

2023 Issue 1 | Free

# SPARK

The magazine of Humanities Washington.

## *How Washington State Built a Nuclear World*

### ALSO INSIDE:

» *Love, Acceptance, and  
Screeching Modems*

» *Washington's New  
Poet Laureate*



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Published twice per year, *Spark* is a free magazine based on those conversations. It's available at cultural organizations throughout the state, or you can have *Spark* delivered for free to your door by signing up at [humanities.org](http://humanities.org).

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As a frequent, self-hating user of Twitter, I'm accustomed to scrolling past reams of human suffering. But occasionally something pops up that stops me in my tracks. Just over a year ago, that something was a Ukrainian soldier saying goodbye to his daughter on the eve of the Russian invasion.

The video is eerily quiet, containing little but the soft sobbing of both a father and his young daughter as she boards a bus to go to a safe zone. In a small moment of compassion familiar to any parent, he helps her put her hat on. He buries his face into her chest, weeping. After she boards the bus and is about to leave, he presses his hand into the window where she's seated, trying to touch her one final time but feeling nothing but cold glass.

I don't cry much, but I cried then. This was the cruelty of the invasion condensed into 90 seconds. It transcended casualty counts and blaring headlines to reveal a simple human tragedy—a father and daughter ripped apart over...what? And the tragedy had particular resonance because I had recently welcomed our second child into the world.

The day after the video went viral, fact checking revealed that the soldier wasn't Ukrainian. He was Russian.

This news made my attitude toward the scene change. My compassion drained. Where I had once seen myself in the father, imagining the horror of wondering if this might be the last moments with my child, I felt a steely distance. I didn't wish harm on him, but I didn't care what happened to him either.

I was—and am—profoundly troubled by this mental shift. Sure, the invasion had just happened and my shock and disgust was white hot. But why didn't this man deserve empathy as well? His humanity was subsumed by his association with a group I was, albeit justifiably, angry with.

I have worked at Humanities Washington for eight years, and it has better prepared me for moments like these. The humanities help us make space for confusion, to dwell in a moment's complexity. They encourage us to understand our human commonalities, vulnerabilities, and the general messiness of our experience.

What isn't often said is that seeing the world through a humanities lens can be really, really hard. We are wired for binary and in-group/out-group thinking, to see people as stand-ins for forces we dislike. To me, that soldier's identity as a father was suddenly subsumed by his affiliation with the Russian army.

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But to see each other as human is to acknowledge that we are deeply complicated creatures, and that there are no easy answers to explain our affiliations or actions.

In preparation for this letter, I re-watched the video and felt renewed compassion. Part of that renewal might be the passage of time—that the initial shock of the invasion had worn off. But part of it might also be that my organization encourages me to keep fighting to see other people not as symbols of good versus evil or right versus wrong, but as complex human beings.

And that mentality requires vigilance. It requires that you constantly fight against the gravitational pull of your mind's need for simple answers.

It requires that you realize that in a different life, in a different country, with different social forces bearing down, you could be that father, fighting for an ugly cause, weeping as he bids his daughter goodbye.



—David Haldeman, editor, *Spark*





▲ An "Unmask Humanity" protest in Vancouver B.C. in August 2020. Photo by GoToVan via Flickr.

# YOUR COVID-DENYING UNCLE ISN'T A BAD PERSON

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*Many Americans don't believe the scientific consensus. Philosopher Michael Goldsby talks about why, and examines how good people can be led to bad ideas.*

By E.J. Iannelli



In an era when terms like *post-truth* and *alternative facts* have entered the popular lexicon, it can be useful to take a step back and reflect on the conditions that give rise to those terms in the first place.

Michael Goldsby, an associate professor of philosophy in the School of Politics, Philosophy, and Public Affairs at Washington State University, gives a Speakers Bureau talk that examines the phenomenon of science denialism.

Fittingly titled “Why Deny Science?,” the talk is Goldsby’s attempt to answer that question through his own research on the logic and epistemology of science. In addition to highlighting the ways in which conventional wisdom about science deniers can be unhelpful, he explains why the rejection of established scientific findings poses a grave, even existential threat. On a hopeful note, Goldsby also proposes ways to find common ground with science deniers—which might just be the key to changing their minds.

**Humanities Washington: Taking a page from the title of your talk, let’s start by asking the obvious: Why would someone deny science?**

**Michael Goldsby:** It’s an interesting case. It turns out there are a lot of theories as to why those who deny science actually do so. And in my talk, I look at why many of those theories don’t actually work.

More often than not, people will assume that those who deny scientific claims simply don’t understand the science. If a science denier had more information, the assumption runs, then they really wouldn’t deny the science. But there’s actually quite a bit of empirical evidence that shows that, once you adjust for education level, people who deny science pretty much know about the same as anybody who believes the science. It’s kind of a confounding finding.

They’ve done this with, say, the theory of evolution and climate change. Instead of asking true or false questions about science, they ask, “What do climate scientists or evolutionary biologists say about this topic?” And when you raise the question that way, people who deny science pretty much know what the climate scientists or evolutionary biologists are saying about the science. So it turns out that it’s not really that much of a knowledge gap—contrary to what I think is a prevailing opinion.

Another claim is that science denialism is all just political and tribal. And while that can account for some results, it comes down more to an approach that ignores shared values. Specifically, in our polarized society, when you say something to the effect of, “The science says this thing is happening, and you’re partially complicit,” somebody makes the inference, “Well, I don’t feel like I’m a bad person. And since I’m not a bad person, that means the science can’t be real.”

And, unfortunately, politics does enter into it in the form of a political apparatus that reinforces that claim. It says, “You’re actually good people, and it’s the science that’s wrong in trying to make you feel bad.”

**But doesn’t consistent bad behavior define a bad person?**

There’s a suppressed premise there. If living a particular lifestyle is bad for the climate, does continuing to live that lifestyle indeed make you an inherently bad person overall? No. It does mean that you’re contributing to the problem if you can’t make changes for the better. But it doesn’t make you a bad person.

Sadly, I think our political debates actually do set it up such that everybody who opposes a particular thing is seen as a villain. And, ironically, when you school somebody who’s, say, a climate denier, by saying, “You’re killing the planet,” you’re actually exacerbating the problem. Because it gives them more reason to double down. In fact, as I alluded to earlier, one way out of this is to promote shared values: “I know you’re not a bad person. You’re just doing some things that are not as good as they could be.”

**So we should instead proceed from the assumption: good person, bad behavior?**

Yes. I’m not necessarily religious, but I’m going to go ahead and say that we have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. There’s some truth to that. But it doesn’t mean that we’re all bad people. We all have bits of bad behavior, but some bad behavior doesn’t make us bad.

And this again returns to my point about shared values. There is empirical evidence that shows that people on both sides of the political spectrum actually care about the future. Neither side wants to hurt the poor. Neither wants to saddle future generations with more burdens. And neither wants to hurt the environment. In fact, study after study shows both sides of the political spectrum generally agree on those issues.

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*There is empirical evidence that shows that people on both sides of the political spectrum actually care about the future. Neither side wants to hurt the poor. Neither wants to saddle future generations with more burdens. And neither wants to hurt the environment.*

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The thing is, if you tell somebody that their actions will end up hurting the poor, they reflect on themselves and say, “You know, we both understand that hurting the poor is what a bad person does, which means you’re accusing me of being a bad person. And I’m not a bad person overall.” So of course they’re going to have to reject the scientific claims—at least to keep consistent in their own heads.

