

Crabs in 2021?



# A New Morning, A New Year

## Step By Step

By Donna Bacon Ulrich

We were at the top of Lost Trail Pass on the Idaho/Montana border when our friend Brad called.

“Brad, when are you meeting us at Rock Creek?”

“Tomorrow.”

“Friday?”

“No, Saturday.”

“Today’s Thursday.”

“No, it’s Friday.”

“But when will you be there?”

“Tomorrow. Saturday.”

“Today’s Friday?”

“Yes, it is Friday.”

“Oh.”

Studies show that, as we age, we become more resilient and patient. Nobody told us we would start forgetting what day it is. We were in our camper with no concept of days — every day was a Friday. It didn’t really matter.

It is like that with rivers. The river reminds us that we are not in control; it runs from the mountains to the sea and that’s it — humans be damned. We are there to take part in a brief moment in its journey.

We lost a fine fishing buddy this year. Sad, yes, but our memories of warm summer days with him, casting dry flies to rising trout, will forever be caught in our souls. We nourished each other, just as the trout, otter, beaver, cottonwoods and pines nourish the river. We’re lucky to have an ecosystem

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**A BRIGHTER DAY** is dawning in 2021, many Humboldtters hope, as they set their resolutions for the new year. Here, a hopeful sunrise gilds Eureka’s Woodley Island Marina and the Samoa Bridge with golden light. Alan Workman photo.

## In 2021, Let’s Have a Better Year

By Ted Pease

The Babylonians are credited with starting making promises for the new year some 4,000 years ago. Their new year began in March with the planting of crops, and resolutions were prom-

ises to their gods to ensure a bountiful season.

It was Julius Caesar who changed the calendar in 44 B.C. to start each year in January, the month

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ASK THE DOC

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**HUMBOLDT SENIOR RESOURCE CENTER**

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## TEDtalks: New Year Ambivalence

Like the Roman god Janus, I am of two minds about greeting the new year.

In Roman mythology, Janus was the god of transitions, passages and change, a god depicted with two faces, looking backward and ahead. The Romans mounted Janus's image over doorways; in fact, the name comes from the Latin word for doorway or portal. Importantly, Janus also presided over times of transition from war to peace.

This January, a month named for Janus, is a portal from a year of strife and conflict to one (we fervently hope!) of peace.

Lord knows, we're all glad to see the end of 2020. Instead of a forward-looking year of keen vision, as hoped, 2020 was a time of stress, sadness and division.

The Washington Post recently asked its readers to select the word that best describes the past year. More than 2,000 responded. "Exhausting" was No. 1 (followed by "lost" and "chaotic").

After the year we've had, it is hard to look forward with a lot of confidence that 2021 will be appreciably better — hence my Janus-like ambivalence as we move into the new year. But, surely, things have got to look up in 2021.

Writers in this month's issue of Senior News offer some reasons for optimism. At 60, Suzy Smith has found a new career and a new direction in her life (page 22). Beginning on Jan. 28, KEET will bring us stories of 12 Humboldt seniors who got to check ambitions off their bucket lists (page 4). Bob Doran has

plans for "After the Storm" (page 3). All these years later, Brenda Cooper's grandmother's cactus is still blooming (page 12).

And Donna Ulrich recommends taking it one day at a time: "Nothing is forever," she writes. "Except the love we share with each other" (page 1).

Thanks for that reminder.

•••

We had planned to showcase submissions to the Senior News Six-Word Memoir Contest this month, but ran out of room.

Ernest Hemingway is often (falsely) held up as the inspiration for the six-word memoir for the shortest short story ever written: "For sale: baby shoes, never worn." A great story, even though Hemingway didn't write it. Can Senior News readers top it?

So we invite your six-word tales for the February issue. For inspiration, see sixword-memoirs.com. Email them to tpease@humsenior.org by Tuesday, Jan. 12.

•••

Finally, with this issue, we welcome aboard new columnist Julie Fulkerson. Violinist, political activist, elected leader, traveler and Humboldt native, Fulkerson will write each month on the world as she sees it. See "Homegrown," page 6.

At presstime, commercial crabbers were preparing to start their season in time for New Year's.

*Ted Pease looks forward to another year as editor of Senior News.*

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# After the Storm, Who Knows What?

By Bob Doran

*“And once the storm is over, you won’t remember how you made it through, how you managed to survive. You won’t even be sure whether the storm is really over. But one thing is certain. When you come out of the storm, you won’t be the same person who walked in. That’s what this storm’s all about.”*

—Haruki Murakami, *Kafka on the Shore*, 2002.

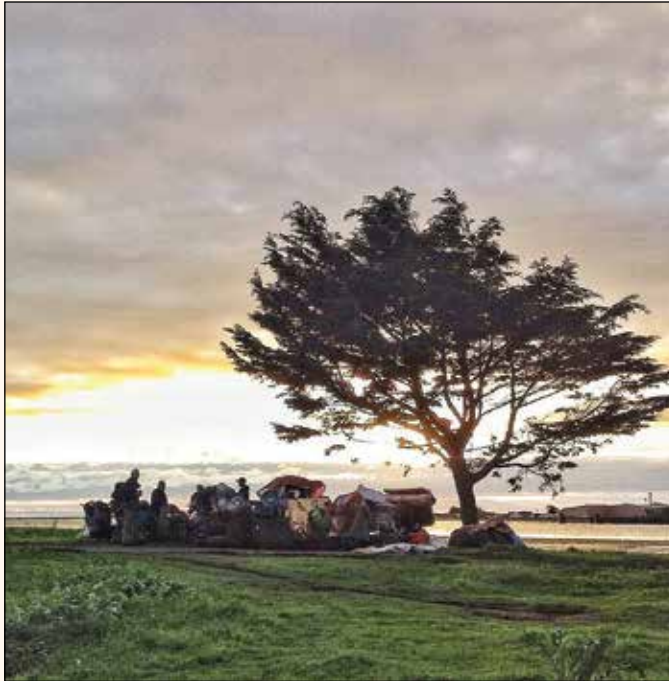
This quote was included in a letter I received from Michael Fields announcing, among other things, his “transition out of Dell’Arte leadership,” although I can’t imagine he’s retiring. Anyway, the letter was a pitch, and I’ll be sending some money their way.

I mainly wanted to repeat that quote because it resonates for me and the way I’ve been feeling lately, uncertain what I should do with myself as I approach a milestone in my own life.

Next week I will hit 70, hopefully not with too much of a bang. What’s next? Who knows.

I wanted to include a photo to illustrate the quote, so I scrolled through the pics on my phone and this one popped out. It was made one afternoon after I had finished shopping at Costco — for what, I have no idea, undoubtedly a roasted chicken and some things I didn’t need.

The sun was setting and I wanted to snap a quick sunset pic. The foot of Del Norte is good for that, with that



**WHAT’S NEXT? That’s what these folks are wondering as the sun sets and they sort through their belongings near the foot of Del Norte Street in Eureka.** Bob Doran photo.

lovely tree. I was surprised to see a group of people there. It took me a couple of minutes to figure out what was going on. There had been a police action that afternoon; the illegal campers had been roused, their meager possessions thrown in a pile, and they were going through it, seeing what they could salvage as they made a transition to whatever was next. Who knows what.

I went home that day, probably shared a chicken dinner with my wife in our warm little house. I was safe from any storm that came. But I wasn’t really the same person who took a right turn to make a photograph that day.

