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EDITOR'S LETTER



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A Parking Spot

HAVE YOU EVER NOTICED the fierce competition that exists in the hunt for parking spots? It doesn't matter if it is a grocery store, the mall or a parking garage, it is always the same scene. A driver will slowly circle the lot as their eyes scan the rows for an empty spot. With no luck, they turn to option B, which is to follow behind someone who is walking through the lot, in hopes of them heading to a soon-to-leave car. Until a spot is found, the dance continues: scan with the eyes, accelerate lightly with the foot, and then, when a spot is found – *pounce* on it with lightning-like skills.

Everybody wants a prime parking spot. Once your car has pulled into a spot and the engine is turned off, it is a sigh of relief: you have carved out a small spot in life that is yours, and yours alone. Sometimes the best part of parking is knowing that you have found a place where you belong. It is like that little space was made just for you, and by pulling into it, you have thrown a flag into the ground saying "I mark this land for me!"

The process of circling for a parking spot is a lot like trying to find your spot in life. When you finally park, you are no longer wandering endlessly, trying to find a place that fits you, where you can easily fit in. No longer worrying if you will find a place where you belong, where you can close your eyes, breathe deeply and say "I'm here!"

Just like when you find a good parking spot, finding a good spot in life is one of the best feelings, and it is one for which we all strive. To find a spot that is just for you, a spot where you belong and are safe, out of the dangers of the traffic of life, and can comfortably settle in, is a wonderful feeling.

Sometimes in parking lots and in life, we park in spots that are uncomfortable – they are too close together, put us near things we don't want to be next to, or we are angled, going in a different direction from where we want to go. Sometimes we get dinged, scratched and banged up by others. When this happens, we have to be willing to wait where we are until we see a spot open that fits us better, and then we have to go for it!

Other times, in parking lots and in life, we park in great spots. Living in Spokane and Coeur d'Alene is like getting a primo parking spot. We have hunted around for a place to park ourselves, looking for somewhere safe, that gets us close to where we want to be, and that allows us to sit back, rest our eyes and know that we are off the crazy road of life, tucked into a space that fits.

Low crime rates, great weather, and shelter from the extreme ups and downs of the economy make our community a great place to park ourselves. So does the combination of so many fantastic restaurants (turn to page 154 for a gastronomic tour of two new ones we are sure you'll be parked at often), beautiful parks, fun things to do, and great people.

One of the greatest community events in Spokane is Bloomsday, which combines a fun event with great people! On page 42 is the story of Bloomsday, and how it *bloomed* into one of Spokane's greatest events.

If you want a sense of community, enter yourself in Bloomsday, and listen to the roar of encouragement as you hoof it along the course. You will be cheered on by citizens who line the streets, acting as Spokane's official cheerleaders, encouraging the people who run, walk and stroll by, urging them on, and lending a hand in the realm of community spirit. Last year, as I ran through the neighborhood just past Doomsday Hill, I felt bolstered by the cheers of those lining the sidewalk. They were clapping continuously, cheering on the thousands of Bloomies who streamed by, yelling, "You can do it!" "Good job!" "Keep it up, you are doing great!" Even though I was only one of 50,000 charging past them that morning, in that moment I felt like I belonged and that I was an important player in the game of life here in Spokane. It made me realize I am parked in the right spot.

As the warmth of the sun begins to reappear, and the city comes to life with beautiful blooms, I invite you to park yourself with the magazine and read all about the beautiful, enviable community in which you live. You may just realize living here means you are parked in the best spot there is.

Blythe