

## CASCADE Observations

By PEGGY DILLS KELTER

### Books' great beginnings 9.651 pages of pleasure

**S**IGNS AND SIGNALS are everywhere that 2014 is behind me and the New Year has formally arrived. Bank statements recapping last year's paltry interest earnings arrive in the mail box; I no longer write "2014" on dated material; and it's time, once again, to recap the previous year's reading history.



Steve Duin, columnist for The Oregonian, got me in the habit of recording the books I read from January through December. Over the course of a year, he challenges his readership to read, read, read — books. Magazines and newspapers are exempt. The reader who devours the

most pages wins a prize; the reward for the rest of us is the satisfaction in reviewing a year's list of books, once anonymous to us and now our good friends.

In 2014 I read 29 books, for a total of 9,651 pages. I bested 2013's count by hundreds of pages, but still fell thousands short of the winners. Nonetheless, I ended the year satisfied by my reading accomplishments, and thankful for the teachers and family members who instilled in me a love of reading.

**Two-thirds** of the books I read were non-fiction and one-third fiction. Many would look at my list and determine that I must be a scatter-brain. I'd rather think of my taste as eclectic. 2014's list does seem to contain a few repeating themes. There were lots of books about eccentrics, visionaries, and travelers. Carl Hoffman, author of the compelling "Savage Harvest — A Tale of Cannibalism, Colonialism, and Michael Rockefeller's Tragic Quest for Primitive Art" writes, "The fascinating stories aren't the ones about people following patterns but about people doing the unpredictable." My list would support that statement. Not only did I read about Nelson Rockefeller's son being cannibalized in New Guinea, but I also read the following — all books about real people doing the unexpected, the outlandish, and sometimes the insane:

- "A Curious Man — The Strange and Brilliant Life of Robert "Believe It or Not" Ripley"

- "80 Days — Nellie Bly and Elizabeth Bisland's History Making a Race Around the World"

- "The Phantom of Fifth Avenue" about eccentric heiress Huguette Clark

- "The River of Doubt — Theodore Roosevelt's Darkest Journey," a gripping tale of survival in the jungle

- "The Boys In the Boat" — the story of a University of Washington scrappy crew team that did the unpredictable when they won gold at the 1936 Berlin Olympics.

I "traveled" vicariously to exotic and domestic locales not only with Teddy Roosevelt and Michael Rockefeller, but also to the Amazon with Anne Patchett's characters in "State of Wonder;" the South Pole with the characters in Maria Semple's novel "Where'd You Go, Bernadette?" and Prineville, with Dorothy McCall's memoir "Ranch Under the Rimrock." In between my literary travels, I experienced the world through the eyes of a dog in "The Art of Racing In the Rain" and an autistic boy who begins to make sense of the world with the help of Disney animation in the memoir "Life, Animated" by Ron Suskind.

I read books by and about old "friends" — people I've come to feel acquainted with through books. These include:

- Bill Bryson's "One Summer - 1927" — Bryson has long been a favorite writer of mine

- Laura Kalpakian's "Graceland" — a true storyteller and prolific novelist from Washington State

- "The Mockingbird Next Door" — a book about living next door to author Harper Lee ("To Kill a Mockingbird") and her sister

- "Julia Child Rules" by Karen Karbo — Reading this book, I relived my fairy tale night in September 2000 when I dined with this American icon.

**Now I have** my sights set on the 2015 selections. Chief among them will be rereading the works of Luis Alberto Urrea, the Hood River County Library's pick for their 2015 "Everybody Reads" program beginning in March. Urrea has been a favorite author of mine since my sister gave me one of his books. In his novels "The Hummingbird's Daughter" and "Queen of America," Urrea weaves true historical events and magical realism together with great craftsmanship. "The Devil's Highway," his riveting non-fiction account of a group of Mexicans who attempted to cross the US border, and died trying, should be read by everyone attempting to understand the immigration crisis in America.

Urrea's novel "Into the Beautiful North" is this year's library selection, and a truly enchanting book. Here's how its publisher describes it:

"Nineteen-year-old Nayeli works at a taco shop in her Mexican village and dreams about her father, who journeyed to the US to find work. Recently, it has dawned on her that he isn't the only man who has left town. In fact, there are almost no men in the village — they've all gone north. While watching The Magnificent Seven, Nayeli decides to go north herself and recruit seven men — her own "Siete Magnificos" — to repopulate her hometown and protect it from the banditos who plan on taking it over.

"Filled with unforgettable characters and prose as radiant as the Sinaloa sun, 'Into the Beautiful North' is the story of an irresistible young woman's quest to find herself on both sides of the fence."

**The kick-off** event for "Everybody Reads" will be March 15 at 2 p.m. at the Hood River County Library. Watch for other events occurring throughout the spring. Be a part of this wonderful experience that celebrates community and good books.

## NRCS office moves

The Hood River office of the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has been re-located to the USDA Forest Service Hood River Ranger District office, 6780 Highway 35, Mt. Hood-Parkdale.

The new office is handicapped accessible, per federal regulations. The phone number for NRCS District Conservationist Carly Heron remains the same, 541-386-2815. The re-location was effective Feb. 5.

The Hood River Soil & Water Conservation District and the Hood River Watershed Group will remain in their current location on the campus of the OSU Mid-Columbia Research and Extension Center at 3007 Experiment Station Drive, Hood River.

For further information, contact NRCS District Conservationist Carly Heron at 541-386-2815.

## Doula group welcomes Cohen

Meg Becker and DeLona Campos-Davis announce the addition of a third doula ready to serve expectant families in the Gorge.

Stefanie Cohen brings a background in massage and 10 years of doula experience. Birth doulas support women and their partners during labor and childbirth.

Join them the second Tuesday of every month at 7 p.m. for a free information event to meet the doulas, held in the offices of Laura Mayo, acupuncturist, 506 Cascade, No. 100.

## Births

### William Ravins

A son, William Thomas Ravins, was born on Feb. 4, 2015, at Providence Hood River Memorial Hospital to Tim and Rachel Ravins of Hood River. He weighed 8 pounds, 7 ounces and measured 21 inches. He joins a sister, Hannah Ravins, 3. Grandparents are Elaine Genor of Aloha, Ore., and Pat and Trudy Ravins of Hillsboro, Ore. Great grandmother is Mary Ravins of Hillsboro.

### Charlotte Ault

A daughter, Charlotte Mae Ault, was born Jan. 14, 2015, at Providence Willamette Falls Medical Center in Oregon City, Ore., to Aimee and Jared Ault of Gladstone, Ore. She weighed 6 pounds, 7 ounces and measured 20 inches. Grandparents are Barb and Kirk Stein of Hood River, Greg and Tammy Ault-Tryon of Eagle Creek, Ore., and Chuck Cooper of Lahue, Hawaii. Great grandmother is Laura Young of Hood River.



### Recycle Tips

#### HAZARDOUS WASTE

- Hazardous waste collection events are FREE to residents, businesses and farmers of Wasco, Sherman, and Hood River Counties.
- Quarterly collections in Hood River and The Dalles, plus 8 rural events/yr.
- Go to our website for full schedule and list of what we accept.



# It's time for the 52nd Annual Hood River News Subscription Campaign

OPEN TO ALL  
**KIDS & TEENS**  
AGES 10-16



## KIDS - Earn BIG Cash Bonuses Here's How!

- Come in and sign up at the Hood River News office on Wednesday, Feb. 18 or Thursday, Feb. 19.
- Call friends & family and sign them up for a Hood River News subscription.



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