~ BAINBRIDGE ISLAND SKETCHES ~

Cannery Row, by John Steinbeck, is a collection of stories, tied loosely together, about the people, businesses, and events that took place during the era of the Great Depression in the area known as Cannery Row, a fictitious name given to Ocean View Avenue in Monterey, California. Steinbeck lived during those years in nearby Pacific Grove. Almost all of the characters, places, and events were based in reality, a masterful blend of fact and fiction.

As part of the Bainbridge Public Library's October 2009, One Book, One Community events, Bainbridge Islanders were invited to craft their own stories – up to 2,000 words long - about life on Bainbridge Island, past or present.

The resulting works were read at the San Carlos Restaurant on November 1, 2009, at which prizes were awarded to those that most closely captured the flavor of Cannery Row.

The following stories and sketches, by Bainbridge Island writers, were contributed to the Cannery Row/Bainbridge Island Sketches project.

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Sandspit Afternoon

By Diane Walker

First Place - Steinbeckian Award

Curving protectively around the lagoon on a windless late September afternoon, when the tide has finished rolling in and prepares to yet again reverse its flow, the entire Sandspit shimmers with a golden stillness. The water's ruffled edges cease to thread their teasing fingers through the weeds along the bank, the silvery fish stop leaping, and the eagle pauses, quiet in her nest. The screeching gulls who hurl their shells against the Gordon's rickety boardwalk settle along the shingled rooftops to doze, and the cormorant drying himself on the Wilsons' buoy, his wings stretched broadly, cranes his head as if to listen for the shift of tide. The corrugated boathouse roof across the way glitters in the sun, and the skiff tied below rocks gently, lightly bumping against the creosoted pilings.

It is a time between, when cats who stalk the Norway rats and voles in the tall dune grass sit back and lick their paws, and songbirds still their restless fluttering along the wires that lace the poles above the narrow pot-holed street. The Wilson's pregnant yellow lab has broken loose again and wanders down the beach in search of fish, lifting her nose to sniff the salted air, and Melba Bailey, hanging out the wash from her back porch, plucks a kleenex from the frayed wrist of her old gray sweater to wipe her nose. Wisps of gray hair streaked with rust protrude beneath the faded cap that protects her freckled scalp from sun, and below her threadbare woolen pants her skin lies dryly rumpled against fragile bones.

There is a quiet glow to this interval, while the tide waits, suspended between its rise and fall; a smooth iridescence, like the blushing interior of the giant moonsnail shells that line Melba's windowsills, marking a lifetime of low-tide strolls along the gray and sandy beach. The lagoon, holding its breath while the currents perform their hidden about-face below the surface, swells slightly, and then, with a quick lift, the tide reverses, its ripples surging in formation toward the narrow channel at the tip of the Spit, gravely piling, wave on wave, until the weight of yearning propels the water through with a churning leap. Mrs. Gordon's youngest boy hears the tidal shift and drops his tennis racket on the ground below the rug his mother's paying him to beat, setting off at a run for his yellow plastic kayak. "Tide's going out, Mom," he shouts, leaving a trail of worn sneakers and toe-holed socks on the drive as he drags the kayak off the front deck and through the tall grass to the lagoon's edge.

With a hiss and a thump the boy-laden kayak slides into the water. Next door, Melba lifts one last damp turtleneck from her laundry basket and extracts another clothespin with arthritic fingers from the pocket of her flowered apron. The back door to the Gordon's house opens, and Alice Gordon backs out onto her deck carrying a litter box, which she places on the gray teak bench her husband Mac bought at last year's Rotary Auction. Full-breasted and blonde, she wears a bright pink Bay Hay t-shirt with five rows of sheep on it – one of them black – and a pair of jeans rolled almost to her knees. Brushing her hands absently at her wide hips, she arches her back in unconscious imitation of the cormorant's wing, then, startled by a dropped clothespin, looks across the fence at Melba.

“Hanging out the wash, eh, Melba?” she calls, but Melba doesn’t hear; the Wilson’s yellow lab, having found a fish, is dancing and barking excitedly at her discovery. With an exultant yelp, the dog dives nose-first into her smelly find and rolls in it, wriggling ecstatically to be sure every bit of fur is deliciously aromatic.

“Shoo, Daisy,” yells Melba, “Did you get loose again? You go on home now,” and, grabbing her cane, the aging woman struggles down her steps and across the strip of lawn that serves as her yard, stopping at the row of logs her sons have stacked to keep the highest tides at bay. “Go home, Daisy, go home,” she shouts, waving her cane, but her thin high voice evaporates in the salt air.

Rory Gordon’s yellow kayak, having shot around and through the channel, is gliding slowly now into the sound, floating lightly, parallel to the Gordon’s beach, and the dog, who turns and spots him, runs eagerly into the surf with an exuberant bark of greeting. “EEUW, go away, Daisy, you stink,” says Rory, swiping ineffectually at the dog with the double-ended wooden paddle Mac brought west when they emigrated from Vermont. “Mom, git her off me!” Alice, caught in the midst of scooping cat litter into a plastic bag with a large Tupperware container, shakes a finger at her son. “Rory Gordon, I thought I told you to finish beating that rug! You get right back up here, put that kayak back where you found it, and get back to work.”

Rory climbs out of his kayak into the shallows and drags the boat up the narrow makeshift ramp to the Gordon’s deck. There’s no room on the ramp for a large wet dog, and Daisy turns back to the beach for another sniff of fish, then catches sight of Melba. She runs to greet her old friend with a delighted bark, exploding over the logs in a burst of energy and knocking the elderly woman to the ground. With a sharp cry Melba curls into herself, hands shielding her face as she attempts to protect her papery cheeks from Daisy’s insistent tongue. Alice and Rory rush over to offer assistance, helping Melba to her feet. “Rory, I’ll hold Daisy: you run get some rope and take her back to the Wilson’s,” says his mom, grabbing Daisy’s collar and tucking an arm around Melba. “Are you all right, Mrs. Bailey? Where does it hurt?” Rory returns with a length of rope to tie the dripping dog and take her home, and Alice and Melba stagger together toward the porch, ducking under the clothesline, pushing aside the frayed and graying turtlenecks, pale stained panties and bright plaid kitchen towels. Melba sinks into a worn green wicker chair, her lined face white with effort.

“Shall I call 911 for you?” asks Alice, kneeling beside her. “Or would you like me to call one of your sons?”

“I’m sure I’m fine, just give me a minute to catch my breath,” whispers Melba, but then her rheumy eyes roll back and she slumps forward, exuding a faint aroma of urine and old wool. Lightly touching the old woman’s cheek, Alice leans in to be sure she’s still breathing, then steps inside to phone the EMTs. After placing the call, she returns to Melba’s side, and gently reaching down behind her she unties the flowered apron with its pocketful of clothespins and drapes it over the back of Melba’s chair.

All along the Sandspit, in the old cabins and the newer multi-storied homes, heads turn at the sound of the siren as the emergency van, lights flashing, wends its way between the densely

packed houses. Behind the high fences, and between the slats of venetian blinds pulled down to shield inhabitants from the prying eyes of casual strollers, curious residents peer out at the truck as it weaves its way past the red-leafed cherry trees and Japanese maples, past the summer-yellowed dune grass and California poppies, past the rusted metal scaffolding that serves the coast guard as a lighthouse, past the row of battered mailboxes and garbage cans, past the Wilson's daughter's Airstream trailer and Dr. Morgan's delicately aromatic sweet-peas; as it bounces over the ten speed bumps set in place to slow joy-riding teens and finally glides to a halt in front of Melba's tiny home. Gossip flows in little rivulets from phone to Sandspit phone as the EMTs tenderly slide Melba's frail body onto the canvas cot and carry it to the emergency van. Rory drags Daisy home to the Wilson's porch, secures her to the railing and races back, hoping for a closer look at the shiny red and white truck; at the men in their dark official-looking uniforms. But the doors are closing just as he arrives, and he stands disconsolate beside his mother, panting heavily from his run, his favorite blue Mariner's shirt damp from both the kayak and his perspiration. Alice puts her hands over Rory's ears as, sirens blaring, the truck backs into the Gordon's drive, then bumps back down the spit.

"Will Melba be okay?" he asks, but his mother shakes her head, ruffling his thick dark hair and folding him protectively against her broad pink chest. "I just don't know, hon; she's almost 90, and pretty fragile; sometimes it's hard to get better when you're that old."

"The Wilson's need to get a stronger rope, maybe even a chain," exclaims Rory; "That Daisy is really strong. And boy, did she stink!"

"So do you," complains his mother, pushing him away and pinching her nose. "You go finish beating that rug, like I told you, and then you need to hop in the tub; no way you're sitting at my dinner table smelling like that."

Across the street, there is a sudden rustle in the dune grass as Rory's tiger cat, Pippa, pounces. She emerges from the weeds carrying a large gray-brown rat, its neck gripped firmly between her teeth, its long hairless tail still twitching. Dragging the rat across the graveled drive and up onto the Gordon's porch, she leaves a bare blood-speckled path through the dark stones and deposits her prey on their brown raffia welcome mat. "Cool," shouts Rory as he breaks loose and sprints across the drive. "Look what Pippa caught – that rat is almost as big as she is!"

"Don't you dare touch that, Rory," calls his mother. "You get back to that rug." With a sigh she takes a last look around Melba's living room, then closes the thick metal door, making sure the storm door is carefully latched as well before crossing the driveway to her own front stoop. Scooping up her son's discarded shoes and socks, she takes a deep breath and squares her shoulders, then climbs the steps to grasp the dead rat by its tail, dropping it in the bent metal garbage can that stands beside their garage door.

The evening has begun to cool, and the water's frenzied rush from the lagoon has slowed to a trickle as Alice moves inside her home to begin dinner. Standing at her kitchen window washing her hands, she watches absently as seagulls squabble over the mud-darkened sand dollars that lie newly exposed on the beach beyond her yard. A kingfisher perched on a nearby piling chitters noisily while scanning for fish, and, startled by the emergency van, the gray-feathered heron

dozing on the Morgan's dock squawks a loud objection and spreads his wide pterodactyl wings to fly low across the emptying lagoon. The sound of the siren fades slowly into the distance, soon replaced with the deep rumble of the Kitsap Transit bus, which stops at the top of the spit to bring Mac Gordon home from his day's commute. Across the lagoon, the eagle's harsh whistle pierces the air, welcoming her mate back to the nest, while under the Wilson's porch Daisy shifts uncomfortably in the cool sand, moaning softly as her labor pains begin. Abandoning their pursuit of the returning eagle, a flock of crows circles Melba's apple tree, then lands, filling its dry branches with their harsh black wings.

- The End –

What Comes To Pass

By Bob McAllister

Second Place – Steinbeckian Award

Mike Lynch lived in the line of beach houses on Rolling Bay, Bainbridge Island, a quarter mile walk from Manitou Beach. On Saturdays he liked to walk the hill from his rented house down to Manitou Beach and take the sound air whether the tide was in or out. It didn't much matter—in the first case, especially in spring, the air was mostly bright when he walked and he liked to sit on the logs strewn about the beach like dead totems and watch gulls swoop and perch on the spines of pilings that once formed a dock at the head of the bay. In the second case, even when the tide flats resembled a ripe sewer, he'd wait for the turn of tide and watch the water foot its way on the gray-pocked sand and consider the way the bog became a lagoon. It reminded him of a Japanese troupe he once saw doing Bhutto- a dance so slow you didn't know it'd changed until you took your eyes away and returned. He admired the way something empty could fill, something barren and gray could become silver and flow.

When he'd read Rav Ashkenazi at college, 15 years before, he learned that the rabbi's followers called him Manitou—a name derived from the Algonquin tribe that means great spirit. He didn't completely understand the concept but it had something to do with the interconnection and balance of the world. That was another reason why he liked to go to Manitou Beach. Where else could you find a Jewish rabbi's philosophy, a Native American Shaman and perhaps, evidence of a deeper harmony?

Mike was 38 now and it was 1980. After the assassinations of John and Bobby Kennedy, Martin Luther King and Malcolm X in the 60's when he needed something he couldn't find and wasn't sure if he'd know what to do if he found it, he thought he'd begun to live a life: a job as a parole officer for King County, a wife, one daughter and a home he'd built in a hollow by Wilkes Elementary School. Then divorce, loss of house, the ex-wife's move to Colorado, disconnection from family and a return to construction work he'd learned to pay his way through college.

More or less, on this Friday in April, he was by himself. His daughter lived in Colorado with a new stepfather and while he talked to her weekly on the phone and she came up for a month or so in the summer, she wasn't there as a presence. He missed that and wondered what had happened that things had come to such a pass. He was drifting into middle age; relatively content with a paycheck, a rented house and on this day, a cold Rainier beer and sitting on the open porch above the boardwalk watching a group of grebes fishing in the Sound. It seemed to be a family, more or less.

The flotilla of six rode the rolling waves and he watched as first one, then two of the larger birds ducked into the water and came back up into shafts of light with a wriggle in their throat. He saw the young ones go beak to beak with the older birds and gulp the prey, turning their heads up into the sun. They seemed to almost laugh as they tipped their heads and floated the incoming waves.

He heard a shot, saw a circle pucker on the water, another shot and one grebe dead and floating. Another crack. .He realized the shots came from the south and near. He ran toward the sound.

A rail of a boy stood on a second story deck with cammo pants and a scoped rifle. Mike yelled: “Stop, stop, what are you doing?”

“I’m shooting at the birds.”

“Why?”

The boy didn’t answer, put down his .22 against the railing and waited. Mike looked out to the water. A grebe was flapping its one working wing, rotating in circles. Mike could almost hear the slap of water as it tried to rise, to get away.

“At least kill that one.”

Walking away, Mike heard the shot but didn’t look to see what happened. He walked back to his porch, sat awhile, drank the rest of the beer and opened another. End of story, he thought, we kill what’s outside of us so we don’t kill ourselves, we shoot at anything that moves. we break things up, we destroy families, we disrupt peace. We’re a blood tide, toxic and poisonous like the sociopaths that can’t get back to a world where things work, where things are nice. He had another beer, forgot to eat dinner, fell asleep on the couch.

He woke up about midnight to moonlight streaming through the paned window of the front room, groaned and got up. He looked out the window.

A full moon tinted orange but mainly yellow formed a path of shimmer on the dark water. He could see white foam like lace at the shoreline and he remembered the afternoon’s events, the kid with the rifle and kept breathing. He went out the door, looked to right and left and saw that the houses on the row were lightless, seemingly empty. It was as alone as he’d felt in a long time. He wasn’t sorry about that nor did he pity himself. It was a fact as real as the salt air he took into his nose and lungs.

He sat to watch and listen to the Sound, the susurration and wheeze of water through gravel to see what it had to say. At the end of the moonlight path to his right he saw a hump of something rocked by the incoming tide. He walked over to look.

He made out the grebe in yellow light and pushing down the fear of touching something dead, picked up the bird—its wet, feathered form, one wing stretched out, the other limp at the side and lifted it up to see its face, its eyes. He couldn’t see into the eyes, what was behind them. Something had left. He thought of burying the bird in the sand by the log as he’d buried his daughter’s goldfish in a garden patch in front of the house by Wilkes and then left the bird at the shoreline because he knew the tide would come in and take it away.

He woke up the next day to the kid’s father knocking on the door. He’d seen him on the walk, said hello, couldn’t remember his name.

“I understand you caught my boy shooting some birds yesterday. I’m glad you did. The kid’s about twenty miles over the speed limit and doesn’t understand what a red light means. What can I say? He’s fourteen and sometimes dumb as a post.”

He liked the way the father said “sometimes”. A few weeks back, he’d seen the boy sweeping the front of the walk by their house after a high tide, He could tell the kid wanted to do a good job by the way he worked the broom. When he came by the boy, he said, as a way to connect with the kid or to cover the fact that he didn’t know his name: “Whole bunch of garbage to clean up after last night, isn’t it?” The boy smiled, nodded his head and went back to his sweeping.

He looked at the father, noticed the scar on his left eyebrow which took a skew-line up towards his head. He wondered how he got the scar. The man was about his age, maybe a bit older but Mike held back asking about his age or how he got on with his kid.

The man sloughed his foot on the deck, chewed his gum, turned to the water and bent his head. Mike wanted to tell him it was okay but couldn’t find the words.

