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APRIL 2005 VOL. 4, NO. 7

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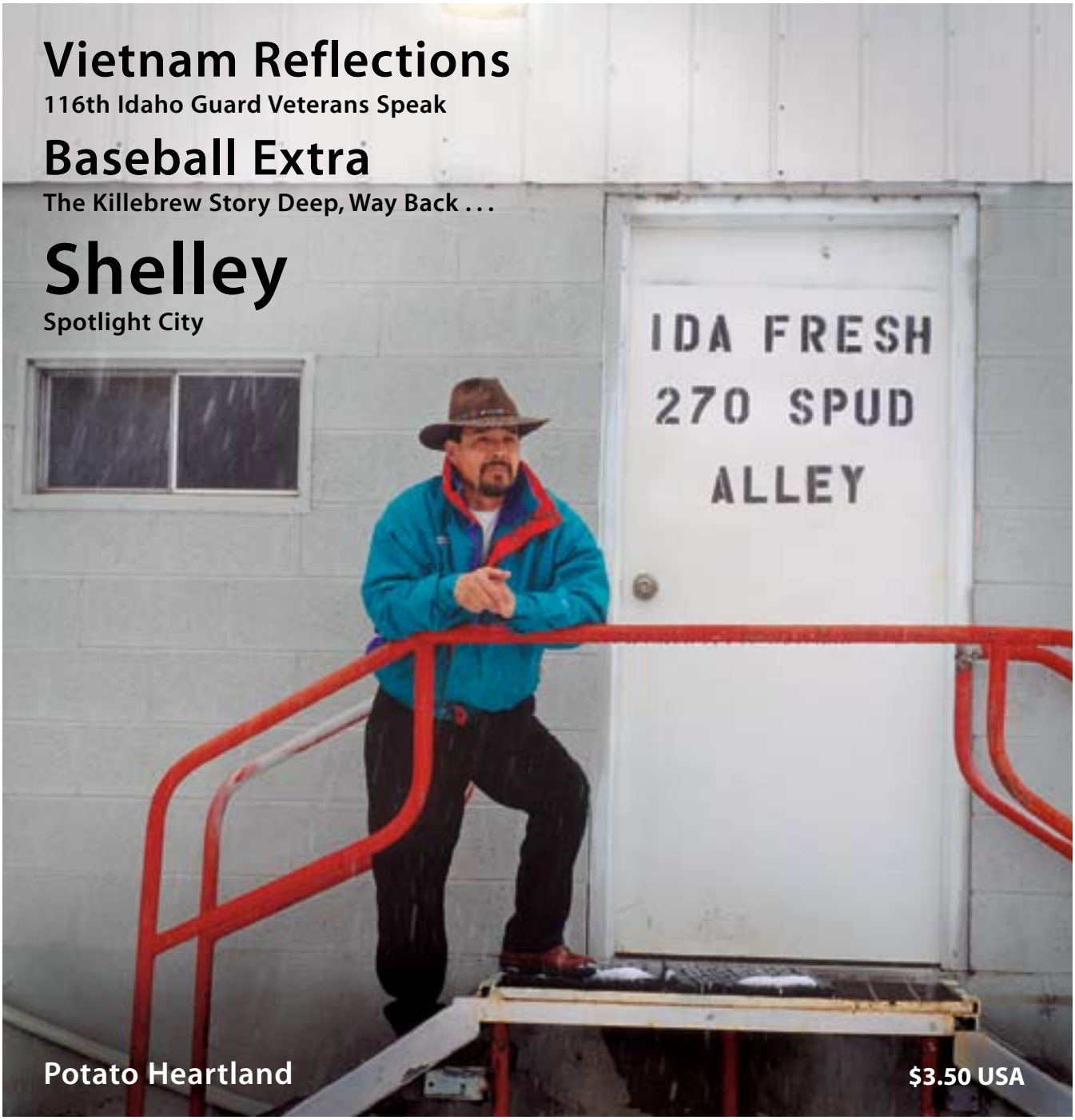

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ELIGIBILITY:

Entries must have at least one person in them, though the person need not be the primary subject. Each entry must be taken in Idaho and submitted by the photographer. Both color and black/white, indoor or outdoor photos are welcome, although preference will be given to color images. Historical photographs may be submitted by the person or agency owning the photo. Computer altered images will not be considered. Final image on cover will be cropped to 6.972" x 7.25."

INSTRUCTIONS:

Mail entries with fees to: **Photo Contest, IDAHO magazine, 4301 Franklin Rd., Boise, ID 83705**. Entries must be postmarked by JULY 31, 2005. Please DO NOT send originals. All traditional photography entries, either color or black/white, must be sent printed on photo quality paper (minimum 4"x6"). Digital image prints must be a resolution of at least 300dpi and 8" x 10." If you would like the print returned, you must include an appropriate-sized, self-addressed envelope with sufficient postage.

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IDAHO magazine

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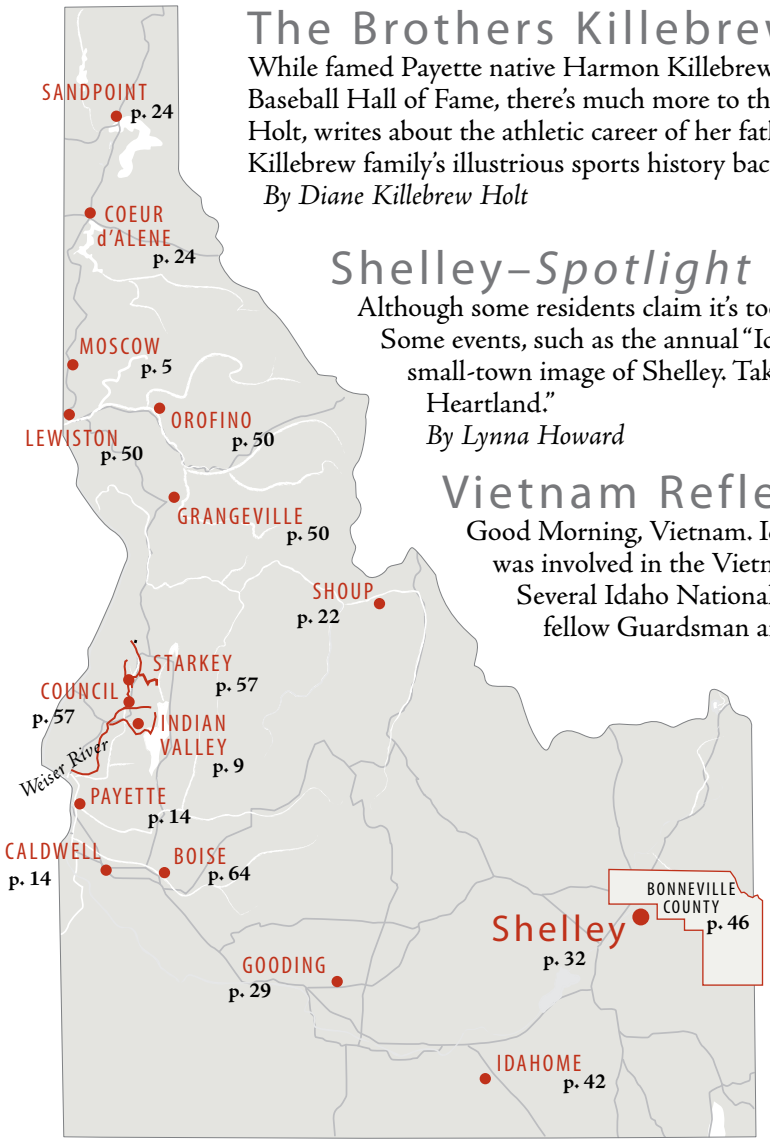
FEATURES

50



Now that spring has officially sprung, what better time to submit your stories to IDAHO magazine?

Bring us your memories and knowledge in true story form. Just remember, these nonfiction stories, (including text and photographs), should be focused on Idaho subjects. Contemporary stories are just as welcome for consideration as articles dealing with historic Idaho subject matter.

For further information, check out "Guidelines for writers & photographers" at IDAHO magazine's *web site: www.idahomagazine.com or contact the magazine's managing editor, Dave Goins, at dgoins@idahomagazine.com, or by calling (208) 336-0653 or 1-800-655-0653.*

IDAHO magazine

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IDAHO magazine considers unsolicited manuscripts, fiction, nonfiction, and letters for publication. Editorial submissions should be sent to:

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departments

cover photo:
Now age 51, Shelley businessman Tony Coronado (shown in cover photo) worked at a potato processing plant on Shelley's "Spud Alley" for two years after high school. In 1957, Coronado's family was the first Hispanic family to settle permanently in Shelley.
Photo title: "Potato Heartland"
Photographer: Leland Howard

correction:
In the March 2005 IDAHO magazine story text about Idaho architecture, the Idaho Farm Bureau Federation and Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance Company of Idaho building at Pocatello was misidentified with the use of the name of another company. We apologize for the error.

> Hello Kitty [Publisher of *IDAHO magazine*],

I wanted to thank you, your staff, your magazine, and your subscribers for the contribution of a subscription and the candy.

You asked about "Operation Warm Heart." I have included a picture of the clothing received and a picture of me that was taken by my roommate. Clothing is being accepted for all age groups up to 15 years old.

This project idea started when I felt I needed to contribute more than just helping fellow soliders. The only way many of these people will see that we are a good people, wanting to help, is to see that it is the soliders, their families, and friends who also want to make a difference. Not the politicians or high-ranking military officials that are so often seen in the media spotlight, often because bad things are happening.

This clothing has been received from friends, family, co-workers, and fellow firefighters from as far away as California. It will be distributed to families and orphans throughout the Iraq theater of operations.

If people would like to contribute they can email me at billybobmedic@yahoo.com, subject: Operation Warm Heart.

Thank You again Kitty.

Bill Arsenault
City of Nampa Firefighter/Paramedic

ABOVE: *SPC Bill Arsenault, a Paramedic with "C" Co. 145th Support Battalion, based in Iraq, enjoys some downtime reading the February 2005 issue of* IDAHO magazine.

LEFT INSET: *SPC Bill Arsenault holds a box of kids clothing that will be distrubed during Medical Assistance Visits while in Iraq.*

Thank You!

To all who donated to help send IDAHO magazine to troops overseas.

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Moscow Folk Musician

Idaho shaped Josh Ritter's art

By Ryan Peck

Folk musician Josh Ritter loves his Idaho roots.

"Being an Idahoan is something I'm pretty proud of," Josh told me recently. "The people of Idaho are individualists and the landscape is so dramatic that it at times seems to be a personality all of its own. Idaho has shaped me artistically in many ways that are deeper than my ability to communicate."

Ritter was born and raised in Moscow. Luckily the MTV-influenced world of music has some difficulty infiltrating rural Idaho. And so, luckily, young Josh, as a new high school student, listened to his parents' old records for entertainment. One of the early records Ritter heard was Bob Dylan's classic Nashville Skyline, more specifically the Johnny Cash and Dylan duet "Girl from the North Country." Ritter, who recalls it as a golden moment of influence, quickly joined the multitude of musicians whose work has been informed by Cash and Dylan. As Ritter puts it, "A light went on."

PHOTO COURTESY OF CONOR MASTERSON

Dylan and Cash's slightly off-key crooning sounded like fun to the young Ritter, and he wanted in on it, in fact, he felt like he had to do it. So while most of his peers were busy jumping their BMX bikes and catching water snakes, Ritter, a young Dylan apprentice, was learning to write songs on a local discount store's cheapest, plywood six-string guitar. "When I started (writing songs) … it felt like a psychological necessity. Finding out that it made meeting girls easier came later– not too much later thankfully," says Ritter, now age twenty-seven. He soon began combing his parents' record collection looking for inspirational songwriters. "When I did find them, I began to realize the ones that I really loved all came from out of the way places just like I did … Dylan came from Hibbing, Minnesota, Cash from Dyess, Arkansas, Neil Young from Ontario, Canada … When you grow up out of the way, the music you latch on to becomes incredibly valuable."

The young Josh grew up and headed to Oberlin College in 1995, initially intending to build a career in the sciences. Post-graduation freedom four years later, however, found him following his heart and pursuing music. Ritter moved to the East Coast so he could gig in the famed folk clubs of Boston and New York. He recorded his first album on his own and through a series of choices and coincidences ended up on a plane to Ireland. Many Irish people have an affinity for folk music and songwriters such as David Gray (who Ritter reminds me of a bit) and Johnny Cash are treated as royalty. Ritter's move to Ireland proved to be a great choice. Ireland fell in love with his clear, unmistakable

voice and spacious melodies. Within a year Josh became the darling of the Irish Hot Press Reader's Poll Awards and found himself in the top five for Best International Folk Act, International Male Songwriter, and International Male Singer. These are awards that artists such as Cash and Bruce Springsteen have won. Josh's music began to catch on in other places too. He was selling out clubs in New York and Boston and captivating and enchanting audiences at the Newport and Cambridge Folk Festivals. The young apprentice was on his way to becoming a master of song. He was touring the world and finding critical acclaim at every turn. Publications such as *The Washington Post* and *The Village Voice* sang his praises. He played the late night TV circuit. Even folk great Joan Baez covered his song "Wings," a song that chronicles the Northwest in the late 19th Century and contains references to Idaho towns Coeur d'Alene and Wallace, and the nearby Cataldo Mission–now Idaho's oldest surviving building at 152 years.

In the last year, Ritter's music has steadily advanced in the United States. This last winter V2 Records, a large, well-respected label, added Josh to their artist roster. When I ask him about his success, Ritter says that his career has been indelibly influenced by his Idaho upbringing; it gave him the confidence to take risks. "I grew up near Viola and I remember well walking through the mountains to my friends Rocky and Dusty's house which was several miles away. I would point myself in the right direction and just head out into the trees," Ritter recounts. "I've always felt completely at home in the woods and I feel sometimes that this has helped me as I went about trying to start a career in music. Sometimes you just have to point yourself in the direction you think you have to go and set out. You can worry about getting lost later."

Sometimes you just have to point yourself in the direction you think you have to go and set out. You can worry about getting lost later. *- Josh Ritter*

Ritter couldn't be happier. He now splits his time between Moscow, the East Coast, and Ireland. And he considers himself to be greatly successful. "I've always considered the ultimate prize a musician can attain is the ability to devote their life to playing music, and to be able to have a lifestyle that can sustain long periods of sitting and thinking and writing," Ritter tells me. "All the other stuff–awards, supposed big record deals, all of that, it doesn't mean anything if it distracts you from why you began playing music in the first place. I'm so happy these days. I can get up in the morning and write and then go on a run and have lunch and settle back down to writing again. I love it. When I go on the road to perform I get to go all over the world and meet all kinds of people who come to see my shows. Things can get bigger in scale but they can't get better. This is tops. I'm making a real living out of the love I have for writing songs. I'm a pretty lucky guy."

Ryan Peck lives in Boise.

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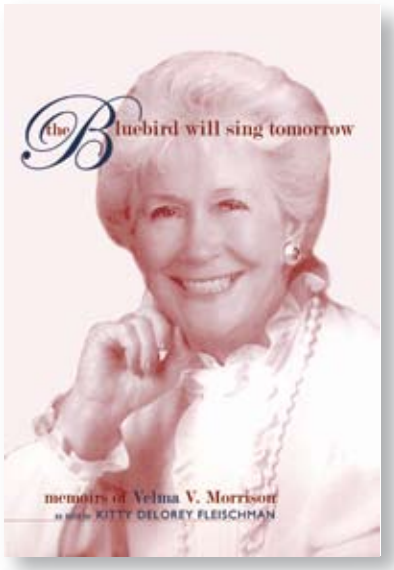

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Bonnie and Clyde

Story text and photographs by Kathy Laline Morris

It was early July when Bonnie and Clyde came strolling into our camp one evening. The local sheriff was just finishing his paperwork on the vehicle identification number of our camper, which we needed recorded for insurance purposes.