I’m sure I will make it into 2021 safe and sound, but I realize I have to be careful to stay at home except for good reasons. Which reminds me, I have to finish a shopping list and get something for dinner. Amy has an idea for me. Everything is going to be okay. —

**Bob Doran, 70, thinks about the meaning of life and what comes next, safe at home in Arcata.**

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“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

—Margaret Mead (1901-1978), anthropologist

# Coming on KEET: What's on Your Bucket List?

By Tracey Barnes-Priestley

What's on your Bucket List? This used to be a much easier question to answer before our lives were turned upside down by the pandemic. But we won't be stuck in this mess forever.

Finally, it's 2021, and the new year offers the perfect opportunity to re-work the list of things you want to experience both now and when freedom is once again ours.

Thanks to PBS/KEET, inspiration for this satisfying exercise is coming your way in a new six-week program, "What's on Your Bucket List?"

Hosted by yours truly, the show will debut on Thursday, Jan. 28, at 7:30 p.m.

Before COVID-19 struck, we put out the call for applicants. We were looking for people, all over 60, who wanted to try something new and different . . . right in their own backyard, Humboldt County.

The response was overwhelming, and the variety of Bucket List requests was remarkable. One woman had always wanted to ride a horse on the beach. Another was intrigued by blacksmithing. Yet another had a serious curiosity about the ghosts of Old Town Eureka.

The selection of guests for the show was challenging but, finally, 12 people between 60 and 82 were asked if they wanted to participate in this madcap adventure. Each and every one said yes.

It was fascinating to learn about why these people wanted to check their idea off of their Bucket Lists. One woman said, "It helps me focus on what

I value the most." Another guest offered, "Having goals keeps me moving forward. I don't want to get stuck in my old age," while another simply laughed and said, "I want to enjoy life and have fun!"

The KEET production team (which included this 69-year-old and her very talented 75-year-old friend, producer Jan Ostrom) traveled from one end of the county to the other in 2019, filming these rich and varied experiences. No matter what the activity was, guests walked away from their opportunity feeling accomplished and happy for having tried something outside of their normal lives.

Tune in to share in the fun and excitement. Not only will you enjoy a lively escape from the mundane, but you just may be sparked to re-visit or begin your own list of new and different experiences.

This the perfect time to be thinking about what you might want to check off of your Bucket List both during the pandemic — yes, you can have a



**CHECK 'DELICIOUS' OFF THE LIST — Donna & Jim Clark of Eureka love to cook together, but had never baked together. Pre-COVID, Berit Meyer, co-owner of Ramone's Bakery, took them through the process of making a delicious multi-layered Gateau a la Margarine. At left, "Bucket List" host Tracey Barnes Priestley approves. Jan Ostrom photo.**

Bucket List now — as well as once we are all free to move about again.

Please join us for this unique program and . . . be prepared to be inspired!

**Tracey Barnes-Priestley** is a Eureka writer and producer of "What's on Your Bucket List?"

## STEP BY STEP . . . From Page 1

of friends. Like the river, friends keep us a step ahead of letting sadness take over our minds.

We step into the river with caution, not trusting our steps. No fanfare, just cautious optimism that we can get deep enough to make that perfect cast. We cannot ask for more.

Even if you don't fish, hike or camp, we hope you can feel the lure of the places wild. The call of the nighthawk, the wings of a bat, an up-canyon breeze and squirrels shouting at us stupid humans. A cozy campfire to warm the feet. A white tail-feather of a bald eagle, found on the trail. The unexpected call of a canyon wren.

Unexpected treasures are the spawn of resilience, knowledge and patience.

Maybe next year we will meet a new fishing buddy — maybe that guy downstream with cut-offs and grimy fishing vest? He smiled as we passed; if we see him again, we will ask his name. We tend to spread out on rivers — socially distanced fishing has always been the norm. But now and then, engaging in conversation with that person downstream or upstream can change it all. Your life may be made richer with the nod of a head and a sharing of flies that were working that day. The river flows through it; we are just here to mark our place, like a

bookmark in a novel.

The rituals of fishing bring us order and pleasure. When interrupted by the loss of a friend or a pandemic that affects us all, we strive to bring order back into our lives. Step cautiously into the water, step cautiously outside your door. But step. One foot in front of the other, step.

Whether it is a bundle of Fridays or a year with many challenges, nothing is forever. Except the love we share with each other.

**Donna Bacon Ulrich** crosses the stream carefully in Trinidad, and then out into the world.

**ASK THE DOCTOR****A Slippery Issue***By Jennifer Heidmann, M.D.*

**H**aving grown up in Wisconsin, I have had my share of falls on icy patches of sidewalks. It is like being in a Looney Tunes cartoon — suddenly the ground slips out from under you, you seemingly hover in space with just enough time to ponder how much the landing will hurt, then . . . BAM!

Here in temperate northern coastal California, ice is rare. But I still worry about falls as we head into the rainy season, cooler days and the deadly slick redwood decks of Humboldt County.

Falling might seem like no big deal, but the data on falling for older adults is not pretty. Injuries from falls increase the risk of ER and hospital visits, nursing home admissions and even mortality, especially if a serious injury like a hip fracture occurs.

Another risk is the inability to get up after a fall. People tend not to want to make a fuss, and therefore often lie on the floor for hours or even days until someone finds them or figures out something is not right. Just lying on the floor can cause significant injury, kidney problems and loss of strength.

Complications related to falls are the leading cause of death due to injury in people older than 65, and the fifth leading cause of death overall in older people.

Risk of falling can increase with sedating medications (pain medications, sleeping pills, anxiety medications, muscle relaxants), alcohol, drugs and weakness or balance

problems. Loss of sensation in the feet (neuropathy) can also increase the risk, as can improper footwear.

Vision problems can lead to falls, as can being in an unfamiliar environment or having a lot of clutter, cords, rugs and furniture that can catch a toe and send someone tumbling.

How can we reduce the risk of falling? There is no silver bullet for this, but the closest thing to a solution we have is exercise. Regular movement, with attention to balance, trains the body to respond better if thrown off balance. Physical therapists are experts in this. But anyone can also go online and find tai chi classes, balance exercises and chair exercises to do at home during the pandemic. When the pandemic is over, joining a class is a great way to get into a routine with exercise.

If you feel dizzy when you stand up, you might want to check if your blood pressure drops too low. This can lead to falls, and can be addressed in your doctor's office. It is also worthwhile closely reviewing your medication list at every visit with your doctor to see if there is anything on the list that can contribute to fall risk. Taking vitamin D supplements (up to a maximum of 1000 international units daily) might be helpful for those with low vitamin D levels and a risk of falling.

Looking at your living situation and assessing the need for grab bars, railings, shower chairs and other adaptive devices is a good idea.

**Continued on Page 19****COVID-19 Vaccinations***By Jennifer Heidmann, M.D.*

Humboldt County's first COVID-19 vaccinations were administered at the end of December, and more are coming. Vaccinations will be distributed based on risk stratification, starting with front-line healthcare providers and elders living in congregate settings, and over coming months more widely distributed to the population at large.

Although the process to develop this vaccine was unusual in its speed, the appropriate scientific steps were taken to ensure safety and efficacy. Scientists from all over the world have worked together to help us move past this global pandemic.

