

Fishtrap Fireside features three Wallowa writers

Go! staff

ENTERPRISE — The February episode of Fishtrap Fireside goes live 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.

Anyone anywhere can take in Fireside online at www.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.

February’s Fishtrap Fireside is sponsored by Wild Carrot Herbs, a Wallowa County-based skin care company making honest, nutrient-rich products for the entire family.

FEATURED READERS

Rick Bombaci grew up in rural



Rick Bombaci

Connecticut. After a brief stint living and working in Portland — when, for \$125 a month, you could rent a nice apartment with hardwood floors and a view of Mt. 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, in order, as a USFS wilderness ranger, a waiter, a bicycle mechanic, a high school teacher, a computer consultant, a grant



Kat Johnson

writer, a nonprofit consultant, an executive director and a USFS wilderness ranger. That’s known as either completing the circle or spinning your wheels. He has one daughter that he knows of, and a number of obsessions, including long-distance hiking and a grandson.

Kathleen “Kat” Johnson was born and raised in Colorado. After earning a B.S. in English she taught fourth grade for a time but quit to become a stay



Katherine Marrone

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. Kat 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 Mc Nerney, in Wallowa County. She is grateful for the kindness of the community and awestruck by the majesty of the landscape. She never tires of watching the deer and quail that visit her yard. Thanks to 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 the sex and relationships advice column she created in college called “Pillow Talk” — in which she answered questions about consent and healthy relationships — and in the international feminist publication Bitch Media, where she explored the state of sex education in the U.S. today and the connection between violence and gender roles.

After freelancing for Bitch, Katherine volunteered at a juvenile detention center in Portland, where she facilitated a writing workshop with youth. 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. Katherine is grateful to grow and live within such a creative and supportive community.

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