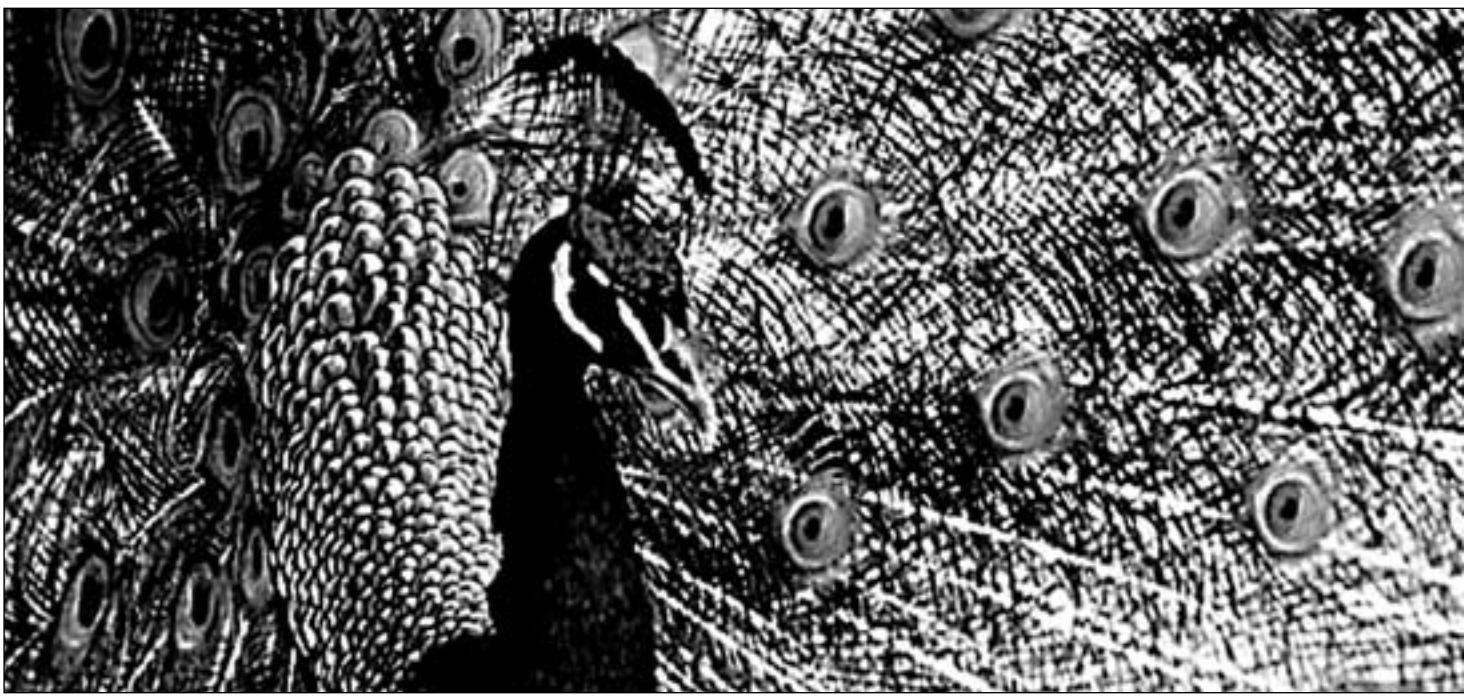
I was the first to see them, and all I could do was stare in an opened mouth, dumbstruck fashion.

I touched the sheriff on the arm and quietly said, "Turn around slowly. I want you to be a witness that these two are in camp. No one is going to believe this!"

Our blue heeler cow dogs didn't make a ruckus. We had already restrained them so they wouldn't bite the sheriff, and Daisy, our Siamese cat, switched her tail while she crouched by the camper door, taking it all in with her blue eyes wide and wondering.

We were in the first of our three cow camps–the spot known as Grouse Creek Camp, or The Corrals. We always back our sixteen-foot camper into a cozy bend of the Little Weiser River, situated so the creek bubbles down towards the camper door, then takes a sharp turn and runs behind us. We've a huge cotton-

Peafowl like to strut their stuff, and Bonnie and Clyde were of that species, an example of which is shown below.



wood tree at the back and one side of the camper. The other side has a small grassy area abruptly ended by a mass of hawthorn trees. A few steps from the camper door there's a tiny, sandy shoreline, also bordered by the inevitable thorn trees. We're about a hundred yards off the gravel road, and the camper sits in a kind of hole, just barely visible from the road, giving us plenty of seclusion and privacy.

Looking back, I see why Bonnie and Clyde chose our camp: it is an ideal setting.

My husband, Jack, and the sheriff both reacted in the same manner as myself upon first seeing our visitors.

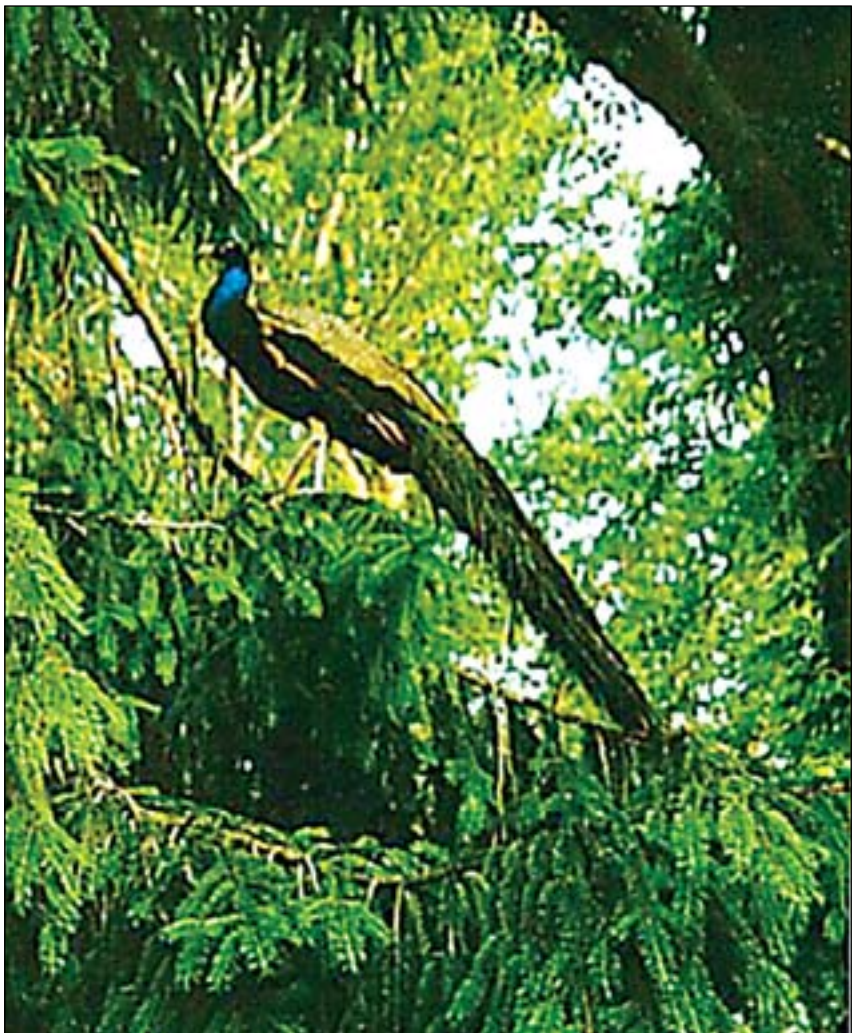
"Now how in the world do you suppose these two got here?" Jack whispered. "Surely they didn't walk the eight miles up creek from town. Maybe someone dumped them out somewhere on the road and we're just the first people they've come across."

Our speculations were many and varied. Bonnie and Clyde didn't seem the least bit frightened–just wary, and definitely on their guard.

In the next few days Jack and I realized our visitors considered themselves permanent campers. We found we had to change our lifestyle somewhat to accommodate them–they simply would not compromise. If the dogs got too feisty Bonnie would throw a tantrum, and we learned Clyde could be sullen for hours. We did our best, however, wanting to be openhearted. We usually had corn chips or potato chips in camp, but we discovered popcorn was their favorite snack when we popped some around the campfire one night. The more we popped, the more they ate.

When it came time for Jack and me to move our cow camp to Big Creek on the Middle Fork of the Little Weiser, we decided it would be a good idea to take Bonnie and Clyde with us, mainly for their own protection. The two camps are twenty miles apart and we worried that Bonnie and Clyde might get into trouble if we left them alone. But they both made it quite clear they had no intention of moving camp. We were forced to leave them. A month or so later we moved camp again to the top of West Mountain where we stayed until the snow started to fly, around the middle of October.

As well as taking care of the range and the cattle, our riding job for the Indian Mountain Cattle Association also required cooperation with other "multiple-use" people on the national forest. In our case, for the most part, that meant the loggers. At Grouse Creek Camp, Bonnie and Clyde brought



Although Clyde was said to have eaten popcorn off the bar at the Ace Saloon, he was never known to have been up a tree, such as this peacock.

us all together in a unique way.

We knew all the weeks we'd be away from Grouse Creek the loggers would be keeping an eye on our friends. Some of the truck drivers promised to drop groceries at the camp when we were too far away to do so.

It wasn't long before Bonnie and Clyde made a few friends and became the talk of the mountain and the town. People hearing the story had a hard time believing they had simply taken up residence in our camp. To make their presence even more far-fetched, they managed to keep themselves hidden from all but a few select people. The legend of their existence grew, however, and as fall and hunting season approached–with so many people pouring into the mountains–we wondered if they would keep out of the general public's sight.

It wasn't long before Bonnie and Clyde made a few friends and became the talk of the mountain and the town. People hearing the story had a hard time believing they had simply taken up residence in our camp.

While we were still camped on top of West Mountain, I talked to one of Bonnie's logger friends. He said he hadn't seen her for several days, although he'd spotted Clyde several times that week. We were all worried because we knew Bonnie would never willingly leave Clyde.

We moved back to Grouse Creek Camp for the end of our fall riding and still no one had seen Bonnie. Clyde acted as though he was delighted to have us camping with him again (the atmosphere was as though we'd moved into his camp) but it was apparent he was worried about Bonnie.

I was doing a little re-riding up Grouse Creek one afternoon and I

happened on her–that is, I found her remains. It was obvious she'd been murdered, but I didn't want to report her death to the authorities. Her body was almost impossible to identify and I was pretty sure nothing would be done anyway–Bonnie being Bonnie.

The weather was turning cold and we were sure getting our share of snow at Grouse Creek Camp. It was around the beginning of November, and we had the cattle gathered for another year. Jack and I were anxious to move home for the winter. Our home was more than thirty miles from camp and with the logging all but shutting down for the winter, we were in a dilemma as to what to do about Clyde. We'd discussed taking him home with us, but we were positive he wouldn't be happy. Besides, as far as moving was concerned, Clyde's attitude hadn't changed one bit. He wasn't going to budge. So Jack and I went through the whole process once again of trying to convince him it was time to move. No luck. He was determined more than ever to stay at Grouse Creek Camp. Perhaps he just couldn't accept Bonnie's death and thought if he stayed there she would eventually return. Who knows? The only thing that was definite was that Clyde wouldn't obligingly come with us.

After hours of discussion and nothing but negative input from Clyde, we finally packed camp for the last time that year and headed for South Crane Creek, our home. We promised Clyde we'd bring him groceries as long as the snow didn't get too deep to drive up to the mountain camp. We knew there was no way to capture his attention and change his mind, but we really didn't believe he'd make it through the winter. We left him with a lot of food and told him he'd have to find shelter as best he could. As I wondered if we were saying our last goodbyes, I cried.

During the next six weeks we talked with the few remaining loggers from time to time, and we were always a little amazed and certainly delighted when someone had seen Clyde and reported he appeared to be fine. Everyone knew that without Bonnie he had become a real recluse. His lone existence on the mountain became a grand legend. Not just anyone could drive up the river and see him but several people (all loggers) tried to coax him into coming off the mountain with them–to no avail.

A couple of days before Christmas, Jack and I decided to drive up to Grouse Creek Camp and check on Clyde. We knew if he were around he would come out of hiding for us. We took his favorite food as a sort of Christmas present. There was a lot of snow, but a couple of drivers were bringing out the last of the logs so the snow-packed road was at least passable. When we finally got to camp we wondered how poor Clyde could possibly still be alive. The snow was over two feet deep around the corrals. Jack was the first to see our cold friend huddled under the loading chute. The snow had drifted up around the sides of the chute, trapping Clyde. He was snowed in!

My husband was excited about catching Clyde in such a vulnerable position and the noise Jack made in getting my attention scared the wits out of our friend. Clyde tried to fly the coop, but Jack was too fast (and Clyde was too cold). Jack caught him by one leg, and then the other . . . he had him. This time Clyde was com-

A peafowl and its plumage.

ing home with us.

We thought he might put up quite a protest in the pickup driving home, but as he started warming up and thawing out, relaxation and drowsiness got the better of him. By the time we got to the Indian Valley (country) Store, Clyde was sound asleep.

The round oak table by the wood stove in the back of the store was laden with coffee mugs, soda and beer cans, and snacks. The celebration of Christmas was well underway when two log drivers stopped off to wish anyone who happened to be around, good cheer. We were thrilled to tell everyone about Clyde.

One of the loggers asked, "Is he going home with you?"

"I guess so," I said, "But I'm afraid he'll be lonesome at our place."

"Weelll, I know my wife would just love to have him at our place for Christmas," he said.

"Really?" I said. "Are you sure she wouldn't mind? I wouldn't want to impose on her." I could hardly believe my ears. I knew that once Clyde was ensconced at the logger's house, he'd have a good home.

"Oh, she'll think he's a great guy. In fact, we'd better take off right now. He might not like sitting out in a cold truck," he said. "Merry Christmas!"

Bright and early the next morning, we got a telephone call from John, a friend of ours living in a town north of us.

"Good morning!" Jack sang out after the second ring.

"Jack!" John bawled. "Did some S.O.B. steal your peacock?"

"No," Jack answered, but before he could say anything more John continued.

"Well, I went for coffee first thing this morning, and everyone was talking about the fact that last night in the Ace Saloon there was a peacock sitting on a bar stool eating popcorn off the bar. The guy who'd brought him into the Ace swore he was Clyde–the peacock from Grouse Creek Camp that no one can catch!"

Jack and I never did find out where the young pair of birds came from. Never having been around peafowl we certainly were in for a lot of surprises that season.

Bonnie had been shot (intentionally or not, I don't know) during grouse hunting season.

Clyde was actually a Christmas present for the logger's wife. She had always wanted to raise peafowl but she had only one lone hen. We were so happy to find a home for Clyde since our lifestyle was anything but conducive for raising domestic birds.

One of the funniest (and most thoroughly frustrating) things Clyde ever did was to stand in the middle of an open gate with his tail in full fanned display just as we were about to put some extremely wild fall calves through the gate. When Clyde struck his pose, those calves turned inside out and ran right back over the top of us. Although it's not unheard of for someone's dog to be in the gate at the wrong time, it was a "first" to have a peacock spooking the cattle.

Besides popcorn, both birds loved cat food. That taste of theirs made it easy for the loggers and us to leave as much as fifty-pound sacks at a time for them when they were alone at camp.

I will always maintain that peacocks don't walk.

They stroll.

Kathy Laline Morris lives in Indian Valley. To the best of her knowledge, Clyde really ate popcorn off the Ace Saloon bar.

When we finally got to camp we wondered how poor Clyde could possibly still be alive. The snow was over two feet deep around the corrals. Jack was the first to see our cold friend huddled under the loading chute. The snow had drifted up around the sides of the chute, trapping Clyde. He was snowed in!

THE BROTHERS KILLEBREW

Brothers Harmon (left) and Bob Killebrew at Payette, circa 1940.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE KILLEBREW FAMILY

Bob, Harmon & the Family Tree

By Diane Killebrew Holt

You could understate it by saying that I'm from a long line of athletes. In fact, like a choice fastball lashed on an upward trajectory toward the centerfield fence, the Killebrew family sports history goes deep … way, way back …

Before my uncle, Harmon Clayton Killebrew Jr., became a baseball legend and member of the National Baseball Hall of Fame, there was my great-grandfather, Culver Killebrew, a Civil War-era wrestling champ. Then there was my grandfather, Harmon Clayton Killebrew Sr., professional football star. And, there's also my father, Robert Culver Killebrew, who was a Snake River regional football and boxing champion.

To start at the beginning, my great-grandfather Culver was a physically large man, strong of body, character and well known for his sense of humor.

It was a fact that he could stand flat-footed and jump over a horse. Born April 15, 1839, in Glasgow, Illinois, during his school years he excelled in wrestling, throwing, and jumping. At the age of 26 he joined Company I, 148th Illinois Infantry Volunteers and served during the Civil War. He was reputed to be the strongest man in his unit and he was wrestling champion of the Union army. After his active duty he applied for a pension on the grounds that he had been partially disabled from mumps and bronchitis while in the service. Word soon came that an investigator was coming to check Culver's physical condition. So, prior to the investigator's visit, Culver took a bath in the middle of winter in a nearby creek to make sure that he'd have a bad cough. The investigators' report read: "His reputation for telling the truth in the community is good, but he is addicted to intemperance." Culver received his pension.

Culver settled in Calhoun County, in Farmers Ridge, just outside of Nebo, Illinois. He cleared the land by day and slept by a roaring fire from the trees he had chopped down. When he was finished clearing the land, he built himself a twenty-two-room mansion that still stands today. Culver was considered a wealthy man in his community and a shrewd business dealer. He farmed and was also a trader, buying and selling cattle and horses.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE KILLEBREW FAMILY

ABOVE: *From left to right, Culver Killebrew, with sons Thomas Killebrew and Harmon Clayton Killebrew Sr. (front), and Culver's third wife (he outlived the first two), Francis Alice Weaver Killebrew, in the 1890s, in Nebo, Illinois.*

BELOW RIGHT: *A high school graduation picture of Harmon Clayton Killebrew Sr. in Nebo, Illinois, circa 1911.*

Two thieves once waylaid him while he was returning from Calhoun County after he had sold some cattle in St. Louis, and attempted to rob him. Instead, he single-handedly beat the tar out of them!

There is a story about the time Culver wrapped five hundred dollars in a calico cloth and placed it in a trunk only to forget about it. Years later, his son Douglas discovered the money and gave it to him. Culver said, while unwrapping the money, he didn't remember the money, but recognized the calico cloth. Another family legend tells about Culver burying a pot of gold on his property and forgetting where he buried it. Numerous people have tried to find the gold through the years but none have been successful.

He outlived his first two wives. His third wife, Francis Alice Weaver, was the local schoolmarm. "Marry me and you'll never have to work another day in your life!" he promised her. They had two sons. My grandfather, Harmon Clayton Killebrew, Sr., known as "Clay," was the youngest of Culver's nine children. Culver was 64 years old when my grandfather was born on October 12, 1893.