The vaccine works by allowing the body to recognize COVID-19 and develop antibodies to it. Thus, if you are exposed to the virus, your body acts to fight it right away. This reduces the risk of significant infection and, if you still get the virus, it would be expected to be much less severe than without being vaccinated.

The vaccines that have been developed cannot cause COVID-19. They can cause side effects in the 24 to 48 hours after you get it, such as a low-grade fever and a sore arm. This is a sign of the immune system doing its work. About 10% to 20% of people in

vaccine studies had these side effects.

Once vaccinated, you must return in 21 to 28 days (depending on the brand of vaccine) for a booster shot. After this, you still need to wear a mask, physically distance yourself from those not within your "COVID pod" (i.e., those you live with), and wash your hands regularly.

Once a large enough proportion of people are vaccinated, we expect to see the COVID positivity rate decrease dramatically, at which time we can discuss loosening stay-at-home requirements.

Without the vaccine, there is no end to this pandemic in sight. If people get the vaccine, we will be able to move on with our lives.

Getting this vaccine serves your own health, protects your family and

your neighbors, and speeds up our chance of getting to socialize and eat out and see live music again.

Stay tuned to find out when you are eligible for the shot. And thank a scientist if you get a chance for their amazing efforts on behalf of all of us!

**Dr. Jennifer Heidmann** is medical director of Redwood Coast PACE at Humboldt Senior Resource Center.

**The doctor gets her shot.**



**HOMEGROWN** BY JULIE FULKERSON

## Where Are You in Line?

The New York Times recently posted a link where you could determine where you are in line for a COVID-19 vaccine. After entering my age, work and county, the computer said I was ahead of two-thirds of Humboldt County.

But I am perplexed. From most of my reading, it appears that health-care and frontline workers come first when the vaccine becomes

available, along with old people. I'm one of the latter, but I don't understand why seniors are so high on the list. Sure, we might be fragile and at-risk, but . . .

For the past year, I have been most worried about nurses, doctors and healthcare workers. These are the people who are closest to the virus, work in tight quarters, have had limited access to protective gear and work long hours — often without breaks and with unimaginable stress and sorrow.

Next in my line of concern are people who work in grocery stores. They touch everything customers handle, including cash, while breathing the same air hours at a time and dealing with people who refuse to wear masks.

Then there are teachers, who have tough jobs in the best of times, but now are distance-teaching with technology unfamiliar to most of their students and parents. How is it possible to push away a young student who needs a hug or pat on the

back, not to mention a nose-wipe?

Young parents (and grandparents) are struggling with young learners, their own jobs, shared technology and no outside help or relief.

Then, there are the millions, mostly people of color, who work in the fields, in processing plants and warehouses, who may live in poverty while providing food and supplies to the rest of us.

So here's my question: how did I and others in my age group rise to the top of the vaccine priority list?

I'll speak for myself: I have had a great life. I am not ready to die, but considering the balance, I should be much lower on the list for the vaccine. I stay home and wear a mask when I go out.

Young people have adventures, education and so much to look forward to. I could even argue that those who refuse to wear masks should be higher on the list. At least they could get the vaccine and save a lot of others from infection.

Many questions remain regarding vaccines. Setting those standards and priorities must be the hardest work of all.

**Julie Fulkerson** was born in Arcata, and has lived in Trinidad, Marin, Vienna and now Eureka. She knows that brains can reject facts, but not questions. Contact: [juliefulkerson@mac.com](mailto:juliefulkerson@mac.com).

## A Lesson That Changed My Life

By Harold McArthur

Somewhere in 1970, I decided to take a drive to nowhere in particular with a six-pack of beer.

At that time, I wasn't afraid to pick up a hitchhiker. He wanted to go to a hot spring on the top of a mountain near St. Helena. The whole way, he preached the gospel.

After dropping him off, I started down the mountain. At a curve, I rolled sideways off a gentle cliff, turning over several times in slow motion until the car landed upside-down.

The car's gas tank had ruptured, and gasoline was running into the car as I hung from the seatbelt. My glasses were lost somewhere.

On my rearview mirror, I had hung a God's Eye ornament. In my drunken

stupor, I thought that if I could touch it, I would be all right. And when I did, I felt peace.

Somehow, I got myself out of the car. Somehow, I found my glasses.

The next day when I called my parents, they said that the highway patrol had found the car, but no body.

Later, my dad drove me to a tow lot to see the car. It looked like the hand of God had wrenched it back and forth, a crumpled conglomerate of metal and plastic.

Looking back, it doesn't seem possible that someone could walk away from that without a scratch.

**Harold McArthur, 70, drives more carefully these days in Eureka.**

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# Keep Teaching Our Children

By Patti Stammer

I was a student teacher in a fifth grade class at Dow's Prairie School in McKinleyville during the years when the Vietnam war and civil rights issues were served along with the mashed potatoes and peas at the dinner table.

Most of my friends were too old or had missed being picked in the draft for the war. Humboldt County was not exactly on the forefront of political activism even when we were confronted with things that were supposed to matter. But the day Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated — April 4, 1968 — the air was electric with sadness, hopelessness and rage.

The next morning as I entered the classroom, my mentor teacher asked students to divide into two groups: blue-eyed people and all the other colors. My eyes were blue, so my spot was with 12 fifth graders on the right side of the room.

For the rest of the day, our blue eyes got us special treatment. We could go anywhere without asking, sit in whichever seat we wanted, use any of the art supplies, and we ate lunch before the browns.

At first, the kids didn't get it. Then one asked if all the browns were Jews. That led to a discussion of World War II and the Holocaust — horror light. Another kid asked if they were supposed to be Negroes, because all Negroes had brown eyes.

The teacher fielded questions and discussions about justice and injustice

like no one I had ever seen. So gentle and kind. She was amazing.

That afternoon, after school, I heard two boys talking.

"Did your class have to do a day with different colored eyes?"

"Huh?" The other kid looked puzzled.

"We were treated really mean by the kids who had blue eyes. My eyes are brown, and it really sucked."

That's stupid," said the second boy. "How could having brown eyes make someone mad at you?"

"My teacher said it was an experiment, and some people get treated mean just because they look different."

"I sort of get it, but I still think it's really dumb. Everybody looks different except twins."

"Yeah, and sometimes the girls are really mean for no reason."

Just two months later, Robert Kennedy was assassinated.

In the midst of news coverage of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s and Robert Kennedy's deaths, the blue vs. brown discussions and the kids' questions and comments, I realized how fortunate I had been to be a small part of an extraordinary experience gleaned from national tragedy.

My wish for the future is that, one day, we finally get it right.

—  
**Patti Stammer, 76, reflects on life's hard lessons from her home in McKinleyville.**

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**"Act as if what you do makes a difference. It does."**

—William James (1842-1910), psychologist

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## PAINTING THE OCEAN

BY MARGARET KELLERMANN

# Sleepover Party

*“O world, I cannot hold thee close enough!”*

—Edna St. Vincent Millay

Back in March 2020, as you recall, we Californians were told to shelter in place a few days or weeks before other parts of the country. At first, we were told the global pandemic would blow through in six weeks or so. “Very soon,” promised officials, we could return to our essential plans and projects.

“Six whole weeks!” I thought. “How will we survive the isolation?” Italians were surviving by singing arias to one another on their balconies, naturally. So I decided to post a daily paragraph on my blog through the pandemic. I hoped to encourage the public, keeping up essential spirits.

