

the OUTER LIMITS

Stray away from the beaten path in the state you only thought you knew...

Washington has more to offer than evergreens, Pike Place Market and the Space Needle. Inside find more of the unusual, Pages C8 & 9

Stories by
BRETT
OPPEGAARD

Photos by
TOM BOYD
The Columbian



Chief Joseph's life ended in exile in Nespelem, a city on the Colville Indian Reservation, 12 miles north of Grand Coulee.

Washington, where are you?

ELLENSBURG — During one drunken, all-night party here, local artists Dick Elliot and Jane Orleman mixed some friends, a pickup truck full of junk and a few old boards.

The next day, they woke up with a new fence. That fence — held together by such items as doll bodies, a broken tricycle and a dishpan — became the cornerstone of "Dick and Jane's Spot," a mecca for Washington folk artists.

Today, 15 years later, "Dick and Jane's Spot" displays work from dozens of Northwest artists, including an optical-illusion walkway, a 5-foot-tall fortuneteller's hand and a garden filled with staked doll heads. Beer bottle caps and reflectors adorn each corner and post.

A booth in the yard offers information, such as the number of visitors each year (up to 1,000 per day in summer) and where all this stuff came from ("We did not drink all the beer ourselves").

"Things cycle through, things change," Elliot said. "We're in a constant evolution, a constant state of repair and recycle."

One of his signs asks, "What is this place?"

Good question.

In this collection, The Columbian looks for answers for Washingtonians, native and newcomer alike. In doing so, we forgo the familiar for the fringes of the state: its Dick and Jane's; its cultural junk and jewels.



What is this place? It's Dick and Jane's Spot, a folk art phenomenon in Ellensburg.

Gotta dig a 'duck a day ...

Just the facts...

Scientific name: *Panopea abrupta*.
Common name: geoduck (pronounced gooey duck).

Also known as: king clams, gooey, giant clams and ducks.

What are they? Geoducks are one of the largest burrowing clams in the world. Their contractile siphons can stretch nearly 4 feet and are so large that they cannot be completely withdrawn into the shell. They weigh about 2 pounds.

Oldest known geoduck: 147 years old, found in British Columbia. A geoduck's age is calculated like tree age, by counting its annual growth rings on the shell.

Phallic but true: Geoducks become sexually active at 6 years old and often don't quit until they are in their 100s.

It's the law: It is illegal in Washington to possess a geoduck neck not attached to the rest of the geoduck.

Where are they found? From depths of 2 feet to more than 350 feet. Geoducks are most abundant in Puget Sound and British Columbia, but they also live in Alaska.

Cash clam: Each year, commercial fishermen harvest about 2 million pounds, or about \$10 million worth, of geoducks from Puget Sound, says Hal Beattie, Brinnon's shellfish hatchery manager. They are the state's most profitable shellfish. Department of Natural Resources gets about \$5 million of the money and uses it for resource management, building new aquatic nature trails, boardwalks and docks in the marine areas of Puget Sound.

To eat: Soak in hot water. Peel the skin. Can be eaten raw or cooked. Often found in sushi bars. Some popular methods of preparation include baked, poached and chopped up into chowder. Taste is sweet, compared most often to abalone.

Info-Line: Listen to The Geoduck Song on Info-Line; call 699-6000, then press 7062.

Mark Millard grew up a few blocks from the Point Whitney geoduck hatchery in Brinnon on Hood Canal. Now he works as a technician there, handling and helping his hard-shelled friends find homes in the Puget Sound. His review: "The siphon is a bit chewier than the breast, but both parts are tasty."



'Your spirit is strong...'

NESPELEM — Chief Joseph seems out of place here.

His gravestone towers above the dozens of anonymous burial mounds that surround it. Yet for one of the most well-known of the West's 19th century Indian leaders, his grave lacks an ambience of grandeur.