The man took a deep breath, said, “It won’t happen again, I’ll promise you that.” and walked down the steps. Mike looked out to Rolling Bay, saw a gill netter winching its catch and figured he’d take a walk to Manitou to see if the tide was coming in or going out.

- The End -

The Dock

By Theo Fehsenfeld

Third Place – Steinbeckian Award

The narrow road was streaked with white paint from mischievous seniors leaving a legacy. Ben and Ryan scampered along the road. All around them, the constant rhythm of fireworks lit up their faces for a few seconds, until the safety of darkness enveloped them once more. Up on the hillside summerhouses looked out over the inlet, down to the rocky beaches over Point White dock, and into the Puget Sound. Jacob's house, nestled between a white one-story bungalow, and a bigger shingled house was dark brown. It was mid-sized with a wrap around porch, big windows for looking out, a basement and one small deck up towards the roof that was separate from the main part of the house. This deck was probably reserved for his parents, after long days of work in the city to come back and rest, glass of wine in hand and talk of Jacob and his future in the family business. Tall reeds and little flower beds outlined their small manicured lawn and gave them little privacy from the road just outside their doorstep. They were surrounded by the lives of other families ten steps away.

Tonight Pointe White Drive was booming. People walked up and down the narrow passage fireworks in arms and little boys leading the way to their dream explosion. Grandmas enjoyed the view from a safe porch, watching the night play out before them.

"I'll get the fireworks, meet you down by the beach!" Jacob half yelled as he started to run up towards his house. "Wait for me, I'm comin' too!" Charlie darted after him his basketball shorts swishing over defined calves. Five girls and five guys made their way down to the beach all with their certain love interests. Everyone sat on the concrete steps jittering in excitement at another Fourth of July on Bainbridge. Fresh from riding in Nic's beat up Toyota with the windows down, music blaring, our salty sun bleached hair tossed from wind after jumping off Pointe White.

Jacob ran with Charlie tagging along behind him, dragging a bag of fireworks. His feet crunched across the rocks and barnacles. "Hey guys…pstt" Jacob's voice suddenly lowers and pulls a bottle of vodka out of his plaid shirt. Everyone grows silent.

"Jacob, no, put that away. You know we can't get away with that." Ben took a step back, eyeing the bottle suspiciously.

"Oh Ben, my mom never uses this stuff anyways," he paused. "Let's put it to good use." The teenagers gathered around the bottle, eyeing it like a forbidden treasure.

"Fireworks time!" Ryan pulled away from the crowd. He was not the tallest boy there but sturdy with large callused hands. He had grown his hair out that summer despite his friends and their protests. Side swept and brown with highlights from the sun, he made girls blush and smile at him unconsciously. He wore a semi tight Hoopfest tee from 7th grade, baggy jeans and some worn leather flip flops. His almond eyes newly developed tan were dark against the light of the bonfire. After an awkward pause the group began milling around for the lighter and the girls snuggled up around the fire giggling and laughing excited for what is to come. Some were up,

skipping stones into the ocean, the splash low and deep with circulating ringlets expanding out on the smooth water. Ben, Jacob and Ryan started throwing rocks at the Stotlemeyer's dock. It was the perfect length away from the bonfire and height to challenge the boys to hit it straight on the wood pilings.

"I bet you can't get it over the railings Ryan," Ben grinned, playfully competing with Ryan. Ben's teeth flashed, lit up from a neighboring firework. He was tall, blond and arrogant. Ryan slowly grabbed a rock off the beach, its smooth surface resting in the palm of his hand. An ivory dead barnacle was suctioned to the rock making a resting place for his index finger. He raised his arm up above his head and with all his force, thrusted the rock high into the air, through the darkness, pegging the pilings but going no further.

"Let me give it another try." Ryan hastily snatched another rock and again threw it far, but not far enough.

" Ha! Got you." Ben taunted.

"Come on Ryan, you got it!" Jacob yelled. Ryan kept trying, one step closer each time. He knew he could do it, it was just a matter of practice. As he picked up his last rock, he folded it over in his hands, a nervous habit he had developed in baseball. He eyed the railings of the dock worn from weather and salt. The dock extended from the road separated by overgrown wild rose bushes. The neighborhood was suddenly illuminated by two halogen lights blinding the boys. These lights were headlights, leading the way of a stray car that had turned the bend around Pointe White. Ryan's arm swung back and he launched his whole body into the throw letting go of the rock. It was too dark to see the rock's pathway in the night but as it soared high into the air it veered towards the road and over the hedge. CRASH. One of the rays of light vanished. Wheels screeched, and everyone around the bonfire turned their heads sharply. They knew exactly what had happened.

"Shit, I'm leaving you guys… what should I do?" Ryan's face was white. All Ryan could think of was running away from the mess he had just created.

"Wait, Ryan," Jacob muttered. The car's engine was still on and the light started moving again, slowly now, in defeat of a broken headlight.

"I didn't do it on purpose."

"Ryan, just talk to him. Tell him the truth. He'll understand." Chloe stood up, her eyebrows turned upwards, concerned for Ryan.

"Understand what? That I was throwing rocks at a dock, he's gonna make me pay." Ryan started off in the other direction to escape. At the same moment, a man appeared at the stairs down to the beach. He was hardly visible in the darkness but was outlined by the house lights in the background. He was tall, muscular and looked to be in his 40's. A Rolex watch clutched his wrist and his black hair showed early signs of balding. He looked too fancy to be a father, not as if he had been tending the barbeque all day. Disgust filled his expression. Ryan realized at that

moment that he no choice now but to be the good person his parents had brought him up to be. Those sitting around the bonfire turned their heads and realizing they were being watched.

“Alright who did this?” His voice was low and didn’t have much life to it. Silence. The only sounds were of the neighbors finishing the fireworks bought on the reservation. “You better tell me immediately.” Another long pause. Ryan knew he should say something, but what? How could he explain what he had done?

“ I did it.”

“Come over here,” spat the man gruffly. His index fingered beckoned Ryan. Ryan’s feet slowly dragged him across the rocks. The man turned around and walked back to his car with Ryan following like a dog with his tail between his legs. The man stopped.

“Look what you did,” Ryan stepped towards the car timidly. It was a black Mercedes, shiny and fancy, the newest edition. Its front right headlight was smashed, with sharp edges of glass jutting out. The bulb was crushed, leaving the filament naked. “I just got this refinished too.” The man seemed to be holding in his anger like a pressure cooker. Ryan was speechless. He stood there mutely staring at what he had done.

“Look, I’m sorry sir. I meant no harm. It was an accident.”

“An accident? You can’t always get away with accidents. Did you do this on purpose?” Ray was a man of order. His house was perfect, his wife was beautiful and he was a successful business executive. He was a serious man, laughed on occasion and when he did it was dry and artificial. He had lived in California all his life, but when he was offered a job up in Seattle as a CEO he couldn’t let it go. It was his next leg up in the business. He found Bainbridge Island in Sunset Magazine and his wife and him found an expensive house on Puget Sound with many extra bathrooms. He had been heading back from the pub where he had met some business colleagues for burgers and beers.

“I…I..” Ryan choked, he was scared out of his mind.

“Look, you tell me the story now cause I am this close to calling the cops.” He said, his voice raised. Ray’s first instinct was to punch the kid in the face. What did he think he was doing? Ruining his nice car. Instead, he had taken a step back and talked to the kid, trying to calm fuming anger through gritting teeth. It was getting unbearable.

“ I…uh was throwing rocks at the Stottlemeyer’s dock. You know the one just down the street and I, uh, missed and didn’t realize a car was coming until it happened.”

“Throwing rocks at a dock?” Ray was yelling now. All his patience was gone.

“Is everything alright down there? What’s all the yelling for? I am trying to put some kids to bed if you don’t mind.” A women’s voice was heard up on the hillside from one of the houses. Both men turned to see a middle aged women coming down the stairs of her house walking towards

them. Her figure was sturdy and round from child rearing. Her arms were tightly crossed in front of her. She wore a pair of worn light blue and navy striped pajamas and a brown woolen sweater. Her hair was down wavy and clearly wasn't a high priority. Once she reached the road, she stopped and took in the situation. Standing before her was a middle aged man and a young boy arguing, illuminated by the light of one headlight. The man looked angry and fed up. She continued towards the two figures.

"He threw a rock at my car, supposedly accidentally." She briskly stepped into the situation.

"Ryan is that you? How did this happen?" She said surprised, seeing what had happened.

"Yeah." Ryan said slowly, recognizing the cheery voice of Allison, a neighborhood mother. All at once, Ray spilled the details of what had happened, his voice raised in frustration. Once Ray was finished, Ryan relieved in Allison's presence, started telling his side of the story, leaving nothing out. Calm seeped over the situation like a smooth fog quieting Ray. Allison listened without interruption and once they had both finished she turned towards Ryan.

"Ryan, what are you going to do about this?" She asked optimistically. Ryan became quiet again. He knew the right thing to do was pay the man for the damage he had caused, but he had no place to get the money. He wanted to avoid the consequences.

"How about you call him tomorrow? Sorry what is your name?"

"Ray Banning." Ray took a deep breath letting the oxygen expand in his lungs. He felt the anger seep out as quickly as it had come. He imagined himself as a kid again, free and strong spirited. He reached into his pocket, pulled out his wallet and handed Ryan a business card with his phone number.

"Well Ryan I expect to hear from you tomorrow, and we'll work this one out."

Ray got into his car and slowly drove to his house, ashamed of his outburst of anger. Ryan looked out onto the water. His friends had scattered, hurrying to get home before their curfews. Allison had to go back to her house to check on her kids, but as she left, she turned around to face Ryan once more.

"Happy Fourth!" And she walked up to her house without another word.

"Thank you." Ryan said. He looked out over the Sound, watching one last firework burn out, the muffled sound distant and hard to hear.

- The End –

Spring Comes to Waterfront Park

By Cameron Snow

Dora Flood "Prostitute with a Heart of Gold" Award

He let drop a classic set of long johns and stood skinny and naked before a polished metal mirror. Water vapor floated on the chill air, fogging his image. He rubbed a spot clear with his fist then peered closely at the end of his nose, the vee-shape of his mouth and the reddish-gray mustache, a 61 year old guy. Did the face-hair make him look older?

This was the first spring since the park district had installed a new public restroom with a shower. Other denizens of the park and harbor hadn't awakened to the possibility of a spring shower but Jerry felt it was time, time to have a good shower, a hot shower and, he had a purpose.

He left his winter garb heaped on the floor and stepped into the streaming water. Soap. Yes, he had soap, a nice lavender-smelling soap that had been part of the kits handed out at Christmas. Unbidden, his thoughts formed a jumbled Ode to Soap. He cited aloud:

"You go to these parties at the Senior Center and you wonder, 'What am I doing here?' and then, it turns out there are reasons. Soap is a reason. Scented Soap can perk you up."

Inspiration swelled in him and he finished off, "It's time to put soap and acquaintance to some purpose."

"Brilliant."

* * * *

Mary unlocked the door to the Senior Center Thrift Shop. She stood pushing the door back and forth to fan fresh air into the room then switched on the lights as she stepped over the threshold. Tube lights began their warm-up, flashing "hello" to racks of clothes, and tumbled books. She pulled out the change drawer and dumped in rolls of quarters. A basket of bejeweled insects winked at her as she picked a ladybug brooch from the top of the pile and pinned it to her jacket.

She glanced at the try-on mirror and saw how the brooch sparked-up her brightly printed jungle-number from the summer of 88. Above the jewel colors, she recognized a composed, not too bad face of 61 years. The tube lights steadied.

Jerry came through the door, nodding hello and making for the books. Mary gave him her automatic "good morning" as he began picking through books on the floor and placing them in their proper categories on the shelves. She liked his neatness.

When all the books had been sorted, he set one book aside to bring to the counter. He looked anxiously at the cheery figure in a brightly printed jacket and struggled with the memory of those high school years when Mary had been completely unapproachable, a cheerleader.

“That will be 50-cents,” she said, checking his choice, *America’s Best Short Stories of 1960*.

He dug into the coin pocket of his jeans to pull out a neatly folded dollar bill. An unsettling whiff of lavender came to her with the bill. For a moment they looked right into each other’s eyes, but then he said, “Good morning” and backed out the door so fast greeting cards were flapping in their rack.

Jerry stopped at the brink of the park where he could survey the sloping grass down to the kayak class launching from the public pier. “Launch!” he exerted them.

A dog ran--- unleashed. “Unleashed,” he declaimed.

Nannies sat in-silhouette against the water, watching their charges totter this way and that.

“I totter, should I ought’ter?” he rhymed to himself. “Sunlight breaks through a heavy grey cloud cover and streams into the park.”

It felt like an insight somehow, though he hadn’t worked out all the symbolism. His energy lifted, and he turned back to the shop.

* * * *

Mary turned to a row of Bainbridge High School Yearbooks ranged along one wall and easily found her senior year, 1967. She couldn’t remember his name, but she thought she had known him in school. He might have been editor of the school paper.

She turned the pages of the yearbook, passed her classmates with bouffant hairdos and the boys in white shirts with narrow ties, until she came to the page dedicated to the school paper. There he was: No mustache, not very strong chin, grinning like a cheerful imp. Jerry.

Then she sort of remembered him, a sort of intellectual, would-be-poet, lost to her in a crowd of hefty football players--- all of them gone somewhere else by now. And here he was, after all these years, someone who shared some of her time and place and, who, apparently, needed some looking-after. Better than taking on a cat, really.

The door scraped open. “Hello, again,” she said. “You forgot your change.”

“Say,” he beamed, “Would you like to go to the poetry reading at San Carlos this afternoon? I’ll be reading a poem or two.”

“Yes”, she said simply.

He grinned that impish grin, just like the yearbook but with a mustache. “I’ll come by about 4:30 then.”

“Great,” she smiled after him.

The rough shut of the door set a line of hand-crocheted pot holders dancing over the window. A sense of well-being suffused her, almost like happiness.

- The End -

Ghost Houses

By Larry Helm

Mack and the Boys Award

A branch snaps back and slaps me in the face. "Hey, watch it," I say to the back of Mike's green plaid shirt as I follow him up the animal trail. Mike and I've been hanging around together since school got out. He's going into seventh grade, same as me.

"Stay farther back then," he says. "What's the rush?"

"It'll be dark soon," I say.

"What's wrong? You scared of the dark?"

"Look, we agreed to get in and get out. So move it."

The trail turns up an overgrown logging road and the way gets easier. Overhead, a shaft of sunlight breaks through the thick fir canopy and lands on the forest floor, spotlighting clumps of salal, Oregon Grape and a huckleberry bush. A group of gnats, captivated by the light, dance around specks of dust floating in the warm August air. Ahead, I make out the silhouettes of three small houses huddled together in a clearing. We come up behind the largest one, walk around to the front and step on the porch. Like the others, it's a one-room cabin that was built in the middle of the woods and abandoned. The door's padlocked. The shutters are boarded over and nailed shut. As far back as I could remember the houses had been there. I asked my parents who'd built them but they said they didn't know.

I size up the padlock. It was an inch thick. "We'll have to bust down this door to get in. Let's try a window."

We go around to the side of the house and eye the shutters. They're just out of reach.

"We need a stick," Mike says.

I walk to the edge of the clearing and find a fallen branch. Grabbing one end I put my foot in the middle and yank, breaking it in two. It cracks loudly, sending a shock wave into the forest.

"Wake up the dead, why don't you," Mike says.

I creep toward the house. Halfway back, the hair bristles on the back of my neck.
"Somebody watching us," I say and turn and scan the forest.

"That's crazy," says Mike. "Nobody's around."

"Mike, look!" I point back toward the path. "See the deer? There's three of 'em."

"So what? They're just curious. Gimme that stick."

I hand it to him and he raises the branch overhead, clunking it against the boarded window. He forces it behind the shutter and pries, easing out the bottom until the nails pop free. It's hinged on top and he uses the stick to prop it open.

"Let's go in. Give me a leg up," Mike says.

I lace my fingers into a stirrup and Mike put his foot in. I hoist him to the window and he grabs the sill and pulls himself up and hangs by his elbows.

"Hey, there's no glass." He goes in headfirst, then leans out, grabs my hands and pulls me in.