Clay attended Jacksonville High School not far from Farmers Ridge, where he participated in all sports and set several track and field records that stood unbroken for many years. During his high school and college years he lettered in track and football.

Grandfather was an All-American fullback for James Millikin University in Decatur, Illinois, and West Virginia Wesleyan, where his team played Army, Navy, Notre Dame, and many others. As a fullback for his high school football team, he was named all-state in 1913.

During his sophomore year at West Virginia Wesleyan University he picked up all-conference honors for his fullback work on the conference championship team and received honorable mention on Walter Camp's All-American squad. After he graduated from college he played professional football for the Wheeling Steelers of West Virginia. It was during those years that he ran against famous football greats such as Wilber "Fats" Henry and the immortal Jim Thorpe. Thorpe complained that he couldn't keep up with Clay's running abilities on the football field, once telling him, "Killi, you are a good boy. You let Jim run." Clay returned with, "Let you run? Hell, it took me forty yards to catch you!" They both laughed. * (See sidebar, page 21).

Clay loved sports and his girlfriend, Katherine Pearl May. He eventually found time to marry Katie on his way home from a football game in St. Louis in 1917. Grandmother always said that, as a girl, she used to pass the Killebrew mansion on the way to visit her relatives, and she'd say, "I wouldn't mind living in the country if I could live there." She never dreamed that someday she would.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE KILLEBREW FAMILY

When Clay decided to move his family West, it wasn't just he and Katie and their children. The entire family, including Katie's grandmother, Elizabeth May, her parents, John and Sarah Emerellis "Rella" May, and her sister Anne, who was still single at the time, pooled their money and moved West. Grandpa May had come through Idaho on many hunting trips over the years, and he was captured by the state's beauty.

Katie's uncle, Robert Faris, lived on Harrison Boulevard in Boise. He was an engineer who sold equipment to a fledgling engineering and construction company called Morrison-Knudsen before becoming the director of the Bureau of Reclamation.

Clay and Katie first moved to Portland, Oregon, in 1920. It was there that he enjoyed wrestling for the Amateur Multnomah Wrestlers League. He competed up and down the West Coast. The high point of his wrestling career was his match with Ted Thy for the Pacific Coast Championship belt.

Four years later the family settled in Payette. It didn't take the townspeople long to get acquainted with Clay and find out about his athletic abilities, nor to learn about John May and his practical jokes. On one occasion, John took a pot of soil to a woman at the courthouse, and told her it was an exotic plant, and to keep watering it faithfully. He gave her a complicated set of instructions for caring for the plant. When it finally sprouted, she laughed to realize he'd given her a dandelion.

Besides being known for his athletic ability, Clay also was the sheriff in Payette.

The Payette townspeople used to come to the Victorian-style Killebrew house on North 7th Street and take him to compete with the circus boxers. Clay always won the matches and he had a standing offer to box for the circus. His love of sports and activities never waned. Even in his old age, he often volunteered as a field judge or a starter.

His first love was sports but he was a scholar and a philosopher as well. He always looked at life from the standpoint of a philosopher. He was a firm believer that, "the best things in life are free."

As a young man Clay Killebrew had read the works of Homer, Socrates, Plato, and Cicero. He spent hours reviewing the theories of Spengler and accomplishments of the great European authors. His love of sports would develop into a physical and mental philosophy that was passed down to his children: Gene, Eula, Bob, and Harmon. My dad,

To start at the beginning, my great-grandfather Culver was a physically large man, strong of body, character and well known for his sense of humor. It was a fact that he could stand flat-footed and jump over a horse.

Robert "Bob" Culver Killebrew was born in Payette on a hot summer night in 1933 to Harmon Sr. and Katherine Killebrew. Not only was Dad born on Center Avenue, but his life was centered in Payette. He also graduated from high school and was married by the Justice of the Peace Celia Settle, all within three blocks of his birthplace.

In 1936 my uncle, Harmon Clayton Killebrew Jr., joined the family. Having a kid brother wasn't an easy adjustment for Dad, who has always loved to build things. At the age of three he was constructing with his building blocks when his baby brother "Harm" crawled by and knocked down his work. Frustrated, Bob asked his mother, "Are we going to keep this kid all winter?" Dad has always been able to stand up for himself.

In first grade his mother sent him off for his first day of school only to see him return a short time later. His mother asked what he was doing home so early. He replied, "The teacher said there were too many Bobs in the room, so I decided to come home!"

Those other Bobs became lifetime friends that shared in his boyhood adventures. Dad and Uncle Harmon enjoyed their life growing up in Idaho. They had the best of both worlds–city and country. They had their Uncle Charlie and Aunt Anne Grace. At their farm they enjoyed fishing and riding horses in the summer and ice-skating and sledding in the winter and playing ball in the spring and autumn. There were always garden fresh vegetables, fresh milk, and home-churned butter on homemade bread for good eating. Every day brought a new adventure of hunting or building rafts and rafting the mighty Snake or Payette rivers. In town, all of the Killebrew children, Gene, Bob, Harmon and Eula, took tap dancing and piano lessons. At age

A neighbor was strolling down the sidewalk in front of their home one day as the Killebrews were playing ball and said, "Looks like your sons are wearing out your lawn, Mr. Killebrew!" To which Grandfather replied, "We're raising boys here, not flowers and grass!"

five, Dad appeared on stage tap dancing with a midget in a duet.

When Dad was seven his father taught him a lesson he would never forget. One afternoon, Clay put boxing gloves on Bob and told him to get down on his knees and protect himself. Granddad tapped him lightly and each time he fell backwards until Dad finally lost his temper and stood up swinging at his father. His father stopped him and said, "Look at yourself. You have lost control of the battle. You are not planning strategy but rather just wanting to get back at your opponent. You have forgotten what you were trying to accomplish. That will apply throughout your entire life. Never lose sight of your objective."

Grandfather was ever the strong influence in his sons' lives when it came to sports. He used to race Bob and Harmon home from the movies and instruct them on wrestling, boxing, baseball, and football in their front yard. A neighbor was strolling down the sidewalk in front of their home one day as the Killebrews were playing ball and said, "Looks like your sons are wearing out your lawn, Mr. Killebrew!" To which Grandfather replied, "We're raising boys here, not flowers and grass!"

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE KILLEBREW FAMILY

ABOVE: *Bob Killebrew (left) and Harmon "Harm" Killebrew (right) with their dad, Harmon Clayton "Clay" Killebrew at their North 7th Street home in Payette, circa 1940.*

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE KILLEBREW FAMILY

BELOW LEFT: *Bob (right) and Harmon Killebrew as football stars at Payette High School in the fall of 1950. Harmon (number 28) was a freshman and Bob was a senior.*

Dad lettered in football, basketball, track, baseball, and boxing. As a senior at Payette High School, Dad received the Snake River Valley All-Conference Halfback of the Year award and the Snake River and Western Idaho Boxing Champ awards. He also received a football scholarship from the College of Idaho, now known as Albertson College of Idaho.

Dad graduated from Payette High School in the spring of 1951. That fall he played football for the C of I. The next year he headed to San Jose State for one year. Bob was drafted in 1953 and spent eighteen months in Korea.

This was a turning point for Bob. Upon his return from Korea he attended the C of I for another year. This time he met my mother, Georgia Rae Cheney–the love of his life. Bob wasn't as interested in college life as he had been, and he decided to talk with his brother Gene about the printing industry.

Harmon, who was only seventeen at the time, signed in 1954 to play major league baseball with the Washington Senators, where he played first, second and third base. When the team moved to Minnesota in 1961 and was renamed the Twins, he played first and third base and outfield. Second only to Babe Ruth for American League home runs with 573, Uncle Harmon was well-known as a power hitter, who led the American League outright in home runs four times, and was twice the co-leader. He was named the AL's Most Valuable Player

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE KILLEBREW FAMILY

ABOVE: *Harmon Killebrew (left) and his brother Bob Killebrew in recent years at a benefit for the Children's Baseball Fair in Japan.*

BELOW: *The slugger and his brother: Payette natives Harmon "Killer" Killebrew and brother Bob Killebrew beside the former's National Baseball Hall of Fame plaque at Cooperstown, New York.*

in 1969, after finishing the season with a league-leading 49 home runs and 140 runs batted in for the Twins. He concluded his career in 1975 as a designated hitter and first baseman for the Kansas City Royals. Uncle Harmon received numerous awards over the years, capped by his induction into the National Baseball Hall of Fame in 1984–one of his proudest moments.

Bob's brother Gene had a degree in journalism, and was part owner and editor of the *Payette Valley Sentinel*, in New Plymouth. He encouraged Dad to attend the Vo-tech Printing School in Spokane. Bob headed for the school in Spokane in the fall of 1956. He came back on his Christmas break and married my mother, Georgia, in Payette and she moved with him when he returned to Spokane to finish school. After completing school he worked for the newspapers in Clarkston, Washington, before returning to Idaho to work at the paper in Weiser. A job offer with Caxton Printers, Ltd. settled him in Caldwell where he worked for most of his career. There he and Mom raised their three daughters: my sisters Cheryl and Karen, and me.

Bob retired from Caxton after twenty-six years and since has enjoyed golf and travel with his wife and family. He has been fortunate over the last ten years to travel with Harmon to Japan to attend the Children's Baseball Fair, where children from all over the world come to attend baseball camp. They also went to Germany where they did autograph signings at one U.S. Air Force base, and two Air Force bases in England. Dad has traveled to Cooperstown to the Baseball Hall of Fame exhibits and met baseball greats such as Yogi Berra, Hank Aaron, Rollie Fingers, Ted Williams, and Bob Feller. Uncle Harmon has hosted eight celebrity golf tournaments, raising money for hospice care, and Dad has attended several of the golf tournaments in Arizona. He has had the opportunity to be a part of this worthy cause and he enjoys the company of his brother. He also has enjoyed meeting many other sports and entertainment celebrities such as Alice Cooper, Charlie Pride, Bob Uecker, and Leslie Nielsen.

Like all families we have had our hours of glory and we've felt the agony of defeat. Through it all we have stayed strong, loved, laughed together and supported each other when it was too tough to stand alone. I'm proud of my Killebrew heritage and I'm proud to live in Idaho.

Diane Killebrew Holt lives in Eagle.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE KILLEBREW FAMILY

*** Jim Thorpe** was named an All-American football player in 1911 and 1912. A member of the Sac and Fox Indian tribes, he attended Carlisle Indian Institute in Pennsylvania. In 1912 he led Carlisle to the national collegiate championship in football, personally scoring 25 touchdowns and 198 points. He was often described as a "one-man track team," winning gold in both the pentathlon and the decathlon at the 1912 Olympics. In addition, he played six years of professional baseball, leading the Canton Bulldogs to championships in 1917, 1918, and 1919. Thorpe later became the first president of the association that evolved into the National Football League. He was named "Athlete of the 20th Century" by an ABC poll. – *Kitty Fleischman*

Frustrated, Bob asked his mother, "Are we going to keep this kid [Harmon] all winter?" Dad has always been able to stand up for himself.

Serpent Time in Shoup

By Merle Kearsley

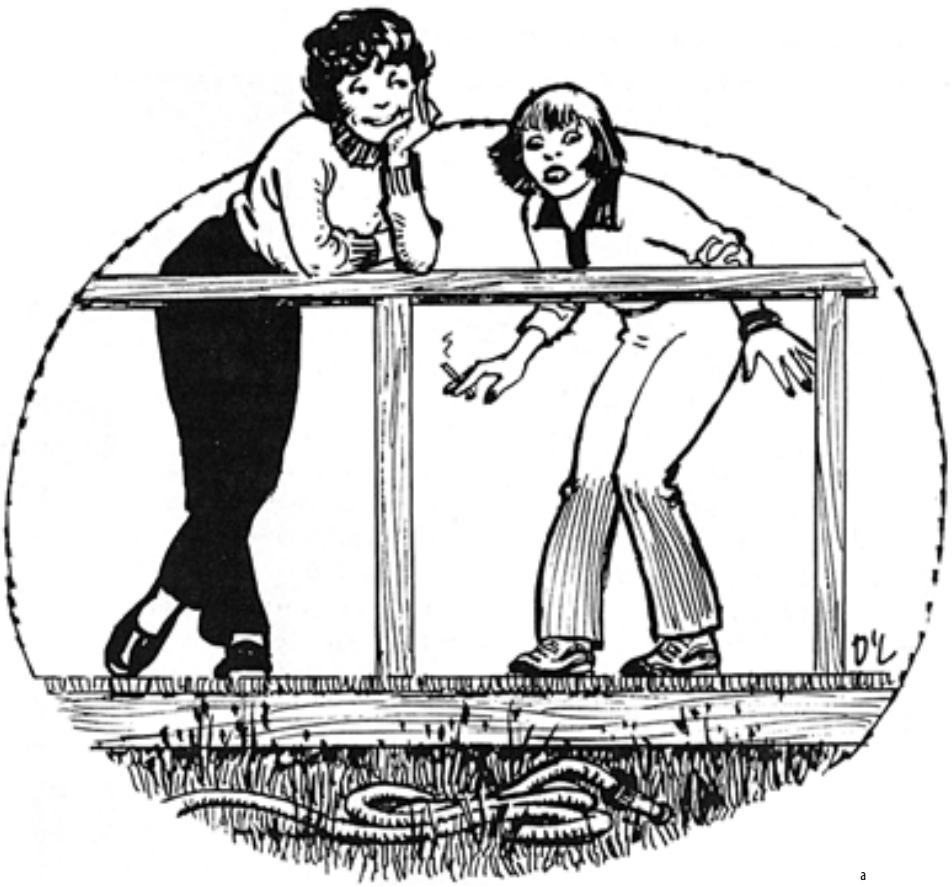
I'm not afraid of snakes, so when I discovered Snavely, a green garden snake living under the rock patio, I didn't tell my husband Ev. He hated snakes with a passion and could almost walk on air to keep from stepping on one of them.

When we were first married, Ev took me on a camping trip to the mountains. After we'd pitched our tent, he warned me in no uncertain terms to watch out for rattlesnakes. "What do they look like?" I asked.

As he was putting his fishing pole together he said, "If I see one, I'll kill it and bring it back. Then you'll know what to look out for."

He returned a couple of hours later carrying a forked stick, on which was a gob of what looked like raw hamburger. To kill the rattlesnake he'd beaten it to a pulp and there was no way it could be identified. I never did meet a snake on the trail as I dragged a stick to make a noise and let the snakes get out of my way.

Polly, Ev's sister, was even more afraid of snakes than her brother. Actually his whole family was terrified by snakes. When we had company I made a point of making noise when we went outdoors, and Snavely would slither into his rock cave before anyone could spot him. After people left, and it was quiet, Snavely would come of his hole and sun himself, much to my amusement.



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Although I was adept at keeping Snavely away from humans, when Polly came for an extended visit during the 1960s, it was not an easy trick to keep her separated from Snavely. Meanwhile Ev had discovered my pet and had reluctantly agreed to let him live as long as he stayed out of his way. He also didn't warn Polly. It wasn't easy, but I managed to keep her unaware of Snavely. She'd asked if there were any snakes at Shoup, but I lied and told her I hadn't seen one.

I don't smoke, and I don't allow anyone to smoke in my house. I don't own an ashtray and Polly is a two-pack-a-day smoker. She was constantly going outside to satisfy her habit, which kept me on guard. If she saw that snake, I was sure she'd either faint or become hysterical and I wasn't sure I could cope with either.

> . . . my husband Ev. He hated snakes with a passion and could almost walk on air to keep from stepping on one of them.

Then it happened. Just before going to bed Polly stepped outside for one last cigarette. A full moon lit the yard. As she leaned over the banister to rest on her arms, she saw an "it" and raced back into the house. "There's a snake on the lawn!" she screamed.

I went outside to take a look but didn't see anything threatening.

Pointing to what looked like a coiled snake, she said, "There! See it."

"I don't think it's anything," I told her.

"It is too! I saw it move!"

"It can't get in the house, so come on inside," I said, taking her by the arm. "If it is a snake, it'll be gone by morning."

Polly spent a sleepless night. I think she thought that a snake could come in under the crack below the door. Morning brought the urge for a cigarette, which meant she must go outside and possibly face a serpent.

"It's all right," I told her. "Come on, I'll go out with you."

Rattling the door, I opened it and stepped out onto the patio. "Nothing out here," I said looking around. Polly followed.

Walking to the railing, I peered over the banister, looking for Polly's snake. I saw nothing but a coiled up garden hose.

Idaho Falls resident Merle Kearsley is a former Shoup postmaster.

North Idaho Prodigy

Ten-year-old stirs the art world

Story text and photographs by Cecil Hicks

North Idaho ten-year-old Akiane Kramarik has an amazing natural gift and self-taught talent for painting, and that assessment goes far beyond the usual oohs and ahhs of proud parents and grandparents. She's definitely not your typical pre-teen. She has been featured on the Oprah Winfrey television show. In addition to painting pictures that have sold for tens of thousands of dollars, she writes poetry and speaks three languages at home: her mother's native Lithuanian, English, and Russian.

Born July 9, 1994, in Mount Morris, Illinois, Akiane (pronounced ah-kee-ah-nah) became interested in art at about the age of four and began pencil sketching. By six she was painting in pastels, but soon she was asking her parents for larger canvases and oil and acrylic sets. At first she mostly drew pic-

RIGHT: *Ten-year-old artist Akiane Kramarik in the eye of the larger-than-life self-portrait she painted at age eight. The painting sold for $25,000.*

OPPOSITE: *Akiane painted "The Journey," depicting her professed dream journey through space at age four.*

tures of family members and pets, but her interests eventually moved to her favorite subject–portrait faces. Akiane, who moved with her family from Colorado to Sandpoint three years ago then to Kootenai County a year ago, also paints animals and landscapes.

