



Senior Moments

with Emma Edwards

I've learned a lot from obituaries

I'll begin my column today with a confession. I enjoy reading obituaries and often come away happy.

Of course, there are the sad ones that provoke us to pray for all concerned even if we do not know the family.

And there are times you read an obituary wishing you had known the person when they were living.

Or maybe you knew the person, but not the salient facts about them and you wish you had.

I have a daughter-in-law in California who now and then sends copies of obituaries she has read that she "knows I would enjoy."

No, I am not known (nor is she) as someone on a "death watch." But it's interesting to find out that a particular person was an immigrant and to learn all that he or she accomplished in their lifetimes.

One woman wrote in an obituary recently, "My husband died while we were on vacation in the mountains he loved; it was easy to decide on a song for his funeral service. John Denver wrote it, ... 'Healing time on Earth.'"

I looked it up and was able to find it. I am sure you will find it apropos (as I did) at this time of our lives and our country. Here is the first verse:

Let the mountains talk, let the rivers run.

There's a wisdom here; there is much to learn.

There is much to know, much to understand.

In this healing time all across the land.

If you're able to research it, there are several verses. And I suspect it will bless your heart.

Obituaries can both delight and bless us, for sure.

It's a fact that many of us seniors turn to the obituaries when we first open our local newspaper and, secondly, to the public safety calls.

I get to thinking that maybe it would be fun to help our family out by writing our own obituaries. And no, I have not done so myself, but I am truly thinking about it.

And then there is the picture. For sure I think family would appreciate it if we picked out the picture we wanted in the paper.

Then there is the epitaph on your gravestone. One epitaph that could be the most quoted in history is, "I told you I was sick."

I learned that some women like to put their favorite recipe on their gravestone while others (usually men) prefer fewer words.

A favorite male inscription of mine is "Here lies John Yeast. Pardon me for not rising."

In closing, I can't help but share one of the most meaningful epitaphs I have ever read on a gravestone. The stone shows an open Bible and engraved over it is "Whoever believes in Him, may have eternal life! John 3:15."

I would be remiss should I not remind all of us to read on to the secret of it all by reading the next verse, John 3:16.

Actually, no secret -- God put it there for all of us.

Off the Shelf

by Kelly Knudsen



Delights when books jump into our bags

We delightedly reopened the Warrenton Community Library (WCL) doors this week for patrons to browse for books and materials and use the computers, with a time limit of 30 minutes.

Thank you to everyone for understanding the importance of utilizing the drive-through during the past two months and helping Clatsop County slow the spread of COVID-19 in our community.

We are delighted to let people in again, with masks and social distancing, helping them fill their informational and literacy needs.

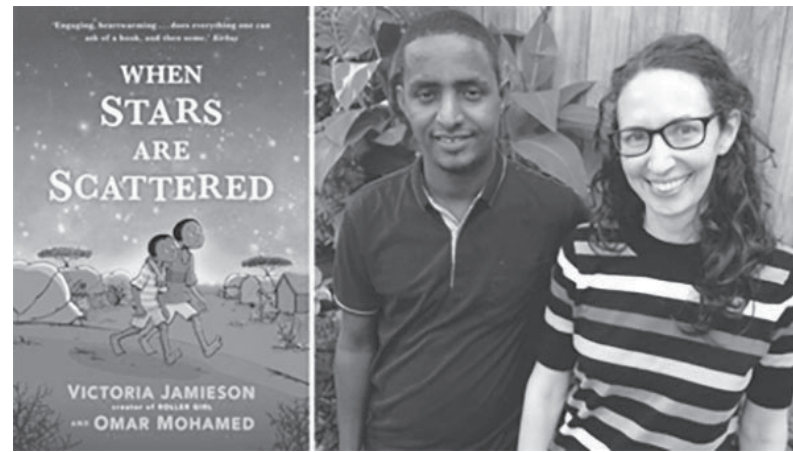
Working at a library has many perks for book lovers, especially in the winter months during a pandemic.

Carole Feldman, WCL's library administrative assistant, jokes daily about the books calling out to her as she walks through the stacks and, twice a week, she tells me that another book grew legs and jumped in her bag.

Books follow me home, too.

Recently, a junior graphic novel titled, "When Stars Are Scattered" by Victoria Jamieson and Omar Mohamed, decided to jump in my bag. Graphic novels are a type of comic book featuring graphic art in a narrative form, utilizing pictures to tell the story.

This heartwarming, beautifully illustrated 256-page memoir about Omar and his younger brother, Hassan, who have lived at a refugee camp in Kenya for more than 15 years, offered inspiration, reinforced the idea of never



The cover of "When Stars are Scattered" and authors Omar Mohamed and Victoria Jamieson.

giving up, and demonstrated the importance and value of kindness.

Omar described living in an "open prison" refugee camp, drinking tree bark tea for dinner because that's all there was, and not being able to go to school because he had to take care of his nonverbal younger brother. Yet he never lost hope.

All of us are suffering during the pandemic as we can't do things we love. We are trapped indoors, we can't see or hug our loved ones, we have to wear masks and life as we know it has ceased. The same as Omar's life. Yet he was able to hold on with faith, love, and support from

unexpected places. And he got through it.

No one asks to be a refugee and no one asks for a pandemic. Year after year, Omar believed life would improve for him and his brother, and eventually it did.

A prayer from Ramadan that Omar shared in the story spoke to me and sticks with me daily.

"Indeed, with hardship will be ease."

We've had plenty of hardship over the last 12 months.

Ease is on the horizon.

Kelly Knudsen is director of Warrenton Community Library. She has a master's degree in library and information science.

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