What's left of the daylight follows us in and mixes with the darkness. My eyes adjust and the inside of the room appears. The kitchen table's set. Plates, forks, cups, the whole shebang, neatly in place. Mike rounds up an old glass kerosene lamp, but the kerosene evaporated long ago. We pull out two chairs and sit at the table.

"Whoever lived here musta left in a hurry," says Mike.

Above the drain board, open shelving holds pots and pans and a blue and white porcelain tea set with tiny cups. A wood cookstove, its nickel still shining, stands at the ready against the wall. The place is spotless, no spider webs, no dust.

"Somebody's taking care of this place," I say.

A section of the back wall is unfinished, exposing newspapers stuffed between the boards for insulation. I get up and fish out a crumpled sheet and spread it out on the table.

"Hey, look at this," I say, "It's dated November 1, 1941."

"That's 25 years ago," says Mike. "But it's like they just left."

I look out the window. The deer had move closer. A band of crows had landed in a cedar tree and sit silently like ornaments, their inky eyes trained on the cabin. A squirrel runs to the end of a branch and peers down. In a gust of wind the trees lean forward and brush against the cabin. I get a funny feeling.

"Mike," I say, " This place is spookin' me. I'm gettin' out of here." I climb out the window, hang from the sill by my fingers and drop to the ground.

The sun goes down and dusk rushes into the woods and surrounds everything. In the window I see Mike's outline holding the kerosene lamp. He motions for me to take it. I want to say no but when he leans farther out I jump up and grab it. Mike hops down and pulls out the stick. The shutter flops shut with a thud, startling the crows who fly off and blend into the shadows. The

deer retreat as we make our way toward the trail. I can still feel the touch of their soft brown eyes on my back long after we leave the woods and stand on Foster Road. "Let's go to the beach camp," Mike says.

Our beach camp is located on the long flat sand bar at the entrance to Fletcher's Bay. We built it on the day school let out by picking ferns, tying them in bundles with twine and stacking them around a frame of two by-fours. As the summer nights grew warmer, we slept there more and more.

On the way we stop by Mike's house and fill the lamp with oil. By the time we reach the camp the stars are out. Mars is overhead. No Venus. Across the bay I see the lights of Brownsville. We crawl inside and Mike lights the lamp, adjusting the wick until our sleeping quarters are filled with an orange light.

"Do you believe in ghosts?" Mike says.

"I don't know."

"We got to find out what happened to those people who lived in the ghost houses. Old man Shotwell lives the closest. Let's ask him."

"You ask him, I ain't," I say.

We never go near Shorty Shotwell's house because he looks mean. When he drives by in his Coup de Ville and we're walking on the road he never waves. If we run into him at Dick's Market he never speaks to us. We figure he's a crusty old coot who doesn't like kids. Heck, Mike and I are almost thirteen and we are as tall as him.

The next morning I follow Mike over to old man Shotwell's house, the biggest in the neighborhood. It's a house like on TV, a one story rambler that rambles on and on and has a garage big enough for his Caddy, a three quarter ton pickup truck and a ChrisCraft Runabout. We know Mr. Shotwell's a big wheel in the real estate business and holds some kind of county office. We find him out front watering his rhododendrons, holding the hose in one hand and a cup of coffee in the other. He's decked out in his golf clothes, bright red shirt, blue pants and a hat like Gilligan. His back's to us when we approach and Mike clears his throat. Mr. Shotwell spins around and spills his coffee. He regains his composure and looks us over before he says, "What are you kids doing snooping around here?"

Mike says quickly, "We've come to ask you a question, Mr. Shotwell."

"A question!" he says, "What is it?"

"Those old houses in the woods," Mike says, pointing in the direction of the ghost houses. "Who built them?"

Shotwell's eyes get beady and don't move off Mike. He points his coffee cup at him. 'You kids been messing around those buildings?"

"No sir," says Mike, his voice kind of high. "We want to know who built them is all."
"Some Japs built 'em before the war," he says.

"Where are they now?" Mike asks.

Shotwell's eyes widen and he lifts his eyebrows. "Looks like I'll have to give you boys a history lesson. Ever heard of Pearl Harbor. Well, it's in Hawaii and the Japs snuck up on it and bombed it. That when the army came and rounded up all the Japs on Bainbridge. They put them on a ferry and sent them to a holding camp in the California desert. Good riddance, I said then and I say now."

"Aren't they coming back to their homes?" asks Mike.

"Hell no, they won't be back. I've paid the back taxes. That property's mine now and I don't want you punk-kids trespassin' on it. If I catch you near those houses, I'm calling the cops and have you brats arrested. Understand?" He aims the hose in our direction and sprays water at us. "Now git and don't come back."

We leave and walk down Shotwell's long driveway. It's got a good view of the Olympic Mountains. The morning sun reflects off a small patch of snow on one of the peaks. From fifty miles away I make out the notches of the long river valleys cut by the Hamma Hamma and the Dosewallips. The weather's going to be clear today, our clothes will dry quickly.

Two days later we burn down our beach camp. Mike says it has ghosts. He says they came with the lamp. The flames of our beach fire shoot up as Mike tosses on the dried ferns, bundle by bundle. It illuminates his jet black hair and almond eyes. I put my weight against the wooden frame and push it over. We take it apart and lay the two by fours side by side and lash them together with twine from the ferns. Mike sets the kerosene lamp in the middle and bends nails over its base to make it steady. We drag the make-shift raft down to the water's edge where Mike lights the wick and turns it up high. Mike and I wade into the water up to our knees and pull the raft off the end of the spit shove it into the outgoing tide. We stand on the beach and watch the lamp blaze away like a beacon, until it disappears around Battle Point. Then Mike yells, "Banzai!" like the Japanese do in the movies and we sling our sleeping bags over our shoulders and head home.

Though the characters in this story are in part fictional, the Japanese houses are real. They were located off Hansen Road near Fletcher's Bay where they survived until 1994. Two fell to a bulldozer's blade when the land was cleared for a housing development. The third and smallest one was spared for its utilitarian value, serving as a tool shed for the construction company. Today, dwarfed by its two-story neighbors, it's been painted green and used as a woodshed. It stands to remind us of the modest aspirations of three Japanese families whose hopes and dreams were crushed when they were over taken by events beyond their control. For some of us, there will always be ghosts.

- The End -

Bicycle Commute with Ferry

By Hans Griesser

The New Bainbridge Award

“Well, I’ll probably make it," Vic decides as he swings his leg over the seat and flashing red bicycle lights. Rolling down the driveway, he knows it’s going to be another five mile sprint to the ferry.

Birds sing in the suburban trees with the rising sun. But Vic doesn't hear them welcoming the day, he hears them saying, "Go, man go!" He’ll pedal hard to catch the 7:05 Bainbridge ferry to Seattle.

Planning ahead is the secret to successful bicycle commuting. Vic recognized this early, but even after ten years, he wasn't that good at it.

On an exceptional day, he is on his bike less than five minutes after waking. Today is more typical. He bumbles around the house getting dressed and gathering his things. And even though his clothes are rolled and his breakfast and lunch waiting for him from the night before, the morning still slips away. Vic hustles on his gloves, jacket, and helmet, grabs his gear, kisses his groggy wife, and loads the bike. He knows that if he isn’t out by quarter till, then he may as well wait another forty minutes for the next ferry. One minute late for the ferry is 45 minutes late for work. On a much bumbled day, Vic could miss several deadlines making the 10:25 instead of the 7:05 ferry. Rainy days are worse requiring extra gear handling.

Clipping his shoes into the pedals, Vic starts to go faster. He takes a flat dirt path across the neighborhood houses and lawns. It gives him a chance to warm up before the first hill. He turns onto Koura Road where the trees are older and much taller. Koura travels across the spine of Bainbridge Island. That means it is hilly, and the steepest is just before Koura meets the highway. Vic reaches 45 miles per hour by the bottom. Some days the rain stings his face. Today he tucks his head down, grinning and whooping with joy.

Vic works up a sweat on Highway 305 trying to time the traffic lights. He remembers that deeply cold winter morning when his toes and fingers were about to fall off. That day the wait at the last light was intolerable. "Arrgh! I'm running this light!" The flashing lights came on before he made it across. Huh? Where did that patrol car come from? It must have been at the intersection waiting next to him. How did he miss it?

Vic stopped at the sidewalk. The officer came out, looked him over, and said, "Those lights apply to bicycles too."

"Yes sir, I know,” Vic mumbled. "It’s just so cold."

He took Vic's license as another bicycle zoomed through the now green light and past them. A bird sang in the tree, "Stop lights. Stop lights." The ferry horn interrupted the bird's mocking to announce that the captain was ready to sail. The trooper went to sip coffee in his car. Vic shivered, wondering when his first appointment was.

When he misses the ferry, Vic hangs out in the terminal on the Missed-the-Ferry Bench. Here he drapes his jacket, unpacks his pannier, and eats his breakfast while starting work. The entire bench gets covered with stuff, sometimes wet stuff. It's a good half hour until a stream of people signals the ferry's return. After a quick repack, there is no evidence of Vic's presence there.

Today, Vic knows he is going to make the ferry because a motorcycle passes him before the tollbooth. It stops to pay as Vic rolls on board. Bicycles don't pay on this side, but they are often left behind. Without the motorcycle's diversion, the gate would close earlier and Vic would be enjoying the comfortable Missed-the-Ferry Bench again.

On board, Vic wheels his bike through the cars to lean it against the wall. A blinking light on another parked bike catches his attention. Vic fumbles around for its off switch, his turn to be the Bike Light Fairy to the rescue. Someone always leaves a light on, similar to the activated car alarms set off by wave rocking, except never announced on the PA.

Vic never rushes once he is on the ferry. Walking between cars to a window, he sticks his head over the grey water to clear each nostril narrowly missing an otter. At the stairs, he holds the door for a senior couple, returning their smiles. Then he heads up to take a nap.

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Vic wakes with the bump of the ferry against the dock. Gathering his gear, he heads to the car deck, awake enough to chat with the other bikers.

The bicyclists burst off the ferry to every corner of Seattle. Vic chats with a group riding up Western Avenue, behind Pike Place Market. Halfway up, he slows down to look back over the water at the Olympics under the brightening blue sky.

The morning city streets are quiet, different than the earlier ride. On Bainbridge, you avoid deer jumping from the roadside blackberries. In Belltown, you avoid broken auto glass and corner drug deals.

***

In the evening, Vic is rushing again. Late getting to the locker room, he throws his gear into the pannier, puts on his helmet, jacket, gloves, and tucks his pant legs into his socks. "Well, I'll probably make the 5:30."

Traffic in the city is much heavier as everyone leaves work. Vic obeys the traffic rules. He gets respect from traffic by acting like a car, taking an entire lane.

Zipping back down Western Avenue, Vic activates his headlight. The uphill cars stack up at the stop sign. Vic, standing on the pedals, weaves his bike back and forth across the lane to avoid potholes and to be more noticeable. One of the cars pushes its nose out of the line, and Vic's heart jumps. Look out! Not again!

A few years ago, one of those uphill cars had decided not to wait in line. It had u-turned just as Vic arrived. Vic had gripped the brakes and shouted, "No!" but his front wheel hit the car's side. The back wheel kicked up sending Vic into the air. The pillar on the side of the windshield slammed into Vic's hip, hard. Everything went black. Vic remembers the swat but not the flight across the road.

Color had quickly returned and, amongst firemen and EMTs, Vic was lying in a puddle of glass talking on another rider's phone saying, "Honey, I missed the ferry again."

Today, safely down Western, he glances at the line on the passenger ramp. A crowd slogs onto the boat. Plenty of time. On the Seattle side, there is no bench for the tardy. Here, at Colman Dock, you sit on the Missed-the-Ferry Curb or, in the rain, on the Missed-the-Ferry Galley Trays under the passenger ramp.

One time Vic was so desperate to get on the ferry that he rode right up to the gate, dramatically threw his arms and yelled to the First Mate. Against all hope, the mate waved Vic and his bike under the gate. Really! He made it!

***

This evening, the clouds billow and the sun breaks through. Vic stands on the aft deck, the picklefork, willing to endure some wind and rain because the sun at his back projects a brilliant rainbow over Seattle's skyline.

Vic parked his bike on the front of the ferry so he must return before the dock bump. His bike cleats clack down the stairs to the car deck. Vic is now in his bike tights having changed in the ferry's head. It's like Superman's phone booth except it's the ferry bathroom.

Surrounded by cars and motorcycles, Vic activates his blinking lights and watches the ferry approach. The roar of white foam announces their arrival and slows the ferry. Vic steadies himself for the bump.

The ferry workers secure the boat. The motorcycles start their engines. The bicycle taillights flash madly. There's mounting excitement until finally the barrier rope is thrown to the side and the mate yells, "BICYCLES!"

The bikes flood off the ferry. A school of blinking red lights weaving and bobbing around each other as the faster riders maneuver through the slower. The fast bikes rush up the hill. The slow flow into the eddies. There is a calm moment as the last few, dribbled through the packed deck, trickle off.

Suddenly, a roar explodes from the ferry. The motorcycles are loosed. If the bikes were salmon, the motorcycles are orcas charging after them. The bicyclists rushing up the hill move to either side so the motorcycles can fly through. At the light, they mingle again, yellowish goretex, black

leather, heavy panting, rumbling exhaust. The light changes and with a final roar, they scatter to all points of Kitsap.

Vic struggles with the first few strokes up that hill. His legs are stiff and he's hungry for dinner. Ten seconds later, that's forgotten. He goes faster on Ferncliff Avenue. Vic rides fast, not because he has to, but because he wants to. Sometimes he'll get in a line of bikes riding fast, one drafting behind the other, taking turns being the leader pushing the air out of the way for the others. Tour de France with panniers.

Tonight Vic is alone, his pace quick and easy. The light rain on his face refreshes him. He could keep this up for miles taking in the smell of the cedar all around him. Along the side of the road is a gully, the mouth to Murden Cove. At low tide, it smells of sulfur.

But eventually he rejoins the highway. Vic turns on his headlight with the setting sun.

He looks for a break in the car line. This is the diciest part of the ride, the left turn across 305 onto Koura. Many bike accidents happen on 305. Bicyclists without lights, drivers on cell phones, hidden side roads all contribute. Vic spots a potential opening and pumps harder to pick up speed. The break between the cars is too small and goes by too early. Vic looks back and sees another break. As the trailing car passes, Vic double checks the break, jams his left arm straight out, and banks hard to swerve across into the turning lane. Today he's lucky that oncoming traffic is sparse enough to let him complete the turn quickly instead of waiting in the middle of two opposing traffic lanes.

The hill on Koura Road, which made him whoop with joy that morning, is a monster at night. Vic attacks it with all his speed but quickly downshifts as the hill rises. The first time he rode up this hill, Vic was tempted to walk the bike, but somehow he kept going, and soon without really realizing it, Vic had pedaled to the top. He never thought about walking the bike again.

Tonight he watches his breath flow into the headlight beam making a white cloud, the straight line of the beam delineating the darkening night. The breeze shuffles through trees hidden in the wet darkness. He pants harder reigniting the headlight cone. Without realizing it, Vic pedals to the top again.

Only the occasional car rushes by him now, the considerate ones giving him a wide berth. He rolls down the final hill with enough speed to coast to the top of the dirt driveway. Aiming his bike downhill for tomorrow and leaning it against the house, Vic opens the front door.

Warm air smelling of poached salmon hits his face. Both kids run to him, "Dad's home!"

"Who wants a hug?" Vic laughs taking off his helmet.

"Are you sweaty?"

"Nope," Vic fibs as he kisses his wife, "it's just rain."

“Take a shower first,” the kids tell him and go back to their homework.

Later that evening after the hugs and dinner, Vic packs his breakfast and lunch, rolls up his clothes, and vows to leave earlier the next morning.

- The End –

Talking Baseball

By Walt Ball

A short recollection of a time as a youth in Eagledale

Living on an island set us apart because the world we had to explore was remote, but that never slowed us down. Baseball was a big part of our lives, just as it was for any suburbanite of Brooklyn or Boston, except the game we played was strictly country hardball.

The island's shorelines may have limited our travels and perhaps our horizons, but the spirit of country hardball could not be confined. The energies, the anticipations, the sounds, seemed to transcend every emotion . . . every obstacle.

