

Making Ripples

Heroes are Common Folks

Anyone can be a hero!

by Amanda Bancroft

Those we admire, both fictional and real, are simply common characters or people who took five minutes here and there to make choices that made a difference. Whether they helped the environment, other people, or both, they did it in between toothaches and heartaches, rainy days and child rearing. People who act in love today are tomorrow's heroes of old.

Harriet Tubman, who first escaped from slavery on September 17, 1849 before guiding over 300 slaves to freedom in 19 trips north, did so while suffering headaches and seizures as a result of a wound to the head by a slave owner.

Beatrix Potter protected in perpetuity over 4,000 acres of farmland and historic buildings in the Lake District of England while politely battling her disapproving parents and grieving over the death of her fiancé one month after their engagement.

Helen Keller was deaf and blind, yet through education (hey, teacher-heroes!) she not only advocated for those with disabilities but also traveled, wrote prolifically, and campaigned for women's suffrage, peace, and labor rights.

Even the world of entertainment does not present heroism without struggle. Look at most Disney heroes and heroines, and you'll see poverty, oppression, poor decision-making, and even wrongdoing from many of them (Aladdin or Elsa being prime examples). Lord of the Rings shows the characters in the fellowship of the ring undergoing many trials and often turning towards evil. Kirby, the pink puffball Nintendo video game hero, is said to be impulsive, naïve, and tone-deaf even though he also has many good qualities. Superhero comics point out the humble farm beginnings of Superman when he was a boy. Avatar Aang appears to be an immature liar and showoff (as well as master of the four elements) in the Nickelodeon cartoon series Avatar: the Last Airbender.

There are many lesser-known heroes right here in Northwest Arkansas. They have planted small sustainable farms at great financial sacrifice and labor so we could eat organic, local food. They have begun charities to solve problems not being addressed by larger organizations. Some of these local heroes are behind-the-scenes helpers to heroes in the spotlight. Some have started their own businesses as social or environmental entrepreneurs.

There are minute-by-minute heroes whose decisions and actions always line up with love, without focusing on a particular cause for a few hours on the weekend, but creating a lifestyle in which their mundane daily existence does good in the world through their friendships, buying power, career, home, transportation, or hobbies. They keep themselves healthy so that they can enjoy life and not become incapacitated. Some heroes don't take time out to make a difference,

but rather, try to make all their time make a difference. Maybe you know some of them. Maybe you are one!

Amanda Bancroft is a writer, artist, and naturalist building an off-grid cottage for land conservation on Mt. Kessler. She and her husband Ryan blog about their adventures and offer a solar-hosted online educational center on how to make a difference with everyday choices at: www.RipplesBlog.org.