At seven years of age, Akiane completed her first large painting, entitled, "Again I See The Winter." By the time Akiane was eight, she had completed a large self-portrait that sold for $25,000. Before long, her ability to portray ordinary people with such deep emotion and sensitivity was causing a stir in the art world, where she was being widely recognized for her astonishingly rare talent.

Today, Akiane's original paintings sell for anywhere from $5,000 up to as much as the $150,000 that one work brought at a charity auction. Original prices typically range from $30,000 to $50,000. Her prints on canvas sell from $99 to $3,000. A substantial portion of Akiane's income

Akiane says that at age four, she had a life-changing spiritual transformation in a dream journey through space. She later completed a painting entitled "The Journey" about the professed enlightening experience.

ABOVE: *Prodigy artist Akiane Kramarik practices her sign language skills on a poem she wrote for her painting (pictured) entitled "Freedom Horse."*

OPPOSITE: *One of Akiane's paintings, entitled, "Father Forgive Them."*

from art sales goes to select charities to help people, especially children. She also donates some of her prints to charity auction fundraisers.

Akiane is rather modest about all the attention her talent has drawn. She credits as God-given her special artistic gift. She states, "I have been blessed by God. And if I'm blessed, there is one reason and one reason only, and that is to help others." Akiane says that at age four, she had a life-changing spiritual transformation in a dream journey through space. She later completed a painting entitled "The Journey" about the professed enlightening experience. Her family has since converted to Christianity. Akiane says that many of her other paintings were also inspired through visions, images, and dreams that were later transposed to canvas in vivid, colorful detail.

At age nine, Akiane appeared on a special "Oprah" television show highlighting prodigies that are some of the most talented kids in the world.

She has also been featured on the Lou Dobbs and Wayne Brady shows, plus television stations out of Spokane, Washington, and Omaha, Nebraska. Stories about Akiane and her special talent have been written

up in regional newspapers. She has also received news media coverage in some national magazines.

For some of her paintings she uses models, her own imagination, nature, or inspiration from magazine pictures.

Besides holding art shows in the Northwest, Akiane exhibited her paintings last September at a three-day art show at the Museum of Religious Art in Logan, Iowa. According to Akiane's mother, Foreli Kramarik, they sold all of Akiane's prints that were taken to the Iowa showing.

While Akiane is a very friendly and outgoing person who enjoys talking to people, both she and her mother were astounded at the phenomenal outpouring of attention she received in Iowa. For three extremely busy days, Akiane greeted several thousand art museum visitors.

She answered questions about her art, explained the story behind her paintings, signed autographs, had pictures taken with people, conducted news media interviews, appeared on a local television show in Omaha, and read poetry.

She has a book entitled "Akiane–Her Art, Her Poetry, Her Life" scheduled for publication soon. Her book will include a biography of her life, feature pictures of her paintings, and have more than three hundred poems. She usually writes poems to accompany her paintings.

After breakfast she heads to her own 15-by-15 foot art room for the next few hours to paint or write poetry. Usually by 9:30 a.m. she's ready to shift from painting to her home schooling assignments.

When her schoolwork is finished for the day, it's playtime, and what ten-year-old doesn't enjoy a session on the backyard family trampoline. Her hobby is learning to play the piano, on which she's received some instruction from her mother, but is mostly self-taught. Family activities include hikes and outings to the beaches at local lakes. And everybody in the family plays chess.

Akiane wants to share her love for art and poetry with others. She also plans to set up projects with money

When Akiane decided this year to learn sign language in order to communicate with hearing-impaired people, she started by reading six books on signing, plus reviewing a signing compact disc, and then she practiced. It took her just three months to reach . . . signing proficiency . . .

Akiane is a fifth grade student being home-schooled by her parents, Foreli and Mark, so she has enough time to paint. She has three brothers, ages 13, 11, and 3.

Akiane is an early riser, usually getting up at 5 a.m. for breakfast before her father, Mark, departs for work as the dietician manager of a Coeur d'Alene area hospital.

earned from her unique talent to help homeless and needy people worldwide. She has a special place in her heart for the people of Lithuania (her mother's home country)–especially the children.

When Akiane decided this year to learn sign language in order to communicate with hearing-impaired people, she started by reading six books on signing, plus reviewing a signing compact disc, and then she practiced. It took her just three months to reach a signing proficiency level good enough that she now attends local hearing impaired group meetings to brush

"When I start a new painting, I have a general idea of what it will be, but I never really know how it will look until it's completely finished," she explains. For example, her deer painting entitled "Antlers" started out only having a couple of deer in the scene, but when the painting was finally finished, it had more than twenty-four deer in it.

Her paintings will be on permanent display at the Museum of Religious Art, Logan, Iowa, and internationally through The International Museum of 21st Century Art and Cultural Center, and at Art Without Borders, Laguna Beach, California.

Akiane made a guest appearance at the Crystal Cathedral in Los Angeles, California, in mid-December 2004, and her paintings were earlier scheduled for showings on the eastern seaboard this spring.

For the future, Akiane plans to continue painting, writing poetry, holding art shows around the country, and making guest appearances on television shows. After her book is published, then there's a possibility of combining a book promotional tour with her art shows–which might include a world tour.

Cecil Hicks lives in Sandpoint.

A large smile lights up her face when she talks about the subject of one of her recently finished paintings–a scene with grizzly bears fishing in a river amidst rapids and small waterfalls.

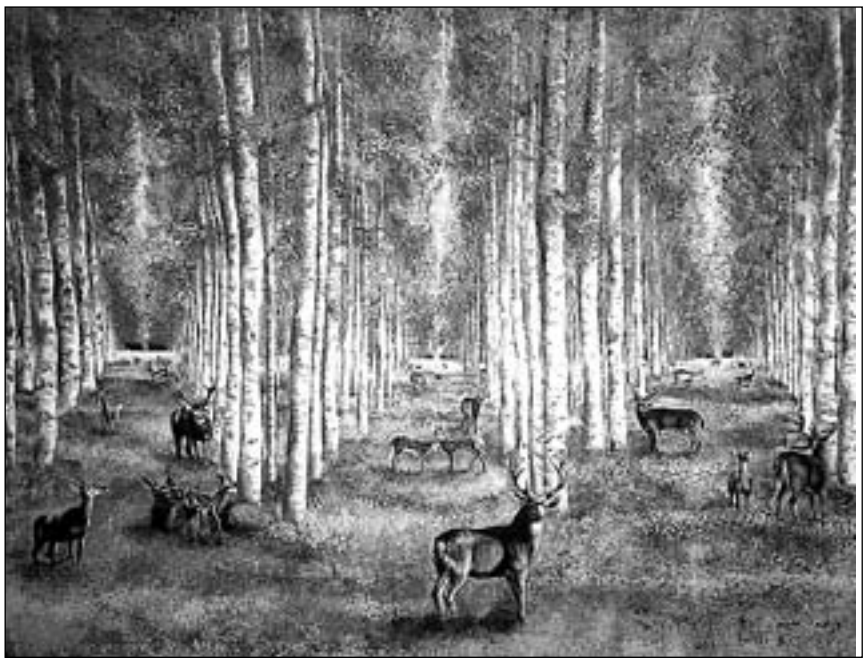
up on her newly-acquired signing skills and make new friends. She hopes to some day make available a DVD of her signing her poetry and describing her artwork.

A large smile lights up her face when she talks about the subject of one of her recently finished paintings–a scene with grizzly bears fishing in a river amidst rapids and small waterfalls. She said the grizzly bears in her painting represent different human traits as they are related to one's faith with God. These include acceptance, rejection (running away), fighting, anger, and selfishness.

She usually starts a painting by sketching the background, then, "I work on the eyes, face and finally the body." Her paintings will take her anywhere from fifteen to two hundred hours to complete.

ABOVE: *In another of her paintings, Akiane correlates the nature of grizzly bears with some human traits.*

BELOW: *"Antlers" was also a nature-inspired painting of Akiane Kramarik.*



A Pleasant Trip Through Nanie's Garden

Story text and photographs by Penny A. Zeller

My grandmother's flower garden today holds as much enchantment as it did twenty years ago when I was a young girl growing up wild and free in rural Idaho. As I walk through the slim and narrow path that leads to a bench on the right, or birdhouses on the left, I feel like I am in a different world. I travel away from the business of the 21st Century, away from the "to do lists" and the demands of being a wife, mother, and writer.

Nanie is my grandmother and has been a gardener for as long as I can remember. Her name is Ruth Brown and she lives in Gooding. To this day, she sends me home, which is 650 miles away, with several coffee cans full of "starter" trees for me to plant in my own "beginner" yard. She is one of the few people I know who gets as excited as I do when the first buds of newly planted flower seeds show their faces to the world.

Nanie takes her gardening very seriously. She carefully grooms her various flowers and several species of trees and pulls the long hose along each day of the hot summer to water her "babies." To

Birdhouses in the garden of Ruth "Nanie" Brown, who lives in Gooding.

those not related to her, no one would know this active and fun-loving grandmother is 74 years of age.

I travel down the path in Nanie's garden and meander my way past a little scarecrow and an old bicycle. "My lady scarecrow is getting old. Did you notice her gray hair?" Nanie always asks me after my pleasant trip through the garden. Nanie tells me of how she found the old gray wig at a thrift shop. "I came home, washed it, and put it on my head. When Papa (my grandfather) came home, he about had a fit!" She laughs. I imagine Papa not being thrilled, at all, that his long-haired blond Swedish beauty has suddenly become a frizzy short gray-haired lady. The scarecrow smiles, as if she can read my thoughts. She seems pleasantly satisfied as she stands in her gingham dress and bonnet.

A bench to the left beckons that I relax and "sit a spell." Hidden by the large tree leaves, no one would be the wiser if I relaxed and took a snooze on the bench, which is a perfect reprieve from the 90-degree weather.

On the path I continue and pass a collection of some of Nanie's favorite things, tastefully placed in a miniature setting. A replica of a log home, a wood fence, and a wheelbarrow full of petunias dot the scenery. The area is perfectly manicured with wood chips and various planters. Three little signs catch my eye. The first is "plant seeds of happiness" and I laugh to myself. Nanie has planted many years of seeds in her garden and is a very happy person. The next little sign says "love." I feel a tear threaten to fall and I remember the days as a child of the 1980s. Those were the days of being a tomboy, being carefree, and biking wildly down dirt roads and crashing a few times, with skinned knees to prove it. Those were the days Nanie gave us "pretend Swedish names." I was always Agnes, and proud of the name and the heritage. All of her grandchildren would ride past Nanie's house when we used to be neighbors with hopes that she'd invite us in for a bowl of Rice Chex cereal, which she always did. Then she'd show us the latest additions to her garden and give us a vitamin bottle full of "hollyhocks" to take home to our mother.

The third sign says "home sweet home" and I thought of how true the words were for Nanie's house. She loves her home and she loves her yard. Most of all she loves her family–her husband, her five children, eleven grandchildren, and eleven great-grandchildren.

Three little signs catch my eye. The first is "plant seeds of happiness" and I laugh to myself. Nanie has planted many years of seeds in her garden and is a very happy person.

BELOW: *Lady scarecrow in Nanie's garden.*

OPPOSITE: *Signs in Nanie's garden.*

The birdhouses at the end of the path are my favorite. I recall the baby birds we rescued and raised to adulthood in our laundry room. Nanie has blended the birdhouses in with the rest of the fairytale setting. "I love the hummingbirds that stop for a visit," she tells me.

Days later, I travel hundreds of miles, returning home to my own yard. A home in a newer subdivision

in Sheridan, Wyoming, we don't have the mature trees and the lush vegetation that exist at Nanie's house. I carefully place the small "starter" trees she gave me in the ground and pray that the deer won't eat them. When the task is finished, I drag the hose over for a quick watering. I stand back and admire the little path of baby willows that will someday tower over me and form a haven like that of Nanie's garden. I glance at my oldest daughter who carefully waters her zinnias we planted last month. Her face is full of pride at the small sprouts that have made their way up through the soil.

Someday, I will be like Nanie and my grandchildren will wander through my garden and feel the enchantment I did two decades ago and continue to experience today whenever I visit Nanie's garden.

Gooding High School and College of Southern Idaho graduate Penny A. Zeller lived in the Magic Valley for nearly twenty years.

SHELLEY,

PHOTO COURTESY OF PIONEER PUBLICATIONS ©1950s

IDAHO

By Lynna Howard

"It's so quiet, and I can leave my car unlocked on the main street," said Erika, who works at Madrigal's Mexican Restaurant & Market on State Street, Shelley's main drag. I had asked her what she liked about Shelley and her reply echoed what I had heard from other residents. "What don't you like?" I persisted. "It's so, so quiet . . . " Erika trailed off. Yes, indeed. I sipped my cinnamon flavored coffee in a silence for which most people would pay good money.

There are times, though, that Shelley fairly vibrates with noise and commotion. When Shelley High School hosts a football game, you can hear the noise for a quarter mile. The roar wafts over the s-curve in the Snake River and startles ducks, beaver, and the occasional bald eagle. But the real hullabaloo, the one in September that encompasses the whole town and draws visitors from all over, is **Idaho Spud Day**.

LEFT: *Spud Days have always been about eating. Identified only as "Cover Girl," this 1950s Shelley resident is digging right in.*

"We are the Russets, mighty, mighty Russets!

And in case you wanted to know, yes we are a potato, and no we are not ashamed!" So say local athletic teams, who have won so many tournaments that they may have to build a bigger gym to display all the banners. And so says the town, where Russet Burbank potatoes are no joke, financially speaking. Basic American Foods, owner of the potato processing plant, is the largest employer in Shelley. A walk at sunset along the Nature Trail by the Snake River is the perfect setup for viewing the twin pillars of steam rising from the plant as they bloom coral, pink, and finally red in the sun's last rays. Hey, it's industrial art.

PHOTO COURTESY OF PIONEER PUBLICATIONS

PHOTO COURTESY OF PIONEER PUBLICATIONS

THE POTATO CELEBRATION

In 1927, the "Biggest Little Town in the State" hosted the first annual Idaho Spud Day. The Oregon Short Line Railroad Company offered discount fares for would-be celebrants. Agricultural experts, railroad barons, football fanatics, boxing fans, horse breeders, the American Legion Band, and onlookers from all over showed up to compete, laugh, dance, and, most importantly, eat ten thousand free baked potatoes. The celebration was

OPPOSITE: *National guard troops square off against a team of LDS missionaries in the Spud Tug, one of the many Idaho Spud Day events in Shelley.*

LEFT: *A determined team of LDS missionaries works to avoid the dreaded pit of mashed potatoes during the Spud Tug at Shelley.*

BELOW: *The Big Spud balloon float was purchased by the Shelley Chamber of Commerce in 1930. The float was entered in the American Legion Rodeo parade in Blackfoot and in the "Whoopee Days" parade in Rexburg before appearing in the Spud Day Parade in Shelley. No one seems to know what became of this float, which was used for many years before mysteriously disappearing. The truck pulling the float in this parade is a Ford, circa 1939.*

wildly successful. According to historian David Crowder, Albert Anderson and George Davis won spud-picking contests in their respective divisions. There was only one dark moment: Shelley was mashed by Firth by a score of 21-0 in the football game. No one in Shelley remembers that part.

With the exception of a break during World War II, Idaho Annual Spud Day has anchored Shelley's event calendar every year. The third Saturday in September (the 17th of that month in 2005) is now the date to remember. The Baked Potato Giveaway continues; there's the Dutch Oven Cookoff, spud-picking contests are held for all genders and all ages, bands play, politicians, and children parade, and the lovely Miss Russet presides. With butter, salt, and pepper, she seasons a pit full of mashed potatoes, more of a sludge really, which is delivered by cement mixer to the site of the Spud Tug. Miss Russet tastes the sludge before the rope pull begins–well, she claims to taste it, but I've seen the video. Nevertheless, local legend has it that a past Miss Russet did actually taste the goo. She survived.

One year an LDS Missionary team beat the brawny National Guardsmen in the Spud Tug, probably out of sheer terror of the pit. Dawn Lloyd, recreation director for the city, says that her husband won't let her back in the house if she ends up in the pit. She says it doesn't take long for the stench to get to be worse than ... well, she couldn't come up with an appropriate comparison. Cleanup crews used to donate the contents to happy pigs, but Dawn said that, "some environmentalists complained, so now it's disposed of."

"How do they dispose of it?" I asked.

"I don't want to know," she replied.

