

TRAVEL THE PNW WITH TRACY

Explore the Thurston Bountiful Byway

Trails, farms and food await on the route

OLYMPIA — Fall is one of my favorite times of year to enjoy a leisurely drive. The Thurston Bountiful Byway lies southeast of Olympia, and about an hour north of Longview. This gorgeous byway features trail systems designed for long walks, bike rides and wildlife viewing, as well as farms to experience and food to taste.



TRACY ELLEN BEARD

The Thurston Bountiful Byway has something for everyone. You can spend the day driving the loop and enjoying the fall scenery or get out, stretch your legs, explore nature and the local shops. Begin planning your trip by downloading a map at www.experienceolympia.com/planning-tools/byway-map.

Fall in the Pacific Northwest

www.experienceolympia.com/thurston-bountiful-byway

Fall is an excellent time to go for a Sunday drive in the Pacific Northwest. The heat of summer is over, yet the days are warm, and the nights are cool and crisp. The weather is ideal for outdoor adventures and summer crowds have disappeared.

In the fall, the forested landscape is nothing short of stunning. Evergreens maintain their deep shades of green, and broadleaf deciduous trees provide an ever-changing array of colors. Initially, the leaves turn from their countless shades of spring and summer green to scarlet red, then a reddish-orange, then vibrant yellows. As the season progresses, the colors turn darker, drawing many people outdoors.

Walk or Ride the Trails

www.wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/chehalis-western-trail; www.wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/yelm-tenino-trail

The Chehalis Western Trail and the Yelm-Tenino Trail are part of the rails-to-trails system and are fabulous for walking or cycling. Most trails are paved and are relatively flat with very slight elevation changes. The Chehalis Western Trail spans just over 21 miles and passes through Olympia, South Bay, Lacey, East Olympia, Skookumchuck, and Rainier. The Yelm-Tenino Trail is 14.5 miles long, runs parallel to State Route 507, and intersects with the Chehalis Western Trail.

One of my favorite stops along the trail is the Monarch Sculpture Park, located at 8431 Waldrick Rd. SE, Tenino, along the Yelm-Tenino Trail. This free outdoor art exhibit features creative and fun sculptures. My favorites are an enormous hand holding pickup sticks and a little dragon.

Rutledge Farm

302 93rd Ave. SE, Olympia, rutledgecornmaze.com

Thurston Bountiful Byway

Thurston Bountiful Byway
Chehalis Western Trail
Yelm-Rainier Trail

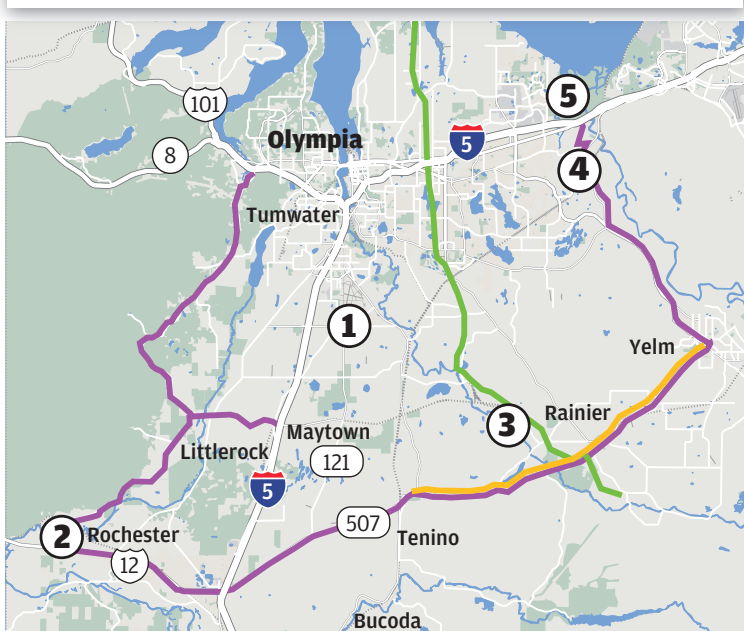
1. Rutledge Farm:
302 93rd Ave., Olympia

2. Lael's Moon Garden Nursery:
17813 Moon Road, Rochester

3. Monarch Sculpture Park:
8431 Waldrick Road, Tenino

4. Medicine Creek Winery:
47 Old Pacific Highway, Olympia

5. The Refuge:
100 Brown Farm Road, Olympia



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TRACY ELLEN BEARD PHOTOS, CONTRIBUTED

The Monarch Sculpture Park, located along the Yelm-Tenino Trail, is a free outdoor art exhibit featuring sculptures.



Rutledge Farm in Olympia includes sunflowers that reach more than 10 feet tall.



Lael's Moon Garden Nursery includes a banana tree that stands over 10 feet tall.



Medicine Creek Winery in Olympia specializes in red wines.

Fall on the Farm is open daily at Rutledge Farm, featuring practice calf roping, tether ball, swings and a giant bubble barn with bubbles reaching 1-2 feet in width and up to 6-10 feet in length. The pumpkin patch is open during the week and features 10-12 pumpkin varieties to satisfy your pumpkin carving, pie making and pumpkin seed roasting needs.

The fun continues and expands on the weekends with wagon rides through the sunflower fields, cow train rides powered by a tractor, a jump pad, a Western paintball shooting gallery, and the Haunted Maze. The expanded options are open the weekend of Oct. 15, 22, and 29, and on Monday, Oct. 30, and Tuesday, Oct. 31.

