

ROOTS And Branches

By MAIJA YASUI

Got this shoe? Make amends



NEW BALANCE orthopedic shoe belongs to a man who truly needs it.

There are so many great things our students and young adults do in this community that I hate to mention a less than sterling moment committed by one young man. Perhaps it was a prank, or a simple irresponsible act. Regardless, if I write this article, and enough folks discuss how seemingly harmless pranks may inadvertently cause others significant pain, we can make amends.

In this case, it is all about one individually molded white leather, New Balance tennis shoe, made to fit the remains of a left foot, but holding the key to a wheelchair bound man's spirit, mobility and freedom.



This shoe story began fifteen years ago when my cousin Zanne returned to her home town of Hood River to care for her aging mother. She and her husband worked hard to retire in the community they always thought of as Paradise. Unfortunately the last fifteen years have read more like "Paradise Lost," first with the passing of her mother, and then the continued escalation of health issues both have had to face.

In spite of partial loss of limb, vision, and mobility due to surgical, radiation and chemotherapy, the couple have always considered themselves fortunate. Their spirits seldom flag, in spite of formidable odds. They have supported a variety of good causes, from pets to people, throughout the years. I often marveled at their ability to be upbeat while dealing with ever increasing debilitation.

Around 1 p.m. on Tuesday, May 12, Zanne and her husband pulled into Monagon's Restaurant at 1301 for a bite to eat. They had just received another dose of demoralization from the doctor who recommended they delay a long planned trip back east to visit their grandchildren due to some sores that were not healing properly. Changing travel plans is a lengthy process for anyone, let alone for a couple who is facing complications of wounds and lack of mobility.

Zanne dropped her husband off in front of the handicap access and parked the car as he wheeled himself into the restaurant. As Zanne got out of the car, she noticed a white shoe on the ground and wondered if it was John's lost in the dandy shuffle he does while propelling the wheelchair forward. As she moved towards the shoe to take a closer look, a small, bright red, older car pulled up. In one rapid motion, the driver's door swung open and a young man grabbed the shoe and pulled into the west bound traffic on Belmont. Zanne remembers feeling relieved that it was someone else's shoe given the cost (\$900) of replacing the distinctive orthopedic pair and the fact that insurance would not cover the expense for another year.

Dread set in as Zanne approached the booth where John was seated and saw that he was missing his left shoe. They talked about what they could do. John had already lost pieces of his feet. One would think that the loss of a shoe would be of little consequence compared to the loss of parts of his body. Yet the shoe was in fact a replacement part for his foot, providing him with a little more mobility and personal freedom. She hadn't gotten the license of the small, older red car, nor was she able to describe what the person looked like. She had the distinct impression from the arm that extended out the driver's door that it was a young person. But then as Zanne says, everyone seems young now days.

She knew they went west on Belmont at 1-ish and thought perhaps it was a teen heading back to the high school. So she and one shoed John shuffled back to the car and drove over to the high school. She went into the office and asked if an announcement could be made seeking the return of the trendy "tenni" with no questions asked. Spirits plummeted as school staff said they were unable to make the announcement due to several complications. It was testing time, the act occurred off campus, and there was no hard evidence that the young adult was in fact a Hood River Valley High School Student. She was instructed to file a police report.

Feeling discouraged, they drove through the parking lot and noted there were at least 20 little red cars parked around the school. She couldn't identify any one of them for sure. Zanne pinned her hopes on the passing remark of staff. They would tell the student Leadership classes and activities director Niko Yasui (who is my son) to be on the lookout for the shoe. Zanne's spirit returned. Yasui was her cousin and she knew first hand of the many good deeds leadership students had conducted throughout the years. No questions asked. Leave the shoe in the HRVHS office, or in Niko Yasui's classroom.