Our equipment was sparse. Handed down, worn out gloves. Broken and even homemade bats, cardboard bases, and a single ball. The occasional new baseball was looked upon as though godlike, jealously guarded. The responsibility for its care was not taken lightly and when it finally became torn it was wrapped in that sticky black tape that our dads kept in the basement.

"Work up" was the name of the game on our little field and there were the usual home field rules. Newcomers to our game were forced to learn the rules the hard way. Only the regulars knew where the foul lines were and that a perfect diamond may not exist.

The huge old maple trees near third were out of play, the outfield was defined by the girls' swings on the right field side and in the distance, the old madrona trees marked the longest fly balls ever seen in our ball park. Basketball and football were played in season but, whenever the weather was fair, it was time to play baseball.

The little hamlet we lived in was known as Eagledale. It was first settled by our grandparents, who worked in the Port Blakely timber mill. The mill had long since gone the way of others. But there was another sort of mill where our fathers worked. This was the Eagle Harbor creosoting mill, building railroad ties, power poles, and piling for all the docks scattered throughout Puget Sound and around the world. The pungent odor of burning tree bark and hot creosote bring back the fondest of memories, in the same manner, I suppose, of sweet corn on the plains or apples in the fall. It is one of those memories I tell of today.

It was a particularly hot August day. Taking a break from an afternoon game, we walked a short way down the road to the old store, where we could have a soda and cool off in the shade. Bill, who was our only left-hander, pointed out some strangers coming up the road from the mill. As these fellows drew closer, we could see clearly they were not from our neighborhood.

They were Japanese, from the tanker that had tied up at the mill the night before. To us, creosote was an exotic material, delivered by tank ships manned by middle Europeans, so their presence was strange indeed.

Not strange was their nationality. Japanese had helped settle our little island. In fact, it was from Eagledale that our island's administration had sent the local Japanese families off to Manzanar for confinement during World War II.

Naturally, we did not understand a word they said, but there were lots of smiles and odd gestures. They seemed especially curious about our baseball gear, limited though it was.

Now we were completely self-coached. Our fathers had played for many years for a team known as the Eagledale Black Bears. They were the mill team, and I remember fondly how the mill would put all our families on an old scow. Pushed by an older tug boat, and off we would go to Indianola or Hansville for a Sunday double header. . . how the game would stop when the only ball was knocked into the blackberries to the raucous cheers of one side or another . . . even the wives and children were allowed to help in the search.

At any rate, we continued our leisurely break without realizing our new friends had slipped away. About a half hour later, our new Japanese friends returned with their own baseball gear. There was no question. It was time to play baseball. As we walked up the road to the field, the old store keeper asked where we were going and Pat told him, "We're off to play these fellows a little work up."

At the start there were only fourteen of us, seven for each side. The game started slowly at first, each team carefully feeling out the other for skills. We had doubts about their abilities. After all, they were Japanese and this was Eagledale. Language was another problem, but soon overcome. Anyone can see that a footrace to the plate was rewarded by the first at bat, and that the player with his hands highest on the bat handle could be second.

About the sixth inning, a few extra players showed up. They were our fathers and their friends and now the game was on in earnest. These Japanese fellows could play the game. We marveled at how they threw themselves at the ball, their diving catches, and the intensity they brought to our little field. But, as it usually happened, the game ended when it became difficult to see the ball because of darkness.

The final score went unrecorded. We decided that the single home run for our side would be counted in our storehouse of personal triumphs.

We walked with these fellows back to their ship, chattering and gesturing, smiles all around. Without realizing it, we had leaned something that day and so had our parents.

You see, our parents had gone to war against these people and, because of that, had generally despised them. Our parents had sent Japanese American citizens away to concentration camps, out of fear, without taking time to understand them. And we, the Eagledale boys, had assumed that only we could play baseball. We were wrong, for we shared a common language - the language of baseball.

The End

The Weekend Party

By Bill Branley

And so it came to pass that my wife, Phoebe, and I were invited—no, encouraged—no, pressed into service—to host a fundraising event for the local arts guild. The dictator was my mother. I knew the kind of event it would be: a lot of old time Copper Islanders plus assorted new residents who had arrived in the last ten years. Mother was on the board of the arts guild, of course. Phoebe and I were often squeezed between two camps: the new-fangled world of organic food and carbon offsets and the old-fangled world of beef-eating, Rolls-driving relics of the past. Yet, the fact is, the new-fangled types needed money from the old-fangled types. Our job was to bring them together.

I began the day by visiting the wine merchant, a trusted ally of mine, and had him recommend the finest ten dollar wines in his collection. No point in overspending on the arty crowd. They come primarily to have their egos massaged. I could serve them Kool-Aid as long as I told them how much I simply adored their last painting/photograph/play/book/song/poem/sculpture/film... you get the idea.

Later my daughter Stephanie arrived to help prepare for the onslaught. She had been jogging and still smelled of sea salt and sunscreen. Mother soon joined us and took charge. She was dressed in what she called her work clothes: a purple velour track suit with white stripes up the sides. She also wore what seemed a full complement of jewelry and makeup. I don't think in my entire life I've ever known her to step beyond her bedroom door without being fully accessorized.

The task at hand was to rearrange practically everything in the house.

“The buffet should be presented in the library,” declared Mother. “It’s your most attractive room.”

“The dining room is closer to the kitchen,” Phoebe dared to observe.

“Why not in the kitchen?” said Stephanie.

“My god, this isn’t a pizza party,” said Mother.

While that debate raged I was assigned by Phoebe to move two dining room chairs into the music room so that they flanked the fireplace.

The moment the chairs were in place, Mother came by and said, “Those need to be by the window. Helga Finsky will stand by the fireplace to read her latest poem, *Minerals and Magic*. Don’t you think, Sidney, it would be perfect to have the fireplace as a backdrop?”

“Most assuredly,” I replied, and dutifully moved the chairs to a window looking out to the garden.

Moments later, Stephanie happened by and said, “Those chairs might be in the way.”

“Oh?”

“The garden will be illuminated and Mom wanted people to be able to walk up to the window to see it,” she said.

The room was shrinking with possibilities. “How about near the piano?” I suggested. “People sitting there will have a commanding view of the room.”

“Great idea,” she said.

I dragged the chairs so that they were nestled into the curve of the grand piano, thinking that at last the task would be done. Needing a bit of nourishment, I went into the kitchen to see if anything was lying about.

“Sidney, dear.” It was Phoebe’s voice, sounding distressed.

“Yes?” I wandered over to her location, tea in hand. She was looking at the chairs as though they were the most offensive pieces of furniture ever created.

“I wanted these by the fireplace,” she said.

I then gave her a condensed retelling of the journey of the chairs from the fireplace to the window to the piano.

After which she said, “Well, they won’t do here because Cleave Zachman will play the piano. We can't have people sitting with their ears practically glued to the soundboard. After all, he's playing Prokofiev.”

Phoebe dropped her hands, exasperated by the ordeal of trying to trying to find the perfect solution to the age-old furniture puzzle. After some discussion we returned the chairs to the dining room. I escaped to the garden with my tea.

The first of the guests, Claude Vord and his wife Catherine, arrived promptly at six. This was a stunning coup for our social event. Claude was a noted adventurer who always, it seemed, was just returning from a far off place where he had been hiking or climbing or snowshoeing or paddling up some reptile-infested waterway.

“Claude,” I said, shaking his hand as one man-of-the-world to another. “Haven’t seen you in a while.”

“Dogsledding,” he said.

“Can’t wait to hear about it. Catherine, how are you? Come in, please.”

I gave Catherine my best air kiss and then led them into the foyer, where Phoebe greeted them. My wife wore a sleek little party dress that I had not seen before. I confess I could not take my eyes off of her. Mother, on the other hand, was in a flowing number that looked like a desert tent, with bangles and hoops hanging all about.

"My dear Claude," Mother exclaimed. "I am dying to hear about Alaska. I hope you brought pictures."

I was certain there would be pictures.

"I do have one or two with me," Claude said, and like a magician he produced a stack of photographs. "Here's a shot with my dogs just after finishing the Iditarod."

Catherine laid a hand on his arm. "Perhaps we should wait until the others are here."

"Quite right," said Claude.

She had the patience of a cat. By then our guests were arriving in a steady stream and I returned to my post to welcome them.

Harvey Ott was a retired actor from Hollywood who was quite funny on stage when he appeared at our local playhouse but who, in person, had an unfortunate quirk: no matter what comment you made to him he would respond with a story about himself and Some Famous Actor having lunch and the Famous Actor making a joke, and you were supposed to throw your head back as though it was so riotously funny you could barely contain yourself.

Harvey introduced his companion, a much younger man whose pants were embarrassingly tight and in which it looked like he was carrying a handful of golf balls. "Sid, this is Sid," said Harvey, and laughed loudly.

"I shall have no trouble remembering your name," I said, shaking the hand of the other Sid.

"Chaplin did that to me once," Harvey began. "We were having lunch in Santa Monica---"

"Oh, Phoebe, look who's here," I broke in, "Harvey Ott and his friend. And you'll never guess what his friend's name is--Sid!"

I deftly passed them off to Phoebe and turned my attention to Cleave Zachman, the pianist. He was tall with a pronounced shock of white hair that rose up from his forehead like a snowdrift.

"Cleave, I am looking forward to your performance," I said.

"Thank you. Is the bar open?"

“Certainly. I believe you know where it is,” I said. He patted my shoulder and winked. What I didn't say was that I had hid my bottles of MacAllan Scotch and put out the cheaper stuff. Zachman, for one, was known to pour it liberally.

Next came Greta Swanson who, at ninety-five, would no doubt be the oldest member present. She was also the richest. As she began to negotiate the two steps from the walk up to my front stoop she held out her hand for me to grasp.

“I apologize for holding everybody up,” she said to the people waiting behind her, but they wouldn't dare hurry her anyway. Greta Swanson was the Queen Bee of Copper Island.

“Nonsense,” I said, guiding her up the steps. She was a tiny woman who once presided over an enormously profitable company that coated logs with a black pitch to make them last longer when exposed to the elements. She made an immense fortune but lost much of it in lawsuits. Interestingly, she never married.

I kissed her on the cheek. She was surprisingly alert. “You’re looking a bit heavy, Sidney,” she confided to me. “Get out and walk more.”

“I’ve been meaning to do just that,” I said, feeling a few pairs of eyes taking note of my well-fed physique.

Greta went in to be attended by Mother and Phoebe.

The other guests included many younger faces, such as actors from the playhouse and musicians I had heard at the local coffee shop. There was also Helga, the poet, and several writers, and many painters and photographers, and a healthy dose of people who went to artsy gatherings to soak up the atmosphere. By six-thirty the house was jammed.

After the last person had gone inside, I took my customary stroll down the driveway to Skolmish Road to make sure none of our guests had made inappropriate parking decisions. The rhododendrons that border our drive were in full bloom as I walked from the house.

One of the first cars I spotted was Greta's. It was hard to miss her 1959 Rolls-Royce, a graceful sea-swell of fenders and chrome that she had received as a birthday present from her brother. She stopped driving it herself decades ago and hired Ruben, the son of a strawberry farmer, to drive her around and take care of the vehicle.

I stood in the road and looked up and down. Vehicles were parked in both directions along the shoulders. About half were Subarus and grungy old Volvos with peace stickers on them, and a few rusted pickup trucks. In my mind these represented the traditional Copper Islanders, a cranky lot at times. The rest of the vehicles were late model types, some of them perhaps owned by people still trying to decide whether or not to make a go of it on Copper. It is a fact that some new arrivals leave after a year, having quickly grown tired of the rain, or the politics, or both.

Satisfied that I wouldn't receive any irate calls from my neighbors or the police, I returned to the house to pour my first two fingers of MacAllan. Or maybe three.

The End

Where Hyla Turns

By Megan Benton

They'd been walking every morning for a month before Jane Magnussen noticed what lay behind the huckleberries rimming the property where Hyla Avenue turns. Carol Barnes saw even less as they circled their two-mile route. There was her mutt Scorchy to be managed, for one thing, but mostly it was the endless troubles of her husband's job that kept Carol's conversation elsewhere and her eyes on the gravel.

"I've never noticed that before," Jane said, into the lull as Carol bent to bag Scorchy's morning business. She walked halfway up the dim and slippery drive to get a better look.

"It's a golf course. Come look."

Carol pulled Scorchy along to peer into the bright bowl of grass and garden. Tall flagsticks glistened like masts on a smooth green lake. Threaded through beds of head-high rhododendrons and deep bunkers the size of rowboats, lay several short golf holes. Beside each tee stood a ballwasher and a wire mesh basket for soda cans and candy wrappers. The course showed no sign of play, no divots, no worn paths, no scuffling of the pristine turf.

Whispering as if Tiger Woods loomed nearby, Jane said, "There must be a story behind this."

The women eased their way back to the road, family job woes forgotten. Determined to stride away the creeping poundage of her fifties, Jane was usually the one to push their pace. But today she rounded the property in a slow stroll, loitering for more glimpses of the little course, more magical for having suddenly sprung up, Athena-like, along their route.

Neither woman spoke until Hyla resumed its rutted northward course. Where it levels off, along the old orchard, Jane said, "It's too lovely not to have a story."

"Someone likes to golf?" Carol suggested between puffs of breath.

Jane glanced at her laboring friend. "A good story. It deserves a good story."

After their coffee break at Bay Hay the women continued up Sunrise. They slowed at the farm to watch the new lambs.

"I think there should be a sad and beautiful story behind that little golf course," Jane said, "maybe heart-breaking, but beautiful. That will be our job now, when we walk by there. To tell its story. Do you mind?"

Carol was too astonished to object. She and Scorchy hurried to catch up as Jane headed north along the narrow shoulder of Sunrise Drive.

“I think I’ll call him Bart,” Jane began. “He played defensive end for the ’79 Huskies, and he was a starting outfielder on the baseball team. But after college, when Bart moved back to Bainbridge with his new wife Mary and they bought that wooded place on Hyla, he grew thick around the middle, as athletes often do. Not ones to simply accept fate, Bart and Mary joined Wing Point—”

Jane swung toward Carol. “Was it there then? The Wing Point course?”

yes wide, Carol lifted her shoulders in ignorance.

“Had to be. Let’s say it was.” Jane turned back to face the road.

“They joined Wing Point,” she continued, “and Bart began playing twice, maybe three times a week. In no time, he was a scratch golfer. He even won a few tournaments.”

Jane fell silent as they took the hill up Roberts. Along Kallgren, she resumed. “This new golf prowess, the pleasure of being an athlete again—only made it worse when Mary finally carried a baby to term and their son was born.”

At the startled jerk of Carol’s head, Jane explained. “Oh, they were thrilled, of course, and they loved him with all their hearts. They named him Barry, blending their own names together. But something was wrong. Barry’s arms hung from his shoulders like tiny tadpoles, pink, bony, withered. His heart was the wrong size too, and doctors told them he would be lucky to see his tenth birthday. Apparently it was something Mary had taken. She cried for weeks, from the guilt of it, and in his own silence Bart mourned that his son would never rush for a touchdown, hit a homer, or reach the green in one.”

Jane spoke slowly, with long pauses between sentences. Carol didn’t mind. Even Scorchy trotted along peacefully, if not attentive at least less of a nuisance than usual.

The next day they came up Beach Crest and as always turned north, disappearing into Hyla’s shadows. This time they both peered into the bright glade where the road turns. A pin stood in a shaft of sunlight, its flag limp with last night’s rain. The swells and hollows of the course, what they could see of it through dripping cedar boughs, were sheened with silver.

“So what happened to little Barry?” Carol said.

Jane smiled. “Barry was stronger than anyone expected. He grew into a stout and cheerful little boy. For months his mother guided the thumbless hook that was his hand, curled around a fat pencil, until he could form his letters as well as any first grader. When fall came he went down the hill to catch the school bus with the two Andreson boys who lived up Beach Crest. They called him Birdie, because his arms reminded them of the little wings on a Thanksgiving turkey. It was a friendly nickname and Barry liked it, so it stuck.”

Jane stopped. A woman with wild red hair approached, struggling to control her three lab puppies. During the sniffs, smiles, and dance of untangling leashes, Jane leaned against a fencepost to loosen her shoe and scoop out a pebble.