#### **What’s the role of social media in all this?**

There’s a lot of work being done on that. Believe it or not, philosophers of science have been looking at this for a long time. It’s called the looping effect, which is this ability to validate your choices based on further affirmative interactions.

Now, I’m not an expert on social media, but it does seem like social media in particular rewards more extreme claims. If you say, “I had a cupcake,” you’re not going to get as many likes as if you said, “I had the best cupcake in the world!” There’s a certain, dare I say, ratings-centered approach to many people’s engagement on social media.

This ratings-centered approach likewise incentivizes the vilification of people who anger you. If you say, “Oh, I had a disagreement with my friend,” that’s not going to get as many likes as, “My friend is the devil! They believe that climate change is a hoax perpetrated by the Chinese!” At first it sounds kind of funny, but I believe that adds to the vilification and, actually, it encourages people to double down.

Let’s face it: The people who deny science aren’t genocidal maniacs. They’re regular people trying to do what’s best as a

general rule. But when you’re not talking about a particular behavior that could be made better, you’re actually making it about the character. And of course they’re going to react.

#### **Framing things in terms of “good” and “bad” invariably lends things a moral dimension. Couldn’t people also deny science for the sake of convenience—that is, to persist in hedonistic or selfish behavior?**

I wouldn’t rule out that people are denying science for selfish reasons. Or that some people are doing it because it conveniently allows them to live the lifestyle they’ve grown accustomed to. And it is hard to make a lot of changes. For example, I call myself a chegan, and that’s a vegan who cheats. So I will occasionally have a cheeseburger.

But there is this tendency toward extremes, and believe it or not, the denial of science in this arena is actually informed by certain values. Someone who rejects the science that tells them to cut down on cheeseburgers is defending a value of allowing the future to be able to enjoy the same things that they enjoyed in some regard.

#### **You’d mentioned something about remaining consistent. How does a desire for consistency inform the logic of science denialism?**

One thing that I look at a lot is how people reason through these things. I’m not a psychologist. Instead I pay attention to the reasoning behind ideas and behavior.

If you engage with a science denier, one thing you can’t do, ironically, is go in and provide what you think are the scientific



facts or the necessary evidence. This is because a skilled science denier—and it doesn't really take much effort—can always come up with some response to every challenge you make. They're able to remain consistent.

Consistency is the minimum standard of rationality. It's a very low bar and easy to maintain. To avoid threatening that consistency, we've got to start thinking about emphasizing shared values and refrain from vilifying those who deny the science.

Another thing to bear in mind—and I find this link especially interesting—is that it turns out that there's also quite a bit of similarity between science denialism and conspiracy theories. Almost every conspiracy theory can remain consistent no matter what evidence you provide. Trying to disprove them is like playing whack-a-mole with the counterarguments.

But aside from being frustrating for their interlocutor, this dogged consistency actually erodes the science denier's or conspiracy theorist's ability to make predictions. And that means it erodes their ability to make good policy decisions—or good decisions in general. To my mind, this is the biggest threat posed by science denialism.

**One appeal of conspiracy theories is that you're privy to some higher-order truth. Does science denialism also rest in that same sense of specialness, so that folks can romanticize themselves as skeptics or a free thinkers?**

I can't really speak to the romantic appeal. However, what I can say is that one of the best ways of combating conspiracy theories or science denialism is actually to turn it around and say, "My side, we can make predictions. Why don't you tell us what's going to happen in the future?"

In a way, what you're doing there is avoiding the game of whack-a-mole, trying to defeat every claim and every assumption back to first principles. You're not stuck trying to disprove their theory, you're asking them to validate it: "Do you feel your theory is strong enough that you can make good predictions? Because if it is, then it's valuable. And if it's not, then there might actually be something wrong with the theory despite the fact that you're able to remain consistent."

**So the practical advice for Thanksgiving dinners is to tell your ranting uncle to make a prediction for next year?**


Actually, yes! Ask them to make a prediction. Because, once again, it's so simple to maintain consistency—especially when it comes to conspiracy theories, which offer a 'truth' and a very fluid 'cover story' that allows them to remain consistent.

That approach often works because our arguments tend to rely on showing that our interlocutor is inconsistent. It's a long and hallowed tradition in philosophy to argue in that way. However, I think people are more sophisticated. Maybe the tradition ought to be, how well can you make predictions based on the claims you're making?

So, next Thanksgiving, do that experiment. Then, in a year's time, see if your climate-change-denying relative has changed their mind—or at least doesn't bring that topic up anymore.

**Has our conversation been a "Why Deny Science?" spoiler, or do you have extra perks for your audiences?**

It's not all doom and gloom, and I do try to have fun. One of the things I do in my talk is teach you how to become a science denier in three easy steps. And then, of course, I explain why you ought not to be.

And I also try to offer a little hope, because it's really easy to look at the news and the tribalism and to lose heart. But by exposing the mechanics and dangers of science denialism and the fact that shared values can help us overcome it, I'd like to think we're working on a roadmap to a better place. 

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E.J. Iannelli is the arts and music director at Spokane Public Radio, and a freelance writer, editor, and translator. He's a regular contributor to regional newspapers and magazines as well as the *Times Literary Supplement*.

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► *Check out Michael Goldsby's **Speakers Bureau** talk, "Why Deny Science?," online and in-person around the state. To find an event, visit [humanities.org](http://humanities.org).*



# Love, Acceptance & SCREECHING MODEMS

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*The early internet provided a new way for LGBTQ people to connect and come out. Take a tour of the online communities that were, for many, a lifeline.*

By Avery Dame-Griff

When folks think of the history of the internet, certain images, sounds, and feelings may spring to mind, like bins of free AOL trial CDs by the front door of Blockbuster, the eerie screech of a 56K modem dialing in, or the frustration at not being able to use their home's one phone line because someone had an important call coming. Alternatively, they might think about representations of the Internet in popular culture, like the techno-thriller *The Net* (1995), starring Sandra Bullock, or the romantic comedy *You've Got Mail* (1998), which updates the 1937 Hungarian play *Parfumerie* for the digital era.

All of these moments are most often associated with the mid- to late-1990s, when now-decommissioned NSFNET (a nationwide computer network funded by the National Science Foundation) became the infrastructural backbone a growing number of American consumers used to access the World Wide Web. However, many individuals were using computers to communicate, share resources, and build community long before Bryant Gumbel infamously asked, “What is the internet, anyway?” Many communities benefited from early digital communications, but for LGBTQ individuals—especially those who weren’t yet out or didn’t have access to a local community—it could be a lifeline. Though many different groups existed, the following were notable examples of internet forums’ possibilities.

### soc.motss (1983 – Today)

Founded in 1983 by Boston-based programmer Steve Dyer, the Usenet newsgroup net.motss (renamed soc.motss in 1987) is the earliest documented LGB-specific online community. Launched in late 1979, Usenet is the first non-governmental platform-agnostic computer communication network. Initially distributed primarily via the federally funded ARPANET, Usenet access expanded through the 1980s and 1990s to include major commercial services like AOL and CompuServe, as well as access through web browsers like Netscape.

