

Healing the heart



SARAH HAUG

LIGHT OF UNITY

We recently visited Wales for first time in over two years. I write novels, and this was a research trip. Mostly. It was also a bit of a pilgrimage, because it was our first trip since my mother's death.

I've written quite a lot about her in this column. Obviously, I'm "still" grieving, even as I know there's no "still" about it. I have read that grief is like a soundtrack playing in your head. Most of the time you can barely hear it, but then sometimes the volume gets turned up loud, often when you least expect it.

During her last trip with us, we visited a number of medieval churches, established as early as the fifth century during what is known in Wales as the "Age of Saints." Healing wells are often associated with these churches, the last desperate hope of the ill. Healing wells have never been part of our religious tradition, my mother's nor mine, but we felt the peace of them, heartfelt evidence of a spiritual unity that is a core tenet of the Baha'i Faith.

In 2018, after my mother was newly diagnosed with metastatic breast cancer and doing chemo, I'd brought home water for her from the well of St. Gwenffrewi. When the next PET scan

after she drank the water showed her cancer to have receded, she and I laughed, in joy and relief—and could understand why people once believed in the power of water from a healing well.

By May of 2019, although her cancer had taken a turn for the worse, my mother was well enough (and determined enough) to travel with us. We had an amazing two weeks in Wales. And on the last day, we visited St. Gwenffrewi's well.

It was closed, the water in the well undrinkable.

I knew my mother well enough to know that, even as she brushed off her disappointment as not important, it felt like she'd been slapped in the face, and that the answer to our request for healing was a very frank, "No." We weren't going to get a second miracle.

This year, St. Gwenffrewi's well wasn't even on our agenda, but on our last day in Wales we drove by it ... and I burst into tears. Silently, my husband pulled over the car and sent me inside alone.

This time I filled two bottles, one for me and one for my sister, to drink together in our mother's memory. It was a different kind of healing I was looking for this time—of spirit, rather than of body. While the soundtrack is just as loud as before, maybe I'm hearing less grief these days than joy.

Sarah Haug is a member of the Baha'i Faith and has called Pendleton home since 2002. You can find her most days walking on the riverwalk with her husband, Dan.

Thanksgiving Day race trots for Made to Thrive

PENDLETON — The public is invited to trot off some of their holiday calories during a run/walk on Thanksgiving Day.

In its ninth year, the race is changing venues. Previously held in Echo, the Club 24 Turkey Trot starts Thursday, Nov. 25, 9 a.m. at Club 24, 1845 Westgate, Pendleton. The event features a marked course along the Pendleton River Parkway. An untimed fun event, it includes distances of 1 mile, 5K and 10K.

Participants are encouraged to jump start the fun by dressing in costumes. Also, well-behaved dogs on leashes are welcome.

Profits from the Turkey Trot will be donated to Made to Thrive, a nonprofit organization serving at-risk youths in Umatilla and Morrow counties. Registration is \$15 for adults and \$10 for youths.

To register or for additional information, visit bit.ly/3n1odq4. For questions, call 509-783-1037.

Good Shepherd hosts vaccine clinics

HERMISTON — Good Shepherd Health Care System is offering free COVID-19 vaccines, including the initial series and booster doses. Patients should bring vaccination cards, if applicable.

No appointment is necessary: Friday, Nov. 19, 7 a.m. to noon; and Monday, Nov. 22, 2:30-7 p.m. The vaccines will be administered in the hospital's Conference Center 1 and 2, at 610 N.W. 11th St., Hermiston. Required monitoring after vaccine administration is 15 minutes.

Good Shepherd has the Moderna and Johnson & Johnson vaccines, both authorized for those 18 and older; and the Pfizer vaccine, for those 12 and older. Good

COMMUNITY BRIEFS



Kathy Aney/East Oregonian, File

A runner dressed as a turkey participates in the 2019 Turkey Trot on Thanksgiving Day in Echo. This year's Thursday, Nov. 25, 2021, fun run/walk will start at Pendleton's Club 24 and features marked courses along the Pendleton River Parkway.

Shepherd is not providing the Pfizer vaccine for 5-11 year olds at these clinics. In accordance with Oregon Law, patients 15 and older can self-consent for the vaccine. For ages 12-14, a parent or guardian must be present.

For more information, call the vaccination hotline at 541-667-3426, visit www.gshealth.org/coronavirus or search www.facebook.com/gshcsnews.

Estate sale features items from former VFW

HERMISTON — A defunct post estate sale will feature a variety of items from the former Veterans of Foreign Wars Post in Hermiston.

The sale is Saturday, Nov. 20, and Sunday, Nov. 21, both days from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. The event will be at the old VFW Hall, 45 W. Cherry Ave., Hermiston.

Items available for purchase include folding tables, stackable chairs, monitors, wall decorations, a safe, a 40-foot Conex container, American flags,

Bradford Exchange eagles, office chairs, electric roasters and more. In addition, there is a Bingo King machine and board, and a variety of bingo supplies, including daubers and bingo game sheets.

Photos of items can be viewed at www.facebook.com/oregonvfw. For questions, contact 503-255-5808 or orvfwHQ@gmail.com.

Echo church serves holiday meal

ECHO — Everyone is invited to a Thanksgiving meal hosted by the Echo Community Church.

The free dinner is Saturday, Nov. 20, 12:30-2:30 p.m. at the church, 21 N. Bonanza St., Echo. People do not have to attend the church to enjoy the fellowship and food at the community meal. For more information, call 541-571-4419.

Local hospice offers holiday grief support

WALLA WALLA — A virtual holiday grief support program is being facilitated

by Walla Walla Community Hospice.

The free event is open to any adult who has suffered the death of a loved one. Participants can join the discussion and learn strategies to utilize in facing the holiday season while experiencing grief. The session will include members of the Hospice Bereavement Team, consisting of staff social workers and spiritual support counselors.

Holiday Grief Support is Sunday, Nov. 21, 1-3 p.m. An RSVP is required to obtain the Zoom connection information. For more information or to register, contact 509-525-5561, info@wwhospice.org, visit www.wwhospice.org or search www.facebook.com/wallawalla-hospice.

UCF extends fair court application deadline

HERMISTON — The Umatilla County Fair has extended the deadline to apply for the 2022 Umatilla County Fair court. The application deadline is Monday, Nov. 22, by 9 a.m.

Participating on the fair court offers young people an opportunity to represent Umatilla County not only during fair week in August but at parades and other events throughout Eastern Oregon and Washington in 2022. The program is open to Umatilla County students in ninth through 12th grade. Participation provides a fun way to develop confidence and build relationships with other county residents.

Applications are available via www.umatillacountyfair.net or at the fair office at the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center, 1705 E. Airport Road, Hermiston. For questions, call 541-567-6121 or email fair@umatillacounty.net.

—EO Media Group

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