The commotion at last resolved, Carol cleared her throat. “The highlight of little Birdie’s week,” she said, quietly, because the red-haired woman had not gone far and she felt a little silly, “came every Saturday morning when Bart took him along for his 8:30 round at Wing Point. Birdie always ran ahead to each green and wrapped his arms around the flagstick, gripping it with clenched shoulders. With a jump he could lift it free and lay it aside.”

Jane clapped her hands. “Of course. That’s exactly what happened.”

The women walked on to Bay Hay in thoughtful silence. They settled on a picnic bench with their decaf Americanos.

Jane leaned back against the table. “It was the look on Birdie’s face,” she said, “when he watched his father’s putts, smooth and true, that gave Bart the idea. He talked to a friend with a machine shop in Ballard, and when Birdie’s ninth birthday came around—an occasion secretly dreaded by his parents—Bart presented his son with a special putter, its shaft elongated and its grip narrowed, so that the boy could control it with his stunted arms.”

Jane paused. “Birdie loved that putter,” she said. “He practiced for hours, whenever he could get a ride to Wing Point, and soon he was one-putting from almost anywhere on the practice green. The next summer Bart worked overtime for a month to have a special nine-iron made for Birdie. He could manage only a short stabbing backswing, but he practiced and practiced, and—”

“Crikey!” Carol exclaimed. “The Comcast guy is coming at 11. Gotta run.” The sudden banality of it was like a slammed door in the night. Dragging Scorchy, Carol hurried away through the rows of blooming lilac, forsythia, and quince.

The next day Carol no sooner latched the gate behind her than Jane told her Bart’s best idea came that following winter. “Understandably, he and Mary wanted Birdie’s tenth birthday to be his best ever,” she said as they headed down Falk’s leafy tunnel toward Murden Cove. “According to Bart’s plan, Mary took Birdie to Disneyland for spring break. Then, from the moment Bart said good bye at the ferry, he was busy. That afternoon his buddies from Wing Point came over. For seven straight days, at odd hours, whenever the men could get away to help, neighbors saw strange cars and pick-up trucks snaking back and forth on Hyla. No one could tell what they were up to.”

Carol made a low chuckling sound.

“Well,” Jane went on, “when Birdie returned with Mary from Disneyland, sunburned and tired but bubbling with things to tell his dad, Bart just smiled as he swung the old Subaru into their driveway. ‘You know, Birdie,’ he said, ‘Somebody has a birthday next—.’ A squeal from the back seat cut short his words. Birdie levered open the car door and tumbled out. He

scrambled up the drive to where it met the lawn, wheeling his arms in short arcs of excitement. Before him lay three truncated holes of a golf course, each green set from its tee just about as far as Birdie's swing could send a ball. The sod was still laced with sand, and the tees were just scraped and flattened tables of earth pushed up from the flower beds, but it was the most perfect thing the boy had ever seen."

"Oh, Jane," Carol said.

They left the story there for the day, as Scorchy insisted on badgering two Dalmatians and an old collie. But over the next days and weeks the women took turns moving life along for the family at that beautiful and mysterious corner along Hyla. As Birdie turned eleven, and then twelve and thirteen, he mastered with choppy grace each short hole his father was able to add, expanding the course over the ridge and down into the valley behind their house. The Andresen boys forgot about soccer and begged to join Birdie. The woods around Hyla rang with their shouts as they played.

Then one morning Carol pulled shut her gate and greeted her friend with a face so stricken with misery that Jane feared Ed Barnes had finally lost his job. "I met the woman who lives in that house on Hyla," Carol blurted out. "She—"

"No," Jane said sharply. "Let's finish our story." They took the long way that day, down Manitou Beach. As they walked along the bluff, Mount Rainier ghostly on the horizon, Jane said, "Mary had a terrible feeling as they celebrated Birdie's fifteenth birthday. Bart saw a boy stretching to manhood, but Mary saw what her son could never outgrow, those tiny arms, two flags marking the child's heart inside. It happened on one of those glorious October mornings of sun and foghorns. Standing at the kitchen sink, Mary saw Birdie kneeling on the fourth green, bent low over the hole. She thought he was retrieving his ball. Then she saw his forehead slump and his torso topple over, as gently as if a giant finger had nudged him. Mary ran out and pumped on that little heart with all her might, but she couldn't save him. It took three paramedics to pull her away."

To Scorchy's surprise, Carol crouched and lowered her face to receive his affections. Jane kept walking. When they caught up with her, Jane said, "Each morning Bart sweeps the greens free of leaves and cedar needles, and he trims the special grass twice a week after work. The ballwashers are filled, the towels washed and changed, the bunkers raked, and the tee pins moved with every mowing, but no one plays there now. To Bart and Mary, it's still Birdie's course."

Jane drove her fists into the pockets of her jacket and walked on, jaw high, gaze steady on Hyla's ruts. The story was over.

"Her name is Jeannette," Carol said. "She says they just like golf."

"She has her story," Jane answered after awhile. "We have ours. Walkers' prerogative. It's a Bainbridge thing."

The End

Little Pink

By Bonny Lawrence
Based on a true story

We had just settled down with coffee and the *New York Times* at Pegasus... the island's oldest coffee house. We prefer to sit in the window seat at the front of this very old establishment to capture the morning sun light and to observe the action as locals come and go from the counter.

This morning a small new comer signaled to us as her mother sat down at the table by our window seat. We don't know the little girl's name so we refer to her as "little pink". Pink had a warm and engaging smile on the morning of our encounter. Her eye contact was direct and firm...unusual for a four year old.

Pink captured our attention as she slowly and deliberately opened her neon green rain slicker and displayed her pink outfit the way a courtier model would part her coat on a european runway to tease us with what might be underneath. We glanced over at Pink's mother...a scandanavian appearing woman...plump,,,bundled in the perfunctory island drab brown parka, the cheeks ruddy, the hair wilted damp and dark blond, the expression remote and difficult to read. Perhaps, like my mother years ago, she was wondering what it would be like to have an innocent, shy and modest little girl.

Pink smiled broadly at us as she twirled in her rose silk eastern indian skirt, dainty little puckered top, pale pink tights dotted with rose buds and black and pink polka dot rubber boots. The haute hippie ensemble worked well together...complimented by Pink's long, thick and wavy blond hair and her pearlescent complexion.

Pink continued her modeling routine. “She's really creative,” I murmured to her mother, who nodded and remarked cooly..."Yes…more so them most children her age…she dresses herself every day."

A gleam in Pink's eyes she parted the wrap skirt to expose her smooth little child's tummy, she thrust her little rose colored tights and pelvis slowly towards us with a twinkle, held the pose and then twirled smoothly. Then there were a few exotic burlesque bumps and grinds which were disconcerting to her audience of two.

A brief time out...Pink pulled up to her mother and signed to her as four year olds are prone to do..."fix my tie". Mommy carefully obliged and Pink was back on stage-another slow pivet...then Pink settled into her chair and chewed thoughtfully on a bagel as she studiously stared at a far wall.....lost in her thoughts. To the unsuspecting she was her mother's daughter once again.

Pink and I had recognized each other at once...I had been like her at that age...my mother never got over the sorrow of having an unconventional little daughter. We turned back to our newspapers with a slightly unsettled feeling mixed with a dash of pleasure. We have not seen Pink since that morning but we are watching for her.

Have you seen Pink?

The End

The School on the Hill

By Barbara Clark

On a hill outside of town they'd turned an old farmhouse into a school for young people who couldn't live on their own. They were there for a variety of reasons but typically to be with others who were like them and to avoid living in an institution. There was some schoolwork but mostly they figured how to do living without getting into trouble. At the very most there were ten or twelve young people but everyone seemed to feel better when their numbers were smaller.

If they walked east to where the road ended and t-boned into the one into town they could see the head of the harbor, lovely all times of the year.. At night, owls hooted among the trees and for J.D., who loved to be outside at night or at least sleep with the window open, that was one of the best parts of the school. He could pick out the patterns of his favorites. There was a little screech owl and a big old barn owl, his most beloved. He loved seeing it glide from the woods and snatch some little thing scurrying in the dark, then disappear again. He liked going through the woods and finding their pellets at the bottoms of a few chosen trees. J.D. would get a stick and poke at the pellet, trying to decide if he knew which little animal the owl had eaten. It made him sad to think of those tiny creatures being somebody's dinner, but he knew that's the way it worked. Everybody needed to have supper.

The girls at the school (although it was a toss up to call them girls or young women since they had the bodies of young women but minds like little girls so it could be confusing,) loved J.D. because he was kind to the animals and kind to them. J.D. wasn't always trying to show off or get them to like him. He wasn't much of a talker. The boys at the school also had the bodies of grown ups, but often since they tended to horse around, call each other names, and sometimes cry when they'd been insulted, mostly they were known as boys. That's how they tended to think of themselves too, although they thought of themselves as men when women were involved.

On one particularly fine spring Saturday when the trees had all just leafed out J.D., Frances, Archie, Zeke and Emma decided to ride along on a trip to town. They were all going to get a book from the library before Dr. Jennings took them to the IGA where they each had a little money to spend. Frances always got a Coke, relishing its sweetness long after the fizz had gone out of the bottle. Archie and Zeke got some kind of sugary doughnuts that came in a little package. J.D. liked black licorice and Emma always had a hard time deciding. Sometimes the others had to hurry her up because when Mrs. J. was the driver to town, she got tired of waiting for Emma to make up her mind. Every once in a while Mrs. J. came into the store and told Emma she had one minute to decide, otherwise she'd pick one of the others to decide for her. Emma always hurried up then because she knew if Mrs. J. picked Frances, that Frances would choose something that only she liked and Emma would end up not wanting to eat it. Frances wouldn't say a word, but would silently gloat when Emma offered her treat up to the others, eating her share as close to Emma as she could get.

Since it was such a nice day Dr. Jennings decided to do his errands in the truck. He had to stop at the nursery close by the IGA and get a few bags of potting soil. Nobody minded riding in the back of the truck although sometimes Frances complained about her blonde hair getting blown

around so she usually tied a scarf around her head. Emma's hair was short and curly and she didn't mind a bit. In fact she liked the way the wind felt.

They all piled in the back of the truck except for Zeke who liked to ride inside next to Dr. Jennings. A person could think that Zeke saw himself as Dr. J's right hand man. Before he got in Zeke tried to help everybody into the truck bed. Emma and Frances took him up on his chivalry, as did J.D., who in all honesty, was such a tiny guy that he would have had a hard time clamoring up by himself. Archie told Zeke, for what seemed like the millionth time, "Back off. I can do it. I ain't a wimp." He always did make it, too, sometimes taking a couple of tries to get there. When they were all in Dr. J. headed out the drive to the right, turning left at the spot where they could see the water before heading down the hill into town.

It was by far the finest spring day so far, mid-April, just as daffodils and rhododendrons were beginning to bloom. Dr. J. let them out in the library parking lot, telling them he'd be back in about half an hour. There was a particularly fine red rhododendron blooming by the door. Frances stopped to smell it and Emma followed her lead. Zeke vaguely leaned its way, before catching himself and muttering, "Them things don't smell." The door to the library was open, letting in the warm breeze that made the afternoon languorous and a luxury.

Only the farm school kids and one other person were library patrons right then. Mrs. Kitchell, with her white bun immaculately in place, was on duty behind the desk. The Saturday librarian must have been sick because Mrs. Kitchell was usually there only during the week. She was head librarian and always helped them find the book they wanted. The Saturday librarian often told them they had to be quiet but Mrs. Kitchell never did that. Instead she came over to their table and asked them if she could help them. Besides, she knew all their names and the kinds of books they liked. Figuring out the card catalog was too daunting a task, so they'd tell her what kind of subject they were interested in that day and whether or not they wanted one with pictures. Sometimes she'd take them where they had the children's books. Emma liked those best. On this day Archie wanted a book about planes, pictures of World War II planes. He loved model planes and when he was at his parents' house sometimes his dad would make one for him. Frances said she wanted a book about movie stars, since that was what she wanted to be. Mrs. Kitchell quickly found a book Frances had checked out before. J.D. knew where to look for books on animals so he went there. Mrs. Kitchell picked a book for Emma that had a picture of little girls with hats on and in two straight lines on the cover. Emma sat down at the table and began to look at it and Mrs. Kitchell asked her if she wanted some help with the words. Emma said, "No thanks," and began picking out the words, one by one.

Frances said, "Emma, you're being too loud," the volume of her voice much louder than Emma's. With that pause, Zeke turned Frances' book so he could see it and flipped the page to a movie star in a glamorous evening gown. He whistled. "Wow! Look at her! She sure is pretty." Frances said, "Gimme back my book, Zeke. I'm looking for Marilyn Monroe. She's my favorite." Frances grabbed her book and flipped the pages quickly before she found the picture she was looking for, Marilyn getting out of a limousine dressed in a short skirt and white fur coat. Frances thought she looked like a queen. "Hey, can I see her? Please, Frances?" Zeke had his fingers on the edge of her book. "Just one second. I'm not done looking. I'm going to get a coat like that. Maybe for Christmas, next Christmas."

Just then Archie looked up and announced, “I’m going to Disneyland for Christmas. I’m going to ride the teacups and spin around. I’m getting Mickey Mouse ears too. My mom said she’d take me, so I’m asking for it for Christmas. I can’t wait to go to Disneyland.”

“No, you’re not jerk head. They don’t let people like you into Disneyland.” Zeke finally gained enough grasp of Frances’ book to spin it part way around.

“Stop it, Zeke,” said Frances. “I’m warning you. And besides, you know we’re not supposed to call each other names. Gimme back my book.” Frances grasped an edge firmly and pulled. The book split down the middle with a loud tearing sound. Marilyn Monroe, singled out and defeated, fluttered onto the floor, landing face down. Frances shrieked, “Now look what you made me do. I hate you Zeke. Oh no, now what do I do?” Frances started to cry as Mrs. Kitchell came over and patted Frances on the back, telling her it would be okay. Emma, not liking loud noises, got up and moved to another table, continuing to read with her finger tracing out each word. Zeke looked embarrassed and said, “Sorry. Sorry, Frances. I didn’t mean to rip your book. I just wanted to see Marilyn Monroe.” He picked Marilyn up off the floor. “Here, you can have her back. She sure is pretty. She’s a real movie star.” Frances sniffed and Mrs. Kitchell handed her a tissue that had been tucked into the sleeve of her green sweater. Frances blew her nose, but not before giving Zeke her hardest glare.

Mrs. Kitchell told them, “It’ll be okay. This book will have to go to repair though. Zeke, what’s the rule about books? Frances?” Zeke looked embarrassed some more. “I forget, Mrs. Kitchell.” Frances replied, “Treat them nice, like a friend. You always say that, Mrs. Kitchell. Books are our friends.”

By the time Dr. J. came to get them Frances had a new book of movie stars and Zeke had found a magazine about cars. Emma hugged her book to her chest and Archie was making soft airplane noises. J.D. chose a badger book, one he hadn’t had before. They all gave Mrs. Kitchell their library cards and she stamped each book. Dr. Jennings, Frances and Zeke had a short talk with Mrs. Kitchell while Emma, J.D. and Archie trooped out to the truck. Archie barreled himself into the back and helped the other two get in. While they waited Emma and J.D. wondered if they’d get to go to the IGA. Pretty soon Zeke came out and got in the front, slamming the door more than he’d meant to. Archie helped Frances over the tailgate. She was looking pretty grumpy.

They did stop for treats at the IGA although Zeke and Frances waited in the truck, saying they didn’t have enough money. Emma made her decision in record time and offered some to Frances, who sniffed and said, “Thanks.” It was a quiet ride home. Back in the driveway the boys helped Dr. Jennings unload the bags of dirt and pile them in the barn while Emma and Frances sat on the steps watching. J.D. could tell Frances was still feeling bad. He had one more piece of licorice left and he offered it to her, making a long speech for him, saying, “Frances, you’re prettier than Marilyn Monroe. I sure hope you get your fur coat at Christmas.” Frances sat up taller, ran her hand through her hair, and took the licorice. Emma could tell she liked that quite a lot.

The End

The Dog Party

By Joyce Dupre

For one reason or another, the social swing on Bainbridge Island begins to diminish towards the end of summer. Relatives and old friends from California have come and gone again. Bare brown spots and mole holes mar the lawn. Days lag when the children no longer delight in rising at dawn to search for newly ripened berries. The clams are left undisturbed. The hammocks sag. Sunsets go unnoticed and even the nightly bonfires at Yeomalt have tended to lose their spark.