Hidden on a curbless back road in the impoverished Colville Indian Reservation, it stands about 5 feet tall and measures less than a foot wide. The city of Vancouver has a larger monument dedicated to Gen. Ulysses S. Grant's 19th century potato patch.

Despite the stone's simplicity, Joseph's grave attracts many visitors. Pennies, nickels, dimes and quarters rest on every flat surface. A small piece of wood has been placed at the base with a hand-written message, "Your spirit is strong, and it will always remain with your people."

Tributes to Joseph come in all shapes, including unsmoked cigarettes, a birthday balloon, seashells and an ear of corn.

"It's a way for his people to leave physical evidence of their visit," Colville historian Adeline Fredin said. "They do it out of respect, respect for the man and the burden he carried."

Joseph became a leader of the Nez Perce in 1871, after his father died.

History paints him as a negotiator who was willing to compromise on just about every issue, except religion and possession of his homeland in the Wallowa Valley of northeastern Oregon. In the end, compromise wasn't enough.

In the fall of 1877, the Army used force and a fraudulently obtained treaty to push Joseph and his people from the valley.

Joseph agreed to leave for Canada with his followers, but a misinformed general, O.O. Howard, launched his troops against the tribe anyway. (Vancouver plans to spend \$1.8 million this year to restore a building that carries the general's name on Officers Row.)

That bloody battle with Howard began a more-than-1,000-mile Nez Perce retreat. They eventually ended up in the Bear Paw Mountains of Montana, where they camped to rest and hunt buffalo.

Just 30 miles from Indian allies and the Canadian border, the Nez Perce were cornered by Col. Nelson A. Miles and about 600 soldiers on Oct. 1, 1877. Joseph was down to fewer than 100 warriors, but he chose to fight rather than flee and leave the women and children.

After five days, Joseph could take no more. He ended what would turn out to be one of the last important Indian battles.

Through a translator, Joseph surrendered: "I am tired of fighting. Looking Glass is dead. Toohoolhoolzote is dead. The old men are all dead. . . . It is cold and we have no blankets. The little children are freezing to death. My people, some of them, have run away to the hills, and have no blankets, no food; no one knows where they are — perhaps freezing to death. I want to have time to look for my children and see how many of them I can find. Maybe I shall find them among the dead. Hear me, my chiefs. I am tired; my heart is sick and sad. From where the sun now stands, I will fight no more forever."

The surviving Nez Perce were shipped to reservation camps across the United States. Joseph was banished to Nespelem, where he died.

Many attempts have been made over the years to return Joseph's remains to the Wallowa Valley. He never made it home.

Road trip ...

Today's series is just a sample of the stories and pictures you can find in The Columbian's special publication: Washington, The Outer Limits.

The guide is available for \$7.95, plus \$1 for shipping and handling.

Some of the highlights:
■ Directions to all locations
■ Experience Jimi Hendrix
■ D.B. Cooper's last fall
■ Stonehenge Jr.

To order, send your name and address, plus check or money order, to New Media Group, c/o The Columbian, P.O. Box 180, Vancouver, Wash., 98666. If you prefer, order by credit card and e-mail (Research@Columbian.Com). Please allow eight to ten weeks for delivery.



Vantage point . . . This metal sculpture of wild horses caught in a gallop stands on a desolate plateau overlooking the Columbia River on the north side of Interstate 90, east of Vantage. "There's magic in that piece. There's magic in its message," said the artist, David Govedare of Chewelah. "This is wild horse country, and my work is full of that imagery, the whole sense of freedom and the balance

among humans, animals and the environment." Govedare built the 15 life-sized horses and donated them to the state during Washington's centennial celebration in 1989. They were funded by private donations and sit on state-owned land. The Thundering Hooves Sculpture Committee and Govedare are now trying to raise about \$300,000 so Govedare can complete the

piece, called "Grandfather cuts loose the ponies." Govedare would like to add three horses and a 13-ton, 36-foot-diameter metal basket, adorned with symbols of "land, water, sky and the human spirit." The horses would appear to be running out of the tilted basket, commemorating the Great Spirit's gift of horses to this planet.