The World Championship Spud Picking Contest's slim claim to "World" status is based on ... nothing. "We have Mexicans, and some of the students from Rexburg might be international," I was told by staff working at *The Shelley Pioneer* newspaper. I see an opportunity for spud pickers from Peru, where Spanish explorers discovered the potato in 1537. Three-hundred years later, in 1837, Presbyterian missionary Henry Spalding planted the first crop of potatoes in part of what would become the state of Idaho (in 1890), near Lapwai. When members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints worked out an irrigation plan in Salt Lake City in 1847, potatoes

PHOTO COURTESY OF PIONEER PUBLICATIONS

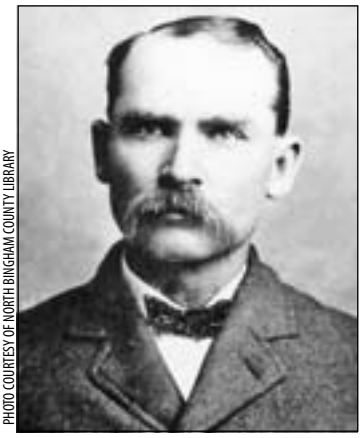


PHOTO COURTESY OF NORTH BINGHAM COUNTY LIBRARY

PHOTO COURTESY OF NORTH BINGHAM COUNTY LIBRARY

were their first crop. J.F. Shelley and his wife Theodocia Chipman Shelley moved to the Idaho Territory from the Mormon community of American Fork (not far from Salt Lake City) in 1885. In 1882, construction of the Oregon Short Line across the southern Idaho Territory provided rail service to Shelley and its environs. In 1889, French chemists devised a spray to fight potato beetles. Crops failed in other parts of the nation about the same time, leaving markets open for Idaho products. On July 3, 1890, Idaho became a state. For J.F. Shelley and his wife, the timing was impeccable.

Technically speaking, Theodocia Shelley is the co-founder of the town, though she is seldom mentioned in history books. Her husband had used his 160-acre homesteading allotment in Iona, east of Eagle Rock (now Idaho Falls). When the couple saw the potential for growth nine miles south of Eagle Rock, Theodocia filed on 160 acres. In 1892, the couple built a house, store, and barn. In the fall of that same year, they laid out the town site and began to sell lots. Records from *The Shelley Pioneer* newspaper show that the store and barn were on State Street, and the Shelley residence on Center Street. The town got its name more or less by accident. The Oregon Short Line railroaders named the non-existent stop "Shelley" to designate the drop-off point for lumber needed for J.F. Shelley's ambitious building plans.

There were a few other settlers in the area before the Shelley family arrived, and prior to settlers, trappers had scoured the area for beaver. The beaver trapping business failed in the 1840s when the animals were almost eradicated, and beaver hats grew less popular in Europe. Trappers shared the country with Indians, including the Shoshone and Bannock tribes. Covered wagons carrying pioneers to the promised lands of California and Oregon crossed tribal hunting grounds. The

ABOVE LEFT: *J.F. Shelley, co-founder of the town of Shelley, along with his wife Theodocia Chipman Shelley, circa 1892.*

ABOVE RIGHT: *Theodocia Chipman Shelley, wife of J.F. Shelley, and co-founder of the town of Shelley, circa 1892.*

RIGHT: *J.A. Taylor, the largest individual potato grower in Idaho in the early 1900s.*

PHOTO COURTESY OF PIONEER PUBLICATIONS

Potato Heartland

Shelley is located in Bingham County, which is still the largest potato-producing county in the United States, according to figures released by educator Bill Bohl at the University of Idaho's Bingham County extension offices, Blackfoot.

When J.F. and Theodocia Shelley laid out the Shelley town site in 1892, Maine was the nation's top potato producer. Idaho's "Famous Potatoes" took that title away from Maine long ago. And in 2003, Bingham County's potato harvest of nearly 19.6 million hundredweight (a single hundredweight represents one hundred pounds of spuds) eclipsed the state of Maine's potato production by almost 2.6 million hundredweight. Put another way, Bingham County's 2003 potato harvest from 60,300 acres yielded slightly less than two billion pounds of spuds. – *Lynna Howard*

PHOTO BY LYNNA HOWARD

Union Pacific Railroad brought even more newcomers, and incomprehensible changes disrupted Native American life. Nearby, Fort Hall Reservation was established in 1869. Hunger, starvation, mistakes, and miscommunication between Indians and white men had barely settled down when J.F. Shelley brought his family to Idaho.

Shelley and his fellow settlers blasted wells into the lava rock for drinking water, hauled wood over the frozen river in winter, and dug the first irrigation canals by hand. They opened the first channels from the Snake River that made farming feasible in the dry land. Theodocia Shelley died in 1908, but not before making quite an impression in the LDS Church and in the community. She kept all the mail in her wardrobe until a better spot was found for a post office. In 1894, "Sister Theodocia C. Shelley" was named president of the first Relief Society. She is a shadowy figure in the background of history written mostly by men, but we catch glimpses of her here and there. She was "instrumental in the circulation of a petition for getting a bridge across the Snake River" according to town history recorded by an anonymous author. Betty Huntsman, present-day stake historian for Shelley Stake, said of such women, "We do a lot, but we do it quietly."

In 1919 Shelley graduated from village status to an incorporated city. In January 1929, the Virginia Theater opened with "Lilac Time," billed as "The greatest air spectacle of the age! The sweetest love story of this era!"—a silent film. Two days later, the theater closed for renovations so it could screen "talkies." In February, an "absorbing drama of a love that lives beyond the grave!" was aired. William Powell and Evelyn Bent starred in "Interference." Citizens of Shelley paid fifty cents for adults and twenty-five cents for children to see the movie and two additional features, a comedy with Eddie Cantor, and a short of Ruth Etting in "Blue Songs."

World War II was an unexpected catalyst for more sweeping changes. Badly needed farm laborers were off fighting the war, so Mexicans were hired and shipped by train and truck to many agricultural areas. Local farmers still use seasonal labor, but many Hispanic families have settled permanently in Shelley. In the 2000 census, 449 of the 3,813 residents identified themselves as Hispanic. With about 4,000 residents in 2005, 12 to 15 percent of them Hispanic, Shelley continues to grow.

ABOVE: *Touted as "one of the finest theaters in Idaho," was the Virginia Theater, where "the [pipe organ] music furnished by Miss Mable Holland is alone worth the price of admission, 25 cents and 50 cents," read the promotional copy that appeared in the January 1929 Shelley Pioneer. The theater is now defunct.*

BELOW LEFT: *Gabriel and Maria Coronado, with their son Benny, in Shelley City Park, circa 1965. The Coronados were the first Hispanic family to settle permanently in Shelley.*

BELOW RIGHT: *Fama Hansen, a 91-year-old Shelley resident, is a drummer in a local band.*

PHOTO COURTESY OF TONY CORONADO

PHOTO BY LYNNA HOWARD

VOICES FROM SHELLEY

Fama Hansen, 91-year-old drummer in a local band, and one of the original founders of the Shelley Senior Citizens Center: "Flossie and I cleaned this

floor when Crooks Grocery moved out." Prompted for the names of other founders, Fama allows that her husband helped. I ask for his name. "Don't you put his name in there! He was a horse's bee-hind." "Fama!" her friends break in, "Fama, the tape recorder's on. Say that's off the record." Fama figures nothing she says at this point in her life should be off the record, but she eventually relents and adds, "You can say Clive was a good guitarist, and that's as far as I'll go." Fama's friends tell me three times that the senior citizen's lunch is the best, and that Fama plays the drums at 1 p.m. on Wednesdays and Fridays.

Chief of Police, Allan Dial: "Our number one problem is dogs … We have seven officers on the force … Always take the anchor position in the Spud Tug."

Gabriel Coronado, now 82 years of age, was the first Hispanic to settle permanently in Shelley. Tony Coronado, one of Gabriel's sons, remembers moving here when he was three years old, in 1957: "Back in the 50s, there was more work up north," Tony says. "My dad decided we were going to stay here. He worked in warehouses in the winter, and he'd make $62 a week with overtime. We were the first Hispanics in Shelley to go to school regularly–that was in 1960-61. My dad made sure we got on that bus. I didn't know a lick of English. My dad came up here on the Bracero Program. (Between 1942 and 1963 more than three million Mexicans entered the U.S. under the Bracero Program). My dad had a visa too. It wasn't a problem to come across legally. But people didn't stay. They got their money and they went back. We were fortunate that the farmers we worked for were very kind. If it hadn't been for them, we might not be here. My dad contracted to hoe beets for $19 per acre, and to pick spuds for six cents a sack. My parents, especially Dad, wanted to know why in the world I wanted to play sports. He didn't know the passage to manhood around here was through sports. When I graduated from high school, I worked at the potato plant. When my dad first started working there, I was in fifth grade, and that was when we moved into town. Our quality of life changed completely. Our first telephone was in town, our first refrigerator, indoor plumbing. We had a heater that heated the whole house. In the summertime, Dad would take us all out to pick spuds, back in the day before combines. He would get off the morning shift, and we'd go pick spuds. My sister, Lupe, won six or seven spud-picking trophies. The real move was cultural. From me on down, we all participated in sports. I was the first one to go to college. To this day some of my old friends say, 'Is it true? You graduated from college?' I taught school for seven or eight years. I've coached at the Olympic wrestling camps in Boulder, Colorado. I have a business now. I've been at it for fourteen years. I'd like to get back to teaching some day."

Julie Ritter-Hall, who opened Grand Teton Emporium Coffee Tea & Books shop in 2004: "I like Shelley because it's homey and down-to-earth. I wish people would support their town and its shops. State Street needs to be beautified. It's lookin' a little shabby down here." The espresso shop offers, "Everything for the non-caffeine drinker." With a quilting frame in the back room, the shop also caters to a community with a rich heritage of arts and crafts. But don't discount the value of high-test coffee. "I have needs," a customer announces, and orders a 20-ounce, double-shot something-or-other. Wireless Internet connections are available–take your laptop out for coffee.

In 1966, Manuel Peña moved to Shelley from Texas with his family. He was twelve years old. He describes Shelley as "a nice little town, with a lot of nice people, but a few of them are still prejudiced." Manuel worked in the fields until he was 18, old enough to work in the potato processing plant, where he still works. He's also a volunteer fireman and an emergency medical technician (EMT) for the city. In honor of his volunteer work, he was chosen citizen of the year "about seven years ago." Manuel, his nine brothers and two sisters "never got a chance to graduate from high school." If you ask him what he's proud of, he'll tell you, "All six of my children graduated from Shelley High School." He's also pleased to see Hispanic culture in shops like the market attached to Madrigal's Restaurant.

Blue Mule auctioneer, Kurt Coates with a full head of steam: "Hey, Five-Five-Five, Who'll gimme five? Hep! Seven'na half, seven'na half, Hep! Ten, now, ten, Ten-Ten-Ten. Sold! for seven'na half to number five two. Fifty-two buys 'em. Got the whole shootin' match for all one money." Blue Mule Auctions is one of the businesses on Shelley's famous "Spud Alley." (Well, OK, it's not exactly famous, but it is one of a kind.)

Mayor Eric "Swede" Christiansen: "There's nothing I don't like about living in Shelley! We're building infrastructure. We have a new water treatment plant in the works."

Jason Barrett, manager of the new Broulims grocery store: "Businesses may come and go, but the people of Shelley remain. We have some buff guys working here. We could do well in the next Spud Tug." (I predict an increase in business at Dr. Goodbody's gym now that the challenge is public.)

Jesse Howard, recent graduate from Shelley High School: "We had lots of illegal good times in school. I remember pulling people out of your parking spot with a chain, and having to buy the guy a new transmission off

PHOTO BY LYNNA HOWARD

PHOTO BY LYNNA HOWARD

LEFT: *The Olympia beer poster offered at the auction presided over by Blue Mule Auctioneers of Shelley.*

INSET BELOW: *Kurt Coates, auctioneer for Blue Mule Auctioneers, Shelley. "Number five two buys 'em! All for one money!" Coates says.*

eBay to repair the damage. We didn't steal things or do drugs, instead we went to the rival team's school with gas cans and burned SHELLEY into their football field and caused quite a stir."

Crystal Foster, General Manager at *Pioneer Publications*: "April 2005 is the newspaper's 100th birthday." I ask to look at files for past Spud Days, and Crystal replies, "We don't have files, we have piles."

Dale Clark, Vice Principal of Shelley High School: "Separation of church and state requires that we keep seminary separate. We offer release time to all students. Some attend LDS Seminary, some use the time for work, and some sleep in. Last year we gained forty students, after about ten years of declining enrollment. Now we're on the brink of becoming a Class A school. The competition in sports is going to get a lot tougher."

Lynna Howard lives in Shelley.

SHELLEY
Calendar of Events

April
7 100th Birthday of The Shelley Pioneer newspaper
16 Senior Citizens Center Craft Sale and Pancake Breakfast sponsored by Quick Response Unit, 8 a.m. –11 a.m.
29 Arbor Day tree planting

May
13 Health Fair, Shelley Senior Citizen Center
18-19 LDS Seminary Graduation
26 Graduation Day, last day of school, Shelley High School

July
24 Baseball Tournament, Shelley Parks & Recreation Dept.

September
14 Miss Russet Pageant, 7 p.m.
16 Tater Tot Trot, Skateboard Competition
17 Idaho Spud Day

For more information contact the Shelley Chamber of Commerce @ (208) 357-3390 or visit online @ www.ci.shelley.id.us

Shelley's "Idaho Spud Day" Activities
Saturday, September 17, 2005

- Quick Response Unit Pancake Breakfast
  Senior Citizens Center, 7 a.m.
- Spud Run
  7:30 a.m.
- Children's Parade
  10:15 a.m. on State Street
- Spud Day Parade
  10:30 a.m. on State Street
- Dutch Oven Cookoff
  11-3 p.m. Shelley City Park
- Free Baked Potatoes with trimmings
  Noon, Shelley City Park
- Free Stage Show
  Noon, Shelley City Park
- Horseshoe Tournament
  12:30 p.m., Shelley City Park
- Spud Tug
  1-2 p.m., Shelley City Park
- Red Baron RC Model Flyers
  2 p.m., North Bingham County Park
- Demolition Derby
  5 p.m. North Bingham County Park

The Idaho Spud Day event includes food booths, craft and commercial booths, games, petting zoo, and climbing tower, all day at Shelley City Park.

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Idahome

A fond, fading memory

Story text and photographs by Lisa Dayley

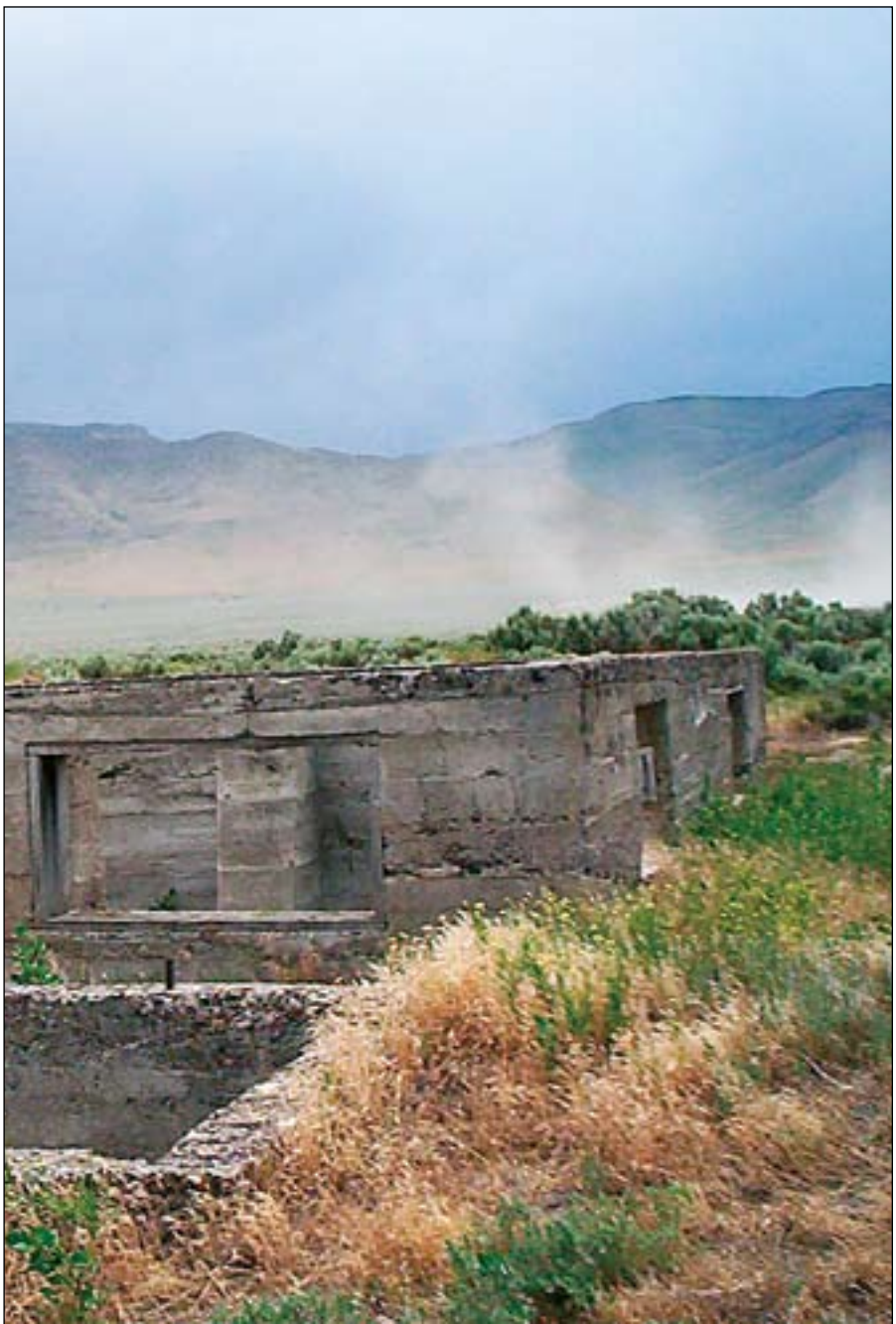
Idahome: a new town at the terminus of a new railroad.