So it happened, that one evening late last summer our listless spirits were given an upward lift by an invitation to a dog party.

Before going on about this curious affair, I will mention that the canine population on Bainbridge is large and varied. Dedicated dog lovers abound. In fact, most families have at least one dog; many have two of the sacred beasts. A few overdo with three or more. It was on this very Island I first heard my father say, “The more I see of other people, the more I love my dog.”

A Bainbridge dog’s life is a good one. Recklessly they run on the muddy roads, along the beaches, and through the dark, wet woods chasing sea gulls, cats, and cars. It is here that dogs are not only indulged; they are on occasion honored.

The invitation marked the celebration of the twelfth birthday of a gentle, grey Weimaraner named Sam. A dog known in our neighborhood for his distinguished limp, arrogant air, and a certain selectivity in over-turning garbage cans.

Thus on the appointed evening when twilight was deepening into darkness, we went to his garden where we found other friends and breeds of the animal kingdom gathered. The air was full of flower scents and a few other smells as well.

We spotted a few dogs we knew. Sitting up in her best beseeching manner was Heidi, a fluffy Pomeranian recognized for her yearning eyes and ability to do Yoga with her mistress. Heidi makes it to most celebrations and indeed, makes the most of them. Lounging nearby in the early chrysanthemums was gigantic, lustful Ike. Usually a villainous animal, on this particular night he wore an amiable expression. An infamous German Shepherd suddenly flung herself down by his side; it was Fritzi, and discipline had never been her strong point. We spied Barney stretching out his stumpy legs by the faded Canterbury Bells. He happened to be a favorite of ours because of his faithfulness and wit. His short legs accommodate the most unlikely body and carry Barney many miles over the Island’s horse trails as he cheerfully trots beside his mistress on her horse. Our dog Jody, a broad yellow lab, was wagging all over the place enjoying herself immensely. Standing on guard by the garden gate was a shining black Spaniel called “PV,” nicknamed for Prince Valiant – and he has always lived up to it.

In the midst of introductions, an elegant Afghan hound slithered into the group, followed by her panting mistress, who appeared at the end of a long, frayed rope. There were other dogs, some indeterminate types roaming about. Three horses were tethered to the apple trees, and some cats watched from the roof as the adults, children, and dogs mingled in the garden setting. It was a

good, fast-moving party, even though some of the guests regarded each other with mutual distrust. However, there was no snarling, biting, or going for one another's throat.

When the guests were more or less assembled, refreshments were served quickly and adroitly. A majority of the animals had attended obedience school, which helped to lessen any violent social tendencies.

The dogs watched the hostess closely. Ice cream cones, featuring the Neapolitan flavor, were tossed into the air, caught, and downed in one gulp. The horses, who appeared indifferent to the proceedings, were accorded the same treat. The initial course was followed by a platter of tempting, meaty bones. These were seized immediately and highly prized by the doggy group. At this point, a gentle hush settled upon the company; the only sound was the dogs gnawing the bones.

The theme of the party was Viva Mexico, the highlight being a large piñata tied to a tree branch. The gay music of the Baja Marimba Band could be heard in the background. Why a Mexico theme for a German dog? Because Sam's mistress has been taking Spanish lessons and is hoping for a trip south of the Border.

After we roared out the Birthday song, the piñata was beaten with an appropriate club. The dogs were overwhelmed by the contents as in a great downpour, "People Crackers" gushed forth. Little milkmen, policemen, mailmen, vets, dog catchers tantalized the animals. The dogs went at them in a blinding speed. Soon, all that remained was a whirlwind of pink and green confetti, a few bits of crumpled paper.

Timing is of the essence at any successful gathering, so before any fierce fighting broke out, the celebration was called to a halt, and the dogs were taken reluctantly home. Our dog was exhausted the day following the festivities. She dragged around with a drooping tail, ate grass, lapped a pail of water, slept dreaming of the last great communal feast.

I think Sam enjoyed the party; he was a model of good breeding and maintained a dignified alertness throughout the whole affair. It was an extraordinary event. I am glad we went because Sam did not live long after the end of summer. We were relieved when his mistress decided against a military funeral. We think back on the dog party with humour and sadness as well.

The End

The Mail Shoppe

By Al Gunby

The Mail Shoppe was conveniently located near the intersection of High School Road and the highway to the ferry. That was a notable location for the fight between those Islanders who disdained chain business and McDonald's, a fight eventually won by the fast food folks, but not without the concession of a smaller sign. But that's another story.

The Mail Shoppe incurred no such ill will and became a gathering spot for many folks who rented mail boxes when the post office rented all of theirs. It was a handy arrangement. You could pick up your mail by noon, pay your bill or write a quick letter, copy it, fax a reply or buy an envelope and stamp for mailing or send it overnight, leaving at 4:30 that evening. The regulars would hang around and gab, sort of a café society, though the café was available only next door.

The store front was only twenty feet wide and extended eighty feet to the back, through well-lit rows of mail boxes on the left and office supply displays on the right, to the main counter. Cash register and shipping scales were prominent features here, along with an always-full candy dish, with a fax machine and other gadgetry on the cabinets behind. Three copy machines were spaced along the walls and a waist-high island stood in front of the mailboxes, ready for customers to spread out their mail or their projects. In the dim back area, like an inner sanctum where ancient rites were performed, the few employees practiced the arts of packing. Reed Stevens was the chief priest of this area, and manager of the store.

Reed was not native to the Island, but had taken root quickly on arrival. Like Canadian stones deposited by the glacier, he and many other compatriots were left behind when their Navy tours were over. Rather than return to Kansas, he came to like the varied terrain of Kitsap County, and the Island in particular, and settled in on his Navy benefits, making a small wage while waiting for social security.

He was tall, in a slouchy way, wore a prominent moustache, and in his Mail Shoppe apron was the perfect picture of friendly efficiency. He always walked to work from his apartment several blocks away, regardless of weather, and never failed to wear a wide-brimmed hat with its own peculiar slouch. One patron of the store likened his image to "Clint Eastwood without the pale horse."

Reed's key helper was David Lundell, an Island native happy to make minimum wage as long as he could pursue his arts: painting, sculpture, stained glass. His tolerant wife brought in the real bucks, allowing them a comfortable living for a couple with no children. He was perpetually happy, always singing as he sorted the mail behind the boxes. In contrast to Reed, David was short and round. It was a tight fit for him in the narrow workspace behind the mailboxes. While Reed walked to work, David drove his 4X4 truck from the north end of the Island. The two were a perfect team and ran the operation well for the owner.

Business was always steady. It seemed many Californians were arriving with small business plans and found mail boxes only at the Shoppe. Some would spend one winter and leave, of course, but most of them stayed and the mail, copies and shipping flourished.. Christmas especially was hectic with a hundred gifts a day to be packed and shipped. The line to the counter often stretched out the door. Extra help was hired. Soon it was December 24. With shipping at zero and customers a mere trickle. Reed closed the security gate, locked the front door at 3:00 PM and left through the back as usual.

December 26 dawned cloudy and cold. Arctic air had descended and moisture from the South was arriving. Reed slapped on his hat and headed to the Shoppe for opening. This was often a busy shipping day as people returned presents by mail or UPS. Snowflakes sifted down as he began his walk. By the time he unlocked the Shoppe's back door the ground was white. Not so many customers today, he thought.

David was due an hour later and pulled in with a full inch everywhere. Except for a handful of cars up at the Safeway, his was the only one at his end of the parking lot. He walked in the front door, was announced by the electric-eye bell, and as soon as he said, "Ho, ho, ho; Merry Christmas", the power went out.

Bainbridge Island at that time had a well-earned reputation for outages, being on the end of a long transmission path. And when the power went out at the Mail Shoppe, everything stopped: copiers, shipping computer, cash register, fax machine, the works. Reed and David looked at each other and at the deepening snow outside.

"Looks like you and I are gonna be the only ones in today," Reed said. "Better call the boss."

But the boss lady didn't answer. So they settled in to see what would happen, sharing David's large thermos of strong coffee, intending on calling each hour for guidance and hoping for an early closing.

"Maybe I should go to the P.O. and see if there's mail, " said David, as he zipped up his coat. "It's about noon."

Four to five inches were now on the roads as David's 4X4 slid down Highway 305 toward the post office on Winslow Way. Turning in the parking lot he saw that lights were on and remembered they had a generator on site. The mail must get through! He loaded two tubs of mail and signed for a mysterious six-inch-cube package sent by certified mail. It was a six-inch cube of white cardboard covered with cut-out pictures of scenic views: Yosemite Falls, Mount Shasta, San Francisco. His return trip was slow and careful.

Once back in the rapidly chilling Shoppe, David set to his usual job, singing snatches of "I Could Have Danced All Night" in a fine baritone while he sorted the mail … catalogs, bills, sale promos, late Christmas cards. Then he turned to the certified package. The return address was Bolinas, California.

"Hey, Reed," David shouted from behind the mail boxes. "Where's Bolinas, California?"

“I think it’s near San Francisco, north of the Golden Gate,” Reed replied.

David brought out the package from the mail area and set it on the counter. He began to fill out a Package Notice to slip into Box 283.“What’ya think’s in it?” he said.

“That’s down near Hippieville – probably Mary Jane,” came the reply.

David wrinkled his brow. “Mary Jane?” he said.

“Marijuana … grass … weed,” Reed said easily. He was engrossed in a lingerie catalog.

David smiled. “Ah … Well, maybe Effie’ll show today and we’ll find out.”

“That’s an idea,” said Reed, never lifting his eye from the page.

Effie was a sprightly, lifetime Islander of seventy years, who loved dogs and always had one or two on leash when she walked the quarter mile to pick up her mail. Recently she had taken in a retired drug-sniffing German shepherd who patiently waited outside the door while Effie was inside the Shoppe.

It was getting toward 2:00 PM and snow was still falling. Two customers came in to check their boxes, both anxiously looking for expected money in the mail. Both were disappointed, and after some brief banter and a piece of candy from the dish on the counter, left quickly. Effie arrived soon after. She stuck her head in the door before entering.

“Hey, guys; mind if Max comes in to warm up?” she called.

“Sure,” said Reed. “See if he’ll shake off outside.”

Dogs were welcome at the Shoppe, as the owner often brought in her three Bassets who rambled and sniffed everywhere. Well-trained, Max sent his snow-coat flying and came in with Effie. She opened her box but found it empty.

“Hmmm. No mail. Well, at least we got our walk in.” She threw back her hood, shook out her short, grey hair, then bent over to touch her toes three times. Even in her bulky coat and thermal ski pants she was a small figure. Her dog seemed extra large beside her. She grinned and stretched her arms upward. “Feels good to be out, whatever the weather.”

“Hey, we have a little job for Max,” said David, picking up the California package. “See what Max does with this. How does he respond to drugs?”

“I think he’s supposed to give a short bark or something … but I’ve never heard him do it,” she said.

David held the package under Max’s nose. Max looked up and gave a muffled “woof.”

“Is that his signal?” asked Reed.

“Don’t know,” said Effie, “but he does seem interested in it. Who’s it for?”

“Box 283,” said David, “fairly new rental, maybe three, four months ago. Another Californian, I think.”

As if on cue, a man appeared at the door, stamped off the snow from his shoes and came in. “Mail in today?” he asked. “Wife sent me in to get a package…Box 283.” Reed and David exchanged quick glances.

“Yup, right here,” said David, holding out the package. “We were just speculating on it. Christmas gift?”

Box 283 replied, “I think so; my wife said she got a call from her sister in Marin County … said she sent us a package by mail. Well … it’s after Christmas. Let’s see what’s so wonderful to drag me out on a messy day like this. He took scissors from the counter and sliced the sealing tape.

Inside was a single orange and a note: JUST A REMINDER OF THE SUNSHINE YOU LEFT BEHIND.

“That does it!” the man said. “I slog through a foot of snow to get my mail and all I get is a snide comment on relocating to the mild, temperate Puget Sound! I think we need to head back! Here. Merry Christmas!” He tossed the orange to Reed and stomped out.

Effie, David and Reed looked at each other and smiled.

Reed stroked his moustache. “Good,” he said. “That’ll help the traffic on 305.”

The End

A Pleasant Morning

By Gwen Adams

(Inspired by a Wilhelm Hester photo of the Pleasant Beach Hotel in the University of Washington Special Collections Library.)

For Samuel the Pleasant Beach Hotel was neither pleasant nor his kind of beach. It was not like the beaches of California. The beaches here were uncut diamonds, icy slopes of slivered shells and a haven for the wind. Ask him about the people and he would say much the same. He would be speaking of the city visitors of course, not the workers or the other islanders. His people knew work at an early age and even those of wealth toiled in their gardens or aboard their boats and daily displayed an appreciation for the island they called Bainbridge. Before the discovery of Agate Passage, the isle was thought to be a peninsula. Now ferries brought visitors daily from the port towns on the true peninsula and from Seattle.

Samuel braced his knees against the wall below the window, transferring some Sylvan Grove loam from his pants to the pristine surface. This was insignificant compared to the imprint of his muddy sole as he scrambled through the open window. He had known what to expect but still got to his feet with the awe of the untraveled. He had hoped the early morning light through the tall, pretentious windows would be enough to avoid lighting the lamps. He was right. The three immaculate alleys of pine stretched before him like bizarre striated dance floors. Ditches divided them on both sides. Knickerbocker alleys, Mr. Kirk, the stableman, had called them. He said there were hundreds in New York and in his home in New Jersey. Of course when he lived there such activity was not acceptable to polite society. Nine pins was akin to horse racing and cards and the game was banned until someone added a tenth pin and called it sport. Now even the ladies bowled, bending delicately in their long dresses and trying to release the ball down the lane without setting their hats askew. Samuel's laughter at this spectacle got him discovered and evicted at his first visit to the hotel's new attraction.

At one end chairs were aligned for the comfort of the players. At the other end stood the odd flock of wooden geese, fanned out in their "v" formation. A trough of ironwood balls squatted behind the chairs. Samuel ran his hands over the smooth, stony surfaces before selecting one. The ball had a couple of slight imperfections and that resonated with him. He needed both hands to heft the ball from its resting place. It was strangely heavy and dense for its size. Though not as heavy as a cannonball, it was much larger and heavier than the croquet balls the hotel put out on Sundays.

The alleys had been open for months, but like the billiard room and the tavern, he was not allowed here. He knew he'd be undetected at this early hour. The less slovenly might be up but would be preparing for their champagne brunch. His mother and the other workers would be too busy to leave their stations. At last he was alone.

He stepped around the banister separating the chairs from the alleys, constantly rotating the ball against his palms. There were two holes drilled in the ball and he tried different combinations of fingers and thumb to use them but this only resulted in dropping the ball,

leaving a small divot in the flooring in front of the alley. Samuel looked about guiltily and retrieved the ball as it tried to escape towards the scoring table.

This time he crooked his pointer finger in one of the holes and balanced the ball with his other hand. He approached the alley like a flag carrier for the Union Army. Where the wood surface changed he released the ball with gusto and watched excitedly as it obediently headed down the middle of the lane. He had watched enough before to know that a ball in the ditch meant no score. His ball was headed for the center of the wooden pins. It struck with force and seven of the pins scattered. They scattered and fell with a clamor he had not anticipated. The noise was deafening in the small hall. Surely they heard it all the way to the kitchen.

Then Samuel heard a soft, methodical clapping. He turned to see a man strange to him, yet obviously no stranger to the Northwest. He wore a wool skull cap like those Alaskan sailors and his clothing was layered and practical, not for show. He held a pipe by the bowl in one hand and Samuel realized he had been too self-absorbed to notice the waft of black spice Cavendish filling the hall. Samuel took one step towards his escape but the man didn't move.

"You better set them pins back up or they'll know you were here," the stranger said. His accent had a drawl but it was not like the southern gentlemen currently staying in the hotel's south wing. Samuel thought perhaps it was from the Midwest, one of those shapeless states in his geography book.

"Who are you," Samuel demanded with new-found bravado.

"I'm the one what has right to be in here," came the response. The two locked stares. "Saul," he added, "my name is Saul."

He moved with a slow determination and Samuel detected the hint of a limp. His pipe held between his teeth, he palmed one of the balls and approached an alley. He released it with a wild flourish straight towards the ditch and the ball spun wildly away from the gutter (Samuel finally remembered the proper term) and came at the pins from an angle, sending all ten pins flying. One landed with a clatter on the alley Samuel had just bowled.