As time went on, I recorded the area’s striking changes, as the wilderness started recapturing its property. Within weeks, whole deer families were sashaying around towns and parks, crossing roads casually, making me go at their pace. Aggravating at first, their pace became sweetly funny. With fewer planes and other engines about, I could hear the peaceful flapping of birds winging overhead. Maybe even hear them breathing.

On some dragging days last summer, though, I couldn’t bear to keep up the constant hope that something big would happen to make the tension go away. Though Luke has loved our constant time together — it’s been a never-ending sleepover party for this dog — I was

more than eager by summer’s end to do something new.

Fortunately, a collaborative effort of Trinidad Coastal Land Trust and Friends of the Dunes offered a Coastal Naturalist Training course in the fall, and I jumped in. Now I can tell a coast redwood from coastal California buckwheat, which is convenient. But I also learned that, on our field trips, the point was to listen and learn. Intently studying a forest plant or sea creature, we collaborated, buzzing with ideas for projects to support our coastal habitats.

Then, except for Zoom calls and friend walks here and there, social isolation again. One day in late fall, during this pregnancy-long episode of waiting, pacing the floor during a rainstorm, it finally struck me: *For the foreseeable future, this is what is. Don’t fight it. This won’t last forever. Change will come.*

If I’m to find any good, any peace in this time — as some political prisoners find in their dark isolation — I need to *not* impatiently stick it out but . . . to embrace the present, as Luke and the deer have been training me to do. And to hug the natural world so close I can hear it breathing.

—  
Margaret Kellermann continues her daily blog of encouraging words for the foreseeable future: visit [bluelakestudio.net](http://bluelakestudio.net).

# Telemedicine Is Now

By John Graves

Living in rural California means limited access to specialized medical care. To partly fill the gap, telemedicine via the internet is being used to connect us with specialists hundreds of miles away.

In part due to COVID-19, every healthcare organization has been forced to up their game regarding use of telemedicine. It is now possible to schedule appointments with specialists and hold the meetings online using Zoom or similar internet connections.

To say that this saves time and travel is an understatement. You still may need to travel for specialized tests — and, obviously, for surgery — but getting all the preliminaries out of the way without leaving your home has huge benefits.

Recently, I was diagnosed with cancer of the esophagus. It was immediately obvious that this was way beyond the scope of care that could be provided locally. I asked my primary physician to refer me to the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF), and away we went. I had multiple meetings with specialists at UCSF and Stanford via Zoom.

In my case, I was required to travel to the Bay Area for two specialized tests that are not available here. But those were singular instances of travel, rather than multiple back-and-forth trips just to speak with someone.

An added wrinkle: because of COVID-19, any surgery as well as some testing requires a “clear” COVID-19 test three to four days before the procedure. Many healthcare organizations are willing to help coordinate care, particularly if testing is within their own organization.

Prior to my surgery at California

Pacific Medical Center (San Francisco), a part of Sutter Health, my doctors arranged for a COVID-19 test at Sutter Coast Hospital in Crescent City. In another instance, Stanford arranged for a COVID-19 test on their campus the day before a required test.

Another big plus of the rise in telemedicine is being able to message your provider or check test results online. Most healthcare organizations maintain their own online patient portals, where test results are posted, reminders of upcoming appointments are listed, and messaging to a healthcare provider is available. It is also possible to link to the sites of different healthcare organizations so you can see all of your messages in one place.

What do you need for telemedicine? You need a computer, a good internet connection, a web camera and audio speakers. Many laptops and tablets come with cameras and microphone pre-installed, but if you don’t have video and audio, the hardware is easy to set up.

You can download a free version of Zoom at [Zoom.com](http://Zoom.com), the Google Store or Apple Play, and Zoom calls between yourself and one other party are free.

Telemedicine is not useful only for contacting distant health care providers — all my meetings with the staff at Open Door Clinic are held online.

The future of medicine in our area depends upon telemedicine. Get set up now, start asking your local healthcare providers about meeting digitally, and you’ll be ready when you need it.

—  
John Graves, 71, lives in Westhaven.



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AGING IS AN ART — BY JOHN HECKEL

## Boomers' Legacy

During this pandemic, on almost every Saturday night, Janet and I have a socially distanced, outdoor get-together.

We meet mostly around someone's fire pit, and bring our own food. We find a way to connect, to laugh, tell stories and — yes — we have the occasional poetry and theater night.

On average, we are an older group, mostly Baby Boomers. The last several gatherings have, however, included Bob, a 27-year-old, and last week's campfire discourse turned to him telling us what he and his Millennial colleagues thought of Baby Boomers.

Now, I didn't even know what a Millennial was, let alone what they thought of me. So I Googled it: Anyone born between 1982 and 2000 is considered a Millennial. Some 83 million people — more than a quarter of the U.S. population — are Millennial.

The older I get, the less triggered I am by what someone believes or states as truth. I also find I have lost the need to change their mind or to persuade them of the value of my opinion. I am more comfortable with the existence of a more expansive variety of opinions, of which mine is merely one.

So I, a Senior-Statesman-Boomer, was intent on listening to what Bob, a Middling-Millennial, had to say.

His comments included: "What did your marches of the '60s really accomplish?" and, "Your need for

us to have a parental relationship with you has lost all relevance," followed by, "Your life experiences are no longer valid justifications for your opinion."

His shared observations led to heated discussions (with several Boomers getting very agitated). For me, two of Bob's other opinions painfully struck home.

The first one was that, as Boomers, we were looking for a graceful and meaningful exit to this life. The Millennial, on the other hand, was staring straight into the abyss of what we had left them: climate change and economic inequality, to name just two. As we are preparing to leave this world and all the societal and environmental chaos that we have, at best, done nothing to sort out, they are pondering the moral and ethical aspects of bringing another life into this world.

Ouch! The second one also hurt: "You see yourselves as actors of change, but to us, you are part of the problem that needs to be changed!"

How do I honor that observation and still find value in what I consider a life well lived? Admit that I am part of the problem and then take the first step with three simple words.

I am sorry!

**John Heckel, Ph.D.**, 74, a retired HSU theater and film professor with a doctorate in psychology, ponders his life from his home in Eureka.

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# HSRC News

## After a Wild 2020, New Agency CEO Looks Ahead

By *Melissa Hooven*

What a wild year it has been! Certainly not what I anticipated, transitioning into my new role as CEO of Humboldt Senior Resource Center at the beginning of April, just as the pandemic hit.

The comment I still hear most often is, “How in the world are you holding up?” I have the ability to do what I need to do because I have a team — an amazing group of staff, a strong and supportive Board of Directors and a community of partners. Together, we make things happen. That’s how I’m holding up.

So, here we are, nine months into a pandemic. I think that’s important to reiterate: *Here we are.* HSRC is still at the center of senior health and well-

being in our community through all of our programs — Adult Day Health and Alzheimer’s Services, the Multipurpose Senior Services Program, Nutrition and Activities, and Redwood Coast PACE (Program of All-inclusive Care for the Elderly).

Every day brings a new challenge for our agency, our programs, our employees and our program participants. And each and every day we face these challenges with fierce determination. We do it together, and that’s how we will move into the New Year.

We certainly wish we could just close the door on 2020 with a big “See ya later!” but our reality is far different. As we move into 2021, all

of us will continue to face challenges and uncertainties, but we will continue moving forward. We have no choice.

We will make plans and they will change. We will make plans and they will fall apart, sometimes terribly. We will make plans and they will be extraordinary. That’s how we get through the pandemic.

