

Walkabout aka The Pooh Fairy

On any given day while enjoying a walk on Tubbs Hill you may come upon a woman with a knapsack on her back, a walking stick in one hand, and a bulging plastic grocery bag in the other. If she is using a small black bag to pick up dog pooh, you have just come upon our very own "Pooh Fairy"! She has been using around 8000 of these small bags every year, donated by a generous friend, to pick up after people's dogs, saving all of us unsuspecting walkers/joggers from a very unpleasant experience. (THANK YOU to those dog owners who keep their dogs on leashes and pick up after them!) Our Pooh Fairy states that fall through spring seems to be the worst time for people not picking up after their dogs.

Walkabout and her faithful black lab, Charlie (with a trademark kerchief around his neck), for years and years were Tubbs Hill's caretakers together. Then Charlie suddenly, and very sadly, became ill and died recently. Walkabout continues alone, but Charlie is ever with her as she spies "Charlie's rocks" at various spots where he used to love jumping into the lake for a good swim. When she sees yellow jackets congregating in small holes of fallen logs she remembers the day they jostled a log and were swarmed by these pests. Charlie beat it to the lake. When he returned, drenched and unscathed, he found his beloved friend had been stung multiple times. So many memories! (Her warning to all of us is to check for yellow jacket activity before sitting or stepping on a log. An unusually high number of yellow jackets is present on Tubbs this year.)

Walkabout knows every trail on Tubbs like the back of her hand. She does not have a degree in forestry, but she certainly has one in Tubbs Hill! Should the Parks Department have any questions about our hill, she is the person for them to have on speed dial. For instance, she knows where every patch of poison ivy is. (It is in many spots along the lakeshore!)

Walkabout/Pooh Fairy/Kim grew up about 3 miles outside Colville, WA, spending much time outside (swimming and horseback riding) but was not a big walker at that time in her life. After leaving Spokane Falls Community College, she ended up working for Honeywell Electronics where she met her future husband, Norm, better known as "The Stickman".

At Honeywell, Kim's position was in "quality assurance" where she daily looked for flaws in their products. That skill has carried over to her walks on Tubbs Hill. She automatically switches on a "scan button" within her, spotting flaws on the hill that others miss. Walkabout then picks up the intruding trash and pooh, removing it by the bagful. Around the 4th of July she picked up 100 grocery bags full of garbage weekly!

It is frustrating to her that it seems as though some people simply think someone else will collect their garbage, and she wonders why people such as these come to this beautiful place only to mar it, to leave it "flawed".

When people meet her, some thank her and some think she works for the City. She believes some visitors just think, "The City will pick it up." However, it is volunteers who do the bulk of the job. Walkabout is one very dedicated volunteer who tirelessly and lovingly watches over this one-of-a-kind piece of "urban wilderness", almost daily working to keep Tubbs Hill pristine for all of us. We all owe

Walkabout, aka the Pooh Fairy, a real debt of gratitude. If ever there was a Volunteer of the Year, we have a very special one in Walkabout!

One last thing: The sounds of Tubbs are special for Kim: raindrops hitting her jacket, squirrels cavorting, the rustle of a small snake, birds twittering, the wind in the trees ...and she wonders if you have ever stood perfectly still among the trees while it is snowing and heard the flakes gently light?

Enjoy Tubbs. Take care of it.