"How'd you do that?" Samuel asked, unable to hide his worship.

Saul straddled the gutter between the alleys and followed his ball down the lane. He bent over and set two pins before looking back at Samuel without straightening.

"Ya gonna help?"

Samuel imitated Saul's steps down the lane and began resetting his pins, stealing glances at Saul. They worked in silence until Saul stood back, relit his pipe and admired their handiwork.

"Spacing is off, but they'd never be knowing it," he puffed.

Samuel tried again. "How'd you do that … knock them all down with one toss?"

Saul reclined in one of the wooden chairs. Samuel had not noticed they had curved rockers. Saul did not appear to be a man that spent much time sitting. His hands were rough and calloused, his clothes weather-worn. The shoes that still sat at the lane's edge showed signs of mileage through rough terrain.

"Like anything," Saul mused. "You go at it hard and do it your own way. First time I tried, they all tried to tell me how. Don't stand to the side. Don't throw so hard. Don't aim at the gutter. I hear a lot of don'ts. I don't pay them much mind." Saul smiled slightly at his own joke.

Misako, the kitchen manager, would say he was rude, but Samuel never could hold back the words that wanted to bust out of his head. "You're not a guest. You don't look rich."

Saul shook his head and rocked forward enough to reach his shoes. As he slipped one on he paused to admire the painting of a lovely lady on the wall. "What does rich look like?"

Samuel did not seem to comprehend so Saul repeated. "What do you think rich looks like?"

Samuel then expelled words like the drainpipe of the hotel after a rain. He listed the many wonders he had seen since starting to work at the hotel with his mother. Rich meant fancy clothes and hats with feathers. Rich was the Eagle Harbor suite, French wine, a stable of thoroughbred racehorses, or your own ship. Rich was daily trips to Seattle to the opera and the theatre and the shops.

Saul polished the bowl of his pipe with his thumb. "That's the rich you see. Would you really want to do all of those things? Ya want a hat with feathers and a sour Cabernet?" Samuel shrugged. "What makes you feel rich?"

Samuel's sharp ears heard clattering in the kitchen and blinds being opened in the sitting room. He would need to make his escape soon but he liked this stranger.

"I like bacon with my breakfast. I like having pants with no holes in the seat. I like having a couple of nickels for the Nickelodeon and a ride on the stable pony. Then there's sleeping in on Sundays, being free to visit my friend Gordon in Port Madison. I'd like to ride a train someday. I wish I could have gone fishing with my Dad more but …," Samuel's voice faded away.

A door slammed somewhere above. Samuel headed for the window and Saul gave him a leg up. They paused that way, a strange tableau. Saul winked. "Sounds rich to me. I like those things, too. I ain't got much, but I find a little work on the ferries or a fishing trawler when I need it and every day the Lord gives me I find something new. I've fought side by side with the greatest friends a man could have. I've traveled to distant places in the cargo hold of a ship or a swinging berth half my size but the getting there didn't matter. Once there I saw fantastic things without spending a dollar. Rich to me is warm feet, a cold beer, and some food in my belly. Oh yes, bacon sounds mighty rich to me."

Samuel slid over the sill until he was almost out of sight. "Well I guess I'm rich then, 'cuz I work in the kitchen and I happen to know that there is a whole pan of fresh cooked side pork and biscuits just coming out of the oven."

"Sounds like you got all you need, son," Saul squeezed his arm and reached up to close the window.

Samuel paused. "Meet me at that big rock on the beach that looks like a black bear. I feel like sharing my fortune today."

Saul smiled and nodded. He shut the window behind the fleeing boy and made his own stealthy exit through the main door, dodging around a corner right before a self-important bellhop reached the door and poked his head in side.

It was turning out to be a pleasant morning indeed.

The End

I Love the Ferry!

By Kathryn Keve

In the ferry line, watching the water
quiet time, outdoors, on Eagle Harbor,
skiffs circle, white sails in the sun.
I'm off to the Seattle Arboretum
to visit family in Sammamish,

When leaving the Island, I arrive early
then always cut it close on the return trip.
My game of traffic strategy—
getting to Colman dock in time.

Prepared to wait with a book, crossword puzzle,
writing or knitting; in cold weather, a blanket and pillow.

A thirty minute ride, escorted by gulls, soaring and hopeful.
Once when bread was thrown overboard,
the gulls landed, chowed down then caught up.
Always alert crows hop aboard to scavenge
as the ferry eases into the slip.

Leaving from Bainbridge Island,
we view central Puget Sound,
a panorama of Blake Island, Vashon, Alki,
Elliott Bay, Queen Anne towers,
Shilshole, Whidbey Island, Jeff Head,
on clear days, Mt. Baker and Mt. Rainier.

Sometimes the captain announces a whale,
or riders spot a sea lion or a Navy ship
at anchor for Seafair.
It's a good setting for a short wedding,
and occasionally the ferry stops mid-Sound
while ashes are laid to rest.

One Fourth of July, passengers clustered and climbed
to see fireworks at Myrtle Edwards Park
and this jumbo class multi-ton vessel leaned to port.

An evening at Safeco Field or the symphony
and some in the audience rise en masse
to dash for the 10:15 ferry.

Certain ferry car etiquette is clear—
no cutting in line, an invitation to hostility,
and be ready when it's time to move.

I've held up traffic more than once.
Waiting for Ivar's clam chowder to reach 160 degrees
while hearing the announcement calling the driver of the red car.
Another time I locked myself out of the same red Neon.

There's a soothing calm as people relax and enjoy the ride
on the way to visit friends or family, off to the city, or Seatac,
or coming home, leaving the city behind, refreshed by
open water, open sky, out on the decks,
bathed by wind and summer sun.

During rush hour, the passenger deck is full, teeming
with talk, morning coffee, familiar travelers claim familiar seats.

In off-hours, riders like to sit forward or stroll the upper deck.
I often walk and look for friends.

Sometimes solo musicians play
or we see our Congressman off to Washington
there are many knitters, card players and eyes on laptops;
the mood is social and light.

As the Wenatchee or Tacoma pull into dock,
walk-on passengers ease forward to disembark,
no shoving or impatience
we're in Seattle, not New York!
Almost everyone walks swiftly up the long ramps
determined to get home, get somewhere,
the drumbeat of footsteps quickens as we hit our stride.

Every Friday, for five years as of this March,
during two rush hour ferry arrivals,
Women in Black have held a silent vigil
at the corner of Highway 305 and Winslow Way,
we stand for peace, stand for human rights.

When the ferry arrives,
first we hear the motorcycles roar up the hill,
like birds flushed from the field,
then come the bicycles.
The light turns green and cars surge out of the chute.

Across the street walkers and vehicles pile up at the signal,
the line of cars presses forward for the next boat.
In both directions, drivers are intense
ready to get home or on the way.

In 2006, a beloved veteran ferry worker
retired early. Why did he stand out?
During morning rush hour, he operated the passenger gangplank
on the Seattle side, and warmly greeted all with a cheerful "G'morning!"

After all the years he worked,
when he asked for a desk job due to a knee injury,
he was turned down.
There was no retirement party
and the word leaked out.

Before moving to California
Bill arrived in time for always packed 5:30
commuter run, dressed handsomely in suit and tie.
He greeted his friends, everyone saying their "goodbye's."

On this day, after handshakes and hugs with home-bound riders,
Bill walked onto ferry.
As he headed to the Bainbridge end,
he received a standing ovation.
The Total Experience Gospel Choir was waiting
and sang "I Believe I Can Fly."

One rider came to know "Rev. Bill" well
as she rode to Seattle regularly for her cancer treatments.
In her grateful tribute, she wrote:

"Healers come in all kinds of forms and surround us on a daily basis.
Bill's choice to use his own body, his gestures and towering height

to reach people with his filaments of colorful light is a beautiful,
self-made ritual in which everyone can participate.

At the root of his actions, he is really saying,
"Good... good.... good morning, joy, love one another,
love yourself, good morning"....
This is a message coming from a profound place within Bill's soul
and the sincerity of his heart, making him a true healer,
and I, for one, am grateful to receive his generous blessing."

Bainbridge Island's mayor presented a sculpture of hands
as the choir sang their signature closing song:
"Reach Out and Touch Someone."

I love riding the ferry!

—Kathryn Keve, March 2006 (Toby Schneider wrote about Bill Cowings)

The Cove

By Harriet Alexander

The silent gossip of the condominium community assumed he would go first so it was a shock when his much younger second wife died.

Cliff Jenkins was in his mid-80's, somewhat crippled, we thought from an old war injury. Lillian was at least 15 years younger when they became one of the residents of our "neighborhood."

Was it the age difference that had her issue an edict: "Don't ever call before 9 in the morning!"

Wayne and I lived two units downhill so we had occasion to watch the goings on at their place: family visitors, a little gardening. But it was the daily duck feedings we loved to watch. It was a football field waddle uphill for Mama and Papa Mallard to Cliff's patio. In the right season, ducklings added to the amusement.

Lillian was hardly the "trophy wife" in the jet-set image. But she was truly a treasure. Her white-blond hair coiled in a tight bun but she knew how to sparkle with real jewelry. There was nothing fake about her.

I remember her knitting preemie caps for the Children's Hospital. I took over some extra baby yarn once and watched how quickly those scraps became cute and useful.

One of her relatives was a bachelor musician. He lived in the smallest unit here –probably 900 sq. ft. We often thought about him when later that place was owned by a couple with three babies!

He played beautifully at Lillian's funeral at the little white Lutheran church on Torvanger.

Cliff aged into his late 80s. We saw a hand railing installed at both entrances. After awhile, his routine included careful steps across the driveway; a walker came, then a teenage care-giver provided a stabilizing hand. Cliff's "war wound" became more pronounced. He always, always wore a dark blue golf-type cardigan sweater and a glove on his right hand. Had a grenade exploded too soon somewhere on Guadalcanal? Had he been caught in a chopping machine during hop harvest? Was he paralyzed from polio? We never knew.

Our community began to shrink. First, a widow who had been the first resident. Then a dynamic Californian whose daughter became a successful artist while the two lived here. Neighbors attended her art shows and enjoyed our connections when we would see her works displayed and often sold. "She's one of ours!" After her mother died, she moved away.

Within four years, three more wives died leaving only two married couples. Widowers and married men would take Cliff out to Doc's for coffee. They seemed to know just how to transport him in someone's van or sedan. There would be no lack of story-telling, I've heard.

In those days there grew up an annual "block party."

Several women organized a pot-luck in late summer. With a dock nearby, the atmosphere was salty and convivial. The dock party included non-boaters and friends of residents so there was a potpourri of people sharing food, drink and memories.

Deana Price glanced up the hill and saw Cliff sitting on his patio. "Why isn't Cliff here?" she asked. Shamefacedly, the rest of us realized no one had invited him. No wife, no boat, no invitation.

"Come on, let's get Cliff down here!"

But how?

Our male contingent had grown older and more crippled with arthritis, back surgeries, heart attacks, etc. Nevertheless, four or five raced up the slope – if "race" could be the proper term.

Like a Roman or Oriental potentate, Cliff was carried down the hill, across the boardwalk and to the gate. With an ebbed tide, the pitched ramp was a challenge. The two bearers in front had to keep Cliff horizontal to the water while the men in back had to stoop to maintain that angle.

Huzzahs and whistles cheered the crew upon reaching the dock itself. Cliff managed to shuffle sans walker to the end, inspecting sail boats and kayaks, a fishing boat and even a refitted Foss tugboat. His delight was palpable.

What could top this moment of community togetherness?

Coming down the ramp was a new resident. A willowy young woman in a black and silver bikini.

Sixty-five-year-old Tex stepped back and fell into the water. Huzzahs and whistles erupted again.

I thought I heard Lillian laughing.

The End

A Visit

By Ben Roth

Let us remember, for a moment, the afternoon during which Attila the Hun visited Bainbridge Island.

I remember the weary gaze of a hobo and his dog sitting below the Town & Country tickerboard. It offered a message of congratulations to Mrs. Wendy O'Hagget for her appointment to head of the middle-aged female gardener committee. He offered me a cigarette. Around him, cliques of eager tourists dragged their children through gift shops. I remember the mild evening sunlight reflecting off the windshields of slow-moving Priuses and healthy iced cream cones. At least four rug galleries flourished.

When the distant pounding crept into the edge of my hearing, I assumed the ferry had unloaded a pack of motorcycles, or perhaps that a street sweeping truck had turned onto the next block. I attributed the muffled animal whoops and shouts to the bargoers at Isla Bonita having an early start. Like everyone around me, I had no suspicion that I was listening to the sound of ten thousand hooves. The hobo's weather-bleached dog perked its ears, and I took the cigarette.

That night, Bainbridge Island burned.

The End

Why I Love Beautiful Bainbridge Island

By Donna Moore

How did I come to live on Bainbridge Island? Well, that's an interesting story. In 1976 after I resigned from my job in Washington D.C., I decided to move closer to my mother who still lived in my old home town of Tacoma. I didn't want to live in Seattle, or any other big city in the area, but I knew I would be working in the Federal Bldg. in Seattle. I didn't want to commute by car, having done that for years in DC. to the point where I felt my shoulders had grown directly out of my neck from the stress. And I knew it was possible to commute to Seattle by ferry because Uncle Leo had done that for years from his home on Hood Canal to his office at Boeing. But I wasn't sure where the "other end" of the ferry was located.

One day mother and I went exploring and we found Winslow. I immediately fell in love with it. I had grown up in Tacoma and had always lived in big cities - Los Angeles, Washington, D.C., Paris, Jiddah, Dacca, and Lima. But I was fed up with city living. I was tired of the noise, the crowds, the dirt, and especially tired of how impersonal they were. Winslow seemed like the perfect village of my dreams. A place where everyone knew one another and where the town dog wandered around from shop to shop each morning just saying hello.

Living the Foreign Service lifestyle was exciting at first. However, it had become too shallow for me. It made me feel I was only an observer of life because I never really belonged anywhere. Living in the District of Columbia turned out to be an extension of that same feeling. People are there from everywhere but they're just passing through – the military, the politicians, the diplomats – they all stay longer than just a short tourist visit but not long enough to really care about the place.

Surely, I imagined, Winslow would be different. It would be a place where I would know everyone and everyone would know me. Actually, that hasn't turned out to be 100% true but I do continue to love this community even after 30plus years and lots of changes. I enjoy reading the Police Blotter in the weekly newspaper because it reminds me that funny things happen and people care. Let me give you an example of what I mean.

About six months after I moved here – and determined I could deal with the daily ferry commute - I bought my first house on the NE corner of Ericksen and Wyatt Way. I decided to do some landscaping and one of my first purchases was a pair of 3-ft. high Jeanne Marie Rhododendrons for the front yard. As I recall, one Saturday Aunt Pat went with me to the old Rhody farm at the top of Sawdust Hill in Big Valley and we picked out the rhodys, took them home and she showed me how to plant them. Since this was my first home with a garden, this was a new experience for me.

Early on the following Monday morning as I left the house to walk to the ferry, I discovered one of the Rhodys was missing. There was only a gaping hole where it had originally been. I puzzled all that day about whether or not to report it to the police. After all, a crime had been committed. But would they laugh at me? Or was it even worthwhile to bother them? That afternoon I decided yes I would call the police. The policeman who answered the phone was polite but it was pretty evident he was quite amused. He tried to mask the snigger in his voice as he said: "I assure

you, Madam, we will do our best to find your Rhody but its pretty had to tell one from the other this early in the spring." I thanked him politely. Apart from having done my civic duty, I really didn't expect much would come of it.

Several days went by and I received a phone call from the same policeman advising me that they had indeed found my rhody and if I would go to Junko's nursery and identify it, I could take it home. I was amazed!

Saturday next I went to the nursery and learned the whole story. If you have lived here long enough, you may recall that before he moved to Bainbridge Gardens out on Miller Road, Junko had his nursery at the corner of High School Road and the Highway – right where the Chevron station is today. The distance between my house on Ericksen and his nursery was only a few blocks much of it reached by a narrow wooded path. That was before there were many buildings along the northern part of Ericksen Ave.

