's like a red, red rose, that's newly sprung in June/O, my luv'e's like the melodie/That's sweetly play'd in tune." Perfect for upcoming Valentine's Day.

"Rabbie Burns was a hugely committed artist who dealt with everyday emotions and big emotions so, in that sense, it's not a surprise he's influenced

Dylan," Dr. Gerard Carruthers, director for the Centre for Burns Study at the University of Glasgow shared. "I imagine Dylan will still be loved in 200 years as much as Burns is."

Many artists have reflected the lines of "A Red, Red Rose" including Dylan himself in "Make You Feel My Love."

"When the evening shadows and the stars appear/And there is no one there to dry your tears/I could hold you for a million years/To make you feel my love." Another Valentine treasure.

Rabbie Burns has had an enduring literary influence to this day. Along the way to today, Burns' words can be found in works such as John Steinbeck's "Of Mice and Men." The best laid schemes o' mice an' men/Gang aft agley. Another high school must-read, "Catcher in the Rye," was named such by J. D. Salinger from a misinterpretation of Burns' poem "Comin' Through the Rye." Misinterpretation aside, still, a profound influence.

Burns has become an interna-



Photo by Shelley Smith Jones

A group of celebrants, many appropriately garbed, recently noted the birthday of Scottish poet Robert "Rabbie" Burns by singing "Auld Lang Syne" — and then going for a ski.

tional icon. Keep in mind, this genius died at age 37 — younger than my youngest son!

Here in Mazama, a group of Burns' admirers have begun a tradition — such as is done in many countries — to celebrate his birthday on Jan. 25. This year, COVID upended the tradition, so the support-

ers looked for a reincarnation of their Community Center dinner and entertainment and chose an outdoor, scaled-down celebration.

Gathering on Jan. 25, at the Mazama trailhead decked in Tartan garb, the celebrants heard bagpipe music, a reading by Midge Cross in an

excellent Scottish brogue, and circled Goat Wall Loop to then quaff a sip of Louise Stevens' Scotch whisky. Before heading out, the group joined contactless hands and sang another song with lyrics by Rabbie Burns: "Auld Lang Syne."

All said and done: poetry in motion.



Ashley Lodato

Winthrop

Like many others, I assumed that as eligibility for the COVID vaccine moves beyond health care workers and elders, school employees who are working at schools offering in-person learning would be prioritized. I was wrong.

The state's recently unveiled "Get Ready" plan is designed to launch when school employees become eligible under Washington state's vaccination protocols, and when 50% of those in the Phase 1A Tiers 1 & 2 (health care workers, residents in

long-term care facilities) and Phase 1B Tier 1 (people aged 65 and over, those who are 50 and over and living in a confusingly worded "multi-generational household") are vaccinated.

The Get Ready plan, according to the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), "will focus on supporting a safe return to school for communities across the state." Kaiser Permanente Washington (Kaiser) is partnering with OSPI to offer vaccination to 80% of the state's 143,000 school employees within four weeks of the launch. The Get Ready plan includes "approximately 14 to 20 vaccination locations along the I-5 corridor and in Spokane," Kaiser reports, because "vaccines are a crucial step needed to get our students and school employees back to school safely."

Ahem. Hello! It's us over here in central Washington, where school employees took the "crucial step" to getting students back to school last September (Methow Valley), October (Brewster, Cascade/

Leavenworth, Eastmont, Manson, Okanogan, Omak, Oroville, Tonasket), November (Wenatchee), and December (Chelan). Without benefit of vaccination, these districts' school employees bus drivers, teachers, custodians, paraeducators, food service staff, administrators — took those crucial steps into the places that pose the greatest risk for COVID infection: inside, in prolonged contact with people other than members of their own households.