That was more or less the slogan for a new little city, a proposed Raft River town the Empire Land Company was promoting in the early 20th Century.

The company had big plans for diminutive Idahome, which the business hoped would become a major railroad center and city in Cassia County.

The Empire Land Company advertised the fledgling Idahome–located about twenty-seven miles east of Burley–as having "more resources to develop a town than had Twin Falls or Burley in their infancy."

The company also boasted the planned town's close proximity to the railroad. "Is situated in the heart of a rich valley and is the only railroad point for 100 miles east,



RIGHT: *Little more remains of Idahome than this foundation of a former business. The ghost town was once a thriving community that builders hoped would become a major railroad center.*

OPPOSITE: *A marker of the Cassia County ghost town of Idahome, now listed as an Idaho historic site.*

west or south," wrote the company in an advertisement.

The proposed railway would be a main line connecting Salt Lake City, Utah, and Burley. It was estimated the proposed line would shave nearly one hundred miles off the trip.

In 1911, the Salt Lake and Idaho Railroad Company planned to run trains through Idahome. That year the Oregon Short Line Railroad surveyed the land for the proposed line and had plans to build when, in 1912, the U.S. government ordered it to stop.

Citing settlers' water rights and access, the government told the railroad to make other plans. Workers instead built tracks, which connected Raft River to Burley. In 1916, workers finished work on the tracks, which ran through Declo and Idahome. In the meantime, the main line was built through Pocatello.

While the government and the railroad companies haggled over where to build tracks, construction at Idahome continued. With hopes of a thriving railroad town homes, two grain elevators, lumber companies, a newspaper, and an airport runway were built.

"It wouldn't have been there in the first place if it hadn't been for the railroad," said Burley's Rae Hutchinson who was born at Idahome. It was always a treat when the train came and all the children anticipated that weekly arrival, Hutchinson recalled. The train picked up wheat while also delivering supplies.

The conductor, Burt Williams, always gave the Idahome youngsters a train trip around what the children called "the Y," Hutchinson said.

The Y formed the train's connecting track to Burley

"It was something to look forward to," Hutchinson said. "You knew it was coming when you could see the smoke. You saw the smoke before you ever saw the train."

Without fail Burt let youngsters ride the rails.

"We would ride around, and then Mr. Williams would turn around and take us back," she said. The train came even during some of Raft River's worst storms, Hutchinson said. "The train would plow through the snow," she said.

Hutchinson's parents, Edward and Della May Williams (no relation to train conductor Burt Williams), co-owned the Idahome General Store with Benjamin McEwen. The store also doubled as a post office.

Originally from Oklahoma, the Williams family moved to Idahome shortly after moving to American Falls where Edward had a sister.

"Mom and Dad came out here in 1917. When they first came out, it was quite the little settlement," Hutchinson said.

She recalled several families living in the new city.

"Mrs. McClend lived up the road," Hutchinson said. "An old bachelor named Kit Moore had a little house and then there were the Reeds and the Tannehills. There was a family named Sanders that had an oil company. There were sixteen or seventeen Sanders kids."

[Empire Land Company] had big plans for diminutive Idahome, which the business hoped would become a major railroad center and city in Cassia County.

Hutchinson recalled going to school with those children. The schoolhouse was about a quarter-mile from her home.

The one-room school held classes for grades one through eight. If the youngsters wanted anything to drink they had to rely on the town well. Everyone shared the same cup. "Maybe two times a week somebody would go out and get the dipper," Hutchinson said. "Mom would wash it and have someone take it back. That's the truth."

No one had running water and because of it there were no plush lawns at Idahome, she said.

"I don't think there was one blade of grass in the whole town," she said. "There was no way to water anything."

While there was no running water, there was an airport at Idahome. "I remember the beacon for the airplanes flying back and forth," she said.

The Williams' store had the town's only telephone, and airport workers in other cities often called the family for the weather report.

"When they'd call in, and one of the kids would go look around to see if it was raining or if it was cloudy," she said. "That was the weather report for the airport."

RIGHT: *The old granary front at Idahome, now home to nesting birds.*

OPPOSITE: *Idaho Stonehenge? Actually it's part of what remains of old Idahome, a ghost town located twenty-seven miles east of Burley.*

The Williams store, where families from throughout the Raft River Valley shopped, thrived during Idahome's beginnings.

"My parents got a lot of business," said Hutchinson, who recalled being fascinated with the Haglars, a family that used mules to pull their wagon.

"They [the Haglars] cut the mules' tails in a zigzag," Hutchinson said. "I used to stand there looking at those mules tails while the family was in the store." The business sold everything from food to clothing to kerosene. "People used to come get their kerosene with their little kerosene cans," she said. "Everybody had kerosene lamps."

Hutchinson had an affinity for living in Idahome.

"I loved it," she said. "I had a great childhood. I played in the sagebrush and the dirt. What's a kid not to like? As long as you have got friends to play with and something to do, it didn't really matter."

Idahome's demise began when many of the families began to leave in the 1930s. The school consolidated with other Cassia County schools and the Williams family turned the store's management over to McEwen.

While operating the store, the Williams also managed a ranch and moved there when Hutchinson was about age 14.

"My mother was so glad to move up to the ranch where it had a lawn and flowers," she said.

With no major railroad expansion and the Great Depression wreaking havoc on the economy, families left Idahome. Businesses closed and the land was eventually turned into farm ground. Today a grain elevator and foundations mark where the town once stood. A historical marker tells the tale of the once-thriving city.

"When I was a kid, the town went poof!" Hutchinson said. "When the town went kaflooey, there wasn't anything left."

Hutchinson isn't bitter that the town disappeared. Instead she has lots of fond memories of Idahome and says it was a wonderful place to grow up.

"You do get nostalgic about a lot of things," she said. "When we go down the road, I picture what was there. I loved it there."

Lisa Dayley lives in Burley.

Idahome's demise began when many of the families began to leave in the 1930s. The school consolidated with other Cassia County schools and the Williams family turned the [Idahome General] store's management over to [Benjamin] McEwen.

The Barns of Bonneville County

Idaho Falls museum to celebrate historic role of farm buildings

Story text and photographs by Cheryl Cox

There is just something about a barn. For that reason alone, I recently visited my father's old place in Lincoln, a small city about three miles east of Idaho Falls, near the old U & I sugar factory. His old barn, like a former starlet forced to play the aging nurse, now earns her way by keeping snow off patio furniture. But, there was a time when residents worked seasonal factory jobs, raised gardens, and kept milk cows in small barns tucked neatly in corners against the alleyways.

Grainy snapshots suggest that most of these family barns had been built in the 1920s and were of simple, gable-roofed construction, some with attached sheds. Rough cut one-by-tens nailed vertically covered the outside walls and roof. To seal

against wind and water, narrow strips of one-by-fours were nailed over all vertical seams. A small window or two and a man-door opened on a broad side and the loft and animal doors on the narrow side.

Driven by necessity to shrink measurements and fit lot sizes, these barns were, nevertheless, outfitted with the same accoutrements found in the imposing, aristocratic structures of the New Sweden farmsteads and the elegant prairie designs of the Swan Valley ranches.

Generally, the mangers were built against walls and fitted with no more than two stanchions. From a loft loaded by hand through side-swinging doors, hay dropped through an opening directly to the manger. Adjacent the cows' side, a portion of floor space could be shaped to a variety of jobs. Paneled off and generously strewn with clean straw, it might keep calves warm, protect a few lambs, or provide bedding for a sow with a farrow. Always, the orange crates nailed bottoms-to-the-wall and filled with straw hung ready for nesting hens.

Add corner shelves for stiff brushes and the ever-present jar of bag balm, find a place for a fifty-gallon barrel of grain, drive nails in the wall for the milker's T-stool, pitch forks, halters, and ropes, and the building becomes an acceptable, if not impressive, barn.

But then came wars and Wal-Marts, big supermarkets and steady jobs, and Lincoln no longer needed the barns. While some were left to sag *au naturel*, others were saved from extinction by practicality. Braced with new timbers and covered with metal roofs, they sheltered Chevrolets instead of cows.

But from windows boarded shut, doors that no longer hang square, and walls that sit low in the dirt, I hear my brother youthfully shout, "Geronimo!" before jumping ahead of my sister and me through the loft door onto the straw and manure pile. I see those infamous mousers, Worm and Hairy, waiting anxiously for fresh milk from the galvanized bucket that only my father could fill half with foam as the cow's bag swayed with the rhythm of his milking.

I miss those moments in that barn. But since time cannot be conned into turning around, I reject pure nostalgia–too hackneyed, too predictable–to explain my longing. Instead, I want stories about those moments: narratives written with an understanding of sadness and joy that far exceed any desire to reclaim a weatherworn building; wistful tales like those Fred Ochi painted into "Mr. Ririe's Barn," and the biographies that weave through Margery Clearwater's images of farmed land.

In search of those kinds of stories, kindred souls and barn lovers under the direction of Chris Hatch and her assistant, Ellie Hampton, at the Eagle Rock Art Museum have banded together for what amounts to a historical and aesthetic crusade on behalf of Bonneville

OPPOSITE: *Joe Long's barn in New Sweden, east of Idaho Falls, stands in industry's way.*

LEFT: *One of the early barns on the original Thiel homestead, in the New Sweden area west of Idaho Falls.*

County's old barns. In manageable chunks, writers, painters, sculptors, photographers, historians, and passionate citizens have volunteered to cover Bonneville County's 1,879 square miles.

For our part, Mickey Thiel, Carl Poulter, and I headed to New Sweden, an early day farming community west of Idaho Falls. Here, as the 19th Century stepped into the 20th, immigrant farmers, many having made interim stops in the Midwest before coming to Idaho, built a strong community. Planting old traditions with new crops, they built the barns and Victorian houses that defined the area.

With maps, notebooks, cameras, and a deadline to meet, we loaded the car and began our survey. On the road, our questions and comments resembled the shuffle of a deck of cards, loud and abrupt, randomly layered, but necessary for our game.

Questions and comments like:

"I remember riding my bicycle to that store and reading funny books."

"Have we crossed Pioneer Road yet?"

"Don't you think the New Sweden school would make a great brew pub?"

"My sister-in-law was a Long. Maybe, she could tell us."

"I remember coming out here with the fire truck. A grain field was burning."

"Cupola just says barn, doesn't it?"

"That guy wanted me to forget the grain and put out the junipers."

"Not if it's on a chicken coop."

"Somebody told me there used to be an old hotel out here."

And thus, we came to the Thiel home place–the house, once lived in by early day canal builders, and the barn, among the first in New Sweden. Carl learned from the current owner that tall barns were largely dictated by the heritage of Midwest farmers rather than the dry western climate that permitted hay storage outside. But, in spite of unreasonable insurance rates and a crumbling rock foundation, the barn stays. Perhaps, for no better reason than nothing on a farm is ever thrown away, like all the furniture, tires, and harnesses stored inside.

But, that barn keeps intangibles dry as well. Though I had never been inside, I knew my way around stanchions and mangers to its loft. The ladder was as solid as the day it was put up. My steps across the loft floor disturbed the scent of hay dust, old wood, and long-absent cows. Visible in slits of sunlight through warped walls were a bit of hay and a few weathered two-by-fours. An old rope hung from rafters white with pigeon droppings. Later, we would laugh when Mickey applauded my decision not to swing on the rope, but would bend over with the fourth-grade giggles when she told of climbing, at ten years old, to the cupola, and smoking a cigarette.

South of the Thiel place close to the county's southern boundary, industry and highway construction are scraping away New Sweden farms. Bereft of historical place

names, roads have become numbers on a grid. And, to original homesteaders who contributed heavily to an economic turnaround at the close of the previous century, homage is paid only by a few remaining barns. The biggest and grandest will stand only a short time longer.

The Peterson barn, profiled tall and wide against the foothills, is decaying. Doors, hanging on a single hinge, expose to barn voyeurs the intricate strength of the barn's rafters, empty ribs that miss the structure's heart. Stanchions–for fifty cows that would have known their own milking places–span the length of this dairy barn, one that could never possibly have foreseen its own demise.

Nearby, the Joe Long family barn, sagging under the withering strength of its tongue and groove siding, stands in industry's way. Inside its cathedral-size space, a double hayfork, still rigged with rope and pulleys, hangs from a ceiling beam. It speaks of a time when it loaded the loft with hay from surrounding fields. Fallow now, those same fields may soon be covered with concrete.

But, to document Bonneville County's barns is not to wallow in regret or regression. Preservation and respect may be the finer points as the EagleRock Art museum of Idaho Falls completes a yearlong project to locate and record the histories of Bonneville County's barns. This extensive effort will end in a late summer celebration with activities, entertainment, and several area tours of barns, all inspired by the Smithsonian Institution's traveling exhibit, "Barn Again!" In Idaho Falls, from August 4 through September 11, 2005, barns will once again become the center of community activity when the Eagle Rock Art Museum hosts the Smithsonian display.

Anticipating an enthusiastic response in southeastern Idaho to the Smithsonian exhibit, the Eagle Rock Art Museum plans to show the work of local and regional artists, in several of the museum's other rooms. Visitors to "Barn Again!" will also be able to see the "Best of Barns" and "Idaho Icons," two juried shows by barn artists and photographers. Local cowboy artists will present "Saddlery and Tack," and art guild members will show their "Barnyard Art." Finally,

OPPOSITE: *Below the double hayfork in Joe Long's barn.*

BELOW: *The Peterson barn in New Sweden.*

...I want stories about those moments: narratives written with an understanding of sadness and joy that far exceed any desire to reclaim a weatherworn building...

Gary Lords will be the featured guild artist for this celebration. The museum's shows will run from August 6 through September 24.

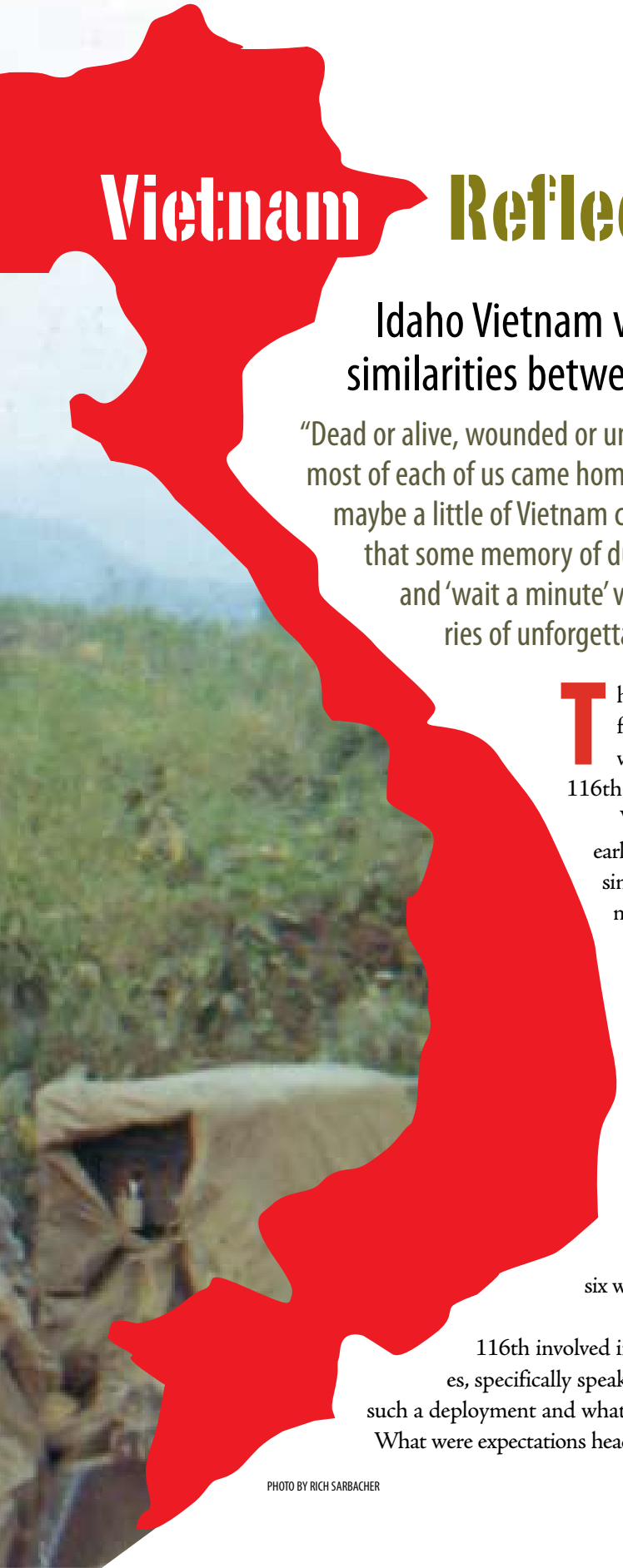
In addition to Idaho Falls, the Idaho Humanities Council has made it possible, from April 2005 through February 2006, for Coeur d'Alene, New Meadows, Jerome, and Preston to host the Smithsonian Institution's "Barn Again! Celebration of an American Icon."

Cheryl Cox lives in Idaho Falls.

The 116th at B'Sar, 1969: Left to right, Jerry Polumsky (of Kendrick), Jim Madden (Cottonwood), Martin Fowler (Grangeville), Butch Finke (Orofino), and Ralph Stubbers of Greencreek.

