

As American As Apple Pie

by Ali Spahn

Nikki Conley's mission is to grow and preserve the oldest, rarest apple that this climate can support such as Thomas Jefferson's favorite apple, the Esopus Spitzenburg.

"Apples grow amazingly well in mountain environments. You can leave some of the pine trees and still plant apple trees among them and they do really well," Nikki states.

Their Athol farm is like a museum that tells the history of apples and Nikki's like a latter-day Johnny Appleseed. She has a passion for American history, and wanted to plant something other than the commercial orchard varieties so she researched historical apple varieties.

Athol Orchards is a family owned business growing organic apples. Nikki Conley is jack of all trades. Growing up in Springville, CA, there were multi-generational apple farms down the street from her home. Her fondest memories were attending apple festivals and walking into the old barns where the apples were on display. "It was the smell of damp earth, old barn wood and apples in the paper bags that I wanted to recreate for my children," she said. With such rich experiences cultivating her childhood dreams, she knew from a very young age that someday she would be a farmer.

After graduating from high school, Nikki married her high school sweetheart, Erreck. After their children were born, they realized they wanted to raise their girls, Mackenzie and Madelyn, in a slow, simple environment. As the family was vacationing in Northern Idaho, Athol felt like home. In June 2016, Nikki and Erreck took a leap of faith and purchased property in the Athol area. The 10 acres actually had an old homestead orchard already established including a creek. It was perfect.

The farm products are Apple Cider Caramel, special order pies, raw honey and Apple Cider Syrup. The business is thriving. Nikki has product displays in 35 to 40 stores such as Super 1, Yokes, and Pilgrims just to name a few.

The farm also has beehives, 40 hens and a herd of fully registered Nigerian dwarf goats to make goat milk cheeses and soaps.

During October, Nikki schedules tours for home schoolers, private schools,

Girl Scouts, and other groups. (Continued)

She takes the time to demonstrate how to work the honey spinner, explains how to harvest honey out of frames and lets the kids crank and make their own apple cider. "Most kids don't have access to or are ever exposed to agriculture at all. So, through the farm, the agriculture, the growing historical apples and the teaching element, I'm hoping I can at least turn on some lightbulbs," she said with pride.

In 2017, they had such a demand for their syrups they had to make the shift to wholesale. With that high demand, they needed to build a larger kitchen closer to their home. In the true spirit of, "it takes a village", friends, family and supporters came together to help Nikki and Erreck with their Kickstarter campaign to build a licensed commercial kitchen on their property. With the financial support in place, the construction started this year.



Nikki taught herself to bake and it has taken 20 years to perfect her pie crust. She sells her pies at the **Athol Farmer's Market**, along with her daughter Mackenzie's homemade cookies. Both she and her daughter sell out at the market every Friday.

If that's not enough, Nikki is co-founder of a farm stand revival called the **Panhandle Farm Corridor** which began on Memorial Day this year. People can visit the farms to buy products directly from the farmer. "The Panhandle Farm Corridor is a collective of small farms offering agricultural products grown and raised in North Idaho," (<https://www.facebook.com/panhandlefarmcorridor/>).

"When you have a strong local food system you're so much less dependent on the big picture which was made apparent when the food supply chain broke down during the beginning of the pandemic" says Nikki.

Yes, Nikki is a busy lady. You can visit the family's website: <https://www.atholorchards.com>

It is vitally important that we, as a community, support these hard working agricultural entrepreneurs. Some say laughter is the best medicine, which is true, but there's nothing like homegrown fruits and vegetables to keep you healthy. We have these hard working individuals to thank, so please support them.

If you're a private group and are interested in visiting the farm, send Nikki a message: nikki@atholorchards.com If you have a desire to taste their products, you can visit Nikki on Fridays at the Athol Farmer's market. I guarantee you won't be disappointed.



A Notable Notary



Nansi Cisneros will notarize your documents for FREE if you're a local Bayview resident and you don't need to leave your home either. How great is that?

This month's business profile puts in perspective how ideally suited Bayview has become for online professionals and makes me wonder how many of them there are.

Nansi moved to Bayview in January 2020 after selling her house in Moyie Springs. She discovered Bayview in 2010 while visiting family who caretake a cabin on the water in Lakeview. "One day out on their pontoon cruising through the bay, I fell in love with Bayview and decided I would live here after I retired from West Yellowstone Police Department" says Nansi, who spent 20 years in law enforcement.

I have family spread throughout the Northwest and the Idaho panhandle gives me easy access to them all. Bayview turned out to be the perfect location.

In 2001 Nansi founded **Escrows Northwest** which covers northern Idaho and western Montana. Her job includes closing, refinances and other real estate transactions. Title companies and lenders all over the country email her their closing documents, usually refinance packages or seller packages for all the folks moving here from other states. She travels to the clients' homes, explaining the closing documents, then has the clients sign. All the notarized papers are then overnighted back to the title company.

"I am absolutely buried in closings right now, as everybody on the planet is refinancing due to the record-low interest rates," says Nansi.

All others states mandate \$5 per signature to notarize but Nansi would like to offer our community her notary services. The person being notarized needs to present a valid driver's license or picture ID (passports, military ID).

"If someone needs something notarized, please call or text first as I am extremely busy right now. My cell number is 406-314-1015. I can do a notarization pretty much any day of the week, just depends on my schedule."

Thank you, Nansi for providing this great public service to the residents of Bayview.

Get Your Drone On

Looking for someone to take drone photos? Imagine how cool it would be to go on a bicycle ride with friends and have a drone flying above taking photos of your ride.

According to Athol resident, Tate Busenbark "Real estate, weddings, video editing, commercial, construction, and any other drone photography/ videography I can do."



Tate's flat rate is \$200.00 per job, and then it goes to \$100.00 an hour after 2 hours. For flight video, editing and creation varies per project. You can contact Tate via email: tate.busenbark@gmail.com

Paint & Sip Party

Everyone is invited so don't delay and sign up soon. The **Captain's Wheel** is hosting a once a month paint and sip class. The reservations list will be posted on their Facebook page.

"It's really fun, we paint as a big group with an instructor and have a glass of wine and laugh and visit," says manager Sarah Cramer.

A Matter of Fact

Fake news is nothing new but challenging times warrant diligence in spreading facts. You're free to believe what you want, but it's everyone's responsibility to try to seek the truth. Several residents posted on Facebook that Dr. Fauci wife was sister to the infamous Jeffrey Epstein's girlfriend that was previously wanted for questioning. A simple Google search revealed that Dr. Faucil wife is Christine Grady, a bioethicists at the National Institute of Health Clinical Center and does **not** have a sister who has ties to a known pedophile.

In the end we're all in this together. Let's do our best to check our facts because facts matter.

Update: East Gate Petition

Doug Eastwood, an Idaho Park & Recreation Commissioner, contacted me about an upcoming August 12th Zoom meeting. As a Community Council representative he asked that I explain my reasons for re-opening the Farragut State Park East Gate to all the other Commissioners. The time and log in for the online Zoom meeting will be sent at a later date. The meeting is open to the public, so hopefully many Bayview residents will join in.

Kudos to the Bayview Community Council for bringing the issue to the forefront but credit goes to the community for their overwhelming support of the petition, which now has **1,040** signatures.

For suggestions, ideas, comments, etc contact sherylpp@gmail.com If you would like to get on the Shore Lines' email list, please contact me as well.

The Shore Lines Newsletter publishes issues facing our community, happenings around town, plus features businesses and individuals in our community.