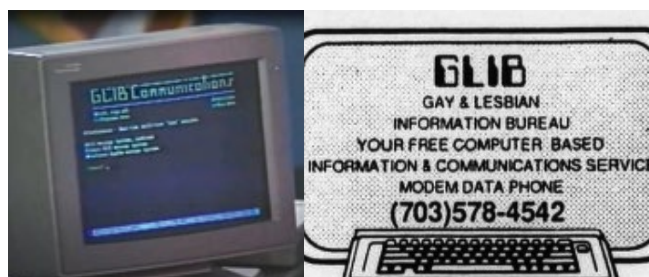
In the early 1980s, there’d been some discussions about creating a gay- and lesbian-specific newsgroup, but some administrators (who were responsible for distributing Usenet posts across the network) worried hosting and sharing a newsgroup with the name “net.gay” would be seen by their employers, which included governmental entities and state universities, as tacit approval of “inappropriate” content. As a result, Dyer named the group using the acronym motss (for “members of the same sex”), which had been used elsewhere on Usenet.

By 1984, net.motss had developed into a thriving community of regular users. For some posters, net.motss was the first place where they felt comfortable coming out as gay. Linguist Arnold Zwicky, reflecting on the group, noted that it provided “an enormous array of people, amongst whom almost anyone could find some to relate to,” and even after being out for 15 years, “it

would not be an exaggeration to say that this group changed my life; I found a gay community...and also found friends, and *their* friends, and so on, so that my social world has been transformed.”

A few years later, regular members began meeting up at in-person industry events like annual USENIX conferences. These meetups led to the first motss.con in San Francisco in 1988, a tradition that continues to this day.

### Gay and Lesbian Information Bureau (GLIB) (1986 – 2001)

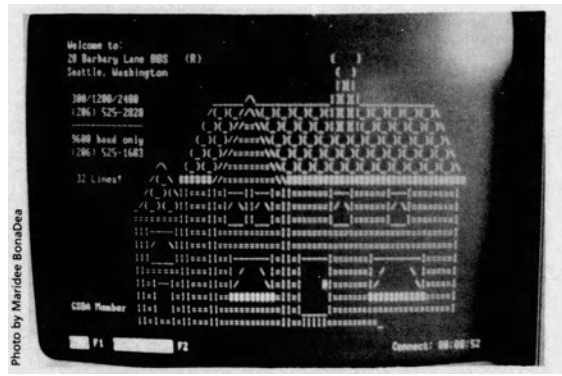


▲ Left: Still from a 1991 segment on Virginia-based public access show *Gay Fairfax* where Larimore did an interactive demonstration of GLIB’s capabilities. Right: Classified advertisement for GLIB from the October 18, 1991 issue of *The Washington Blade*.

Arlington, Virginia-based Gay and Lesbian Information Bureau (GLIB) was among the most prominent early gay and lesbian bulletin board systems (BBSes) in the United States. Though its name recalls physical corkboards in community centers and grocery stores, the BBS was actually a computer that was converted, using BBS software, to a server other users could dial into via modem. Founded in 1986, GLIB offered a variety of features common to BBSes, including messaging, chat, a file library, access to content from major US publications, and games.

In 1993, GLIB ranked #5 in industry trade magazine *Boardwatch*’s “Top 100 Boards” poll—a rare feat given the prominence of non-community-specific boards within the field. In a 1994 profile of GLIB, regular users described the board as a safe space to find friends and connect with other gay and lesbian folks. At times, these online connections led to offline volunteering: In 1993, President Clinton sent a letter of thanks to GLIB’s users for their work helping process constituent letters





▲ Left: Logo for Emerald OnRamp, which first appeared when a user went to log in. | Middle: Photograph of 28 Barbary Lane landing page, pulled up on a computer monitor, from the February 14, 1992 issue of *Seattle Gay News*. Courtesy of Newspapers.com. | Right: Classified advertisement for the Seattle AIDS Info BBS from the June 23, 1995 issue of *Seattle Gay News*. Courtesy of Newspapers.com.

sent to the new administration, which in 1992 had received more mail than the entire tenure of the previous administration.

While GLIB was one of the more prominent LGB BBSes within the United States, Washington State was also home to multiple active BBSes, like Duvall Pride Line, Waka Waka BBS, Emerald OnRamp, Rendezvous, the Cyber Queer Lounge, and 28 Barbary Lane, as well as an LGBT forum on the nonprofit Seattle Community Network. They weren't just online, either: Rendezvous sponsored public computer terminals at the R Place bar in Seattle's Capitol Hill neighborhood, and both Pride Line and 28 Barbary Lane had contingents that marched in Seattle's Pride Parade.

While most of these systems required some computer savvy to easily use, others aimed for wider accessibility. Emerald OnRamp, for example, was hosted and run using the proprietary FirstClass software, which bundled email, chatrooms, forums, and other services in one easy-to-use interface.

### 28 Barbary Lane (1985 – 1997)

Founded in 1985, 28 Barbary Lane (28BBL) was the earliest gay and lesbian BBS in Washington State. The board took its name from the San Francisco address for the boarding house in Armistead Maupin's 1978 novel *Tales of the City*, which included a variety of LGBT characters. The board's founder and first system operator (sysop) J.D. Brown was inspired to create a digital alternative to the local bar scene, and offered a variety of forums for discussion ranging from current political issues, local news, and humor, as well as email and chat rooms. Not only

did members find lifelong friends online, but some also made romantic connections, meeting their future partners first on 28BBL. 28BBL was also notable for its active women's forum, Wimminwood, bucking dominant trends within the BBS scene. In 1991, a "bar invasion" drawing attention to the limited social spaces for lesbians organized in Wimminwood drew 40 participants. By 1990, then-current sysop Jeffery Thomson proudly noted that the board had over 1,000 members in a 1990 *Seattle Gay News* piece on the BBS's five-year-anniversary. That same year, 28BBL was voted the best BBS in Washington State by readers of *Boardwatch*. By 1997, the board had grown to over 4,100 active members.

### Seattle AIDS Info BBS (1990 – 1995)

Beyond just social spaces, the BBS was also a key tool for spreading information during the early years of the AIDS epidemic. Boards like HIV/AIDS Info BBS (later renamed AEGIS) in San Juan Capistrano, California, the AIDS Info BBS in San Francisco, California, and Critical Path in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania offered access to social support and the latest research on AIDS trials and treatments. In Seattle, the Seattle AIDS Information BBS (SAIBBS), founded in late 1989, gave callers free access to treatment news, lists of local resources, and an anonymous forum where PWAs (people with AIDS) could ask questions and offer support. SAIBBS also offered these users an online "support group" including representatives from local AIDS-related organizations who could help connect them to Seattle-based support services. According to founding sysop Steve Brown, himself a PWA, the BBS was "a perfect medium" for lonely and

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*The BBS was ‘a perfect medium’ for lonely and fearful [people with AIDS] ‘to first become comfortable with discussing their situation with others anonymously...to see the companionship and support they need without revealing their identity.’*

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fearful PWAs “to first become comfortable with discussing their situation with others anonymously...to see the companionship and support they need without revealing their identity.”