Vietnam Reflections

By David Rauzi



Idaho Vietnam vet: 'There are too many similarities between Vietnam and Iraq for comfort'

"Dead or alive, wounded or unscathed, we all came home. Or more accurately, most of each of us came home. A little of each of us stayed in Vietnam. Or maybe a little of Vietnam came home with each of us. A week doesn't pass that some memory of dust and mud, of centipedes and snakes, of bamboo and 'wait a minute' vine, doesn't re-emerge. No flashbacks, just memories of unforgettable people, places, and events." – Steve Kimberling

The 116th Combat Engineer Battalion: They are citizen soldiers from all over northern Idaho who are now on duty in Iraq, providing support services as part of the Idaho National Guard's 116th Cavalry Brigade.

Watching them stateside are their predecessors, members of an earlier deployment of the 116th who also left family and friends for similar duties in a hostile situation. Called to active duty in the summer of 1968, members spent three months in training before deployment that September to an isolated area in the Vietnamese Central Highlands near the town of Bao Loc.

During its one-year deployment, the 116th worked two major projects–improving Highway 20 in Lam Dong and building an airstrip at the coastal city of Phan Thiet–as well as related work on bridges and culverts, and constructing troop billets and mess halls. They, "literally changed the geography of the Central Highlands," stated United States Gen. William C. Westmoreland, Chief of Staff, on the return of the 116th at a 1969 ceremony in Idaho Falls.

Of the 116th's eight hundred guardsmen activated in May 1968, six were killed in the war in Vietnam. Seventy-six were wounded.

With the focus now on the Iraq War, I asked members of the 116th involved in the Vietnam War deployment to comment on their experiences, specifically speaking to civilians on what military personnel go through during such a deployment and what support from home is most welcome.

What were expectations heading into the deployment?

PHOTO BY RICH SARBACHER

"I did not know what to expect. It was a little different in 1968," said Gary R. Konrad, then a 22-year-old Army E-3 who lived in Harpster and worked at the Potlatch plywood plant in Lewiston. Konrad currently lives in Clarkston, Washington, where he is employed as a truck driver and construction worker.

"We were told at first we were not going to go to Vietnam," he said. "They told us we were going to the Hawaiian islands. We were stationed in Ft. Lewis, Washington, for six months before we were sent to Vietnam. A short time before we were sent to Vietnam, Idaho Governor [Don] Samuelson made a visit to Ft. Lewis to meet with our battalion. While he was there, one of the guard members asked Governor Samuelson why we were getting issued all the jungle gear, and he was ordered to sit down and shut up by the commanding officer, Capt. Burris."

"They wouldn't tell us where we were going for security reasons and even hinted it might be Korea," said LaMonte G. Joersz, then age 22, who worked as a civil engineer technician for the Clearwater National Forest in Orofino. "We didn't get the official word until we were in the air halfway to Vietnam." Joersz currently lives in Orofino and retired from the Forest Service last June.

Joersz continued: "The captain opened a sealed envelope and told us we would be arriving in Phan Rang, Vietnam, and that letters to such have been sent our loved ones. This confirmed our suspicions because of the training, clothing and weapons we had received at Ft. Lewis. This is one big difference between then and now; they know exactly where they are headed. I think there was excitement among us in what we were doing, but we were also scared, knowing some of us wouldn't be coming back."

The deployment took Rich Sarbacher by surprise.

"I was kind of blindsided. I was away at basic training when we were called up and wasn't expecting it," said Sarbacher, then age 21 and working at Idapine Mill in Grangeville. He currently lives in Grangeville and works as night freight manager at Asker's Harvest Foods. At deployment he was a private but later served as a Spec. 4 for most of the deployment, four months as a radio man and eight months as an M-60 machine gunner.

"Of course, when you're in basic training you don't get a chance to read a newspaper or watch television," he said. "So the family and friends probably saw it coming better than I did. Family and friends were supportive but concerned. Being a small conservative community, Grangeville was probably more supportive of us than would have been the case in other parts of the country. And Grangeville gave us a parade when we got back."

Said Lewiston resident Steve Kimberling: "Pre-deployment expectations: Based on the news, we were going to a land of jungle, rice paddies, and villages on the opposite side of the world where large numbers of people were being killed," Kimberling said. He was 22 years of age and a resident of Orofino where he worked as a residential carpenter for Clark Construction. He served as a Spec. 4, Commo and Supply, in the Orofino component of Company C. Since completing his military obligation he has worked a "checkered career" in logging, heavy and highway construction, and government.

"Based on our military stateside training," Kimberling continued, "we were going to a land of jungle, rice paddies, and

BELOW: *A sign marks the 116th's battalion headquarters at Di-Linh in 1968-69, noting it as the "sandbag capital of the world."*

RIGHT: *Rich Sarbacher of Grangeville at Di-Linh, Vietnam, in 1968.*

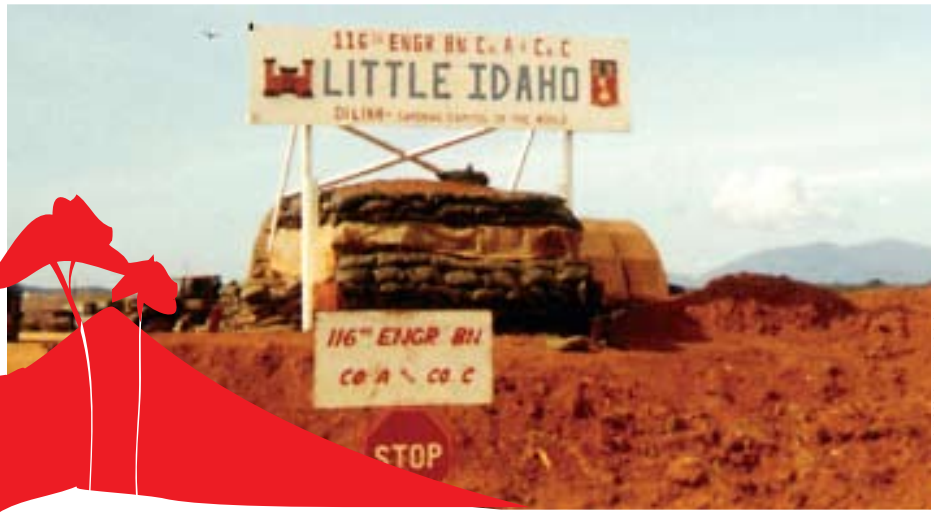


PHOTO BY RALPH STUBBERS

villages on the opposite side of the world where a cunning, remorseless, unprincipled, evil enemy wanted to kill us any way possible. Fearful hometown expectations: We would all be killed, maimed, or wounded by a cunning, remorseless, unprincipled, evil enemy."

Another voice:

"We were not told where we were going. When the plane landed and the door opened, Sgt. Elmer Moore said, 'Welcome to Phan Rang, South Vietnam,'" said Ralph Stubbers, then age 21 and serving as a Spec. 4. He currently lives in Greencreek with his wife, Debbie, and they have four children and two grandchildren.

NO EASY ROAD

"We were expecting it to be hard," Sarbacher said, "and it was. However, we were a good, close-knit unit. We were expecting to perform well as a unit, and we did."

What was your perspective on media coverage?

"While we accomplished our mission," Sarbacher said, "the war as a whole was not going well, and the news coverage at the time probably was more focused on the big picture. In addition, we did not suffer from the morale problems, discipline problems and drug problems that many of the regular army units did. Ask any of the guys who re-upped and extended their tours when we left. The problems were always worse in the regular army units they transferred into. And the general news coverage probably reflected that fact."

PHOTO COURTESY OF RICH SARBACHER

"We were not told where we were going. When the plane landed and the door opened, Sgt. Elmer Moore said, 'Welcome to Phan Rang, South Vietnam..."

What was the reality on arrival?

"Once we got away from Phan Rang Air Force base and the coast, we found the forested hills and agricultural valleys of the central highlands to be a pleasant part of the planet, except for the war that was going on there," Kimberling said. "With the exception of a few knuckleheads (on both sides) the people were decent, sometimes friendly, but not chummy toward us. They appreciated the military scrip we spent in the villages adjoining our camps and they appreciated the road improvements we were doing. The people were industrious, and good roads mean good commerce."

"There were small, roving bands of VC [Vietcong] harassing us from time to time," he continued. "We lost friends to their actions, and some of us came home wounded. Our casualty rate was relatively low, but any loss is one too many."

James J. Babb's view: "It seemed to me during the late 60s and early 70s that the American people did not support the American soldier," said Babb, then age 24, working at First Security Bank of Idaho in Grangeville, and serving as a sergeant first class. He still lives in Grangeville and retired from banking in January 2002.

"The families supported their loved ones, and the communities supported their units," Babb continued. "However, the national media as well as a large section of the American people did not support the soldiers who served in Vietnam, and chose to label those who served unfairly."

Konrad: "From my experience the news coverage did not provide an accurate picture of what was really going on in Vietnam. We were not allowed to send letters or tapes telling of what we were doing or what was going on. They censored our letters and tapes."

Joersz: "The news coverage on us to my knowledge was very little except for what was written in the local communities, probably from letters home. We didn't see many, if any, reporters at the two places where we were stationed, one being Di-Linh and the other B'sar. Now they have reporters embedded with the troops."

Kimberling: "Local papers must have found themselves in a surrealistic situation. Troops writing and calling home often gave accounts that were more frank than the Pentagon wanted the citizenry to hear. Local units did not officially order their troops to paint a rosy picture,

but the pressure was always there to not embarrass the unit. Especially since we were National Guard, and had something to prove to the lifers.

"National media," Kimberling continued, "did not take time to cover the trooper's perspective in enough detail to present a realistic view of the Vietnam

PHOTO BY RICH SARBACHER

situation. The 'truth' was at once better and worse than the media portrayed. Even then, the sound bite was starting to prevail over factual explanation."

What items from home were most valued or desired?

"The things that I looked forward to the most were letters or tapes from my parents," Stubbers said. "They were filled with love and support which kept me going."

Respondents repeatedly noted items most desired were letters, food, music, paperback books, magazines, and games.

"The shows of support that we soldiers found most uplifting were articles written in the newspaper about us, and letters written to us by our wives, friends, and relatives," Konrad said.

Kimberling: "Most of our 'kit' was government-issue and sufficient for the purpose. Sought after items from in-country stores or the BX included stereos, radios, cameras, watches, and jewelry. Goodies to home, from me, included rolls of silk brocaded fabric from the town marketplace in Di-Linh (pronounced Zih-Lynn)."

For those sending items to troops today, Sarbacher advised using common sense as your guide. "Military units are highly mobile and self-containing. Don't send anything that can be easily broken or is hard to pack around."

Joersz: "The number one thing valued from home was just receiving a simple letter. We were stationed in the jungle for the entire year, and other

PHOTO BY RICH SARBACHER

LEFT: *B'Sar, 1969: Back row (left to right), Tom Rowden (of Kendrick), Gary Dykes (Orofino), Gary Konrad (Kooskia), Steve Kimberling (Orofino), Jerry Polumsky (Kendrick), and Butch Finke of Orofino. Front (left to right) Spike Bedwell (Kamiah), David Butikofer (Rigby), Brent Kendall (Rigby), and Dwight Ulery of Elk City.*

ABOVE: *Di-Linh 1968: LaMonte Joersz of Orofino spends some down time with a few of the local children, who clown around with cigarettes.*

than R&R we didn't get to bases. If there was a package of goodies and a picture or two it was just an added bonus, as the main thing was the letters."

Joersz advises civilians to keep in daily touch with loved ones in the military, especially in this day of computers: "You can not do that enough."

"A word about letters," Sarbacher said. "Some soldiers find it easy to put their thoughts in writing. Some find that very hard to do. Both kinds of soldiers need support from friends and family. So if you are not receiving very many letters back from your soldier overseas, continue to write him anyway. He needs the support, and he may just not be the type of guy who is good at putting his thoughts in writing."

What are the comparisons and contrasts between the Vietnam and Iraq deployments?

Overall, respondents noted the lack of public support, at the national level, for the military during Vietnam, as compared to the strong, open support shown for troops today. Both conflicts were and are controversial. Today, however, the public has been able to keep the politics separate and continue to show support.

"That was the protest era, with Vietnam being the major object of protest," Kimberling said. "Most of us did not have any use for the draft dodging hippies who went out of their way to spit on returning troops. Our unit was fortunate in not being exposed to that unwarranted abuse."

Konrad: "The expectations of family, friends, and community I don't think were the same back then, because many people did not support the war. In fact, it was never really called a war, but a conflict. When we came home, there was a

parade for us in Grangeville, but we never felt the support from the people of the United States like the soldiers are getting today."

Kimberling: "There weren't a lot of American flags and 'Support Our Troops' ribbons then. Somehow they would have seemed hollow in that dysfunctional era. Today I am proud our people can sincerely support the troops who are at risk while condemning the politics that put them there. It is a more mature America that can make that distinction."

A few comments are noteworthy on the current situation:

"It is very gratifying to see the support from most all Americans for the soldier serving in the military around the world, even from those who disagree with our current policies," Babb said. "I would hope that this support continues."

Stubbers: "My heart goes out to the men and women serving our country at this time. I wish the feelings would have been the same when we were deployed."

"The daily casualties reported were a lot higher in Vietnam," Joersz said, "The local community supported us and waited patiently for our return, but the nation in general had not much respect for Vietnam veterans. Most were stereotyped into something that wasn't good. I think the respect and appreciation for the Iraq veterans is there now."

Kimberling: "There are too many similarities between Vietnam and Iraq for comfort. Historians talk about the fog of war, but it was the fog of politics that got us into both of these ill-advised misadventures."

On more material differences, Sarbacher noted that guard units represented a small portion of the deployment in Vietnam–ten were called up and of these nine actually served.

"We were the oddity, the curiosity," Sarbacher said. "Today in Iraq, 40 percent of the troops are National Guard or reserve. During the Vietnam War, there was a saying that the members of the 116th resented: NG usually means "not going." NG doesn't mean that anymore."

Other noted differences were the drafted armed services of 1968, which served a one-year tour in comparison with the all-volunteer force of today who in some instances could be facing up to an eighteen-month deployment.

"We had guys who their six-year commitment was up while they were in Vietnam and they were sent home," Joersz said. "Now there is a freeze on letting anyone out even if their time is up. There were no women on the battlefront, and other than R&R, depending where you went, you didn't see a white female the entire year."

Kimberling commented on the, "better, faster coverage" in Iraq, compared with Vietnam, due to embedded reporters and added, "As long as both sides maintain professional integrity, it can function OK. But a lapse of integrity on either, or both, sides quickly leads down a dark path where policymakers and the public are denied factual information."

And in closing:

"We, as civilians and military minded, should support our men in uniform," Stubbers said. "They are in Iraq to protect our homeland."

Sarbacher: "I've been thinking a lot lately about the 116th troops heading to Iraq and about their families. I know what they are going through and how they feel. Me, my friends and my family went through the same thing thirty-six years ago. My thoughts and prayers are with them and their families, and I hope they all return safely."

Kimberling: "I hope every member of today's 116th comes home in good shape. The best outcome is to not have to go at all, but that option has been lost. Our troops deserve the best. I hope we can provide it for them. It's the least we can do."

Grangeville resident David Rauzi is editor of the Idaho County Free Press.

"Today I am proud our people can sincerely support the troops who are at risk while condemning the politics that put them there. It is a more mature America that can make that distinction." *–Steve Kimberling*

PHOTO BY RICH SARBACHER

B'Sar 1969: (left to right) Rance Moore of White Bird, Tom Rowden of Kendrick and Bob Mattson of Culdesac.

Earning My Keep

By Ginger Beall

The wage-earning age came early in my family. Soon after turning twelve, Daddy went to work in the Utah coal mines earning a man's wage. As a seven-year-old, Mama herded a neighbor's three cows all summer. I had reached the ripe old age of ten when I started picking raspberries for pay. The whole family (my parents, myself, plus four siblings) rose before the sun to begin our workday.

Breakfast was a hurry-up affair. Mama kept a crock of sourdough start going all the time. Adding milk, flour and a couple eggs while the cast-iron griddle heated on the stove took no time at all. I rubbed the sleep out of my eyes with one hand and shoveled in hotcakes with the other. Once our bellies were full we headed out the door.

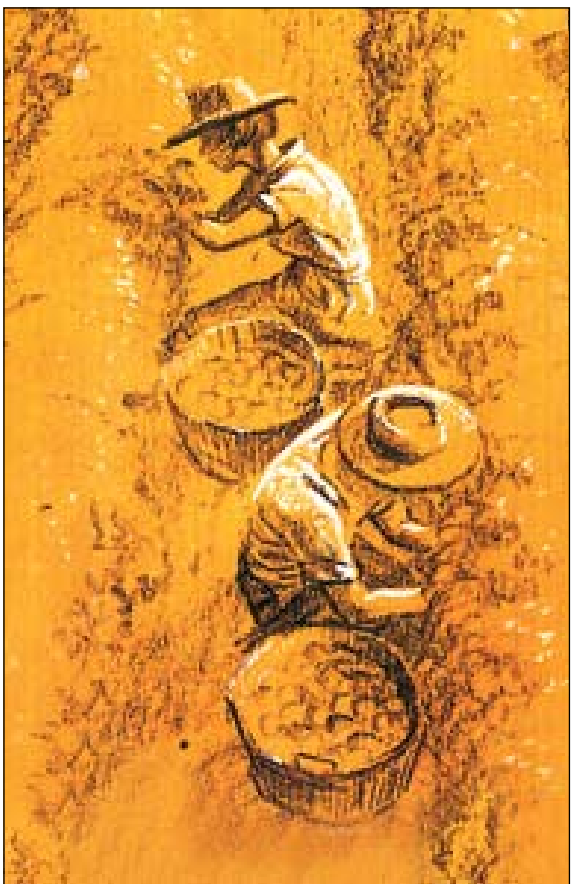


ILLUSTRATION BY DICK LEE

Daddy drove an old red International truck with an open box on the back that he closed in using weathered boards. Mama got in up front with him. Our boxful of lunch occupied the space on the seat between them. Alice, Kathy, Jimmy, Mable and I climbed into the back. Lined up against the back of the cab, our legs sticking out in front of us, we looked like so many crows on a high wire.

