



### Journaling Our Stories

**I**T WAS A FEW DAYS BEFORE THE START OF my first year of college, and my mom, who hadn't yet left for home after taking me down to school in Southern California, was accompanying me as I bought my books for the first semester. As we browsed through the bookstore, she came to a display with blank journals.

"I'm getting this for you," she said, picking up a spiral bound striped journal. "It would be interesting to record your college experience."

The look I gave back to her was just as blank as the pages in the journal that she had in her hand. I couldn't imagine what I would write in there. Weren't journals meant for little girls who wrote the names of boys and decorated the pages with lots of hearts around them? And didn't they usually come with Hello Kitty or a unicorn on the cover, along with a cheap lock? I'd long since passed that "Dear Diary..." phase, and didn't think this journal would get much use.

She ignored the look and got in line, the journal in her hand. "Just try it," she said. "Think of all you are going to learn and the fun you are going to have these next few years. You'll be interested to look back and read your thoughts about it one day."

So the journal was purchased and came back to my room along with the big stack of textbooks. Later, I stood on the balcony of my dorm, fighting back tears as I watched my parents drive off, leaving me alone, 1,200 miles from home in a place where I knew no one. That night, as my new roommate and I were unpacking our things and getting ready to go to sleep, I saw the journal sitting where I had left it. Huh. Maybe I could try it, I thought. I could just jot down a few things from the day,

so I'd remember them later in life. So, I decided to do it! There was only one rule I gave myself: it was going to be all or nothing. I didn't want a few sporadic entries that only gave excerpts of my life; I wanted to challenge myself to jump all the way in and write consistently.

So, I did it. Starting that first night in the dorm, I wrote in the journal, describing the surroundings, things I had done, people I met and my thoughts on being away from my family, missing them in a new world. I wrote every night – holidays, weekends and vacations included – until I graduated three years later. I didn't skip a single day. (I still keep the discipline of writing in my journal, and have done so consistently, with only a few breaks in the years since I graduated.) And guess what? It helped me get where I am today. I developed discipline, became a better writer, and documented great memories. Additionally, as I wrote more, I began to look at things critically and consider how they impacted my life.

In many ways, writing this magazine is like writing a journal for Spokane and the surrounding areas. With blank pages at the start of each issue, we are given the enjoyable task of being disciplined enough to record the events, happenings and stories of the people who make up our region. As we look at the world unfolding here in our backyard, we are pressed to think critically about our community, what is happening within it and how we will each respond. And when we meet new friends, we can share them here on these pages.

One example of a new friend of the magazine is the talented writer, Jim Kershner. Local readers have been following Jim's writing for years, as he has covered features, reviews and arts stories for the *Spokesman-Review*. In our quest to bring together the best local writers, we are very happy to announce that Jim will be covering *The Scene* in our publication, keeping us abreast of all the news about the local performing arts. With his extensive knowledge of local theater, music, arts and events, he'll show what makes Spokane such a vibrant and exciting place to live.

Each story in this magazine is an entry into the journal of our collective lives here in Spokane. Taken one at a time, they are interesting and fun pieces to read. Looking back over the collection of all that we have written – and anticipating the great stories yet to come – they confirm what many of us have long known: we've been blessed with the opportunity to experience a great life by living here!

Happy journaling!

*Blythe*