Unlike other Washington State BBSes, SAIBBS converted to a non-profit organization not long after its founding, which allowed it to accept donations from community members to offset the board’s expenses. These included local businesses, community groups, and even other BBSes: when SAIBBS had to go offline in 1994 due to limited funds, members of 28 Barbary Lane worked to raise enough to keep the board online for several months and later ran a fundraiser for SAIBBS at their annual board birthday party.

Beyond its local connections, SAIBBS was also a founding member of the international AEGIS (AIDS Education General Information System) network, created in 1992 to help AIDS BBSes across the United States quickly circulate essential medical information, and Brown was elected the network’s first vice-president. The BBS would continue to be active until 1995, when it would shut down due to a lack of incoming funding.

The rise of the World Wide Web in the mid-90s drove the closure of many BBSes. Compared to using a web browser, the BBS simply didn’t have the same graphical appeal. Moreover, there were no limits to when and how long you could use the Web, as compared to the BBS’s limited simultaneous user cap. Most BBSes did not declare an “official” end, but slowly faded from public view—for example, all mentions of both 28BBL and Emerald OnRamp, who’d been regular advertisers in the

*Seattle Gay News* throughout the mid-1990s, vanish by the end of 1997. It’s unclear if Emerald OnRamp ever formally notified subscribers of the board’s imminent closure: One member reported they’d heard about EOR’s demise secondhand at the end of April 1997, and only then noticed they’d last been billed in early February.

In other cases, existing BBSes quietly rebranded and shifted to focus their services on a new, booming industry: local Internet Service Providers. Yet the friendships forged on these early forums continued long past their heyday, and longtime members now reconnect and reminisce in BBS-specific Facebook groups. 

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Avery Dame Griff is a lecturer at Gonzaga University in the Department of Women’s and Gender Studies. He was a Public Humanities Fellow with Humanities Washington, through which he is developing a series of online exhibits about the history of LGBTQ communities in online spaces. He founded and serves as primary curator of the Queer Digital History Project, an independent community history project cataloging and archiving pre-2010 LGBTQ spaces online.



▲ Arianne True. Photo by Libby Lewis.

# POETRY IS NOT A FANCY THING

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*An interview with new  
Washington State Poet Laureate Arianne True*

By Michelle Liu



Poetry is but one of the many arts to which Arianne True is drawn—comics, video, Appalachian folk dance. But it is poetry to which she has devoted the most time. Poetry is akin to those fantasy books, she says, where “everyone is born with the potential to do magic, and they decide to curate it or not.” And what does this magic do? Perform the most marvelous and accessible of spells—making words conjure pathways of connection.

True thinks in pictures, and her poems deliver finely etched word-images that create a visceral resonance between poet and receiver. Whether writing about the changing contours of Seattle (“*Seattle Sonata (legato, every note legato)*”), a home landscape felt anew (“*water asleep on the wall (the view home from Brattleboro)*”), or mourning, both personal and historical (“*Pandemic: While home is an outbreak, we pass a graveyard*”), True’s poems pulse with the energy of knowledges crystalized into words. To read a True poem is to be given the gift of clarity, the precision of her words encouraging a deeper listening. To hear a True poem is to receive with your whole body, a stirring of submerged ways of knowing held within.

True (Choctaw/Chickasaw) is a proud alum of the MFA program at the Institute of American Indian Arts, where she found herself experimenting with taking the exuberance and interactivity of the slam tradition, in which she had grown up, into page poetry.

The joy of translation—from slam to page, from image to word, from lone to shared—animates all of True’s work. She spreads this joy in multiple ways, honoring the many writing communities of Seattle that first helped her see herself as an artist. She grew up hearing that “writing is a possible thing; you can have it.” And as a teacher with Writers in the Schools and a mentor with the Seattle Youth Poet Laureate program and Hugo House’s Young Writers cohort, she now shares this same message. They, as the next generation, can have it. Writing is for them.

True has been a 2020 Jack Straw Writer, 2020–21 Hugo Fellow, and the first inaugural Native Artist-in-Residence at Seattle Repertory Theater (2021–22 season). With the Seattle Rep, True created a poetry installation, *exhibits*, in 2022. To walk through the entire collection with your body—hearing it, seeing it, cocooning in it—this was True’s goal.

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*Anyone can do poetry. Poetry is for the people. It has always been for the people. That’s why poets get arrested in authoritative regimes.*

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As the next Poet Laureate, True looks forward to meeting audiences throughout Washington wherever they are, both in terms of locale and their relationship with poetry. While poetry readings are different from poetry installations, True’s goal is the same: to invite people into the magic of shared, heightened listening, putting your body within the poetry and seeing what happens.

*The following interview was edited for length and clarity.*

**Michelle Liu: You have so many artistic interests. How and why did you choose poetry as your current focus?**

**Arianne True:** One of the things I like about poetry, especially as an autistic person growing up in a world where you are told things like, “Use your words,” and, “You have to be able to say this in a way someone will understand,” is that poetry is practice in saying something precisely. It’s more natural to turn pictures into words because poetry is so image-based. So the project for me is: How do I take experiences I have had and move them from my body into someone else’s body, so that they cannot possibly say they don’t understand? A lot of my poems are trying to answer this question. Even when it’s the fun stuff, the chill stuff. It’s all about, *How can I give you this experience that I had, so that you feel it through words?*

And because I come from a lot of identities and categories of people that have been very marginalized and really messed over by a lot of systems and other groups of folks, I know a lot of stories that have gotten silenced. Women’s stories get silenced. Queer stories get silenced. Native stories get silenced. Autistic

voices are constantly silenced, all the time. So having a story on a page, you can't say you don't understand. I told you as precisely as anyone can. It's a bid for connection.

And poetry is fun to bring to people—it's not this fancy, fancy thing! I don't think it's a talent thing, or at least it wasn't for me. I did not start off skilled at this. I just spent time with it, getting better at it and learning how to do it. I had some things that helped, like I think in pictures, and I like precise language. Anyone can do poetry. Poetry is for the people. It has always been for the people. That's why poets get arrested in authoritative regimes.

### **How does poetry invite listening with the body?**

A lot of times when we talk about image, people just think about visual senses. But images can be in any sense. All of our senses are perceived with the body. And so poetry, being such an image-based form, means it is a body-based form. So when you read a description of a sound, or a taste, or a texture, or a smell, you tap directly into your body and the memories you have of these senses. When people say they *felt* something or connected to my poems through their body, that's when I think to myself, *I did it! I did it!* What I'm trying to do is put my experience into your body through the poetry.

There's something about poetry that allows people to listen in a way that's different than, say, a speech. Maybe because poetry exists in this weird middle ground where it's not fiction and not non-fiction. It has a different kind of truth to it beyond what is literally true or not true. Poetry creates a little magic zone outside of these labels. So I think there's more willingness to go with it because it operates in a different paradigm—it's magical. It's about getting curious about the magic poetry can do. And anyone can do it!

### **You mentioned that your time at the Institute of American Indian Arts was formative to your development as a poet. In what ways?**

I wasn't going to do a MFA until I saw their program. It's there that I started exploring page poetry. A lot of folks put in front of me some of the texts that had been the most transformative for my writing and put me in the directions I've gone.


It really was important to me to be in a program that is Native-focused and Native-centering. I got to relax. No one expected

me to perform who I was. And I also got to be in an environment where a lot of people came from a more similar background to me. Even though we were all from different tribes—some who grew up in urban spaces, and some on the rez—there were just more shared kinds of experiences. I didn't have to explain.

