



An Old Tree, Fresh Look and New Year

**M**Y FAMILY'S CHRISTMAS TREE LINGERED A little longer than usual at home this year, almost as if it had put down roots in the living room corner, and was unable to be moved. The "de-trimming" of the house took longer than usual and happened in stages.

Whether it was the busy schedule, a tinge of laziness or simply dread of the inevitable task of putting away every one of the ornaments, for several days the couch and chair in the living room were out of commission as a layer of ornaments consumed every space. Off the tree, they didn't quite make their way into their boxes as quickly as they should have. The bare tree, save for the strands of darkened lights wound around the limbs, stood forlornly in the corner, ashamed of its nakedness and not quite sure what to do with itself.

Finally, push came to shove, and each ornament was wrapped and placed back into its box. Down came the tree and the pine boughs from where they were draped over the mantle and around the mirror on the wall, and away went the wreath from the front door. Once the boxes were tucked back in the storage space under the stairs, and the floor had been swept (how is it that fake trees lose almost as many needles as the real ones?) it was time to breathe a little sigh of relief. Everything felt refreshed, renewed and clean.

Interesting isn't it, that New Year's, falling just after Christmas on our calendars, is the primary time when we yearn for a clean slate and a fresh start? We like to clean out the things in our lives that have been hanging around too long, like an ornament that has overstayed its welcome. When we think of starting anew, there often follows a list of New Year's

resolutions to be tackled—lose 20 lbs, get more sleep, learn Mandarin Chinese, etc. Instead of letting those resolutions fall by the side, I am hoping this is a year of success for you.

Tapping into the most popular of New Year's resolutions—better health, nutrition and exercise habits—this issue's Health Beat section, starting on page 45, is dedicated to helping you get on track and stay on track with your health. We are excited to highlight a new program called Step Up Spokane, which is meant as a resource to get our city moving and get us healthy. Add in the eight top nutrition tips and the workout information provided, and I am sure every one of our readers can find one way to improve their health this coming year. You'll feel and look great!

Even our production team at the magazine felt a yearning for a fresh approach and a new look. As you thumb through the pages of this issue, you'll notice a few tweaks and twists to our format, and even a slight change to the logo on the front cover. New fonts, different layout designs and an overall revamped look are how we are kicking off the New Year at *Spokane Coeur d'Alene Living*.

This fresh look comes to you compliments of our art director, David Crary, and our senior graphic designer, Kristi Somday. These two are always tucked behind the scenes at the magazine, and do not get in the spotlight nearly enough. While my mug shot and words always grace this page, they silently contribute just as much effort, creativity and work into each issue. From ad design and creation, to article layouts and color correction, every visual aspect of this magazine passes through their talented hands before it lands in yours. I handle the words, they handle the design—and they do a great job! Without David and Kristi's hard work, my job would much more difficult and much less fun. A huge thank you to all of the time, work, energy and effort they put into each issue, and especially for what they have done to bring a fresh look to the magazine.

My hope is that you will continue to love the articles you read in these pages this coming year—stories of amazing local people, businesses and events that make our community a place in which we want to live—and that you will enjoy the new look in which they are presented. May the stories anchor you to this community in a new, fresh way and invigorate you for the year to come. I hope the stories linger long in your memories and root themselves your hearts; may they make an impression and stick with you for quite a while—just like the Christmas tree.

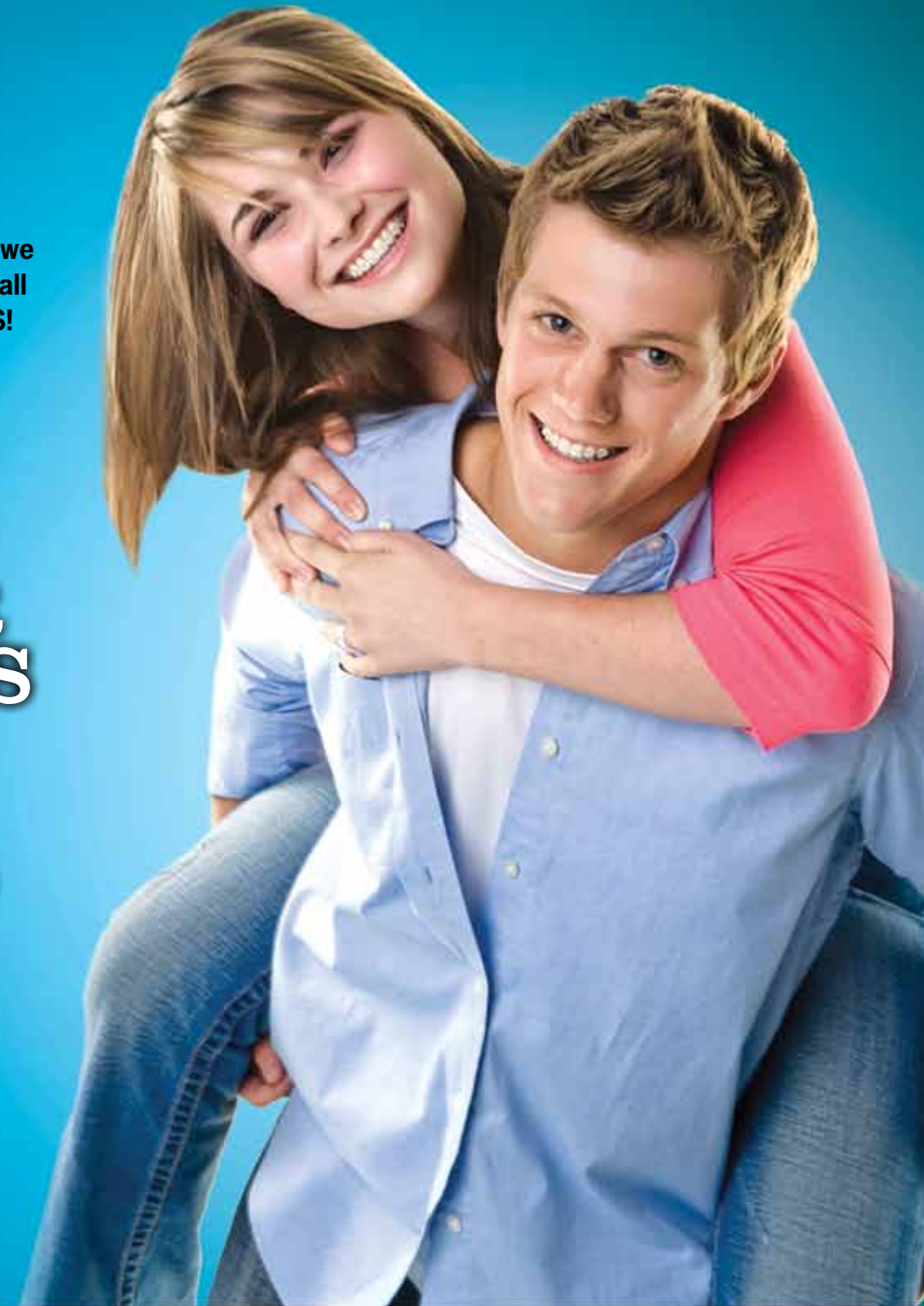
Happy New Year and happy reading!

*Blythe*

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