So I ask you all, students and teachers, newspaper readers, joggers, tweeters and twits. We are looking for a shiny new white leather New Balance shoe. It is the missing mate to the one pictured above. It has little value to anyone else as it is built to replace the missing parts of a man's foot. And while it cost \$900 to replace, it is invaluable to his sense of spirit, personal freedom and mobility.

Whether this is a fellow student, or just someone in the community you might know. Perhaps you are jogging along Belmont and spot a white leather left shoe lying in the ditch. Do the right thing. If the high school is not your comfort zone, drop it off at 1301 Monagon's. They will reunite these soul mates. No questions asked. Paradise Found. Spirit Restored.

HR Elks Lodge honors Barry and Ocheskey

Hannah Barry and Stanley Ocheskey, both students at Hood River Valley High School, were chosen as Students of the Month for April by the Hood River Elks Lodge No. 1507 and were presented with a check for \$100. They will join the other 16 students who will be in the running for the Student of the Year Awards. A banquet in their honor will be held at 6 p.m. on May 31 at the Lodge.



Hannah Barry

Hannah Barry is extremely active in her school as well as volunteering in her community. As part of Leadership, she helps set up all school events, speaking at assemblies, cleaning up the school as well as four hours of community service each month. She has been a Jr. Varsity and Winter Cheerleader since 2012, working on team spirit and for competitions. She has worked at Celilo as a hostess since 2013 and maintains a 3.4 GPA.

As part of her cheerleading community service, she worked the open house for Ace Hardware, making sig-

nage, handing out balloons and answering questions for customers; she volunteered for Rule Rand as a page, handing out water bottles and cheering the racers; she cheered at the middle school bike race; and she helped put on a Junior Cheer Clinic for over 300 second through fifth graders, making and putting up flyers and creating their own dance and cheers for them, which they presented at a football game half-time. Hannah worked on a fundraiser for Owen, a student at her high school, who was fighting cancer; she spent several hours at Hawks Ridge helping elders eat their food, clean-up and chatting with them; and she volunteered at Home At Last Humane Society feeding the animals, cleaning kennels and walking them. She also participated in Young Life, a religious organization that help kids stay out of trouble, organizing the meetings, making dinners and helping raise money for kids who could not afford to go to camp.

Hannah is the daughter of Roger Barry and Pamela Simpson. She will be attending Oregon State University in the fall majoring in merchandising management.

Many of you might remember that Stanley Ocheskey was our Most Valuable Student in December and that he took second place at the NE District Contest. He is quite an accomplished young man. He was an Ambassador and Captain of the 4-H Water Polo team; he was a member of the basketball team, golf team, water polo team and the swim team. He was first team All-League and 5A Player of the Year at Mt. Hood Conference Boys Water Polo, first team All-Tournament at Oregon High School State Championships, and offensive player of the year in 2013.



Stanley Ocheskey

Stanley has been Chapter Secretary, Hood River Valley FFA District Vice President, and is currently FFA Chapter President. He attended the Mt. Hood District Leadership camp 2012, 2013, and 2014. He took third place at state in Beginning Public Speaking and was in the top 8 in state in Advance Public Speaking. With all this activ-

ity, he still maintains a 3.96 GPA.

Stanley's community service includes the following: He was Youth Basketball Camp Counselor; he participated in the Wy'East Middle School Outdoor School as a Camp Counselor; as a 4-H Cloverbud Day Camp Counselor; Football Chain Gang in 2011-12; he volunteered for the Cross Channel Swim Safety Line; member of Link Leaders, helping new student getting acclimated to the high school; he worked at the Mid Valley Elementary Carnival; and participated in Evening of Excellence and Christmas Basket Project.

As part of FFA, he has worked the Steak Feed and Silent Auction since 2011, Pass the Pig since 2013, and with cookie sales, catering and prep for fundraisers. He participated in the Hood River County Fair and Oregon State Fair with 4-H and FFA.

This is one busy young man and he still has time to work at Nature's Finest as a field hand.