We look to the future and we plan. We take what we’ve learned during this time to refocus our efforts, to shore up our foundation so that we can make extraordinary things happen.

And they are. In the midst of the pandemic, we’ve opened our new Fortuna campus, where Eel River Valley residents have access to Adult Day Health, Redwood Coast PACE and

our Nutrition programs. We will soon launch a Behavioral Health program to fill the gap in older adult counseling services, not just for our program participants, but for our community of older adults.

We’ve chosen to view the pandemic as an opportunity, and that’s what we hold onto — the opportunity to do things differently, to launch new programs and provide more services.

We have no choice. Our mission states that we will support our seniors in maintaining health, dignity and self-determination. It is our motivation and our inspiration to continue doing the absolute best that we can for the people we serve.

**Melissa Hooven** is CEO of Humboldt Senior Resource Center.



**Melissa Hooven**

## With the Help of Technology, HSRC Is Zooming Along

Connecting during the pandemic has been one of the biggest challenges for the hundreds of participants in HSRC programs and the staff members who serve them.

Happily, thanks to grants from several local donors, participants in HSRC’s Redwood Coast PACE and Adult Day Health programs have received tablets to connect from home, and have learned the joys of Zooming.

Five days a week, for example, seniors Zoom in from home for group exercises with physical therapist Bart Rankin and other staff. At right, just before Christmas, Rankin (left) along with Remi Chavez and occupational therapist Rhonda Rankin (seated) led nine PACE participants in an exercise session to music by the Beatles and the Village People.

Elsewhere on the schedule are many of the activities participants could expect when they met in person at the PACE Day Center before the shutdown. Adult Day Health has a similarly diverse calendar for its at-home participants, including exercise, socialization, crafts and opportunities just to chat with friends.

Just learning the skills needed to connect via the tablets is a plus, staff members said, with some tablet recipients also using their new tech skills to connect with family and friends online.

Senior News plans a more comprehensive article next month about how Zooming enriches the lives of at-home seniors. If you have a Zoom story to tell, contact editor Ted Pease at [tpease@humsenior.org](mailto:tpease@humsenior.org) or 707-443-9747, x1226.



# 'Grandma's Cactus' Connects Family Over Years and Distance

By Brenda Cooper

Back in rural Tennessee in the 1930s, my grandmother, Rosa Clementine Blaylock, got a Christmas cactus.

That plant is still blooming all these years later on a chest in my living room. This is not just a houseplant; it's a member of the family. Other offshoots in Colorado, Florida and Ohio connect me to distant family members, living and gone.

Sometime around 1947, Grandma Rosa gave a sprout to my oldest brother, Jim. He was 8 at the time, and took his "grandma cactus" with him when our family moved back to Ohio. For the next 63 years, that plant grew huge, flowering in my mother's home in Dayton, an echo of Rosa's big bush of greenery and fuchsia-pink blooms back in Tennessee.

When my mother died 10 years ago, I took a clipping in a Zip-Loc bag to my home to Utah, and Jim carefully packed the big cactus to fly to Denver.

The plant cleared airport security OK, but at the gate, the attendants told him plants were not permitted on planes and he'd have to leave it behind. After more flight officials were called in, and Jim tearfully told them about mom's passing, and the grandma cactus he and mom had loved and nurtured for decades, they relented.

The big cactus survived the flight and, over the years, Jim grew more "kids," as he called them, from the mother plant. That cactus has now spread like kudzu all over the country, and mine reminds me every day of family members and our roots reaching back to Tennessee.

After Jim and his wife, Ann, moved to Florida

in 2015, the grandma cactus grew even bigger. It loves the humidity there, and has made many more "kids."

With the introduction of smartphones, Jim and I would exchange photos of our cacti whenever they bloomed, and talked about shared holidays past. Somewhere I have a photo of Jim's many plants, the time that he and Ann counted more than 400 blooms a couple of years ago.

A few years ago, I rooted a tiny "kid" for a friend whose mother had recently died, and it was full of

blooms this December. At our house, my tiny Zip-Loc cutting has grown to overflow a 24-inch pot, surrounded by at least five more plants.

Back in Ohio, my oldest daughter's "kid" is now a huge plant that was covered with blooms at Thanksgiving, about the same time as Jim and Ann's daughter in Denver sent a photo of her grandma cactus bursting in bright flowers. In Florida, Ann is nurturing all of Jim's plants — his original from Grandma Rosa and all its "kids."

They might be called "Christmas" cactus, but time is a fluid thing to my plants, and they seem to bloom whenever they feel like it. My biggest bloom this year wasn't at Christmas, but in April, around the time Jim died, just short of his 81<sup>st</sup> birthday.

The roots are long and strong in Grandma Rosa's Christmas cactus, a part of our family that blooms and connects us all, across the country and over the years.

**Brenda Cooper, 73, tends her grandmother's cactus in Trinidad.**



'Embellishment' of a grandma cactus offspring. Nina Groth painting.

## My Hopes for 2021

By Louise Bacon-Ogden

In hindsight, 2020 was probably a year of greater vision. If everything that happened to us over this last year opens some eyes for our future, we will be headed in the right direction.

Hopefully, we saw how much intolerance there is of others' religions, cultures, skin color, birthplace, sexual orientation and economic situations. We saw the importance of our great institutions like mail service, justice system and military.

As important issues like the environment and climate change were ignored, we saw the importance of honesty, respect and dignity in government.

We could see the flaws in our system as the powers that be tried to lie, cheat and steal, and, unfortunately, got away with dangerous and shameful actions.

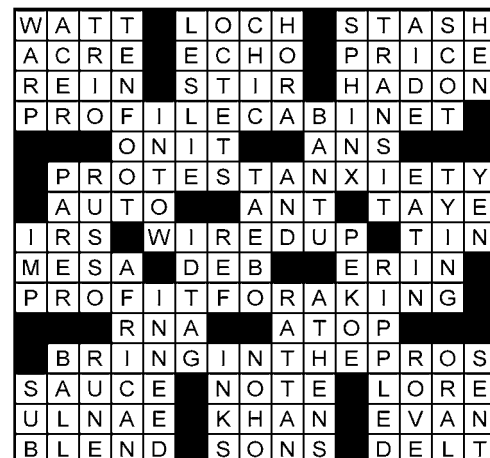
We noticed our country was often in peril. We saw a policeman kill a man by kneeling on his neck with hands in his pockets, while other officers stood by watching.

The pandemic brought out the worst in many, but it also brought out the best in many others.

My favorite phrase in this last year (and since 2016) was, "The truth shall be revealed." It's like I'm in a movie theater, hanging onto the edge of my seat as the villain who steals the "family jewels" dies a horrible death.

That's when the audience cheers!

**Louise Bacon-Ogden watches the world with a keen eye from her home in Eureka.**



Enjoy the  
Crossword  
Puzzle on  
page 23

# Lighthouse Seeking New Home

By Jan West

The fervent hope and dedicated resolve of the Trinidad Civic Club for 2021 is that the Memorial Lighthouse will finally have a permanent home after being in limbo for two years.

The backstory begins in 1949 with construction of the Memorial Lighthouse replica of the historic lighthouse on Trinidad Head. Electrical connection to the lighthouse station on the Head meant that the lighthouse no longer needed its 1871 Fourth Order Fresnel Lens and 1898 fog bell.

