

Aligning behaviors with physical, spiritual world



SARAH HAUG

LIGHT OF UNITY

I stopped drinking alcohol 32 years ago this month, long before “Dry January” made it a thing. I did it because I was becoming a Baha’i, even if I hadn’t yet declared myself to be one. The Baha’i Faith forbids the consumption of alcohol or non-medically prescribed drugs.

This law against substances is what we call a “social” law. It isn’t as fundamental to the Baha’i Faith as the central tenets, which include the oneness of God, the oneness of religion and the oneness of humanity, but rather is a commentary on the needs of the world today.

That’s a crucial caveat: the needs of the world “today.” While alcohol has been an important part of human society for at least 10,000 years, the needs and understandings of our ancestors are not necessarily the same as ours.

I felt the effects of alcohol long before I decided to quit drinking. When I drank, my behavior

changed, and I was more open to suggestions — from men, from friends, from total strangers. Often these behaviors were ones I would never have considered when I wasn’t under the influence. During my junior year abroad in England (where, ironically, I was only 20, so not yet a legal drinker in the U.S.), someone told me that it took 36 hours for alcohol to leave the body. I couldn’t remember the last time it had been 36 hours between drinks.

“It is inadmissible that man, who hath been endowed with reason, should consume that which stealth it away.”

Few would argue that alcohol

has potentially destructive effects on people’s lives and that it puts up a barrier between an individual and their usual self—or even, one could say, their “true” self. From a Baha’i perspective, alcohol thus acts as a veil between an individual and God.

Baha’is are instructed not to condemn anyone or judge the behavior of others — ever. (We don’t believe in hell, either.) But we are taught that there is a physical world and a spiritual world. Those worlds aren’t actually separate or distinct from one another, but exist within a single whole. Our job is to align our behaviors with, and live within, the laws of both. In so doing,

we become happier and healthier.

“Every created thing in the whole universe is but a door leading ... to His straight Path.” These last two years have been hard for our world as a whole, as well as for me personally. Given the dramatic increase in alcohol consumption in the United States as a result, I can only be grateful to my 21-year-old self for putting my feet on this path I’ve walked for 32 years.

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.

COMMUNITY BRIEFING

SNHU announces President’s List

MANCHESTER, N.H. — Eight local students were named to the fall 2021 President’s List at Southern New Hampshire University.

Those receiving the honor include Jenny Peters and Bailey Sitts, both of Pendleton; Holly Kress, Asuzena Ochoa and Jocelle Quinn, all of Hermiston; Jadyne Thomas, of Milton Freewater; Christian Haskell, of Pilot Rock and Johnathan Breshears, of Umatilla.

Students must earn a minimum of 12 credits and achieve a minimum GPA of 3.7 to receive the recognition. Both in-person and online students are eligible to be named to the list at SNHU.

SNHU, a private, nonprofit institution. For more information, visit www.snhu.edu.

Pendleton resident makes Dean’s List at Wisconsin school

OSHKOSH, Wis. — Kaitlyn McMasters of Pendleton was named to the fall 2021 Dean’s List at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh. To receive the honor, students must complete at least 12 credits and earn a GPA of 3.75 or higher.

The UW Oshkosh began as a teacher-training school in 1871. It has expanded to offer bachelor’s, master’s and doctoral degree programs across three campuses. For more information, visit www.uwosh.edu.

Summer internship program offers 75-plus positions

BOARDMAN — Employers in Morrow County are offering more than 75 internship positions during the summer 2022 season. All positions are paid and available in a variety of sectors.

Information about each internship and a link to apply is available via www.columbiaworks.org. The application period is open through April 1.

Columbia Works was established to link regional employers with high school and college students who are looking to gain experience in their prospective career field. Kalie Davis, director of workforce development at the Port of Morrow, said the goal of the program is to assist young professionals in connecting with industry partners who provide opportunities for professional growth and pathways to employment.

“We have seen so many wonderful outcomes from this program,” Davis said. “Our hope is that they complete their summer internship and return to Morrow County when they are ready for a full time position.”