Mrs. White's berry farm lay at the junction of Highway 95 and the gravel road into Starkey Hot Springs, just over the bridge spanning the Weiser River. We lived on that dirt road–a half mile south of Starkey, one mile north of the Fruitvale Mercantile, and four miles west of Council. Heading east in the morning, we drove into the glare of sunrise on a one-lane road. Whenever we approached a blind curve Daddy'd lay on the horn, not letting up until we arrived on the other side. I held my breath and crossed my fingers, grateful for the boards on the side of the truck blocking my view of the deep ravine. Somehow, miraculously, we arrived each day.

Berry picking was not new to me. I'd been picking huckleberries since I can't even remember when. But right away I realized raspberries and huckleberries weren't the same, not even close. If I squeezed at all to tug one off the cane, I got nothing but red fingers and juicy seeds. With huckleberries, when one is ready to pick, the rest are ready, too.

Raspberries ripen in degrees. Pretty soon I learned that the ripe ones practically fell off when I touched them. The others needed to stay on the bushes a day or two longer.

I picked into a small tin can, about a one-pound coffee can, with a bail made of scrap wire. Mama cautioned me not to fill it more than halfway before bringing it to her so the berries wouldn't crush under their own weight. She carefully transferred my berries into small wooden boxes. Each box held about two cups of berries. Eight of these fit into a crate. Mrs. White carefully inspected each filled crate and noted the number of crates in her logbook.

Mornings went by pretty quick. I worked on one side of a long row of canes. On the opposite side Mama or one of my older sisters picked. They checked on me–made sure I got all the ripe ones and left the others alone. By noon that old sun beat down on us and I wanted to sneak off to find some shade. We stopped for lunch and sat down under one of the big Ponderosa pine trees at the edge of the berry patch. Mama passed out slices of cool cucumber and scrambled-egg sandwiches on her homemade whole wheat bread. I took small bites and chewed slowly. One half-hour didn't last long . . . I wanted to stretch it out further.

Afternoons were torture. Those rows looked twice as long as they did in the morning. The top of my head felt like fire ants were loose on it . . . burning hot. I just kept on picking, dropping berries in my pail and taking them to Mama. Once, as I neared the end of my row I melted right down into the ground–just like that. One minute I was picking berries, the next I was flat out in the dirt. Mama said it was heatstroke. She hollered for Daddy. He came and picked me up, carried me to the pine tree and plopped me down in the cool shade. I came to with a fierce pain in my head. Mama took off her apron and poured water on it. She placed the cool wet fabric on my head. I dozed off and spent the rest of the day under that tree.

The next day I was back on the job. Passing out didn't get me fired. Over the summer my skills increased. By day's end I filled three whole crates all by myself. Daddy kept track of my earnings–fifty cents a day for every day I picked, even the day I fainted and only picked half the day. Five days a week for five weeks–I earned $12.50. I daydreamed about that money–about the feel of it in my hand, about what I might buy. When Daddy was twelve, he spent his coal-mining wages on leather to repair the soles of his boots. At seven, Mama skipped merrily toward home tossing her cow-herding silver dollars into the air one at a time, letting them fall on the path. Picking them up, she exclaimed, "Oh, I found a dollar–I'm rich. Oh look, another dollar–I'm rich. Oh my, here's another–I'm really rich!"

I saw only fifty cents of the money I earned that summer. The rest went into a fund for school clothes and supplies. My parents

ILLUSTRATION BY DICK LEE

spent the money on something. Maybe paper and pencils for the school year totaled up to twelve dollars, but Mama made my school dresses out of skirts my older sisters no longer wore. I spent three summers in the berry patch before I found out that Mrs. White paid us a dollar a crate for picking her berries. My motivation for the annual berry-picking business took a serious downturn. That didn't matter to my father.

The year I turned thirteen, Daddy had a bad stroke and went to live in a nursing home in Weiser. That changed everything. He couldn't drive us in the old red truck

anymore. Mama said we didn't have to go pick berries unless we wanted. She stayed home with my younger brother and sister. My sister, Kathy, got married. Alice and I decided that as long as we could have the money we earned, we'd pick Mrs. White's berries for her. Alice drove a clunky old car with a scarred and dirty windshield down that winding road. I could barely see through the hazy glass, and when the sun hit with its blinding glare I feared my next breath would be my last.

Alice never bothered with laying on the horn going around those curves. She was too busy clutching the steering wheel and trying to see the road. Without benefit of the boxed-in truck, to the back I saw the deep drop on my right–with a full view of our fate should she make a wrong move.

The workdays were the same. Wild scary rides to the berry patch. Endless rows of berries. Red, punctured fingertips. Exhaustion at day's end. Mrs. White never paid us directly. She kept track of everything and sent our wages to Mama at the end of the season. I waited anxiously for my pay. Nothing showed up in my palm for several days so I bravely asked Mama about my money. She told me she used it to pay property taxes. I knew nothing of family finances at thirteen, but I knew I was about fed up.

By the time the sting wore off, another job prospect came my way. Mama told Mable and me we could go stay in Dexter, Oregon, with her sister, our Aunt Mable, for the bean-picking season. Oh boy. Beans, berries–what's the difference?

Three days later my older brother Joe drove us south to Weiser, where we boarded a train bound for Oregon. It chugged along, stopping in every little town, slowly covering ground until close to midnight. The darkness outside the train window suddenly gave way to a sea of twinkling lights. We two little girls from the back woods of Idaho glued ourselves to the window–pressed our noses to the glass, absorbed in our first glimpse of city lights.

We spent one night in Aunt Mable's room at the Hoyt Hotel in Portland. The next morning she took us back to the train station. The three of us boarded a train headed for Eugene–four hundred miles away from the raspberry patch and twenty miles from the bean fields. Aunt Mable returned to her job in Portland, leaving Uncle Gus to look after us. He hauled us out of bed early Monday, at 6 a.m. While the oven heated up we watched Uncle Gus mix biscuit dough right in the top of the flour canister. He plopped in an egg and poured in some milk, working it with his hands. We ate biscuits, fried eggs and bacon with one hand, slapping peanut butter and jelly onto slices of store-bought bread with the other. Stumbling up into the cab of his truck, we held our lunch sacks on our laps.

Uncle Gus's blue truck didn't have boards on the back, just a regular pickup box. He drove us to the Dexter Market, where we boarded a bus–nearly full of other sleepy kids just as eager as we to encounter the bean fields. Only twenty minutes of riding brought us to our destination outside of Springfield. Mama grew beans in her garden–tidy rows with sticks and chicken wire support –two or maybe three fifty-foot rows at

> Afternoons were torture. Those rows looked twice as long as they did in the morning. The top of my head felt like fire ants were loose on it . . . burning hot. I just kept on picking, dropping berries in my pail and taking them to Mama. Once, as I neared the end of my row I melted right down into the ground–just like that. One minute I was picking berries, the next I was flat out in the dirt. Mama said it was heatstroke.

most. Nothing like this, rows stretching out so far I couldn't see the end–acres and acres. No matter which direction I turned the view contained one thing–beans.

Large burlap sacks lay in a pile near the bus stop, alongside a huge wooden crate. In front of the crate sat the biggest scale I'd ever seen–with a metal hook bigger than a man's fist, ready to weigh in what we picked. The crew boss stepped up next to the scale. She was hard looking, like she'd been left out in the weather too long–lean, wiry, tough. I decided to do whatever she said. And she began hollering out orders immediately.

"Get a bag here," she said, pointing at the burlap pile.

"Spread yourselves out, one picker on each side of a row," indicating the closest vines.

"Bring your bags back here when they're about two-thirds full," nodding her head toward the monster scale, "to me or to Cory," as she pats the shoulder of a young, blond man standing next to her.

"We'll weigh your beans, record it, empty the bags in this crate and you can fill it up again." She raps her knuckles on the board crate.

"Make sure you mark your row when you weigh in so you can find your place again," she hollers as we all scatter out to begin. "And pick clean. Don't leave anything on the vines."

I didn't think it was so bad that first day. At least bean vines were free of thorns. The beans came off easy, three or four in my hand at a time. The challenge came in hauling a sack two-thirds full back to the scale. I dragged the heavy burlap bag up the row, wasting time. After I turned it over to Cory and he weighed my beans in at sixty-eight pounds, he leaned down close to me and whispered, "Just fill it half full next time," and he winked at me. I only had it about a quarter full when the noon whistle blew.

Mable and I sat in the row opposite each other, eating our sandwiches. I'd picked through a good bit of the time to get the beans she missed . . . so she could keep up with me, and not get in trouble. She couldn't figure out why I had more beans when we stayed even on the row. By day's end I'd picked 203 pounds of beans. Our pay was

ILLUSTRATION BY DICK LEE

two and a half cents per pound, so I earned about five dollars my first day on this new job. Dog-tired. Back on the bus and home to Dexter. Dinner. Go to bed. Up the next day to do it all again: five days a week for five weeks. Even in the rain.

Rain was my friend. Dragging my sack of beans down the muddy rows meant collected dirt and water. Wet dirty beans weighed far more than clean dry ones. Rain gave me my biggest day–342 pounds. It rained steady for three of the five weeks we picked. I came home with my pay envelope in my hand. Money I earned, money I could spend. I'd earned my keep and now I would keep what I earned.

Rain was my friend. Dragging my sack of beans down the muddy rows meant collected dirt and water. Wet dirty beans weighed far more than clean dry ones.

I bought fabric for clothes. Stylish shoes and a purse to match went into my shopping cart. Curlers for my hair, nail polish, bras, panties, and socks–all the things I'd spent four years dreaming about I now bought. I chose the paper and pencils I wanted, and bought colorful folders and binders for my reports. From brand-new cloth, I made dresses and skirts for my school clothes.

Wage-earning in my youth brought me a kinship with those who had done so before me. Daddy had a spring in his step the day he wore his mended boots into the coal mine. Mama felt the precious weight of three silver dollars in her hand when she ran home to show my grandmother her wages. I walked into the halls of Council High School that fall with my head held high, wearing and carrying my summer earnings.

Ginger Beall lives in Boise.

april 2005 calendar of events

1	NP Railroad Museum Opening, Wallace
1	Snowshoe with a Ranger, Ketchum
1	Pianist Scott Kirby, American Classics, Sandpoint
1	Spring Fair, Pocatello
1-16	"Miss California" play, Boise Little Theatre, Boise
2	American Heart Association Walk & Run, Boise
2	Rock 'n' Roll Worship Service, Sandpoint
2-3	Spring Carnival Sun Snow & Suds, Kellogg
3	Rosalie Sorrells Concert, Ketchum
3	A live Musical "Forever Plaid," Sun Valley
4-5	Idaho Theatre for Youth, Moscow
5-9	World Masters Criterium, Sun Valley
6-9	Sirius Idaho Theatre, Moscow
7	T. Murdock Watercolor Workshop, Idaho Falls
8	Night Sky Party, View the Stars & Planets, Ketchum
8	Spring Sprint Marathon, Boise
8-10	Boat Dealers Show, Lewiston
8-9	Starlight Productions Dance Competion, Nampa
9	Horse Show, Lewiston
9	Signing Articles of Incorporation reinactment, Burley
9	American Legion Oyster & Fish Fry, Meridian
9	Symphony Pops Concert, Idaho Falls
9	Michael Ames Book Release, "The Moustache Championships" in Conjunction with Wood River Beard & Moustache Competition, Ketchum
9-10	10th Annual Budweiser Race the Face, Mullan
9-17	Sun Valley Trekking Course, Sun Valley
10	A Sunday in Shoreline Idaho, Sandpoint
14	"Art Reframed" Discussion Series, Hailey
14-17	Boy Scout Camporee, Lewiston
14-17	Majors & Minors Show, Nampa
15	Taste of Home Cooking Show, Lewiston
15	2005 Twilight 5K, Lewiston
15	International Dance Challenge, Boise
15	Introduction to Soft Pastels Workshop, Idaho Falls
15	Cowboy Poetry Contest, Idaho Falls
15	Chamber Ensemble Soiree-, Sandpoint
15-16	Fly Tying/Fly Fishing Expo & Banquet, Idaho Falls
16	2005 Race to Robie Creek, Boise
16	Spring Home & Outdoor Show, Idaho Falls
16	Logger's Day at Nordman, Priest Lake
16-17	25th Annual "Journeys of Lewis & Clark," Lewiston
16-17	Star Garnet Show, Lewiston
17	Concert Series, "Marcus Eaton," Ketchum
17	Spring Dash, Coeur d'Alene
17	Armchair Adventure Series, Ketchum
21	RSVP Senior Fair, Lewiston
21	Taste of Home Cooking School, Idaho Falls
21-23	KZBQ Outdoor Expo, Pocatello
22	Youth Concert, Pocatello
22	Friday Teen Nights, Ketchum
22-23	"As You Like It" Shakespeare, Sandpoint
23	Earth Day, Pocatello
23	Business & Health Expo, Kellogg
23	Gregory Popovich's Comedy Pet Theatre, Nampa
23	Sawtooth Botanical Garden Workshop "Drought Tolerant Plants," Ketchum
24	NWBRA Horse Event, Sandpoint
25	K & K Fishing Derby, Sandpoint
28-5/7	"The Sound of Music," Theatre of Idaho, Nampa
28-30	"The Music Man," Moscow Comm. Theatre, Moscow
29	All School Night Kicks off "Boise Music Week," Boise
29	SRVQG Quilt Show, Idaho Falls
29	Silent Film Festival, Idaho Falls
29	Environmental Fair 2005, Pocatello
29	ID/WA Chorale Concert, Lewiston
29-30	Wood River Home & Garden Tour, Hailey
30	Senior Center Craft Bazaar, Cascade
30	Run For the Hill of It, Lewiston
30	Symphony Orchestra Concert, Meridian
30	Pride Day-Giant Clean-up Party, Burley
30	Kiting Just for Fun, Idaho Falls
30	Farmers Market, Idaho Falls
30	Music Week-Music in the Park, Boise
30-5/8	K & K Fishing Derby, Sandpoint

Do you have a special event in your town in the coming months? Drop us a note with the vital information and we'll make sure friends and neighbors across the street and across the state know about it. All functions must be free to the public, or darn cheap. Events charging admission fees are welcome to purchase ad space to help sponsor this page.

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Airmail Idaho

By Arthur Hart

PHOTO COURTESY OF IDAHO STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

This month's historical snapshot recalls Idaho's significant place in aviation history. The 1928 photograph shows United States Senator William E. Borah, Idaho Governor H.C. Baldridge, and Boise Mayor Walter F. Hansen standing beside a Stearman C-B mail plane as the governor places a letter into a mail slot in the plane's fuselage. The pilot is Lionel Kay, one in the stable of pioneer pilots assembled by Walter T. Varney to fly the mail under the first government contract awarded to a private firm.

On February 22, 1925, Congress passed the Kelly Bill, authorizing the U.S. Post Office to award airmail contracts to private companies. The action was taken because of tragic losses of pilots and planes in the years when the Post Office and U.S. Army flew the mail. On the New York to Chicago run alone, out of an original crew of forty pilots, thirty had died in crashes, most of them because of terrible winter conditions.

The first airmail contract awarded was for a route that few wanted to bid on: the mountain and sagebrush route from Pasco, Washington, to Boise, to Elko, Nevada. Walter Varney, who had a small flying school in San Mateo, California, and a competent crew of pilots and mechanics, guessed that he might be the only bidder on Contract Air Mail 5. He was right. He got the contract and moved his operation to Boise. On April 6, 192, the first commercial airmail flight was by Chief Pilot Leon Cuddeback in a tiny open-cockpit Swallow biplane, powered with a 90-horsepower inline engine. These engines were too weak, and were replaced almost immediately with 150-horsepower Wright Whirlpool radial engines, the kind used by Charles A. Lindbergh in his epic solo flight across the Atlantic in 1927. By the second year of operations, however, it was obvious that the Swallow planes were too small for the increasing airmail loads and that their engines were too weak to buck the headwinds encountered along the route. Several Varney pilots died trying.

By 1928, Varney Air Lines was flying the plane shown above, Stearman C-Bs, popularly known as "Bull" Stearmans. Four of them were put into operation on the Portland to Salt Lake City run, and were able to shorten the flying time by an hour from what it took the little Swallows. In World War II slightly modified Stearman biplanes, still called "Bulls," were used by the Army to train pilots. Today a few of these are still flying in air shows, where they are a favorite of stunt pilots.

In 1931 Varney joined with other small companies to form United Airlines, once the largest in the world. United still dates its founding to April 6, 1926, when Boise-based Varney Air Lines flew the first commercial airmail in American history.

Arthur Hart is director emeritus of the Idaho State Historical Society.

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