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Huckleberries: The Bard's passing had gentle touch

By D.F. Oliveria daveo@spokesman.com (208) 765-7125

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Dave Oliveria

I learned of the death of my friend Tom Wobker, the Bard of Sherman Avenue, on the first day of my recent vacation, April 23. Fittingly, Tom died that morning, on the purported 400th anniversary of William Shakespeare's death. Tom's wife, Sharon, emailed: "In keeping with the poet that he was, his breath quietly paused just at that time before dawn when the birds start singing." Tom asked his wife not to have a funeral service for him. Seems he felt that "the Bard Reveal" at the annual Blogfest for Huckleberries Online was tribute enough. At the Feb. 20 event, Tom was revealed as the poet behind the short rhymes that had pleased followers of this column and the Huckleberries blog for 14 years. A few days later, he emailed me: "(The

Blogfest) had more impact on me than I ever expected. You had told me, but I certainly discounted, the affection many people have for these odd little rhymes. It almost gives me a feeling that this is a calling for me and a reason to keep pushing on as a benefit to others; hope that doesn't sound too grandiose." My talented, gentle friend didn't realize what a blessing he was to us readers. Huckleberries Online and this column will begin rerunning Tom's poems. What would Huckleberries be without The Bard's sweet poetry?

Goodbye X 2

On April 30, the Huckleberries Online/SR.com blogosphere lost Dave Laird of the Community Comment blog. In a HucksOnline comment, John Olson of Spokane provided this fitting eulogy: "Dave Laird was one of the most interesting and engaging people I've known in my life. Wise, Witty, Wicked, and Wonkish. Many of us began blogging on the Review site with him and Community Comment. It was lovely to have a space to wonder and speculate about the goings on in our Basin here. Topics were wide ranging and great fun to discuss. I will miss him. He was Unique, and loved by most, feared by some, and hated by a few."

Huckleberries

Poet's Corner (from Aug. 15, 2002): "Streets in heaven are paved with gold/According to the stories told/Spokane is home to lesser souls/So all its streets are paved with holes" – Tom Wobker, the Bard of Sherman Avenue ("Spokane Streets") ... A poignant moment occurred Thursday at the end of the Coeur d'Alene ceremony at the Fallen Heroes Plaza in observance of the first anniversary of police Sgt. Greg Moore's death. A 911 dispatcher issued a final call for the officer. And then said: "Thanks for your service and dedication. We have not forgotten you" ... The Kootenai Environmental Alliance gave its 2016 Volunteer of the Year award to Kim Ashbaugh (aka Walkabout). Few are more deserving. Daily, Kim hikes Tubbs Hill and the Coeur d'Alene waterfront picking up trash and dog feces. Through rain or shine, sleet or snow. Amazing woman.

Parting shot

So my wife and I are en route to dinner at Crafted on Wednesday night, with two of my siblings and their mates, in two different cars. Mrs. O was the passenger in the vehicle driven by sister Lil. We both pulled our cars into parking spots along Sherman Avenue, between Fifth and Sixth streets. Fortunately, Mrs. O looked down before she stepped out of the vehicle. If she hadn't, she would have stepped in a fresh pile of dog poop positioned about 3 inches from the curb. I wondered about the slob dog owner who allowed his/her pet to poop on a public sidewalk without picking up after it. As disgusting as the situation was, it didn't spoil my superb Catawampus Crawfish Chowder dinner at Crafted later.