### **What do you like about facilitating poetry workshops?**

I love facilitating workshops because people come to know poetry as actually, really accessible because it comes through the body. People know a lot more about poetry than they think they know. It feels empowering when people engage with poetry to bring out their own knowledge, and believe that it's worthwhile knowledge.

I don't do structured workshops, but we do editing. I use a lot of principles from Ross Gay, as well as Marie Kondo's *The Magic of Tidying Up*. A few years ago, I was at Nathan Hale High School, and—it makes my heart all happy when I think about this!—where I had students highlight the parts of their poems that they liked when they read it outloud to themselves. What do you love about these parts, even if they're not happy parts? Then I asked them to take all of those parts, copy them over in a new space, and see what they wanted to do from there.

One kid was having a little bit of trouble figuring out what parts he liked, so I knelt beside him as he went through it. As I watched him, I could see him start to feel what he liked about his own work. I could see him light up, all glowing and excited. And this is why I do everything! I don't want them to look for my validation. I want them to be lit with the light of knowing, "I like my work." 

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Michelle Liu is a professor of English and the associate director of writing programs at the University of Washington. She is also a member of Humanities Washington's Speakers Bureau.



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# ENCODED ANATOMIES

By Arianne True, new Washington State Poet Laureate

I – limbs

this is how it feels to be boneless  
to slide over ground, only muscle

but when I lie down, bone-heavy,  
each line draws a human body on the bed

how wild to still feel tired after days of rest,  
how wild to still/have a racing brain

watching it walk, each step a lash  
a soft curl unfurls along long limbs

that is not how I move anymore  
not today, at least, not now

something is in my heart, or my nerves  
something slows and numbs, I tremble

doctors will come with offerings  
I already hold open and still

whole creatures live this slowly  
cycles of torpor, breath, collapse



## II – mantle, with contents

I used to think diagnosis inevitable,  
to think all wrong things detectable  
and known. Certainty has passed

through my organs transformed.  
Something as soft and malleable  
as an octopus has a hard, sharp

beak somewhere in the supple.  
You can't see it from here. But  
there it is, and venom (call it

poison) spreads the same whether  
or not you watch. Know what bit.  
I'll see a heart specialist next week.

I wonder if she knows which  
tender set of cells grows itself  
three hearts: one for each set

of gills, and one for the rest  
of everything. There are not  
second and third hearts

powering my lungs. She knows  
that already, before meeting.  
What will she and my body

say to each other in that office?  
I've become more afraid, leave  
trails of ink wherever I go.

## III – (it's not all in your) head (but it's there too)

You look last at my eyes. We meet them so rarely these days.  
You know what it is to be sick like this, a body full of  
thresholds and tipping points. Too many people  
I love are sick. From when we didn't die. A  
radula is a rasp, is a ribbon. In octopuses,  
balance is fluid floating in fluid. This is  
older than two summers. Roots in  
the brain, the nervous system.  
Your life hides in your soft  
shell. Ripples (quiet). No  
one knows what's  
wrong. What  
happened.  
But you  
do.







▲ Hanford's N Reactor. Courtesy of the United States Department of Energy.

# HOW WASHINGTON STATE BUILT A NUCLEAR WORLD

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*Hanford is “the single most important place in the nuclear era,” argues author Steve Olson.*

By **Steve Olson**



In the Middle Ages, alchemists sought to convert what they called base metals like lead into precious metals like gold. They always failed. Converting one element into another element requires tools far more powerful than those available to the medieval alchemists.

The first place in the world where large-scale alchemy occurred was on a windswept plain in south-central Washington State. There, at a site now known as the Hanford nuclear reservation, scientists and engineers constructed the first devices capable of converting, in quantity, one element into another. But these modern alchemists were not turning lead into gold. They were creating a new element, discovered just a few years previously, that is needed to make atomic bombs.

Today, most people know relatively little about Hanford. During World War II, when Hanford was built, and in the Cold War that followed, Hanford was shrouded in secrecy. People who worked there—like my grandfather, who was a steamfitter at Hanford—could not tell anyone what they did at their jobs. Even today, though the site is now part of a newly created national park, an air of secrecy still clings to the place, as if the era of Cold War spies had never ended.

That needs to change. In my Speakers Bureau talk, “Atomic Washington: Our Nuclear Past, Present, and Future,” which is based on my book, *The Apocalypse Factory: Plutonium and the Making of the Atomic Age*, I argue that Hanford is in fact the single most important place in the nuclear era. If Hanford had not been built, the United States probably would not have had atomic bombs by the end of World War II. Today, every nuclear weapon in the U.S. arsenal contains a trigger about the size of your fist made of the material manufactured at Hanford. And the ongoing cleanup of the site provides the world with a warning of the difficulties it will face if it opts for a nuclear-powered future.

Of the three sites in the Manhattan Project National Historical Park—Oak Ridge in Tennessee, Los Alamos in New Mexico, and Hanford, in eastern Washington State—the latter is where the physical, the personal, and the political meet most starkly. Hanford represents one of humanity’s greatest intellectual achievements. It also embodies a moral blindness that could destroy us all. People have begun to realize, after decades of warnings, that climate change poses a severe threat to our species. Yet they blithely overlook the fact that human

civilization could end in an afternoon if the leaders of the nuclear states were to unleash the force that Hanford has placed in their hands.



It’s not easy to get to the national park site at Hanford. You have to go to Richland, and board a bus at a visitor center on the outskirts of town. That bus will take you, usually accompanied by a docent engineer who used to work at Hanford, 30 miles through the desert to a bend in the Columbia River just south of the Saddle Mountains. There the bus will turn onto a gravel road and approach a massive concrete structure that rises like a modern-day pyramid from the sagebrush plain.

The first time I walked through the doors of the B Reactor at Hanford, it took my breath away. I couldn’t believe that this structure still existed and that you could walk through it as casually as if you were walking through a shopping mall. Furthermore, the facility is almost exactly the same as when the Italian physicist Enrico Fermi started it up on September 26, 1944. The B Reactor has been called a cathedral to 20th-century science. But if so, it is a cathedral to a direful god.

The B Reactor was the first large-scale nuclear reactor built anywhere in the world. At the end of 1942, Enrico Fermi had built a small-scale reactor under the stands of an abandoned football field at the University of Chicago. Most histories of that reactor depict it as a triumph of scientific experimentation, as the world’s first demonstration that a controlled nuclear reaction was possible—and it was that. But Fermi actually had a much more immediate and practical goal in mind. He wanted to demonstrate that the large-scale nuclear reactors that even then were being designed at the University of Chicago, and which soon would begin to rise next to the Columbia River in eastern Washington, would work.



Today we usually think of nuclear reactors as devices for the production of heat that can be used to drive turbines and generate electricity. But they originally were created to produce something much more specific—subatomic particles called neutrons. When uranium atoms split in a nuclear reactor, they emit energetic neutrons that can be used for many different purposes. In the reactors at Hanford, those neutrons were used



▲ Above: Hanford's B Reactor. | Opposite: B Reactor under construction, 1943/44. Courtesy of the United States Department of Energy.

