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Editor's Letter



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Rise Above It!

EVERYDAY HAS BLUE SKIES and sunshine. No, that's not a weather forecast for some tropical city south of the border; that is what life can be like here in Spokane. One look out your window this time of year with the gray skies, piles of dirty snow pushed up against the curb, dripping icicles and the sound of the blustering wind might lead you to think differently.

It was just such a day a few weeks back, on the Sunday after Thanksgiving, when I sat in the Spokane airport waiting for my delayed flight. My fellow passengers and I were waiting for a plane to arrive from Seattle, which would turn around and shuttle us back to the city with the needle in the sky. I was getting ready to take my first full week off of work in three-and-half years, and I couldn't get on that plane fast enough. I was heading to Denmark for a three-week visit to surprise my best friend, Kathleen. Her husband, Ole, and I had been planning the trip as a surprise for her for months, and I was beyond ready to leave.

I sat waiting impatiently at the gate, with growing despair and hunger as the screen was updated to indicate yet another delay and an even later departure time. A baby across the waiting area was getting squirmy and testing his mother's patience; she in turn was snapping at her husband. It was getting ugly in there.

In an attempt to distract myself, I shifted my attention to the television screens hanging from the ceiling, but the news didn't do much to brighten the mood created by irritable passengers. There was more fighting in the Middle East, snarky bantering between political candidates and a doom and gloom prediction for the retailers dur-

ing the upcoming holiday stretch.

By the time the plane finally got in from Seattle, it was three hours late and people all around were grumpy. Shuffling out into the cold air toward the plane, the rain hit my face like sharp claws, causing me to walk with my face down. As I reached the steps to climb into the plane, my stress deepened when I finally looked up and saw a plane that was so small I half expected them to hand us goggles and leather flying caps for the flight.

With all of the irritable passengers settled into their seats we were soon off and moving, hurtling down the runway. The little plane's nose lifted up into the air and the wind swept under the wings, lifting us higher and higher as the plane's back wheels curled up into the comfort and safety of its interior.

Wind was whipping all around and the little plane bounced up, down and side to side as it climbed into the air. Looking out the window all you could see were gray clouds and the beaded drops of rain pelting against the window.

The delay, the hunger, the cranky passengers, and the bleak weather: you'd have been hard pressed to find a cheerful person in the bunch. And then it happened. With a final burst from the engines, the plane climbed up and broke through the clouds and sunshine filled the cabin from all directions. The bouncing stopped and we suddenly seemed to be gliding above the carpet of voluptuous clouds below. What happened to the dreary scenery, I wondered? Then I remembered, despite the clouds, there are always blue skies and sunshine; you just have to rise above it.

Life is a lot like that flight. The ride can be bouncy and frightening, with stresses coming at us from all angles and making us uncomfortable. You can look all around you and see nothing but despair, irritation, unhappy people and bleak surroundings. Clinging white-knuckled to your armrest as you fly through life, you may wish that things were different; but you have to hang on for the ride, and have faith that, if you want to, you can rise above it. The choice is yours: you can bounce along in the winds, the gray and the rain of life, or you can rise above it. Which way will you go this year?

As we fly through 2008, I hope the articles we bring you in each issue of *Spokane Coeur d'Alene Living* are ones that inform, educate and entertain you, and inspire you to focus less on the gray skies of life, and more on how many great things there are all around us—because there are *always* blue skies and sunshine; to see them, you just have to rise above it!

Up, up and away!

Blythe