



Editor's

NOTE: My life in rodeo with my mom (Annie Oakley)

BY DARCY WYTKO | Editor-in-Chief

She's broken her back seven times, won an Olympic medal in black powder rifle shooting, and spent the last 40 years of her life barrel racing in rodeos.

As a little girl, when people asked her what she wanted to be when she grew up, she would say "Annie Oakley."

But she never turned into Annie Oakley. Instead she became my mom.

No one has had a more profound influence on my life than Patty Wytko-Griffith, and nothing has shaped me quite like my upbringing in rodeo.

By the age of five I could read a road map, since every weekend of my childhood we were on the road to rodeos all over Washington, Oregon and Idaho. By the time I was 11, I had two horses of my own, which not only taught me to love animals, but to take care of them as well. I even barrel raced, too - and won belt buckles the size of my face.

Yet once I hit junior high, there was skateboarding, grunge rock and homework. It became glaringly obvious that I was "artsy" and that rodeo was not my calling. I became a vegetarian (I never liked meat anyway), listened to Pearl Jam and shopped at the Goodwill.

I refused to set foot at a rodeo. I'd eaten enough fair food and shoveled enough horse crap for a lifetime. I'd gotten so much dirt up my nose I could feel a dust tumor forming, and I never wanted to see another Porta-Potty as long as I lived. So

at the ripe old age of 13, I traded in my cowboy boots for a pair of Chuck Taylors and retired.

But it wasn't just rodeo I wanted to put behind me. I wanted a normal mom who made cupcakes and went to the mall on weekends, not one that threw tomahawks, shot guns and collected champion belt buckles like some people collect stamps. I wanted Ward and June Cleaver for parents, not a single cowgirl mom.

Then several summers ago, a two-by-four barn door latch slammed down on my hand, snapping my pinky finger in two. I didn't flinch. My friend's jaw dropped. He offered to take me to the doctor. "Naw," I said. "It's a long way from my heart."

It was then that I realized just what rodeo, and my mother, had taught me - a fierce independence and physical toughness that has allowed me to travel the world and pursue exactly what I want to do, with no apologies and no regrets.

My hand has long since healed, and my relationship with my mom has never been stronger. I enjoy rodeo now, even though I struggle with how roughly the animals are sometimes treated. Yet most contestants and stock contractors I've known love their animals like children, and treat them with utmost care.

As for my mom, her latest venture involves rescuing 11 wild horses from Theodore Roosevelt National Park in North Dakota. June Cleaver she'll never be, but to me, she's something better - my

To read this week's story on the CWU College Rodeo, see "Dust and Dreams" on p. 15

Dear Reader,

No letters this week ... again.
[Even with Jeremy's article last week bashing Obamacare? Really?]

The Observer welcomes brief letters (300 words or less) from readers on current issues. Please include your full name and university affiliation: year and major, degree and year graduated, or staff position and department. For letters to be printed in the following week's issue, please e-mail your letters to cwuobserveropinion@gmail.com by 5 p.m. Monday. The Observer reserves the right to edit for style and length. Anonymous letters will not be considered.

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Observance

A healthy alternative to bingeing on Busch

BY LURI BERNITT | Copy Desk

Struggling to decide what to write for my first opinion piece, I decided to open a bottle of "liquid inspiration," or in other words, a bottle of wine. Three glasses later it was obvious that I had discovered a new profound love for wine ... or as other would say, a problem.

It wasn't until recently that I discovered this new love for wine. After endless weekends of bad beer and Burnett's, I decided to step it up and buy a bottle of wine to try; it was an Asian pear wine, and surprisingly it was gone awfully fast. I continued to purchase and try new wines to further expand my palette.

I feel wine has more to offer than your typical Friday night pre-funk. A good wine pairs nicely with steak or salmon, turns an ordinary night into a special occasion and makes any B-rated movie even more enjoyable.

According to the newly 21-year-old crowd, wine has a snobby sophisticated stereotype reserved only for our parents and grandparents. I am here to prove you wrong! Yes, wine may be an acquired taste, and yes, it may be overwhelming at first, but these reasons should not limit you to trying something new. In order to truly admire wine, you must keep an open mind and an open palette.

There are many different types of wines to indulge in such as: reds (cabernets, merlots and syrahs), whites (chardonnays, pinots and rieslings), as well as dessert wines (ports and sherries). All range from unique bold flavors to light and sweet depending on your mood.

While going to school here at Central, some don't realize how much of a big deal wine is to our state and the Central Washington region. There are some amazing wineries in the Co-

lumbian basin and we are fortunate enough to be located in a perfect area for them. I recommend going to Wineworks, Gifts of the Vine or even Happy's to browse and purchase wine since they are often supportive and enthusiastic about recommending their favorites.

"From robust reds to crisp whites, I highly recommend pushing Busch, Bud and Coors aside for one night and grabbing a bottle of vino for your next get-together or night in."

If you still aren't convinced consider the following: research has proven that drinking a modest amount of wine can lower your bad cholesterol, increase your good cholesterol, lower your blood pressure, increase your bone density, reduce your chances of having kidney stones and improve your memory. Can your six-pack of Rainier do that?

From robust reds to crisp whites, I highly recommend pushing Busch, Bud and Coors aside for one night and grabbing a bottle of vino for your next get-together or night in. Not only is wine full of antioxidants; neutralizing harmful free radicals in your body reducing the risk of heart attacks and strokes, but it also has a higher alcohol percentage for those who are counting!

Muslim Women: Life inside the Hijab

Special to the Observer

BY CHARMAINE HARTSHORN
Senior, Education major

WITH HELP FROM SHURUQ ALHAMRANI
Freshman, ITAM

I made a "Wildcat Connection" on campus with three Muslim women who are CWU students from Saudi Arabia. For me, the connection is especially meaningful because I want to learn more about the Middle East and challenge my misconceptions and fears.

I am currently a student in Professor Barb Flanagan's Political Science 375: The Politics of The Middle East. Recently, following a class discussion about modern Islamic dress and the hijab, the veiling worn by Muslim women in the Middle East, I noticed a female student on campus wearing a hijab. I eagerly introduced myself and invited a conversation and discussion about the Islamic dress code rules for women. I wanted to know if Muslim women get to choose to wear a hijab or if it is forced upon them.

Following our first conversation, we agreed to meet regularly for a cultural exchange. Our circle now includes more female students from the Middle East. I usually bring my textbook, The Middle East Eleventh Edition, and questions from my lecture notes. Through conversation we have revealed many misperceptions, including my biggest one of all: Muslim women being forced to wear a hijab.

I learned that Islamic dress code is dictated by religious attitudes, beliefs and conviction. It requires women to wear little makeup and jewelry and loose, simple clothing to cover head and body. It is intended not to attract attention or reveal one's body shape. Not all Muslim women throughout the Middle East and the world wear one type of clothing. Standards vary among countries.

In some countries, like Afghanistan, rules are different and stricter. Women may be required to cover up entirely so that only their eyes appear, while men may often wear scarves or turbans. Yet, in Cairo, the capital of Egypt, the Islamic dress code is less structured. Muslim women may be seen wearing variations on Western styles of clothing. Throughout the Muslim world many devout Muslims, including my cultural exchange group, obey the strict modesty dress code of Islam because they want to follow the rules of modesty that originate in the Koran and from the prophet Muhammad (c.570-632), the founder of Islam. They take great pride in their Arab identity and their devotion to Islam.

I am thankful for the opportunity to attend CWU and will always appreciate and remember my good fortune to have this cultural exchange. I learned an important and personal lesson; by sharing my misconceptions with others, I can change my mind and my opinion.

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