“ *The B Reactor has been called a cathedral to 20th-century science.  
But if so, it is a cathedral to a direful god.* ”

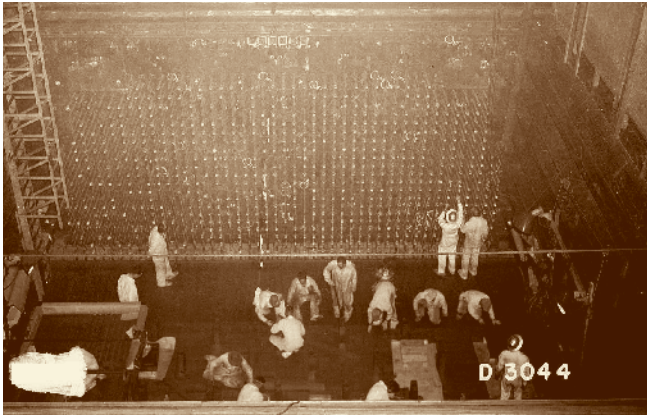
to convert other uranium atoms into a new and artificial element that had been discovered just two years earlier, an element that its discoverers had named plutonium.

Plutonium, it turns out, is the best material in the universe for making atomic bombs. Pound for pound, it produces a far more powerful explosion than any other element. That's why plutonium was the material used in the world's first atomic explosion—on July 16, 1945, in a desert south of Albuquerque, New Mexico. Plutonium was in the atomic bomb dropped on Nagasaki, Japan, three weeks later, and it would have been in the future bombs the United States was building to drop on Japan if the country had not surrendered. Plutonium's power as a bomb-making material is why it's used as a trigger in our nuclear weapons today and in almost all the nuclear weapons that exist elsewhere in the world.


Hanford produced plutonium for our bombs until the 1970s, at which point the United States and Soviet Union had more than 30,000 nuclear weapons each—an absolutely insane number,

enough to destroy the world many times over. With so much nuclear overkill in its arsenals, the United States realized that it had more plutonium than it would ever need, and the mission of Hanford transitioned from plutonium production to cleanup of the incredible environmental mess that production had created. Extracting plutonium from irradiated uranium fuel cells generates huge quantities of extremely toxic and radioactive chemicals, and in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s Hanford's operators had no idea what to do with those chemicals—plus they had a war to win; someone else could deal with the waste problem. Their solution was to build 177 gigantic tanks as big as auditoriums in the middle of the desert and fill them with the chemicals left over from plutonium production. The tanks built in the 1940s had a design life of about 20 years. Just this year, the Department of Energy and its contractors started converting the waste in those tanks into glass logs that, eventually, once a place is found to dispose of them, could be buried deep underground.

There's another legacy of the nuclear era here in Washington State. Twenty miles northwest of Seattle, on the eastern shore



of Hood Canal, is the largest stockpile of deployed nuclear weapons anywhere in the world. That's the site of Naval Base Kitsap, which is the home port of the United States' west coast fleet of ballistic missile submarines. Each of the eight Ohio-class submarines that sail from Naval Base Kitsap carries up to 24 Trident II missiles, and each of those missiles has four to five independently targetable warheads. In other words, a single submarine sailing from Washington State has enough firepower to destroy every major city in Russia—and a single Russian submarine has the ability to do the same to all our major cities.

Washington State has been at the very center of the nuclear era. Plutonium was first manufactured here. Hanford remains the most radiologically contaminated site in the western hemisphere. Naval Base Kitsap has enough nuclear bombs to destroy humanity. Perhaps that gives us, as residents of this state, a special responsibility to help ensure not only that nuclear weapons are never used but that they are abolished from the face of the Earth. 

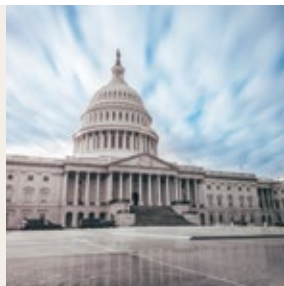
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Steve Olson is a writer who most recently authored *The Apocalypse Factory: Plutonium and the Making of the Atomic Age*. His books have been nominated in several local and national book awards. Since 1979, he has been a consultant writer for the National Academy of Sciences, the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology, and other national scientific organizations

- *Check out Steve Olson's talk, "Atomic Washington: Our Nuclear Past, Present, and Future," online and around the state. To find an event, visit [humanities.org](http://humanities.org).*



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# A PATCHWORK QUILT

▲ "My Dad's Hands" by Megan Torgerson.

*Growing up in a tiny rural town, Megan Torgerson came to realize that American culture looks down on people like her. She reflects on her roots, and why rural people should be more included in the national conversation.*

By **Megan Torgerson**

**O**n the back of my couch rests a patchwork quilt made from the old jeans and corduroy work clothes of farm women and men, many long since gone. The now-frayed quilt of smooth pale denim and paisley, barn red and sun yellow corduroy, was assembled by the skilled hands of Volmer Lutheran Church Lady's Aid women. It was auctioned off at a bazaar in the church basement one dark October evening where my mom placed the winning bid, and I immediately co-opted the quilt for blanket forts and comfort on days I was home sick from school. The day I moved 600 miles across the Big Sky State to attend the University of Montana in Missoula, the perfectly weighted seven by five-and-a-half foot multi-colored quilt was lovingly packed into the back of my 4Runner. It kept me warm in the depths of Rocky Mountain winters, soothed me on Sundays I felt homesick, and later blocked out white noise so I could record a podcast.

My home is filled with reminders like this. Reminders of where I come from.

Atop a slab of granite rock pulled from a harvested wheat field rests a spindly skyward-reaching houseplant. Propping up memoirs by Sarah Smarsh, Grace Olmstead, Kathleen Norris, and Ivan Doig is a rusted out sprocket from one of Dad's tractors. A found deer skull with antlers sits on a bookshelf filled with classic rock and country records. Sand from the hills in Grandma's pasture and soil from the fields surrounding my childhood home line the low windowsill beside my kitchen table.

I wasn't always this preoccupied with my homeland. In fact after I left the sandy hills, prairie buttes, and coulees of Northeast Montana and Western North Dakota, I sought to distance myself from my prairie past. Arriving to a forward-thinking college town from a place that no one had ever heard of, with a slow and thick high plains accent, I was pegged as provincial. While I tried to laugh off being called a country bumpkin by new friends from sexier places like Seattle, those slurs cut deep. It took me years to admit that, but at the time, I learned to pause and think before I spoke, shedding elongated pronunciations of bag [pronounced bayg] for bag, sorry [sorey] for sorry [saw-ry], Megan [Maygan] for Megan [Mehgan].

I leaned so much into this vocal transformation that I was even asked at a party once where in New England I was from. These are the growing pains of early college for a country kid. Test driving versions of yourself until you've found a vehicle for being that better fits into popular culture.

While I was busy trying to outfit myself with an affect that would grant me the perceived sophistication and wit of my peers, I was still proud of being from a Montana farm family, and I never once said I was from a place I wasn't.

And despite trying to change the way I spoke, my new friends were intrigued by my childhood stories weathering weeklong snow storms, witnessing golden bumper crops lay flat after a hail storm, and warding off coyotes with an old radio during calving season. It was beside these companions that my love for the mountains and my attachment to the greater state of Montana deepened.