Here's a legend with some teeth in it . . .

LONG BEACH — No one around here knows for sure where Jake, The Alligator Man, originally came from, but Junior Marsh has heard some interesting stories.

Visitors to Marsh's Free Museum have told the owner that his so-called half-man, half-alligator mummy used to smoke cigars and hang out in a swank New Orleans whorehouse — when he was alive and giggling.

One Kelso couple said they saw Jake performing in a sideshow at a Texas carnival. He supposedly answered simple yes or no questions with a nod of his head.

The freak even dressed in drag at a San Francisco club, according to some reports. There, he was Minnie the Mermaid.

The Marshes first met Jake in 1967, when a local antiques dealer offered to sell them his mummified body for \$750.

"He knew my wife (Marian) and I liked that kind of weird crap," Marsh said. "We found a way to buy it. We thought it would be a good conversation piece."

Today, Jake sits in a glass case in the back of the Long Beach shop, next to a couple of nickel machines called The Throne of Love and The Drunken Dream. Nearby, other mammal anomalies — such as an eight-legged lamb, a two-headed pig and a shrunken human head — look over patrons. The shop full of souvenirs, trinkets and arcane machines sits on the main strip in town, across the street from the "World's Largest Frying Pan."

Jake always has been popular with tourists, Marsh said. More than 30,000 postcards of the Alligator Man have been sold in the past 10 years.

But on Nov. 9, 1963, Jake became a national enigma.

On that day, The World Weekly News, a trashy national tabloid based in Florida, announced: "HALF-MAN, HALF-ALLIGATOR DISCOVERED IN FLORIDA SWAMP."

The picture of the beast was taken straight from one of Marsh's postcards.

"What may be man's missing link — a grotesque, hissing creature with the head and upper body of a human and the dragon-like lower body of an alligator — has been captured alive just miles from here in the Big Cypress Swamp," the story began.

"There is no doubt that the bizarre prehistoric beast found basking in a marsh is an early ancestor of man that took a wrong turn on the twisting road of evolution."

A "doctor" by the name of Simon Shute made his analysis: "I was most impressed with the size of its cranium, which indicates to me that it has a human-size brain. . . . Of course, an intense search is under way to locate any other gator-man creatures. It's difficult to believe that just one of them managed to survive on its own. In the meantime, whether by twist of fate or a stroke of luck, science has the opportunity to look into the face of a creature that may . . . be one of our forefathers."

Marsh said he was angry that the tabloid used his picture without his permission and without giving him any compensation. But he found the tale amusing, just as he does all the others.

So where did Jake come from? What or who was he? Marsh says he doesn't know and doesn't want to. "People like the mystery," he said. "Why ruin the thoughts?"



Tales from the beach: Marian and Junior Marsh display the story that made Jake a national curiosity.

INFO-LINE We'd like to know your favorite Washington person, place or thing. Call us at 699-6000, ext. 7065 and leave your full name, phone number and response. We will print a variety of the suggestions in a special upcoming publication of Washington's Outer Limits.



This statue of Kurt Cobain never made it out of an Aberdeen muffler shop.

Just the facts...
Kurt Cobain
Born: Feb. 20, 1967. The Cobains lived in Hoquiam for about six months after Kurt's birth, then moved to adjacent Aberdeen. Kurt grew up in a broken home and often lived with friends. He even slept under a city bridge on some nights.
Died: April 8, 1994. He killed himself just as his musical career seemed limitless.
Info-Line: To hear Cobain sing, dial 699-6000, then press 7063.

Martyr in a muffler shop . . .

ABERDEEN — Kurt Cobain's name sprayed in black graffiti on a deserted downtown building serves as the only public monument to his life after Grays Harbor.