For more information about the summer internship program, email workforce@portofmorrow.com or call 541-945-2231.

—EO Media Group

Melonville features night of stand-up fun

By TAMMY MALGESINI
East Oregonian

HERMISTON — A pair of funny men, one a former factory worker and the other an aspiring skateboarder, and a funny woman, a former Division I collegiate basketball player, are ready to yuck it up at Melonville Comedy Festival.

Get ready for some laughs with headliner Dale Jones, featured comedian Monica Nevi and emcee Taylor Clark. In its 28th year, the event is Friday, Jan. 28, 8 p.m., at the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center, 1705 E. Airport Road, Hermiston.

The doors open at 7 p.m. with a no-host bar. Open to adults 21 and older, reserved seats are \$35 each or \$300 for a table for 10. Tickets purchased at the door are \$40.

Dale Jones

A dare from co-workers, Jones’ biography states, was the impetus for his first stand-up gig. Referring to his mom as a “smart-aleck” and his dad as a “goofy guy,” the comedian enjoys making people laugh. Two years after his first open mic, Jones dove into comedy full-time.

Honing his skills for nearly three decades, includ-

ing at Second City, Jones possesses a rapid-fire delivery. The headliner’s high-energy performances feature physical comedy, animated expressions and improvisation.

Jones has earned his comedy chops on stages across the country and the seas — he’s a favorite on Carnival Cruise Lines. His TV appearances include Season 6 of NBC’s “Last Comic Standing.” And his November 2021 album, “I’m Not Well,” rose to No. 3 on iTunes comedy releases.

Monica Nevi

A native of the Seattle area, Nevi was a subtle class clown. Describing herself as quiet by nature, people didn’t always hear her cutting up.

“Once I noticed that my friends in my direct vicinity were always laughing at me, I thought maybe I should talk louder,” she said.

While attending Seattle University, Nevi wrote jokes in her spare time. After injuries ended her collegiate basketball career, she



Jones



Nevi



Clark

decided to participate in her first open mic.

Even with millions of jokes available online, Nevi said the internet isn’t a true comedy experience. The camaraderie of the crowd, she said, is like a team spending 90 minutes together forgetting about life’s stressors and just laughing.

“Nothing, and I mean nothing, is the same as being in a room full of people and laughing together,” Nevi said.

Just more than a decade since bouncing into comedy, Nevi is hooked.

In late 2020, she released a pair of albums within a month of each other. The first, “Mostly Finger Guns,” is a standup album and the other is “Chill,” described as a comedic guided meditation. Both topped the comedy charts.

Taylor Clark

A Seattle-based comic, Clark spent time grinding the rails in New York City. According to his biography, an ankle injury took a toll on his career as a sponsored skateboarder. He began

managing apartment rentals, which included special access at a building where he started producing stand-up comedy shows.

Contemplating employment prospects after becoming a dad, Clark packed up his family and headed back to Seattle. While returning to the stage wasn’t his plan, he was invited to audition for the Seattle International Comedy Competition. A finalist in the 2017 contest catapulted Clark back into comedy.

Continuing to ramp up his career, his debut album, “Addictive Tickle,” was released in November 2020. And he hasn’t left his love for skateboarding behind — finding a niche culture with the launch of “Comedians at Skateparks,” a tour and web series.

Organized by Midway Bar & Grill, Melonville Comedy Festival serves as a fundraiser for the local Special Olympics program.

“I think this is an important event in raising money for our local Special Olympics athletes,” Midway owner Stuart Rice said.

For more information or to purchase tickets, visit www.melonvillecomedyfestival.com or stop by Midway, 1750 N. First St., Hermiston. For questions, call 541-567-5180.

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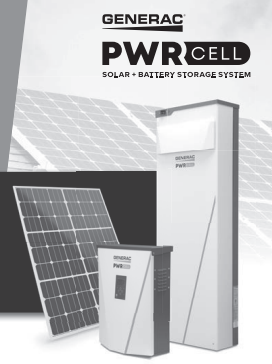
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