

An exclusive magazine serving the communities around one of America's largest freshwater lakes

Lake Pend Oreille

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NEIGHBORS



MEET THE
Smith Family
LOVE AT LONG
LAST IN HOPE



Best Version Media

Photography by Amy Peterson of Selkirk Ridge Photography

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MEET THE
Smith Family
 LOVE AT LONG LAST IN HOPE

By Teresa Pesce | Photography by Amy Peterson of Selkirk Ridge Photography and Courtesy of the Smiths

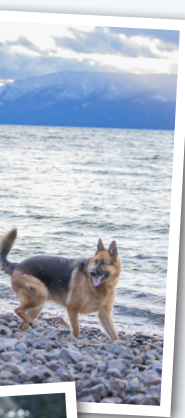
The story of Michelle and Greg Smith’s destined life together needs a soaring soundtrack of emotion, from the first jolt of recognition, through a bittersweet violin serenade to their long separation, to a celebratory orchestration of their reunion.

A long term local, Greg graduated from Sandpoint High School. His early fascination with mechanics became a 25-year career with Schweitzer. Now, as Parts & Service Manager at Northern Idaho Powersports he continues to hone his mechanical skills, most recently with an advanced class at Yamaha Motor University. His childhood love of mountain biking, encouraged by his parents, Bud and Joyce Smith, became a lifelong fearless love of “all things that go fast,” as Michelle describes it. Greg is a professional mountain biker, racing internationally for many years, competing in the Red Bull Rampage four times, and recently competing in the Baja1000 in the Pro division with North Idaho Racers. He also races motorcycles at the professional level. As Parts & Service Manager at Northern Idaho Powersports he continues to hone his mechanical skills,

most recently with an advanced class at Yamaha Motor University.

When Michelle’s parents relocated to the Hope, she did too, working in several local restaurants and enjoying eight years in real estate working at Century 21 On the Lake. “I come from a long line of amazing artists,” Michelle says, “including my grandparents who met in Fine Arts school and my mother who was an exceptionally talented wildlife artist who created exquisitely chiseled wood sculptures and worked in a variety of mediums from stained glass to engraving—even antler carving!” Michelle’s artistic talent revealed itself early, and she won every art contest she entered except the one that refused her entry because they didn’t believe a child could have created it! Michelle attended a Prestigious Fine Art School in Los Angeles for nearly a year; the world had to turn more times before she would pursue art full-time.

It was in Chimney Rock Grill at Schweitzer Mountain where Greg worked that the two almost met. “I was walking into the kitchen and Greg was walking into the back room,” says Michelle. “I saw him and my



heart literally stopped!” Greg’s remembrance is equally clear: “I saw her and did a double-take and was planning on when I would see her again.” But the universe blinked and the moment passed. And so did 18 years.

Then one day at her home on the Hope Peninsula, Michelle’s lawn tractor stopped working. A friend of hers knew a good mechanic (Greg!) and texted him to help. When Greg and Michelle came face to face, Greg said, “Oh my gosh, it’s you!” and Michelle said, “It’s you!”

They were instantly inseparable, married within a month, and “Since then,” smiles Michelle, “life has been adventure, travel and fun—almost like a fairytale.”

Their mutual destiny was also perfectly timed to support Michelle’s fulltime commitment to her art. She remembers, “I was reconnecting with my own soul and purpose. I was at the Hen’s Tooth Gallery on First St, next to the Ross Hall Gallery, when I heard a voice say, ‘You are going to stipple the west.’” Stippling is a detailed process of creating an entire work of art with infinitesimal pinpoints. One square inch of art can take up to ten hours of work and thousands of dots!

Michelle has an artistic fascination with the West, “I want to accomplish the photorealistic stippling of the historic and modern west which was inspired by legendary photographers Ansel Adams and local photographer Ross Hall.” She is currently working on an inspired “In Tandem” series in which her stippled artworks correspond to a

story told by carved antlers. “I got the idea from the antler carvings of my mother,” Michelle says. “We had talked about them before she passed, and using them as a reference and inspiration, I taught myself how to carve them.”

As she rises in the Western Art World with world-renowned artists inspiring her steps, Michelle is gaining a significant following and attracting collectors—an acknowledgment and an honor she greatly appreciates. Because it was a struggle to get over the fears of setting up a business, she is happy now to say, “I call Greg the president of my company, Michelle Elayne. Our new web site at www.MichelleElayne.com features originals, prints, greeting cards and more, and we give a portion of everything sold to charities and organizations we believe in because we share a deep desire to serve others and to give back. I believe art not only has to tell a story and emotionally connect to the audience, it also has to be a form of philanthropy and a way to serve God and the greater good.”

Helping others is a core value in the Smiths’ faith and in their lives. Michelle volunteered with Hope Elementary, served on the PTA, and designed and created the school’s logo. She also served on the Board of the Selkirk School and with Kinderhaven’s Festival of Trees. Greg has long volunteered his search and rescue skills in the mountains as he is trained in both dirt and snow biking. Both cared for parents in their final years too. Now the Smiths look forward to moving into new areas of service in the community. “We’re looking forward to volunteering more at church, as a new couple, and as a family!” says Greg, who does volunteer wood-cutting and stacking for Cedar Hills Church members who can’t get firewood.

Both Michelle’s 7th grade son Kane and

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OUR NEIGHBORS



Would you like to be featured in Lake Pend Oreille Neighbors or like to nominate a family to be featured? Please email Emily Neff at eneff@bestversionmedia.com.

her 5th grade daughter Madison were born and raised in the Sandpoint area. Kane loves mountain biking, hiking, running track, engineering, architecture and playing video games with his friends. Madison enjoys gymnastics, running track, art, music, and spending time with her friends. Both enjoy skiing and are mastering tennis with the coaching of a local family friend, Kent Anderson.

The Smith family loves kayaking on the lake, snowboarding, downhill and cross-country skiing, hiking, playing ping pong, backpacking, huckleberry picking, bike riding, camping, snorkeling, picnicking, traveling, hosting dinners, and attending the Festival at Sandpoint. You may also spot them enjoying pizza at The Old Ice House in Hope or eating at Schweitzer's Chimney Rock. Say hello and ask what's new! The answer will always be lively!

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