I was intoxicated by the Garden City and craved constant stimulation from hot spring adventures across the Idaho border,

to house shows on the North Side and footloose nights on the town. I was more of a student of my helter-skelter life than my English studies, and my identity became wrapped up in everything Missoula meant to me, from the time I first crossed the Rocky Mountain Front to visit my oldest sisters in college, to my new early-adult life.

At that time I hadn't the patience or the reverence to see what humble beauty resided on the grasslands in my rearview mirror. I didn't yet realize all the sophistication and wit that abounded on my family's multigenerational farm.

“

*Most of the mainstream media  
I consumed portrayed rural America  
as a backwards place lacking in culture,  
education, and economic vitality.*

”

As the youngest in a family of four girls, with siblings 7, 12, and 14 years my senior, I spent many days during childhood entertaining myself. Without many kids nearby, my best friends were my dogs Lucky, Fritz, and Oscar. We'd dig tunnels into snow banks or sneak down to Grandma's for tang and ice cream when mom was on long phone calls with German relatives. In the fall my cousin Jacob and I would climb hay bales and shoot gophers with the 22. My favorite times were spent playing in an old hay loft with my friends Katie and Alexa then sneezing myself to sleep after. I had many glorious days like this. Days I'd come home with dirt inside my ears and ticks embedded in my skin.

I also had many lonely days. By the age of 11 my sisters lived in Pullman, Washington; Nederland, Colorado; and San Francisco, California. Then my two best friends moved away, and I became the only girl in my fifth grade class with three pre-pubescent boys. With my friends gone, and my sisters far away, I grew to think of Northeastern Montana as a place to

wait until the rest of my life would begin. Eighteen years later in a grad school classroom in Seattle's bustling Capitol Hill district, I began learning how broader cultural forces and public policy also played a hand in why I thought about my rural home as a waiting room.

First let's consider the cultural forces. The reason my peers thought to call me a country bumpkin in college, and the reason I was convinced it was better to have a metropolitan sounding accent, was due in part to urban-normative media portrayals that valorize urban society while creating single stories of rural and blue-collar people. Especially when I was growing up, I either didn't see myself in TV characters or film protagonists, or they leaned so far into belittling stereotypes that they were hardly recognizable. On the other end of the spectrum, some pioneering mythologies framed country life as a white pastoral utopia devoid of conflict, loss, or diversity. But most of the mainstream media I consumed portrayed rural America as a backwards place lacking in culture, education, and economic vitality.

For those who don't know people from rural America in real life, these caricatures dominate the social imagination, standing in as the only examples from which to create limited and problematic assumptions. For rural people themselves, the cost of these negative portrayals can be self-loathing and shame.

Rooted in my attempt to reframe the narrative on rural America is a desire to dissolve these stereotypes so they don't have so much of a hold on rural-raised people. Without the shame attached, my hope is that we can be proud of where we're from, maintain our accents, and hopefully help create a more harmonious relationship between the big city and small town.

Now considering policy, I'm by no means an expert, but in that Seattle University classroom, I was introduced to the possibility that my life and the future of people living in rural America was directly connected to public policy. It's not just a question of individual will power, or a culture that venerates mobility and encourages rural youth to leave their small towns in order to "make something of their lives." There are also regulatory measures, laws, and funding priorities in place that influence the fate of our rural community members. Rural Idaho native Grace Olmstead tackles this in her memoir *Uprooted: Recovering the Legacy of the Places We've Left Behind*, where she writes "many rural towns are considered interchangeable and expendable,

valuable not for their own sake but because their resources—lumber, paper, coal, minerals, gemstones, oil, gas, produce, dairy, meat, and grains to name a few—have for many decades been exported to other places by large corporations. These towns' worth (or lack thereof) is contingent on what other spaces think of them, take from them, or offer them. This extraction of worth, hope, and resources is something farmer and essayist Wendell Berry and economist John Ikerd have both referred to as "the economic colonization of rural America." She continues, "It's easy to exploit places we don't know about, places we believe to be unimportant."

These aren't just hypothetical places for me, and they may not be for you either. The places and people impacted by actions like the federal "get big or get out" policy that's become a cultural ethos since the Nixon administration are my dad, my cousin, my uncle, my neighbors, people featured in my podcast *Reframing Rural's* first season. They're the reason I want to add color and complexity to the larger cultural narrative, to push back against the notion that rural America is culturally and politically homogenous, that it's unimportant.

The impact of policies that devalue a place in order to exploit it is fewer and fewer farmers farming larger and larger tracts of land. It's a dwindling and aging population, a fifth grade class with four kids in it, and the shuttering of the Lady's Aid group that sewed my favorite quilt.

When I first got the idea for *Reframing Rural*, I was finding a lot of comfort in my patchwork quilt. It was the fall of 2016 and I had just moved 2,700 miles across the country from Portland, Oregon, to Asheville, North Carolina. Smoke from the Gatlinburg fires in East Tennessee was barreling over the Great Smoky Mountains into the Swannanoa Valley. This was the same time rural America was being held responsible for voting in the most polarizing candidate for presidency in modern history. The term "flyover country" was swapped for "Trump country," and a divisive narrative quickly took hold. In the 2020 report *Revealing Rural Realities: What Fuels Inaccurate and Incomplete Coverage of Rural Issues*, the Aspen Institute and Center for Rural Strategies reported that after the 2016 election local journalists were being constantly contacted for "stereotypical 'rural' sources such as the farmer, coal miner, or Trump supporter, even when these people may not have reflected the zeitgeist of the community. Many interviewees



expressed that quick-turnaround stories from national outlets ignored the diversity and nuance of rural America.”

As I watched this happen from my new home base in the Blue Ridge mountains, I grieved how my home state of Montana and rural Americans across the country were being portrayed. This overly politicized narrative on rural America had come to be a single story that didn’t allow for the nuance and timbre of an individual’s voice. Less than a year later, in an application to Seattle University’s Arts Leadership MFA program, I wrote that if accepted I’d like to provide a platform for rural people to reclaim their stories, celebrate their culture, and connect with a broader community. The following year I returned to the Northwest to do just that.

There was a time during college when I hadn’t return to the farm for almost three years. Later I was brought home by a string of memorial services. When I launched *Reframing Rural*, I had the opportunity to go home and get to know my community again without the tinge of loss. When I first returned to record interviews for my podcast, I had the privilege of thanking Margaret and David, the lay ministers who orchestrated my grandparents’ memorial services. I sat across the table from Ralph, our mailman who shared the value of neighbors and what it means to have faith. I spoke to my family friend Kay who detailed for me her time working in a two-room country schoolhouse. I had a long conversation with my friend Eddie who expressed his spiritual connection to the land and animals on the high plains. I conversed with my neighbor Thomas about the investment risks of agriculture. And I shared stories and created new ones with my parents Renny and Russ.

Thanks to the generosity and openness of these people I knit together a series of stories that I hope elicits the diversity of thought, the wisdom, and the hardiness of my small Northeastern Montana community. I hope I’ve made the case for why we should think about people, not headlines or statistics, when we think about rural America. And I hope I can compel you, whether you live in Plentywood, Montana or Seattle, Washington, to pay attention to the human experiences that unite us, not just what’s keeping us from getting to know one another.


In the 2018 documentary *hillbilly*, filmmaker and Kentucky native Ashley York says “sometimes you need to leave where you come from to find your voice. And other times you have to return to that same place to listen for a deeper understanding.”