The western side of the property also boasts various sunflowers, some towering more than 10 feet tall. The flowers are expected to last several more weeks with numerous flowers blooming in brick red, copper,

brown and bright yellows. The blooms stand in rows like gigantic cornfields.

The Rutledge Corn Maze is unavailable this year due to drought conditions that prevented the corn from growing to fruition. However, the Haunted Maze is a must do. Plan to spend the day with the family playing cornhole and then enjoy the maze at night.

Lael's Moon Garden Nursery

17813 Moon Rd SW, Rochester, laelsmoongarden.com

My friend, Connie, and I stopped by Lael's Moon Garden and Nursery again this summer. I was thrilled to see that the banana tree that stands over 10-feet-tall was still growing in the garden. The owner, Larry Lael, has labored for over 40 years creating this magnificent Eden-like paradise, and his well-trained staff keep the grounds flourishing. The nursery is re-

laxing and an incredible source of inspiration for your home garden. Most plants on display are for sale.

Medicine Creek Winery

947 Old Pacific Hwy SE, Olympia, www.medicinecreekwinery.com

Medicine Creek Winery produces a variety of delicious wines. Bring a picnic lunch or buy some nibbles to pair with a glass or bottle of wine. The tasting room offers comfortable seating, and outside you will find tables and chairs for your dining pleasure. Inside the winery is a lovely bar and an interesting old stagecoach.

The Refuge

100 Brown Farm Rd NE, Olympia, www.fws.gov/refuge/billy-frank-jr-nisqually

Billy Fran Jr. Nisqually Wildlife Refuge is a wonderful place for wildlife viewing that changes significantly when the tide comes in or goes out. The 1-mile

boardwalk weaves through the grassy marsh and toward a dirt road. Take a left on the road and continue walking for 30 minutes until you reach the next boardwalk. This wooden walkway expands over the estuary to an excellent viewing area where you can view the Sound. All the trails and boardwalks are wheelchair accessible and relatively flat.

Tracy Ellen Beard is a freelance writer, editor and photographer based in Longview. Her articles are published in more than 20 online and print publications including Upscale Living Magazine, Northwest Travel & Life, Wander With Wonder, Country Magazine, Luxe Getaways and more. The stories she writes focus on luxury and adventure travel locally and abroad, fine dining and local eats, spa experiences, and outdoor activities. She shares a unique perspective on the world as the founder of an international children's nonprofit. She also attended culinary school in San Francisco and owned a catering company.

Friends and relatives remember life of Jim Caple

ANTHONY DION
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Tributes have been rolling in for 1980 R.A. Long graduate Jim Caple who died Oct. 1 at the age of 61 after suffering from primary progressive aphasia, a form of dementia which attacks the frontotemporal lobe of the brain.

No tribute has detailed Caple's life, his career in journalism nor his passion for biking, reading, traveling or the love he held for his wife Vicki as well as that authored by his nephew, Christian Caple.

Christian followed in his uncle's footsteps, working at The Daily while attending the University of Washington before eventually joining The Tacoma Tribune where he worked primarily as the Washington Huskies beat reporter. Christian's piece can be found on B1.

Jim Caple was a beloved sports writer by many readers. After graduating R.A. Long in 1980, Jim attended the University of Washington where he worked as the sports editor at The Daily. Jim



Caple

would go on to cover the Minnesota Twins for the St. Paul Pioneer Press, work as a national baseball writer for the Seattle Post-Intelligencer before joining ESPN full time as a sports columnist on Page 2. In the latter role, Jim was given the opportunity to probe the globe for any story that piqued his unique interest. That freedom spawned hundreds of unique stories, allowed Jim to travel to over 70 countries in his lifetime, cover 20 World Series, six Olympics games while meeting some of the world's most renowned sports figures.

Jim's stories often harked back to his childhood growing up in Longview and attending R.A. Long High School. Jim was inducted into the school's Hall of Fame in March.

■ Read Christian Caple's piece on his late uncle on B1.

Ice cream icon Salt & Straw coming to Waterfront Vancouver

SARAH WOLF
The Columbian

Portland ice cream icon Salt & Straw announced Monday that it's set to open a Vancouver outpost early next year at the Waterfront Vancouver.

The scoop shop is expected to open a 1,200-square-foot shop at 740 Waterfront Way in January, according to the company. The announcement said the company has spent years looking for the right spot in Vancouver.

Co-founders Tyler Malek and Kim Malek both have lived in Washington and the Evergreen State is said to hold a special place in their hearts, the announcement said.

Salt & Straw plans to hire around 20 to 25 people from the area for the Waterfront Vancouver operation.

The ice cream shop is known for unique and Northwest-inspired flavors.

According to the Associated Press, Salt & Straw's Thanksgiving lineup features turkey bacon,



IMAGE BY WOLFGANG GERTH, PIXABAY

Billed as "farm-to-cone ice cream," Salt & Straw's creative flavors regularly result in lines out the door as patrons debate their new favorite concoction. Launched by cousins Kim and Tyler Malek, the pair use local, sustainable and organic ingredients to deliver hand-made, small batches of goat cheese marionberry habanero (a fan favorite), Meyer lemon buttermilk with blueberries, strawberry cilantro lime cheesecake and double fold singing dog vanilla.

buttery brittle and jammy cranberry sauce flavors folded into a five-course feast of ice creams. One of Tyler Malek's favorites is Strawberry Honey Balsamic

with Black Pepper ice cream. To showcase flavorful Oregon strawberries, he worked with a local beekeeper who'd developed a honey balsamic vinegar.