Occasionally, an idea for an official memorial to the dead rock star arises, but a backlash of criticism quickly follows.

Sure, Cobain and his band, Nirvana, sold millions of records. The 27-year-old was a world-wide celebrity, and his grunge-style and growling voice transformed the corporate music industry.

But he also was a junkie, a heroin addict, who couldn't handle his success. He wore the "spokesman for a generation" tag like an albatross, fighting his messianic image in interviews and song lyrics.

Yet, he couldn't escape it. In April 1994, Cobain killed himself and some say embarrassed this logging community on the shores of Grays Harbor, about 100 miles southwest of Seattle.

The final message he scribbled on his suicide note: "I don't have the passion anymore. So remember, it's better to burn out than to fade away."

Aberdeen muffler shop owner Randi Hubbard began dabbling in sculpture shortly after Cobain's death. She said his demise inspired her.

She then created her first large piece of art, a 600-pound concrete Cobain, in her husband's downtown muffler shop.

Titled "All Apologies," which also was the name of a Nirvana song, the statue shows the unshaven Cobain seated, playing guitar. A tear rolls down his face.

Hubbard asked the Aberdeen City Council if she could display it in a public park, and the council agreed, at first.

But then the controversy began. Letters came in. Phones rang. Several people were outraged, including Nirvana's bass player Krist Novoselic, who grew up with Cobain.

In a letter to the Aberdeen Daily World, Novoselic said he was appalled by the idea.

He wrote that the monument would only become "a shrine for idolaters to prostrate themselves in front of and a beacon for reactionaries to shake their fists at while cursing."

"Kurt would hate the idea of a statue," he wrote. "Regardless of the consequences, I'll knock it down . . . to let it stand would signal the defeat of all we tried to make happen."

The outrage from all sides forced Hubbard to abandon the idea. The statue now sits in the muffler shop, next to another work in progress — a 1957 Chevy station wagon.

Hubbard said she hopes to add the piece to Experience Music Project, also known as the Jimi Hendrix museum, which is expected to open in Seattle by 1996.

No other Aberdeen memorials to Cobain are planned by Hubbard or anyone else in the area, city officials say. Spray paint seems more appropriate, anyway.



FOR SALE IN QUILCENE: 1972 Oldsmobile Vista Cruiser urban assault vehicle. Engine needs work. Comes with: flames, quad exhaust pipes, two large rollers under front bumper for road kill and lots of sharp edges and corners. Rumors of use as Quilcene School District's driver's education car are false. Featured in movie "Class of 1999," filmed about 60 miles away in Seattle. Dog and weapons not included. \$2,000. Call Ed, (360) 765-3629.

The OUTER LIMITS

Washington state reveals her secrets and surprises to those who know where to look



Gas station operator Lyn Dasso provides customers with a clear view of his nationally recognized teapot, and if you ask, he'll tell you the tale of one of the most famous scandals in U.S. history.

Trouble's brewing down at the gas station . . .

ZILLAH — Full service at Lyn Dasso's gas station means a topped-off tank, a clean windshield and the story of his 15-foot-tall teapot.

Dasso says the creator of this handled-and-spouted station, Jack Ainsworth, thought up the giant teapot one night in 1922 — when he was drinking moonshine, playing cards and talking politics with a group of drunken friends.

President Warren G. Harding had ordered control of naval oil reserves at Teapot Dome, Wyo., and Elk Hills, Calif., transferred from the Navy to the Department of the Interior in late 1921.

A few months later, Secretary of the Interior Albert Fall leased — without competitive bidding — the Teapot Dome fields to an oil operator named Henry Sinclair, and the fields at Elk Hills to a businessman named Edward L. Doheny. The Senate investigated the transactions and found that

Fall had been "lent" a large amount of money by both Sinclair and Doheny. In one of the loans, Doheny had given Fall \$100,000 without charging interest.

