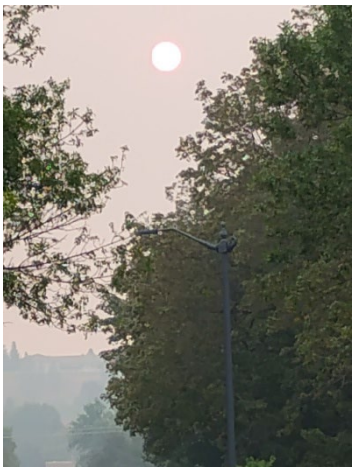
A Long Hot Summer

This is the first entry in my blog for the last several months. Because I haven't had much time to get in front of a computer, I am talking to my phone while sending myself an email. Talking makes text that I can use for the blog.

Huckleberries

WEATHER: weather was extremely warm all summer and even in the spring so lots of fruit and berries set that wouldn't ordinarily be on the vines or on the trees. It was nice to have all of that fruit going on but it was an extremely dry year and we are in an official extreme drought condition. That made fires a really big problem this year. At one point we had fires going in every direction from our house. Luckily, they were all about 50 miles away so we were able to breathe without masks most of the time.



Sun Rising over Market during fires

WATER: To make matters worse there was a big lack of water for the vineyard because our water system did not seem to have the same pressure that it used to have. After looking into it I didn't have any solutions I did find sprinklers that use less water but towards the end of the year I noticed that the water pressure in my office was just fine whereas the water pressure going to the garden was not so great and I figured out that the frost-free spigot outside the office that controls the garden water was causing the problem. I was able to do an end run around it and restore the water pressure but it was actually too little too late for a lot of the plants that could have used a lot more water. At least we avoided the extreme cost of getting a new pump or having any serious work done on the well.

PETS: During the course of all of this picking and whatever else was going on we had our pets. The one at the forefront was always Pongo, our more or less new dog. He should be renamed Mr. Enthusiasm. This dog always likes to chase balls and be with you and run around which was kind of fun and kind of hard to handle sometimes. It was particularly hard to handle for our cats. One of them, Gray-C, had Pongo pretty much in hand but the other one, Pete, was much more withdrawn and didn't like it at all. They did get a sort of standoff going where Pete would hang out in back of the house and Pongo wouldn't go back there. So Pete felt safe. I could go visit him in the evenings and listen to the crickets.

Evenings for Gray-C we're a lot different. She decided that it would be nice to support the family by bringing us things to eat that she liked to eat. The freakiest one was the first flying squirrel. They're nocturnal so she brought it in like 3:00 a.m. in the morning and it was partially eaten. Cheryl very much didn't like it on her bed. That wasn't the last flying squirrel she actually brought in two more and whether it's good or not they were alive. So we had to get the flying squirrels out of the house and luckily the light from our headlamps in the middle of the night kind of blinded the squirrels and we were able to get a hold of them and get them outside. She also brought in a bird. The bird did get away inside the house for a while but eventually we caught it and released it outside. Gray-C was a little much too much excitement.

Pete back home

Pete the cat, is here sleeping on a towel next to the computer. He disappeared for a while several weeks ago. But after 3 days he showed up soaking wet when it started to rain for the first time in a long time. I put the towel there to help him dry off and he has not gone back to his regular bed since then.

PRODUCE: With the warm weather we also had a lot of produce, some from our garden but a lot from the farmers market where we went twice a week pretty much all summer. It was both a big source of income and a source of good food. It was also a big social part of our life. After a while, you know everybody at the farmers market, those selling stuff and most of the people that are buying stuff. That was great.

Another result of the early spring and long summer was that there were a lot of huckleberries out in the mountains and there were a lot of cherries and other fruit down here in the valleys. We had a lot of food to deal with over the course of the summer.

PICKING: With all this food to deal with, there was a lot of picking going on. When I started this entry, I was still picking grapes in the vineyard and making them into raisins. On Halloween, I picked what I hope is the last crop of grapes. From picking the huckleberries and the cherries in the Spring till now my back is kinda sore.

POLITICS: Like it or not, it is a very political year. Our area has had its share of protests. Not living in a big “Blue” city, we avoid the worst invasions. We both have ways to monitor the news that don’t subject us to much direct video of the “Orange One” and his gang. I have lots of opinions about this situation and also have a lot of positive work to do that seems more important. So, I will leave it at that.

HISTORY: What has really been literally keeping me up at night has been orchestrating the 200th anniversary of the establishment of Hudson's Bay Fort Colvile (yes, no double "L"). Without question, it was the beginning of a huge cultural, economic and environmental change for Kettle Falls. Over the course of the last few years, I have read a library of books and met a host of native people living nearby on the Colville and Spokane reservations who I now count as friends.

Rather than go on and on about this – which I totally can do- I am going to list a few links to articles about the bicentennial including the final Fort Colvile Summit which happened at the Mistequa Hotel on October 18th and by teleconference. It was well-attended despite No Kings Day protests, opening of hunting season, ski swaps and other distractions.

Here is an article about the Speakers who were invited to the Summit.

This link goes to a Recording of a talk and slide show I gave to the Westerners historians group about HBC Fort Colvile late this summer.

A big influence on my life and thinking came from a trip to visit folks at the En'owkin Centre in Penticton, BC to learn about Tmix^{w}, a little Salish word with a lot of meaning.

There has been a lot of buzz about the article in Spokane's main newspaper, the Spokesman Review on Sunday October 26th that covered the Fort Colvile Summit.

That same story was picked up by the Seattle Times.

Earlier in the summer there was a front-page article in Spokane's other big newspaper the Inlander, about the Bicentennial of Hudson's Bay Fort Colvile, est. 1825.

On a more local level, the bicentennial has a lasting effect on our boat-building history, The Boys Into the Boat. So enough of that.

ANNIVERSARY and BIRTHDAY: Cheryl and I had a 30th wedding anniversary, September 23rd. Daughter April drove us to the family reunion on San Juan Island in July. My daughter, Bina came to visit after that and I had a birthday on September 26th.

Every day is full of to-dos, surprises and challenges. Stay in touch. I will be able to do a better job of it as we slide into winter.