▲ Megan Torgerson. Photo by Jeremy Lurgio.

When I return to Dagmar, I listen for the wind, the crickets, and the coyotes. I listen for the space between people’s thoughts, how they’re making it through another hot and dry summer and an unpredictable economy. I listen for the joy or the fatigue in their voices and see if there’s something I can do to help while I’m there.

As I write this, I’m packing my work boots, field recorder, and camera for the 1,000 mile pilgrimage back to the farm. I’m revisiting where it all started for me, putting the time in to continue getting to know the place where it all began.

When I get there, I’m going to hop in Dad’s Chevy pickup and instead of watching the grasslands disappear in my rearview mirror, I’m going to embrace my roots and succumb to the vastness of the Northern Great Plains. 

*This essay was adapted from the podcast Reframing Rural.*

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Megan Torgerson is the creator and host of *Reframing Rural*, a podcast that aims to reframe the narrative on rural America. She holds an MFA in arts leadership from Seattle University, and was an inaugural Humanities Washington Public Humanities Fellow in 2022.

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# NEWS

from Humanities Washington

## Introducing Democracy Forward

Teachers can now bring exciting and vetted experts on democracy to their classrooms—for free!

As an addition to our Speakers Bureau program, which provides vetted humanities experts to schools and nonprofits, we've selected seven speakers that help high school students engage with and understand democracy, from political polarization to voting rights to protest and more. We have also developed accompanying slide deck presentations, activities, and a teaching guide in accordance with state social studies standards for teachers' use. More information available at [humanities.org/democracy-forward](https://humanities.org/democracy-forward).

## How Well Do America's Ideals Match Up to Reality?

*A More Perfect Union*, a podcast from the Center for Washington Cultural Traditions, poses this question to different communities in Washington State. Focusing on groups sidelined and sometimes silenced in the American story, you'll hear from Latine Americans in Wenatchee, LGBTQ+ activists from across eastern Washington, and Black Americans from around the Salish Sea.

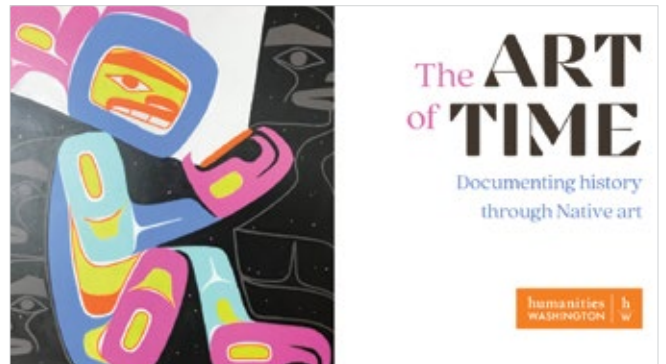
Is American democracy and its aspirations a fantasy or a reality? Come with us to discover that the answer is much more complicated and interesting than the question. Langston Hughes once wrote, in response to Walt Whitman, "I, too, sing America." *A More Perfect Union* gives voice to Washingtonians who also sing America.

Listen on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, or your favorite podcatcher.

The podcasts are presented by the Center for Washington Cultural Traditions, Humanities Washington, and ArtsWA/The Washington State Arts Commission.

## Get Ready for Bedtime

Humanities Washington's annual fundraiser of food, wine, and words will take place on September 29 in Seattle and October 20 in Spokane. The event features some of the Northwest's most prominent writers, who will write and read original work based on the event's theme, *Quarter Moon*. More details to come, and registration will open in late summer.



▲ "Hanging Out with My Friends in Quarantine," Alison Bremner (Tlingit), 2020.

## Watch "The Art of Time" and Other Events

How have Native cultures documented the passage of time? And what can we learn from Native art forms about preserving moments that are important to us? On our YouTube channel, watch the entirety of our recent event with Miranda Belarde-Lewis (Zuni/Tlingit) of the University of Washington's Information School, in which she explores the artful documentation of time as seen through familiar and less familiar artistic traditions within Native communities.

Check out other recent event recordings as well, including "What Are We Afraid Of?" about common monsters throughout cultures, and "Conflict and Compassion" about how we can tone down partisan rage and bring more compassion, nuance, and humility to our political lives.

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*Central Washington University*

Andrew Chanse  
*Spokane Public Libraries*

Peter Danelo  
*Heller Ehrman (retired)*

Eric Davis  
*Bellevue College*

Jennifer Ernst  
*Yakima Valley College*

Senator Karen Fraser  
*22nd District Thurston County (retired)*

Geoff Froh  
*Densho*

Betsy Godlewski  
*Northwest Museum of Arts & Culture*

DeAnne Hamilton  
*KBTC Public TV*

Josh Heim  
*Western Arts Alliance*

Brianna Hoffman  
*Washington Library Association*

Eric Lawson  
*University of Washington*

Mark Miyake  
*Western Washington University*

Clarence Moriwaki  
*Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community*

Bradley Richardson  
*Clark County Historical Museum*

Joe Ross  
*Gates Archive*

Colleen Rozillis (chair)  
*Moss Adams*

## Staff

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George Abeyta  
*Senior Program Manager*

Stone Addington  
*Director of Programs*

Tom Beasley  
*Technology and Special Projects Manager*

Sarah Faulkner  
*Program Manager*

Antonio Gómez  
*Associate Folklorist*

David Haldeman  
*Director of Communications and Content*

Rachel Jacobson  
*Development and Communications Coordinator*

Jera Lego  
*Project Manager*

Violeta Martin  
*Grant and Outreach Manager*

Thomas Grant Richardson  
*Director, Center for Washington Cultural Traditions*

Eric Sanders, CPA  
*Chief Financial Officer*

Shelley Saunders  
*Chief Resource Development Officer*

Julie Ziegler  
*Chief Executive Officer*

# OUR MISSION

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*Humanities Washington opens minds and bridges divides  
by creating spaces to explore different perspectives.*

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## OUR PROGRAMS

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**FAMILY READING** uses storytelling and discussion to explore cultural and ethical themes in children's literature and emphasizes the importance of families reading together.



**GRANTS** assist local organizations in creating opportunities for their community to come together to discuss important issues using the humanities.



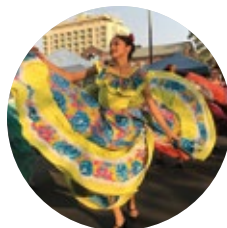
**SPEAKERS BUREAU** draws from a pool of leading cultural experts and scholars to provide free conversational lectures in communities throughout the state.



**THINK & DRINK** brings hosted conversations on provocative topics and new ideas to pubs and tasting rooms in Bellingham, Spokane, Seattle, Tacoma, and Yakima.



**WASHINGTON STATE POET LAUREATE** builds awareness and appreciation of poetry – including the state's legacy of poetry – through public readings, workshops, lectures, and presentations throughout the state. Presented in partnership with ArtsWA.



**CENTER FOR WASHINGTON CULTURAL TRADITIONS** amplifies our state's rich, diverse living cultural treasures through research and special programming. Presented in partnership with ArtsWA.



**MEDIA PROJECTS** brings online content such as live and recorded panel discussions and conversations, radio shows, and other accessible deep dives into important current topics to viewers on our YouTube channel.



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Seattle, WA 98109

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