The Hallmark family donated land at Trinity and Edwards streets for the Memorial Lighthouse to house these treasured objects and preserve Trinidad's maritime history, under the Civic Club's stewardship.

Later, the Civic Club established a memorial park, with the Lighthouse as a monument, dedicated to those lost or buried at sea. The 25th Memorial Ceremony in 2020 commemorated 260 people whose names are engraved on marble plaques.

When coastal erosion threatened the Lighthouse, Club members re-dedicated efforts toward preservation, and began an intensive campaign to raise \$80,000 to relocate it. The Cher-ae Heights Indian Community of the Trinidad Rancheria generously offered "safe harbor" for the Lighthouse at no cost.

A community Zoom "Reveal" event is planned to share the design and estimated budget of a permanent home for the memorial. Significant funds are needed, and the Club is inspired by an anonymous donation of \$50,000; when matched by the community, the donor will give

an additional \$50,000.

Fundraising has been challenging during the pandemic, but the Civic Club believes that the community will contribute to preserve this iconic landmark.

For 107 years since the founding of the Civic Club in 1913, members have supported community development and service projects. Today there are 37 members ranging from their 30s to their 90s who are passionate about this project.

This is a daunting task, but the Civic Club is dedicated to it. "Preservation of these historic aids to maritime navigation and the Memorial Lighthouse itself is of profound importance in Trinidad's maritime history," as the Trinidad Museum Society states.

The most compelling reason for our dedication to this project is service to grieving families. We know that by honoring loved ones, we provide generational continuity and a connection to the past.

"We are moved by their tears and flowers left near loved ones' names," Civic Club co-president Dana Hope

said. "We empathize with their loss and are honored in knowing that our stewardship has touched the lives of many families."

To see the Trinidad Memorial Lighthouse rise and shine again in 2021 would be the fulfillment of many hopes and dreams.

—  
**Jan West** is co-president of the Trinidad Civic Club. For information about the Club and the Memorial Lighthouse Project, go online to [trinidadcivicclub.org](http://trinidadcivicclub.org).



**The Memorial Lighthouse at its temporary home near Trinidad Harbor.** Jody Bryan watercolor.

*Season's Greetings*

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## HSRC Programs & Services Update

**Administrative Services:** Open as usual, but please call 707-443-9747 before coming to our Eureka campus or Fortuna Center and we will assist you remotely if possible. We have locked the doors of our buildings, but staff are available for on-site assistance.

**Activities Program:** Firewood vouchers are sold out; the program has been discontinued. Senior Home Repair is now open for Eureka residents. Call the Senior Services Office at 707-443-9747, x1240, for information about Dial-a-Ride tickets. All other activities are suspended until further notice.

**Adult Day Health & Alzheimer's Services:** Modified services are offered; Day Centers are closed. Staff available by phone. New referrals are being accepted.

**MSSP (Multipurpose Senior Services Program):** Services continue, but contact with clients is primarily via phone. Staff are available by phone. New referrals are being accepted.

**Redwood Coast PACE:** Open in Eureka and Fortuna; Day Centers are closed. Staff are available by phone. New referrals are being accepted.

**Senior News:** Open as usual. Free copies available at some area groceries and businesses, but many regular distribution sites are closed. Available online at hum-senior.org. Subscriptions, \$20/year. Call 707-443-9747 with credit card info, or mail a check to 1910 California St., Eureka CA 95501.

**Nutrition Program:** Status of HSRC Nutrition services:

**Home Delivered Meals** service continues.

**Senior Dining Centers** continue to provide take-out meals via weekly drive-by pickup only. Meals are available by **reservation only** for those 60 and older and their spouse. Reservations must be made no later than seven days prior to pick-up day. Call the Senior Dining Center of your choice below for reservations or for questions about menus. Each package includes a variety of five meals. Pick-up schedules:

**Arcata:** Arcata Community Center, 321 Martin Luther King Parkway, Wednesdays 11:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. Drive to the main entrance on the north side of the building; an Arcata city staff person will direct traffic, and provide directions for those on foot. **Reservations: 707-825-2027.**

**Eureka:** 1910 California St., Tuesdays 11:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. Enter the parking lot from California Street and staff will direct you. **Reservations: 707-442-1181.**

**Fortuna:** Gene Lucas Community Center, 3000 Newburg Road, Thursdays from 12-12:30 p.m. in front of the Fortuna Senior Center wing; staff will bring the meals to you. **Reservations: 707-725-6245.**

Information may change without notice. For questions regarding any HSRC program, call 707-443-9747.

We thank community members for their understanding and flexibility during this time.

## Commodities Distribution

**Arcata:** Thursday, Jan. 21, 10:30-11:30 a.m., Arcata Community Center, 321 Martin Luther King Parkway.

**Eureka:** Wednesday, Jan. 20, 10-11:30 a.m., Humboldt Senior Resource Center, 1910 California St.

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## IN 2021, LET'S HAVE A BETTER YEAR . . . From Page 1

faced Roman god Janus, who looks both back at the previous year and ahead to the next.

These days, New Year's resolutions aren't worth the papyrus they're no longer written on. We promise to eat less junk food or exercise more, call (or, in these COVID days, Zoom) friends and family members more often — resolutions that sometimes fade before Super Bowl Sunday in February.

It does seem a good thing, however, to reflect on the year just ending, and resolve to be a better person. This year especially.

So we asked Senior News readers to share their hopes for 2021, if they had any. Not everyone was absolutely committed to their resolutions, apparently, so we accepted anonymous submissions, thinking others might want to adopt them.

"I don't know if this counts as a 'resolution' for 2021, but here's what I'm hoping for: A return to sanity and humanity in government, to policies that help people instead of fatcats, and an end to crazy conspiracy theories. Is that too much to ask?" wrote a woman who asked to be signed "Anonymous in Eureka."

"My husband said I'd better not use my name, and I guess he's right. Isn't that a sad commentary?"

John Walters, 77, Arcata wants to get outside more. "My wife and I have been taking weekly walks around Humboldt, on the Bay Trail, the Arcata Forest and up in the Redwood Parks," he said. "It's great therapy during COVID, good for mind and soul and body."

The continuing pandemic colors most of our expectations, optimistic or not, for the new year, readers said.

"I remember when New Year's res-

olutions were about losing weight," wrote a man from Bayside named Patrick. "For me, this year I want to resolve to be a better neighbor and friend to people in my own town. 'It takes a village,' right?"

"And it wouldn't hurt me to lose a few of these COVID shutdown pounds, too," he said.

This woman from McKinleyville had the same thought: "I'm going to get a bicycle to ride the Hammond Trail. Every week!"

Perhaps Donna Ulrich of Trinidad was thinking about the isolation and loneliness that the past year has brought in invoking songwriter John Prine (who died of COVID-19 early in the pandemic). "*Old people just grow lonesome/Waiting for someone to say, 'Hello in there, hello.'*"

"I would say this is one of my best years," said Alex Stillman, 81, of Arcata. "This isn't actually a New Year's resolution, but I am looking forward to 2021," she said. "I am thrilled with the innovation in technology that COVID-19 has brought about.

"The pandemic has been devastating for many of us in mind, body and spirit, but it has launched us into the 21st century and given us so many ways to communicate. Being able to attend conferences on Zoom has been the best of the best," Stillman said.

Not only does Zooming save travel time and expense, but Stillman said the ease of connecting online with friends and groups makes her feel less alone.

