

Three featured for Fishtrap Fireside

Chieftain staff

ENTERPRISE — The February episode of Fishtrap Fireside will begin online beginning Friday, Feb. 4, with readings from three Wallowa County writers: longtime Fishtrap friend Rick Bombaci, retired health professional Kathy (Kat) Johnson and poet Katherine Marrone, according to a press release from Fishtrap.

Anyone anywhere can take in Fireside online at Fishtrap.org and on Fishtrap's YouTube Channel.

Fishtrap Fireside is a monthly reading series designed to feature diverse voices from local Wallowa County writers. Each month offers a fresh look at what people of the West are thinking about and writing down.

Rick Bombaci grew up in rural Connecticut. After a brief stint living and working in Portland, where he had a view of Mount St. Helens before it blew up, he moved to Wallowa County, where he's been more or less stuck ever since.

While here, Rick has worked as a U.S. Forest Service wilderness ranger, a waiter, a bicycle mechanic, a high school teacher, a computer consultant, a grant writer and a nonprofit con-

sultant. He has one daughter and a number of obsessions, including long distance hiking and a grandson.

Kathleen (Kat) Johnson was born and raised in Colorado. After earning her B.S. in English, she taught fourth grade for a time but quit to become a stay-at-home mom and follow her first husband as his career took them to New Jersey, California, Georgia and Massachusetts before choosing to make Oregon home. She has been a substitute teacher, library aide, Scout leader, EMT and companion to cats, dogs, ducks, goats and horses. In her 30s, she began a new career as a registered nurse starting in critical care but eventually specializing in geriatrics, geriatric psychiatry and dementia care.

After more than 30 years, finding herself happily retired but not so happily widowed, she decided to begin a new chapter of her life by joining her daughter, Fishtrap Executive Director Shannon McNemey, in Wallowa County. Through Fishtrap, she is rediscovering the joy of diving in and playing with words.

Katherine Marrone is a writer, activist and editor of Fishtrap's community zine, Circle of Seasons. She

works as a legal advocate at Safe Harbors in Enterprise, where she helps survivors of domestic/sexual violence and stalking seek justice and safety in Wallowa County. Having spent periods of her childhood in New York City, Italy and Eastern Oregon, Katherine developed a love for examining the relationship between experience and identity.

Her poems and essays explore gender, human rights and empathy; the meandering path of healing after trauma; finding pockets of joy in the mundane; traveling alone as a woman; and her obsession with the question: How and who do we love — and why?

Her work can be found in a sex and relationships advice column and an international feminist publication. After freelancing, she volunteered at a juvenile detention center in Portland, where she facilitated a writing workshop. It was there that she realized the transformative power of space: the space to tell one's story — and the space to trust that someone will listen.

February's Fishtrap Fireside is sponsored by Wild Carrot Herbals, a Wallowa County-based skincare company making honest, nutrient-rich products for the entire family. Learn more at Fishtrap.org.

St. Patrick's serves the community

By ANN BLOOM
For the Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — At the corner of Third and Main streets in Enterprise sits the unassuming A-frame structure that is St. Patrick's Episcopal Church, a small church as parishes go, but with a big heart. Its outreach extends to many parts of the community.

The church was built in 1960. Prior to that the congregation met on the steps of the dilapidated dance hall at Wallowa Lake.

Katy Nesbitt, the church's new deacon, said despite the church's small congregation, the focus of the parish and the diocese is to reach out beyond its walls.

"The church is to serve the entire county, not just its parishioners," she said.

St. Patrick's serves the county in many ways. From its Main Street Garden, which provides produce to the local food banks, Head Start and the Alternative Education School, to providing volunteers who serve at the senior meal site and more, the church works hard in the community to fulfill its mission. The church also offers an afterschool pro-

gram Wednesday afternoons for grade school children to enjoy activities, a snack and the chance to work in the garden.

Started in 2017, the congregation planted what is now known as the Main Street Garden and began developing relationships with community organizations such as Community Connection, Building Healthy Families and OSU's Extension Service. A greenhouse was donated in 2018 and the church has received several grants to help with funding of the project. Concerts have been held at the church to help raise money for gardening supplies and the church's former budget item, once used to cover lawn mowing, is now used as its garden fund.

"I felt like the \$800 a year we paid to have the lawn mowed could be put to other use," Nesbitt said. "The congregation supported the idea of planting a garden and finding new ways to connect with the community."

The church is looking into some grant opportunities to expand the garden by adding an additional green house, a watering system and more fruit trees and shrubs.

In addition to the Main

Street Garden, the church held its first Community Cider Pressing in the fall. The event invited people to the church with their apples, and the church provided the press and pressed the apples into cider at no cost, for them to take home. The press was loaned to the church by Dr. Severin Knudsen, veterinarian at Enterprise Animal Hospital. Hot dogs, cookies and soda were complimentary. The church intends to make the pressing an annual event.

Another popular, annual event at the church is the Feast of St. Francis, and the Blessing of the Animals. People brought their pets to the church to be blessed. St. Francis is the patron saint of animals.

If you find yourself walking down Main Street, you'll know you've arrived at St. Patrick's Church because of the new welcome sign that's out front. Nesbitt explained that the church's former sign, painted by Gene Hayes of Wallowa, had weathered after many years and the sun had faded the mountain scene. Last summer the church hired Steve Arment to carve a new sign. Near the sign is a bench inviting passersby to sit and rest.

And, yes, all are welcome.



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