

The Ups & Fall Downs of 2017

You know how some years you struggle to remember what happened? Not so for 2017! For those of us who stayed in Hood River, this was the winter of snow and ice.

During the worst ice storm I lucked out and caught a ride with loving strangers to miraculously make it to Washington DC to march with my amazing daughter and a million other women. I marched for you.

It was the beginning of a year of outrage, which lead to mindboggling and utter dismay. How could we have fallen so far so fast?

But in April, ironically at an agility dog show I uncoordinatedly fell and really broke my leg! Nothing changes your perspective on life more than waking up with a fixator, plates & screws. My wonderful husband nursed and saved me and Kate came for 10 days to cheer me up. Neighbors just “happened” to stop by and Friends brought food & comfort!

But the lesson was a little about doing my PT and a lot about letting go and living each day. Like closing open apps on your cell phone, you pare your life down to what’s important. Little miracles, simple joys and baby steps. That first shower, moving to the front seat, Walking without crutches and a lap in the pool. No longer taking everyday things for granted.

But life went on! With a house built next door, we had to close our wedding business. With the broken leg, we stopped being a B&B and became a vacation rental! Whoo hoo! People pay us to go on vacation; lots of trips, but mostly in the RV at the Swope’s in Troutlake.

Our WINGS program, led by the amazing Brandi, has thrived: moms recovering and healing. Babies born, kids returned from foster care, Families restored – so many blessings and joy. If you ever doubt our success, watch the movie, “Warning: This Drug Will Kill You”! The

opioid crisis is a national disgrace & disaster and still James’ dentist ordered him 30 vicodin... even though we knew he would not take them! This has to change and we can make it happen!

Our kids are amazing – all doing well! Two new grandbabies on the way. Both Ryans & wives are due 2 weeks apart. Ashley, Ryan P & Chelsie have great new jobs. Bert is 4, Kayla 2½ and their laughter restores our faith. Kevin is doing great & stays in touch with his sister, Joy. Kate & her boyfriend are planning to move west and our moms continue to amaze us with their positive outlooks - such terrific role models.

Yes, this year has been marked by fires, natural disasters, near misses, sexual harassment and so much bad news. But still I look around to see so much good and so many miracles. I am filled with “Wonder” – yes, go see the movie! I am reminded how blessed I am for my health, happiness, three great dogs, a great board, WINGS moms, amazing friends, wonderful family and this year, more than ever, for James.

Next year I will try to I spend less, call more, breathe deeper, love harder and remember to start and end each day with gratitude.

But I know that this is not the time we can rest. We need to be noisy and use our voices for good. We can be the change and will make a difference. If we do a kindness, celebrate our differences, trust, forgive, support, and care, for those in need, we can overcome fear, darkness and despair.

Know I am grateful to all of you this year for your kindness and support and, in the spirit of this holiday season, wish you peace and joy in 2018.

Allyson & F (James)