"Personally, I have loved all the new technology," she said. "It doesn't mean I am the best at all of it, but I work on figuring it out or ask for help."

But others think they need less Zoom time, not more. "I resolve to

spend less time on the computer and more time in the garden," offered Pat Bitton, 69, of Eureka. "It's only fair to the plants!"

Down in Fortuna, Annie Kassof, 63, says, "My resolution for 2021 is to be like a bear coming out of hibernation."

Just as the coronavirus hit, Kassof moved into a new house that she could never enjoy with friends because of isolation orders. So she's celebrating the new year with another move. "I'd love to have a metaphorical 'coming out party' and the chance to celebrate the end of the pandemic with the rest of the world," she said. "Oh yeah, and I'll start exercising more. Sure."

Finally, Suzanne Simpson, 80, emailed from Arcata that her goal is "to continue to think positively about the future, and to give what I can."

That's a fine new year's resolution for anyone.

**Ted Pease**, editor of *Senior News*, invites everyone to look up more often in 2021 and breathe deep of the pure Humboldt air.



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## Help for Rural Caregivers

By Jasmine Santoyo-Olsson

Do you take care of someone with memory loss and live in a rural area? Have recent months left you feeling overwhelmed and stressed?

You are not alone. The pandemic has limited access to caregiver support services such as support groups and respite care, which provide caregivers with support when they are feeling overwhelmed and stressed. Caregivers worry about taking care of their care partner, and sometimes forget to take care of themselves. Here are some tools, ideas and support from other caregivers to help you take better care of your care partner and your own health.

The Rural Dementia Caregiver Project at the University of California, San Francisco is collaborating with community, state and national organizations serving rural communities in many states across the United States to offer that support. The project, funded by the National Institutes of Health, provides a free online workshop and study to help rural caregivers.

Already, 74 Humboldt residents have completed eligibility studies, and 19 have signed up — nearly 20% of participants nationwide. Local partners include the Humboldt Independent Practice Association, United Indian Health Services and others.

The workshop trains caregivers on reducing stress, managing the difficult behaviors of their friend or family member with memory loss, and planning for the future.

“This workshop has given lots of great suggestions for how to handle stress and also how to handle emotions better,” a recent workshop participant said. “Thank you so much!”

Caregivers also get support from

other caregivers and trained staff. “One of the most useful aspects of this workshop are the comments, suggestions and support from fellow participants,” one caregiver said. “Many offered insights I hadn’t even considered.”

Because it is online, the workshop is accessible at any time, day or night, on a computer, tablet or smartphone.

“Being a part of the workshop has given me an assurance that I am not alone with caring for my husband,” one participant said. “It was good that I could join in on this discussion at any time day or night, and that I did not have to drive anywhere.

“It is also easier to open up by being anonymous; I am very private about our lives,” she said. “Thank you to all for your guidance, support, and great suggestions; it has helped me so much.”

Caregivers are eligible for the program if they live in a rural area, care for someone with memory loss, have internet access, and provide care for at least 10 hours per week (by care, we mean give help with dressing, meals, transportation, medications, appointments, or similar support).

Participants complete four surveys on their caregiving experiences, and will receive up to \$80 in cash.

For more information at to complete the eligibility study, go online to [caregiverproject.ucsf.edu](http://caregiverproject.ucsf.edu). Or call toll-free 1-833-634-0603, or email [caregiverproject@ucsf.edu](mailto:caregiverproject@ucsf.edu).

—  
**Jasmine Santoyo-Olsson** is  
director of the Rural Dementia  
Caregiver Project at the University  
of California, San Francisco.



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# Hospice: Beauty & Peace While Saying Goodbye

By Joe Rogers

Hospice of Humboldt has so many touching stories of bringing patients, families and loved ones together.

Even during this pandemic, we have continued serving our community in patient homes, skilled nursing facilities, assisted living facilities, and in our Ida Emmerson Hospice House.

The Hospice House, nestled in Eureka's redwoods, is a mission-driven gift to our community. Since its 2016 opening, this facility has been dedicated to end of life care and helping families be present with their loved ones, allowing them to be family instead of 24/7 caregivers.

Most do not realize what a rare service this is, one of just 14 such hospice facilities in California, and the only one in a rural county.



**FAREWELL SONG — Friends sing for a Hospice patient in Eureka.** Submitted photo.

A recent Hospice House patient had led a Humboldt children's choir for many years. During her life, she touched many people with her love and passion for music and song. During her last days, we were able to open her patio doors while former

choir members and friends serenaded her for about an hour just outside her room.

The musical celebration honoring this extraordinary woman also included people from all over the country, and even from other parts of the world, through Zoom. The singing and honoring of their friend and mentor during her final days touched all of us, and especially the patient and family.

This is just one of many stories of

how hospice provides "heartfelt care" when people need it most. Hospice is with you every step of the journey.

The global pandemic has challenged all of us in so many ways. We have seen sickness and death, financial challenges, loss of jobs and homes, isolation, trauma and disruption in our day-to-day routines. But regardless of what is going on in our society, our mission remains to provide heartfelt end of life care for our community.

For the past 41 years we have been here at your side at this most vulnerable time, providing comfort and support.

—  
**Joe Rogers** is the CEO of Hospice of Humboldt. Contact: 707-445-8443; [hospiceofhumboldt.org](http://hospiceofhumboldt.org).

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# Reading the Fine Print

*By George Ingraham*

My children and grandchildren live in Portland. I assume that there are no post offices there, for I never receive letters from them.

At their insistence, I registered with a computer service with which they communicate and exchange photographs taken with cellphones (I must get one someday), and the occasional joke.

I entered my name, email address, shoe size, eye color, blood type and one or two lesser details, until I reached the final step, the “Terms of Service” to which one must agree. Raised as I was to read before you sign anything, I clicked as directed. Up popped a new screen for which I needed more powerful glasses than the ones I use flying the Cessna.

I agreed that I understood that anyone could read what I “posted” and that, however, they assumed no responsibility for accurately presenting my little creations. Well and good so far.

I further agreed that the company was not liable for my spelling, grammar or truth of any accusations or declarations hereinafter or thereafter; nor for the suitability, cleanliness or lack thereof of any necktie, cravat

or foulard I wore for any depicted occasion, whether foreign or domestic, notwithstanding whether worn with or without other garmentation, the state of repair of which was beyond the scope of this agreement or other adjoining subdivisions.

I further agreed that the Corporation was not to be held liable for any interpretation or misinterpretation of my posts that result in damages, whether physical or emotional, to any mammal, whether sentient or not as defined in subparagraph 26, and that I would neither suggest, or if suggested, advocate, the diversion or drainage of the Mississippi, Colorado, Ohio, Monongahela or Sacramento rivers, nor their major tributaries as hereinafter defined.

I agreed to indemnify and hold harmless the Corporation for any civil disturbance, insurrection, war, act of regicide, tsunami, pandemic, or earthquake, whether prompted directly or indirectly by my postings.

It all seemed perfectly reasonable to me. I clicked “Agree.”

