



THE BEAR NECESSITIES

Who doesn't remember their childhood teddy bear? The worn fur, the shiny black eyes, the arms and paws that reached out to you in a chronic "I love you! Come here and give me a hug," gesture. Who can forget how reassuring it was to clutch that bear close to your chest while you fought back tears, tucked down in your sleeping bag on your first sleepover, or your first week away at overnight camp? The gentle feel of its ear against your cheek while you fell asleep, or the comfort of seeing it perched on your bed when you came home from college? For all of our strong, accomplished, grown up attitudes, there are probably still some of us that have that bear tucked safely away, always on standby for a dose of comfort as soon as we lay eyes on it.

Teddy bears are such a part of our

childhood history, so it is difficult to imagine life without your bear. But try.

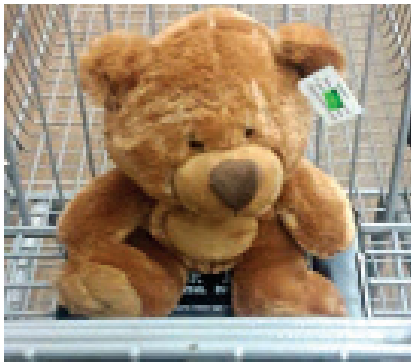
Just for a minute, try to think of how life would be without all of those sweet memories; moments of comfort and the friendship having your bear by your side. Who would comfort you when you were alone and scared? Who would be your buddy and pal for all of the adventures of childhood? To whom would you tell all of your secrets?

For some children, the ones who have the roughest of lives, when it comes to the extra dose of challenges and the empty spots in their hearts, a teddy bear can make a world of difference. But they don't always have one.

That fact is what encouraged Kris DePaulo to start the "Playing" it Forward campaign to collect new teddy bears to give to children who are going to, currently in or

transitioning out of, foster care in Stevens County. CASA / CPS will be charged with making sure they land where the need is the greatest. "My wish is that there will be such an abundance of teddy bears that we can also make them available for police and firefighters to have handy on calls involving children," says DePaulo.

"Playing" it Forward originally started in October 2015, when DePaulo put the call out to her local community that she wanted to collect 100 brand new board games for the 100 kids in foster care in Stevens County, for Christmas; hence, the name "Playing" it Forward. She started the board game idea on the anniversary of her father's death. "He was a huge inspiration and amazing role model of unconditional love, and I got tired of mourning him on that day, and decided to do something positive in honor of his memory," she says. "My



mom has been hand-making blankets to give to the local kids in foster care for years. She spends the entire year working on them. I was very blessed with amazing parents, and felt the need to pass the love along.”

The call for board games was a huge success, with money coming in from as far away as England, and enough board games were gathered for all of the kids in Stevens County and Ferry County, plus local Colville charities. With the huge response, DePaulo decided to start collecting teddy bears for all foster kids currently in the system, just entering the system and also those transitioning out. “A lot of the time, things are happening so fast in these kids’ world, I just want them to have one thing that is all theirs to give them a little security,” she says.

For so many of us, picking up an extra teddy bear or a board game is an easy thing to do. Put them all together, and it makes a huge statement to an entire community, and touches a lot of kid’s lives, most of which do not have a lot.

DePaulo’s goal is to collect at least 100 teddy bears, as there are about 100 kids in care right now in Stevens County, but she would love more so than not only CASA and CPS are covered, but also the local fire department (where her dad was chief for many years) and the EMTs and police department. “It’s my goal that every child in crisis has something to hold onto,” she says. “I’m hoping that in that moment, when a child receives a bear, they are reminded that there is a whole community that cares about them.”

If a child ever felt alone or unloved, we couldn’t bear it! **S**

— Blythe Thimsen

LILACS and LEMONS

[good] [not so good] [good out of bad]

by Vincent Bozzi



LILACS to Prohibition Gastropub on North Monroe Street. On the first Friday of every month they have Service Appreciation Night. Military/Fire/Police eat free when someone purchases a meal of equal or greater value. They wish to honor those who serve. We hope this catches on!



LEMONS to the City of Spokane Valley for abruptly firing city manager Mike Jackson. Described as brilliant, professional and dedicated, this smacks of politics, much the same as when Spokane let the universally praised city planner Scott Chesney go. Why can’t we just get out of the way and let great people do their jobs?



LILACS to the great volunteers who help clean up the People’s Park area by the Sandifur Bridge each year, as well as those in Coeur d’Alene who clean up Tubb’s Hill. Does any community rally around a great cause as well as those in the Inland Northwest do?



LEMONS to Apple for not cooperating with the FBI in creating a key to unlock the phone of the San Bernardino shooters. Yes, it does raise security concerns, but couldn’t they place the phone in a secured room with their staff present, extract the information and then destroy the software? It’s probably just a matter of time before a hacker figures it out anyway, and by then more acts of terror may be committed.



LILACS to Facebook for finally creating an alternative to the “Like” button. All we really wanted was a “dislike” button, but now there is “Like,” “Love,” “Ha ha,” “Wow,” “Sad” and “Angry.” Sadly, you still can’t do anything but like a reply, which is where some of us tend to really want to express our pleasure or displeasure, but this will make Facebook a little more fun. Now if they could only come up with an emblem to indicate sarcasm so we don’t have to explain that we are just joking, or emoticons that express “you’re lying!” or “you’ve got to be kidding” or “my BS detector is going into overdrive” or “you know, for the most part I think you’re crazy as a loon, but this time you were spot on”!



LEMONS to city leaders who don’t understand that they could save money by offering treatment to drug abusers rather than jail time. The recidivism rate is ridiculously high, but treatment would end most of our local property crimes and save a huge amount of court costs.



LILACS to River Park Square for reopening skywalk access to the Old City Hall building, where the Bozzi Gallery has been dormant for the past four months due to nearly impossibly access. Glad to be able to reopen!



LEMONS to all of us for not thinking big. Maybe it’s time for a zoo in Spokane again! Maybe it’s time for a Saturday Market in Riverfront Park (we tried but got stalled by the city). Maybe it’s time for a zipline from the Penthouse at the Paulsen to Riverfront Park! Maybe it’s time to restore the block in front of the Courthouse to a public park with a promenade, as originally planned! Maybe it’s time to create a safe haven for the homeless and the mentally handicapped! Maybe it’s time to create a world-famous food festival (okay, we’re working on it!) in Spokane! Maybe it’s time to put up a 50 story building downtown just to do it. For the longest time, Seattle’s tallest building was the dinky Smith Tower. Look at the city now! Maybe it’s time to finally create a sandy beach by the river downtown! Maybe it’s



time to follow the Hoop-fest model and create the world’s largest Frisbee Golf tournament? We are only limited by our imagination. Let’s make Spokane great! **S**