Stanley is the son of Brent and Emily Ocheskey and he has been accepted at the United States Air Force Academy, where he will be majoring in management.

Friends of the Library used book sale May 28-30

Craving a few more books to read? Maybe, say, a whole bag of books for a dollar? Then you're in luck. The upcoming Friends of the Library Used Book Sale is just what you've been waiting for.

The "members only" preview sale will be Thursday, May 28, from 4:30 to 7 p.m. in the Gaulke Meeting Room of

the main library.

Membership in the Friends can be purchased or renewed at the door. Current members should bring their door passes.

The public sale will be Friday, May 29, from noon to 6 p.m., and Saturday, May 30, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Regular prices on Thursday and Fri-

day are \$1 for hardback books and 50 cents for paperbacks. Saturday is the "bag sale," in which you can buy a bag of books for a dollar.

Thousands of books, ranging from self-help to horror, children's fantasy to adult romance, will be available for your browsing pleasure. The books are donated by

community members throughout the year, then sorted and priced by volunteers for this sale.

The proceeds support ongoing library activities such as Hood River Reads, other reading programs for adults and children, the purchase of needed equipment, and special staff training.

GARDENS

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and long-term needs of the project.)

McNew and the foundation have re-designed five planting borders in Smith Gardens, which suffered after the closure of the Library in 2010-11. Planning for reduced maintenance and a more contemporary design, the majority of plants are shrubs, exhibiting extensive texture interest, disease-resistance, and long blooming periods. In three of the plant-

ing areas, compact Boxwood hedges will frame the borders, furnishing structure and year-round color. McNew said the design suggests a flowing, soothing pattern, with liberal repetition and generous groupings of plants.

Marion McNew is President and principal designer of Mount Hood Gardens Inc., an award-winning landscape design/build company located in Hood River, Oregon. Mount Hood Gardens has created public and private gardens throughout the Mid-Columbia Region, and is celebrating its 30th business anniversary this summer.



Photo by Kirby Neumann-Rea

CARNEGIE BUILDING, built in 1913, and the Georgianna Smith Park commemorative plaque, next to the central patio constructed in 2005. Three separate patios along with numerous benches – wooden and stone – give people numerous places to sit and watch the river, the traffic on Oak, read a book, or enjoy a picnic or ice cream cone.



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'Relay For Life' on tap July 18

On July 18, Columbia Gorge residents will join together at the American Cancer Society Relay For Life of Columbia Gorge to help finish the fight against cancer. The event will take place from 8 a.m. to 12 a.m. at the Hood River County Fairgrounds.

The Relay For Life program is a community-based event where teams and individuals set up campsites at a school, park, or fairground and take turns walking or running around a track or path. Each team has at least one participant on the track at all times. Cancer survivors and caregivers take a celebratory first lap to start each event. Four million people participated in more than 6,000 events worldwide last year. The funds raised support groundbreaking cancer research, education and prevention programs, and critical services for people facing cancer.

It is not too late to for community members to get involved in the event or make a donation to the Relay For Life of Columbia Gorge. For more information, visit www.relayforlife.org/columbia or call 1-800-227-2345.

About the American Cancer Society

The American Cancer Society is a global grassroots force of nearly three million volunteers saving lives and fighting for every birthday threatened by every cancer in every community. As the largest voluntary health organization, the Society's efforts have contributed to a 22 percent decline in cancer death rates in the US during the past two decades, and a 50 percent drop in smoking rates.

Thanks in part to our progress nearly 14.5 million Americans who have had cancer and countless more who have avoided it will celebrate more birthdays this year. We're determined to finish the fight against cancer. As the nation's largest private, not-for-profit investor in cancer research, we're finding cures and ensuring people facing cancer have the help they need and continuing the fight for access to quality health care, lifesaving screenings, clean air, and more. For more information, to get help, or to join the fight, visit cancer.org or call us anytime, day or night, at 1-800-227-2345.

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