Apparently, whoever stole my rhody found it too heavy to carry very far - or perhaps they changed their mind about the advisability of their prank. Anyway, they abandoned it along the path. One of Junko's employees found it while walking to work and, deciding the poor thing would die if left there, so they picked it up and brought it to the nursery. After placing it in a pot and giving it a drink of water, Good Citizens Junko called the police and asked if they had any idea who the rightful owner might be? Who received this phone call? That same policeman who had taken my original call, of course. Maybe there was only one policeman on day duty during in those times. I've forgotten now.

There is a small PS to my original story: When telling my neighbor Peggy Burr about my amazing luck, she told me with a perfectly straight face that when she had had trouble getting to the ferry on a snowy day the winter before, and there was no taxi service available, she called the Police Chief and asked him to come and get her. And he did. According to her, "As a taxpayer, I have a right to call on the police for such services when it's necessary." I was finally and irrevocably convinced I had found the village of my dreams.

Of course, many things have changed over the years. The Town Dog died and so did Peggy. Bless both their souls. Perhaps the present Police Chief would not be so obliging as to bring you to the ferry on a snowy day. But Bainbridge Island, into which Winslow was incorporated, is still my favorite "village." Oh, by the way, keep your eyes peeled when reading the Police Blotter section of the Bainbridge Review. Who knows, you may help a wandering rhody get back to it's rightful caretaker.

The End

The Loading Ramp

By Kathleen Thorne

Rules are meant to be broken. Except, thought Daniel as he waited in the passenger loading ramp for the morning ferry to Seattle, when it comes to the Bainbridge Island commuter runs.

For the first few months after his move to Bainbridge, he had been a classic newcomer, savoring every facet of the ferry experience – arriving at the bustling terminal, securing a cup of Commuter Comforts coffee, lining up in the foot passenger walkway, trooping aboard the boat, scrambling for a seat, staring wide-eyed out the window, jostling at the exit door, and finally decamping into the terminal. But after his cheery attempts at conversation – "Looks like it will be a smooth crossing today" – drew only pitying looks in response, he had learned to adopt the world-weary posture of what appeared to him, as he glanced down the long line of fellow commuters, to be a group audition for the title role in *Death of a Salesman*.

He was still trying to figure Bainbridge Islanders out. They could be obsessively polite at times, tying up progress at a four-way stop for what seemed an eternity as they took turns smiling and waiving each other through. But drop certain words into a conversation – California, for example, or fast food franchises, a second bridge, anything to do with the Republican party, something called "Winslow Tomorrow" – and get ready for an ominous pause and suspicious stares.

One apparent rule for the morning commuter runs was that people lined up on the right side of the walkway when waiting to board the ferry, and keep the left side clear for exiting passengers. Thus they would stand, properly queued up, balancing coffee cups, newspapers, and Blackberries, while waiting patiently for the ferry attendant's announcement, "Now loading foot passengers for the 7:05 ferry to Seattle. Please keep all your personal items with you at all times. All aboard. Seattle."

But it was starting to bother Daniel that pretty much every day at least one person would saunter up the left lane to the front of the line. OK, so it's not exactly breaking news that there are jerks in the world. But what Daniel really couldn't figure out is why, day after day, everyone in the right line just ignored this behavior. Did they like being taken advantage of? For awhile, he contented himself by fantasizing about installing an overhead sign that said, "Line cutters and other low-life to the left, all others to the right."

Then, one morning, he decided to act. The miscreant this time was a guy with long, dirty hair and low-hanging baggy pants, who swaggered by with a sneer as if to say, "Eat my dust, morons." Daniel stepped a little way out of the right-side line and said, "Hey, buddy, how about waiting in line with everyone else?" He was rewarded, predictably, with a scowl and the middle finger.

He turned back to his fellow law-abiding commuters expecting a chorus of encouraging smiles, a few thumbs up, and perhaps some quiet applause. To his amazement, everyone in line was glaring at him accusingly, as if they had suddenly morphed into a contingent of Women in Black. What had HE done? For a moment he considered repeating the response of the line-cutter. Then

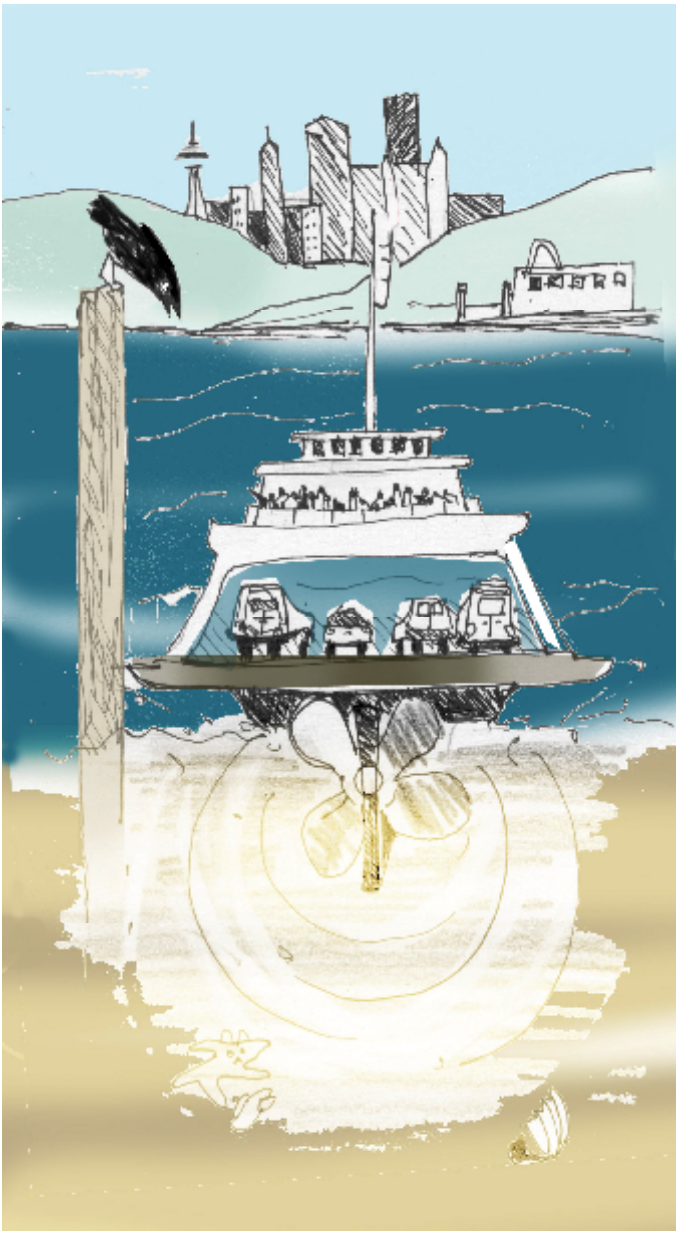
he slunk meekly back into line, aware than he had just learned another inexplicable rule about life on Bainbridge Island.

The End

RAVEN'S Fairy Tale Secret

Written and Illustrated
By

Dorothy Matthews



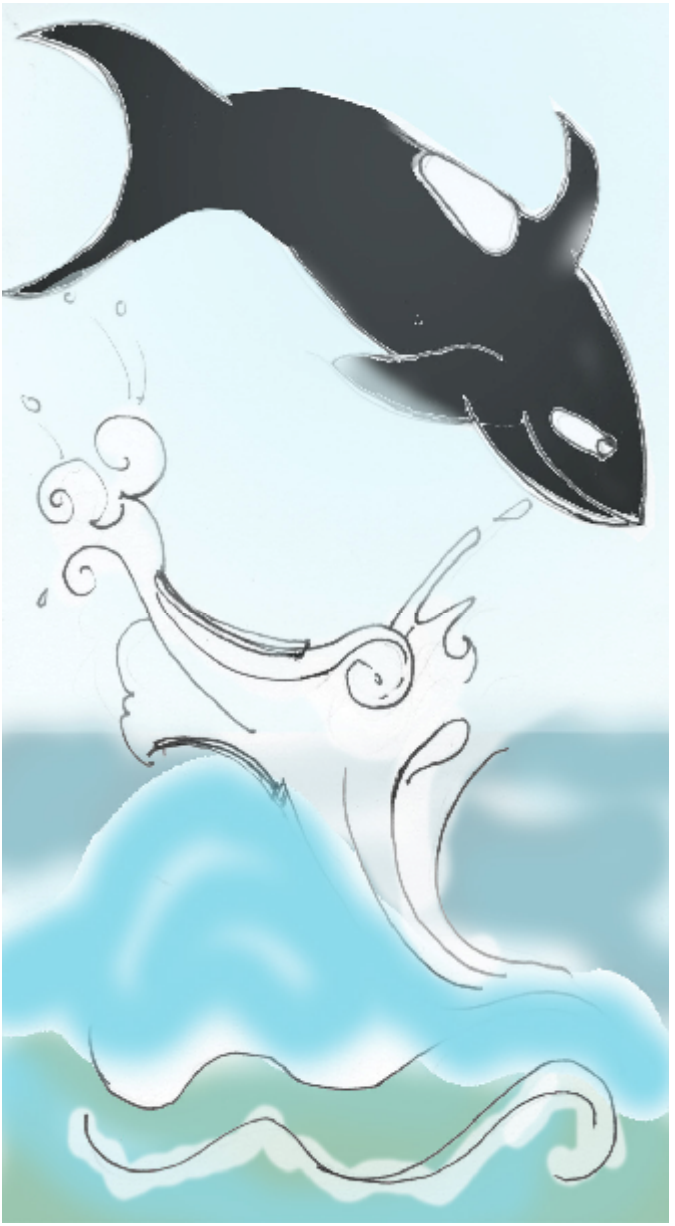
Raven is always hungry. Every morning Raven sits on a piling by the ferryboat dock. Raven listens carefully for the whistle - toooot. That is the signal for the ferryboat to leave the dock …and also a signal for the passengers to throw Raven treats as the ferryboat passes his piling on its way to the city.

One day there is such a low tide that the ferryboat's propeller gets stuck in the mud. The harder the ferryboat captain tries to get underway, the deeper the propeller gets stuck. The passengers are very worried because they will be late for work if the ferryboat does not leave soon.

Raven sees the BIG problem. He also is worried about the ferryboat getting stuck in the mud…especially because passengers may not remember their usual treats. Raven makes a secret plan to solve the problem, and then flies away to get Orca, the whale, to help with the secret plan.

"If I help you, what's in it for me?" Orca asks.
"Lunch of course," Raven replies.

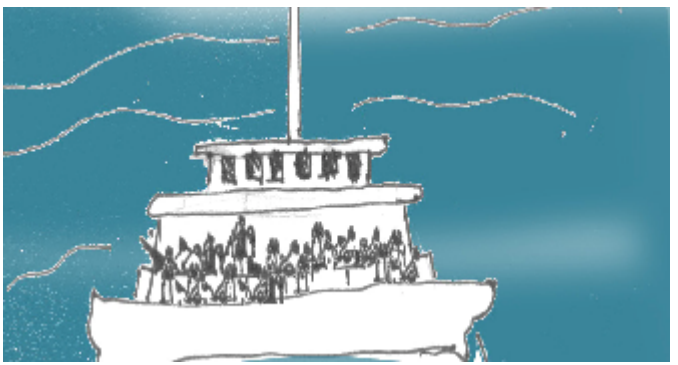
Orca agrees to help then follows Raven back to the ferryboat dock. She commences a lively show of jumping and wiggling her dorsal fin in front of the ferryboat.



The passengers rush out from their seats and their cars to the front of the boat.

They lean against the bow rail to enjoy Orca's show.

When the passengers rush to the bow of the boat, it tips - not too much- just enough. Schlooop the propeller pops out of the mud and the ferryboat suddenly lurches away from the dock into deep water.



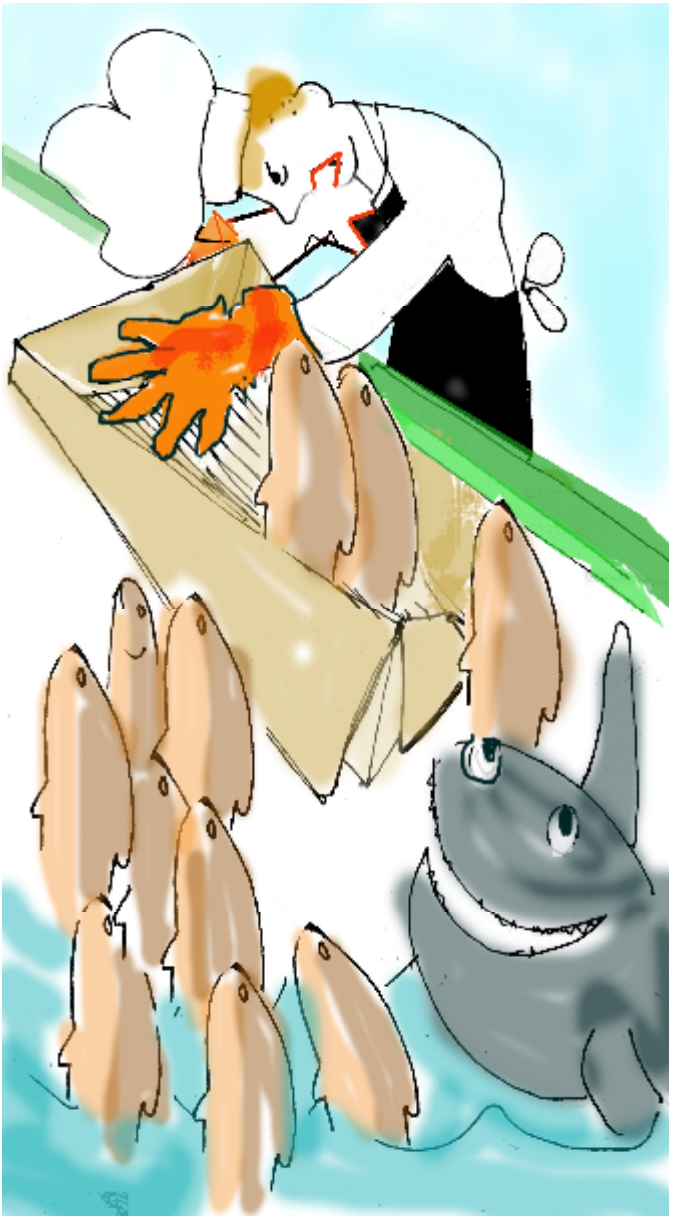
When the ferryboat lurches away from the dock all the

passengers cheer! The ferryboat is finally out of the mud. The ferryboat captain toots the whistle – toooot -

But something else happens at the same time…

Chef is carrying a big box of salmon along the upper deck toward the galley. He is planning to grill his famous salmon burgers for lunch.

Raven watches and laughs. Raven knows what will happen next…



Oh! No! The whole big box of salmon flies out of Chef’s hands.

Over the side it goes, splashing down in front of Orca.

“Wow!” says Orca. “Raven really did it this time! What a great lunch!”

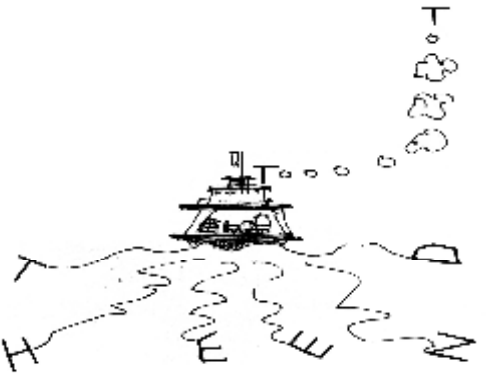
Chef frowns and stomps away to get another box of salmon.

Raven laughs with glee..."arrahk, arrahk, arrahk, arrahk!" His secret plan is a success.

The passengers are very happy to get underway. As they pass near Raven sitting on his piling, they throw extra treats to him. Raven is very satisfied with his secret plan...and with the extra treats.

Raven watches from his piling. He sees a big white wake waving like a tail behind the ferryboat's stern. Is the ferryboat's tail from the propeller, or is it from Orca swimming behind the ferryboat?

The answer to that question is also Raven's secret.



VOCABULARY – WORDS TO TALK ABOUT

Raven	Piling
Ferryboat	Dock
Commences	Tide
Propeller	Underway
Orca	Whale
Dorsal fin	Bow
Chef	Deck
Rail	Salmon
Secret	Glee
Wake	Stern
Tail	Tale