With about 80% of our state's 295 school districts operating 100% remotely, we in central Washington are so lucky to have so many schools open for on-campus learning. We're lucky that our kids are getting the benefit of at least a partial in-person education and the benefit of social time with friends, at a time when teen rates of depression and suicide are skyrocketing in areas where schools are fully remote. We're lucky that working parents can go to work; our local rural economy depends on this. We're lucky that students who face food insecurity

have access to school meals. We're lucky that students who require extra learning support or special education receive these necessary services. We're lucky that all these school employees — who transport our kids, feed them, teach them, inspire them, challenge them, and nurture them — continue to play a central role in helping our kids learn to think, listen, interact, and create. We're lucky that school employees in central Washington are willing to enter those buses and those buildings five days a week.

But OSPI's vaccination program partnership with Kaiser, which has locations only in Puget Sound and Spokane, so blatantly favors the population-dense areas of the state that its intention to "further efforts to define potential sites more proximate to central Washington" seems as much an insult as an afterthought. It's time for the state to acknowledge the dedication of school employees in central Washington and allocate vaccines for regional distribution, as our local state Sen. Hawkins advocates, rather

than facilitating a statewide effort that accommodates those who have the potential to return to school, instead of those who are already there.

So when Phase 1B Tier 2 rolls around and it's school employees' turn to get offered the vaccine according to the Get Ready plan, you'd hope that central Washington school employees who Got Ready last fall and have Remained Ready since then can go to the front of the education sector vaccination line and that they won't have to travel to the I-5 corridor or Spokane to do so.

If you don't have a child enrolled in public school, you may be unaware of the extra burden placed on school employees. Windows are open on school buses and in classrooms to promote air flow, even on frigid days. Custodial duties have multiplied exponentially, in a frighteningly chemical manner. Administrators face a host of concerns and decisions all day, every day, regarding student and staff physical and emotional well-being. Cafeteria staff

has had to abandon the familiar and efficient family-style food preparation method in favor of individual servings. Teachers prepare for and then facilitate lesson plans two-fold, in order to reach in-person and remote students each day. And just imagine what it's like for the technology departments in schools, with most students in possession of a school laptop and half of the student body attending school virtually every day.

And yet, these central Washington school employees are doing it, with a generally cheerful attitude. They care about kids, they recognize the vital role that schools play in the function of our society, and they know that without in-person school, the disparities that already create such a disadvantage for rural, low-income, and non-white students could easily turn into an unbridgeable gulf. So they took the crucial step and opened schools.

This, in my mind, makes central Washington school employees heroes. Let's treat them that way.



Sarah Schrock

Twisp

My Valentine to Twisp: Dear Twisp, We have been together for years, and everyday my love for you grows. The more time we spend together, the more you find a way into my heart with your muted colors. From the rusted iron of your symbols to the dusty corners of your alleys, around each corner, you always show me a new side of your soul. Your artists, your musicians, your craftsmen, your businesses, your charities — they complete me.

When apart, no other measures up. Nay, the charming Victorian coastal villages that tempt me with their intricate adornments and their weathered shingles nor the mountain mecca towns who call me to play among their friends. They are but a dream. But you, Twisp, you

ground me. You never judge me, you accept me for who I am. No one surrounds me with as much beauty as you.

Once I left never to return, but you called me home. And while I may leave again, we will never be apart forever. You see, your grit gets under my fingernails, under my rugs, and under my bed. I can't shake it. You are always with me. Your slushy streets and potholes make every day an adventure.

Each season brings us together in familiar and comforting habits from our autumn runs to our summer swims. Your winter sunrises lighten my days and your summer fires ignite a flame in my heart. Your spring winds test my love, and your cold fog dampens my soul, yet I stay.

My love for you will never end, but lately our relationship has changed. One of the reasons I fell in love with you was all your many faces and all the fun times we shared together. For nearly a year, I have seen only a few of your faces and I miss the others. You were such a tease this summer with your river floaters and Saturday markets, but lately the only faces I see are covered in ski goggles and face masks. I don't even recognize you anymore. I miss eating in your bakeries, drinking from your

watering holes, and seeing your smiles. At times I feel I am a prisoner in my home, even though I know you are there for me, sometimes it is difficult to feel all of you.