Fall was indicted for conspiracy and for accepting bribes. He was convicted of the latter charge, sentenced to a year in prison and fined \$100,000.

Sinclair and Doheny were acquitted on bribery charges, but Sinclair was later sentenced to prison for contempt of the Senate and employing detectives to shadow members of the jury in the case.

Ainsworth created his teapot memorial during the trials.

The oil fields were restored to the government through a Supreme Court decision in 1927, but the Teapot Dome gas station continues to operate about 15 miles southeast of Yakima on Interstate 82.

Dasso says it's thought to be the oldest functioning gas station in the United States, and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

"The regulars still come in here to argue politics," Dasso said. "It's crazy. Everybody has a different personality and different point of view. We talk about everything, but mostly the government."

Inevitably, the topic of the teapot scandal surfaces. "Typical government," Dasso said. "We always end up saying, 'typical government.'"

Just a crooning boy from Bingville . . .

SPOKANE — It's called Crosbyana. A special room has been assembled here on Gonzaga University's campus to showcase and study the life of one of the most popular performing artists in show business history — Harry Lillis "Bing" Crosby.

Crosby moved with his family from Tacoma to Spokane when he was about 3 and grew up in this city, about 20 miles west of the Idaho border.

As a boy, Crosby was enamored of a humorous mock newspaper entitled "Bingville Bugle," which took up an entire page of the Spokesman-Review's Sunday edition.

The characters in Bingville were mostly pear-shaped with big ears, and one of Harry's friends thought they looked like Crosby. The boy began calling him Bing from Bingville, and it stuck. Later the "o" was dropped from Bing.

Crosby finished Catholic high school at Gonzaga in 1920 and attended its college for three years, as a pre-law student. He dropped out to become a performer but later received an honorary doctorate degree.

Crosby sang with dance bands until 1931, when he began to work in radio and films. His soft, smooth voice later defined crooning.

He will be remembered as one of the most popular entertainers of the 20th century, said Stephanie Edwards, Crosbyana's coordinator.

During his more than 50 years of entertaining, Crosby sold more than \$1 billion worth of records and completed more than 50 feature films. Some of his best-known work includes the "Road" series of films with Bob Hope, his Father O'Malley character in the 1944 movie "Going My

Way" and his rendition of the song "White Christmas."

The Crosby collection of several thousand items at Gonzaga includes more than 150 on display, including some of his many awards — the best actor Oscar for "Going My Way," his several gold and platinum records and even a 1949 Downyflake Donut award for having the "face most conducive to dunking."

More than 3,000 people a year who visit can find such peculiar items as a Bing Crosby ice cream carton, the "Call Me Lucky" board game and a piece of exercise equipment Crosby endorsed called "Stretch to Health."

Nearby, Crosby's boyhood Spokane home still stands. It has been turned in to Gonzaga's alumni center and displays even more memorabilia.

"Bing's still very popular," Edwards said. "The students don't necessarily know who he is, but he still attracts bus loads of tourists."

Just the facts...
Harry Lillis "Bing" Crosby
Born: Tacoma, May 3, 1903.
Died: heart failure on a Madrid, Spain, golf course, Oct. 14, 1977.
Crosbyana: a room of Crosby memorabilia in the Crosby Student Center on Gonzaga University's campus, 502 E. Boone Ave., Spokane. Open during the center's hours. Admission is free.
Info-Line: To hear Bing sing, dial Info-Line at 699-6000 and press extension 7061.

It made Niagara look like a leaky faucet . . .

COULEE CITY — This story starts with Lake Missoula, one of the deepest lakes in history. It ends in a desolate state park in Eastern Washington.

The lake was formed at the end of the last ice age, about 20,000 years ago, when an ice dam plugged up the Clark Fork River on the border of Idaho and Montana.