Dearest Twisp, as Valentine's Day approaches, there is small request I make of you: chocolate. The Twisp Valley Grange is hosting its second annual chocolate sale. Mary Jane Perry has informed me that orders for the delicious morsels will be available until Feb. 11 or until supplies last. Reserve your delicious Valentine chocolates now for COVID-safe pickup on Feb. 12, 2:30-4:30 p.m. in Twisp at the Community Center parking lot; and 2:30-4:30 p.m. in Winthrop at the Winthrop Barn parking lot. Please wear a mask and observe social distancing when you pick up your gift for you loved ones. Orders can be made on this link: <https://openfoodnetwork.net/twisp-valley-grange/shop>.

I am forever loyal to you and will wait until the day we may see one other's smile once again. I have learned to see your smile in your eyes and for that I am eternally yours. Until then, I will enjoy your chocolate, your take out, and your Zoom times.

Be mine forever.
Faithfully yours, S.

PRIME SEATING

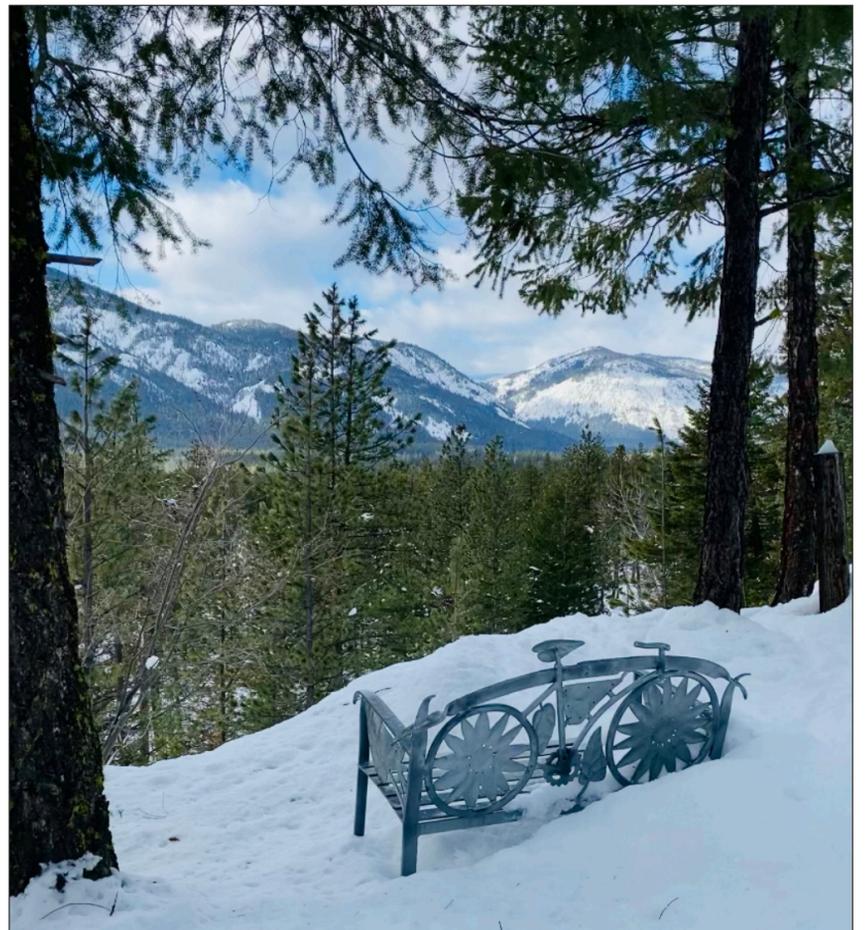


Photo by Ashley Lodato

Skiers on the Goat Creek Trail near Mazama can enjoy a rest and a grand up-valley view from a bench crafted by local metal artist Barry Stromberger.