At its greatest, Lake Missoula was about 2,100 feet deep — 168 feet deeper than Oregon's Crater Lake, the deepest lake in the United States today. It held 500 cubic miles of water — about half the volume of Lake Michigan, and covered 3,000 square miles — more than half the land mass of Connecticut.

The water behind the ice dam eventually became so tremendous that the ice began to float and break apart. Finally, it burst.

Led by a 900-foot-tall wall of water surging at 50 to 60 mph, Lake Missoula emptied in two days. Geologists estimate the water escaped at 10 times the flow of all the rivers in the world today. It was the greatest flood in North America's history.

Channels ripped through Northern Idaho and Eastern Washington as the water branched out. The harshest torrent sliced through the basalt walls of a large, southward-dipping plateau in Eastern Washington, forming the Grand Coulee, a 50-mile-long ravine bordered by 900-foot cliffs.

Another geological wonder formed just southwest of where Coulee City is today: a monumental waterfall.

These falls dropped more than 400 feet and stretched more than 3 miles wide. By comparison, Niagara Falls in New York is about a third as big, 165 feet high and a mile wide.

As floods returned every 50 years, water continued to erode the basalt, and the falls retreated 20 miles by the time the ice age ended.

Thousands of years later, all that remains of what was once the world's largest waterfall are the barren cliffs of Dry Falls.



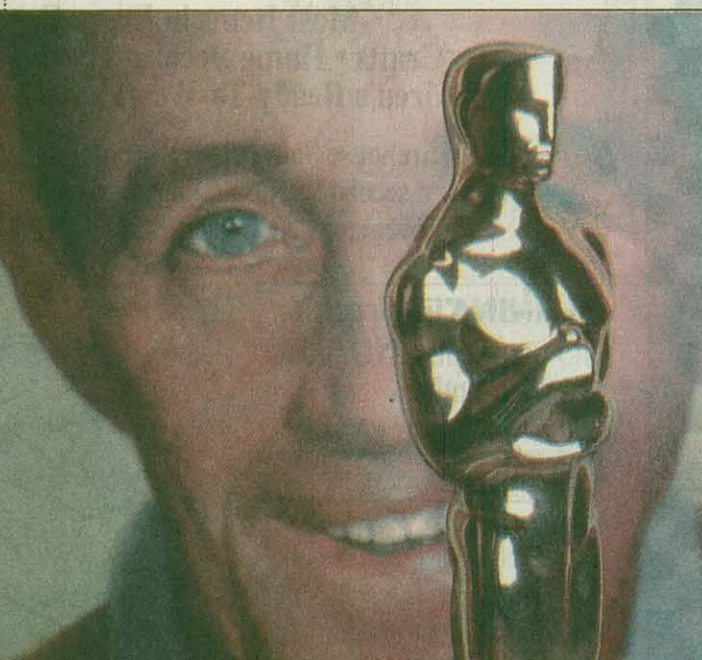
Tase T. Lentil cavorts in Pullman.

A Palouse interpretation . . .

PULLMAN — Before creator George Sharp stuck a name tag on it, Tase T. Lentil was confused with many things — a cow pie, a cookie, a hamburger, a sea otter, etc. Now, the city of Pullman's mascot is clearly labeled as a lentil from the Palouse, where 98 percent of the nation's lentils are grown.

Mascots should help to specifically define an area or an area's spirit, says Sharp, a Pullman Chamber of Commerce employee who dreamed up the 5-foot-tall pea. Washington has many other wonderful mascots — from trappers to chiefs, from loggers to papermakers, from mariners to sea-hawks.

Here's one observer's list of the state's Top 3 most colorful costumed cheerleaders: Nuclear Missile Man (Richland Bombers), Mr. Spud (Ridgefield Spudders) and Nut Man (Oakville Acorns).



A room in the student center at Gonzaga University in Spokane is dedicated to the memory of Bing Crosby, who grew up in the Inland Empire.

Stories by BRETT OPPEGAARD
Photos by TOM BOYD, The Columbian