**George Ingraham, M.D., 85,**  
*channels Samuel Clemens and waits  
in vain by his mailslot in Eureka.*

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\*The production of this document was supported, in part, by grant number CFDA 93.924 from the US Administration for Community Living (ACL), DHHS, Washington, DC. 20201. Grantees undertaking projects under government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their findings and conclusions. Points of view or opinions do not, therefore, necessarily represent official Administration of Community Living policy. Its contents are solely the responsibility of A1AA/HICAP and do not necessarily represent the official views of ACL.\*

## ASK THE DOCTOR . . . From Page 5

Occupational therapists can be helpful in assessing the home to make sure your living environment is best adapted for safety. I also recommend wearing a lifeline device at all times. If you fall and cannot get up, you can push a button and receive immediate assistance.

Taking measures to avoid falling sounds boring. But in my experience, falls are the biggest risk for loss of independence for otherwise well-functioning elders.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has a website with resources geared toward fall prevention: STEADI-Older Adult Fall prevention ([cdc.gov.steadi](http://cdc.gov.steadi)). Another good website is through the American Geriatrics Society: [healthinaging.org/a-z-topic/falls-prevention](http://healthinaging.org/a-z-topic/falls-prevention).

If you do not have a computer to gain access to these and other online resources, consider bringing up fall prevention at your next doctor visit, and ask for advice on ways to reduce your risk.

Exercise is key! It also helps to not live in Wisconsin in the winter, too. Good thing for us that we don't!

**Dr. Jennifer Heidmann** is medical director and primary care provider at Redwood Coast PACE (443-9747). This column should not be taken as medical advice. Ask your medical provider if you have health questions. Send comments to [seniornewseditor@humsenior.org](mailto:seniornewseditor@humsenior.org).

## 'Art for the Young at Heart'

The Ink People for the Arts in Eureka will conduct a 20-week art class and social engagement group for seniors 65 and older beginning the week of Jan. 11 and running through May.

"Art for the Young at Heart" will lead participants through beginning drawing and watercolor painting skills, while also creating the opportunity for peer support among participants. The class will be taught by local watercolor artist and teacher Maureen McGarry and co-facilitated by a licensed clinical social worker.

One Eureka senior who participated in a previous class said she was ready to sign up again. "When the notice about the art class on Zoom came around, I immediately called to say I was interested," she said. "I was so ready for something different. I am

amazed at what I was able to accomplish.

"I learned so much," she said. "I want to learn more. It's wonderful that at my age I can still learn!"

The class is free for participants, with fees charged to Medicare. Art supplies (\$190) are available from the Art Center in Arcata. Participants must have internet access with audio and video capacity, and must download the free Zoom app.

Some low-income seniors may qualify for a scholarship to cover materials.

The program is funded by grants from the California Arts Council, the Ink People Center for the Arts, and other donors. For information, email [Maureen@telebehavioralhealth.us](mailto:Maureen@telebehavioralhealth.us) or call the Ink People at 707-442-8413.

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# Letters to the Editor

## The Path Forward

To the Editor:

Hallelujah! Hallelujah! The Biden-Harris team is elected. Democracy and decency prevailed, albeit along with the cancers in our nation that produced a delusional and criminal president who had no interest in the democratic process or respect for the US Constitution. And . . . the 74 million Americans voting to continue his deceitful presidency.

The election shows that our democracy is fragile and vulnerable. In addition, the outcome of the election declares to America there is a national renewal in decency and integrity, which has a much better chance of moving our ailing nation closer to the

possibility of regaining the nation's soul. The Biden-Harris team has a tremendous task of rebuilding the damage done by the recent incompetent presidency, then addressing the national problems and cancers.

We all have to help with this monumental task. Democracy is participatory. Voting is not enough. Get involved, nationally if possible, locally more realistically. Participate in our neighborhoods and towns. Volunteer in community services and local politics that support equity and inclusion. Our nation's path toward regaining its soul and our lives depends on it.

**Bruce Hitchko**, *Eureka*

## Zoom Turkey

To the Editor:

The recipe called for a "small" turkey. Now, right at that point you ought to turn suspicious. I do not believe there is any such thing.

Turkeys are big birds with massive breasts and long, burly legs. Dark meat competes with the white. In life, the turkey is slow-strutting art work, pitching down its nose to glare from hooded eyes. No, anything calling itself a "small" turkey is probably a chicken.

You'd think a turkey couldn't fly, but they can when the need arises. Those that live in the wild can be found in the branches of a comfortable tree at night. Those who live on farms aren't required to fly, and nobody wants them to since fences

would mean nothing to them. And if a turkey flies away, where's dinner?

In my opinion, turkeys have two points of being: the first is the grand occasion when they are brought steaming on a platter to the applause of a gathered family. The second is leftovers, and that can go on for many days in great variety unless it was that chicken pretending to be a turkey.

This year, with our small gatherings, the chicken may prevail. Doesn't matter. The thought's the same. Put the laptop on the table, hit full volume and Zoom up the family.

Next year, we'll get a real turkey.

**Jim Slade**, *Morgantown, West Virginia*

## High-Flying New Year

To the Editor:

In 1943 Bing Crosby sang, "Let's Start the New Year Right." Oh, how those words are needed as we pass from 2020 to 2021.

In one verse he sang:

*Let's watch the old year die*

*With a fond good-bye*

*And our hopes as high*

*As a kite*

Yes, we need to fly that kite high. We need to get back on track to deal with the many problems facing us – COVID-19; loss of jobs, making so many unable to pay rent and being

evicted with no place to go; our planet being devastated by climate change; a record number of hurricanes; a record number of forest fires.

The list can go on. We need to think about our children and our grandchildren, and what needs to be done now to give them a safe country and world to live in.

"Happy New Year" needs to be a "Work-Together New Year." We need to work together to fly that kite high. Very high.

Happy hopeful New Year!

**Dave Rosso**, *Cutten*

## Thanks for the Memories

To the Editor:

The latest issue of Senior News arrived today. As Jim was gone for three days to take care of business, I grabbed the paper — all by myself! — and read most of it without pausing.

A couple of articles caused my memory bank to open its doors and bring some long-forgotten scenes to mind. "A Beatle Memory," in particular, tugged on my heartstrings. I vividly remember watching the Beatles' debut on "The Ed Sullivan Show" in February 1964. I was very "new" with my first pregnancy. The next evening, I went to a meeting of my college sorority alum group — but I didn't share with them that night. I waited until the March meeting.

And, of course, there's the "Tinsel" story. How well I remember carefully draping those gawd-awful, slithery

things over the branches . . . and then retrieving them when it was time to dismantle the tree. They MUST be saved for next year! I can hear my mother's voice in my head as I write.

I wonder if anyone else made construction paper chains to drape over the limbs of the tree? In grade school, that was THE craft project when I was little. We would cut strips of red and green, then carefully alternate the colors, making rings that we fastened together with white paste. My mother would save the chains from year to year, and they'd be flattened and faded. But that didn't matter

Thanks for the memories.

Oh — by the way — what has happened to the crossword puzzle?

**Jane Corder Moore-Snyder**,  
*Delaware, Ohio*

**Letters Policy:** Senior News welcomes letters to the editor. To be considered for publication, letters should be received by the 12th of the month, must not exceed 300 words, and may be edited for space. Submissions must include the writer's full name, mailing address, phone number and e-mail address. Senior News reserves the right to reject any letter. The same requirements apply to those interested in submitting longer commentary columns (up to 400 words). Mail to Senior News, 1910 California Street, Eureka, CA 95501 or E-mail [tp ease@hum senior.org](mailto:tp ease@hum senior.org).

**MORE LETTERS . . . From Page 20****S.A.I.L.ing During COVID**

To the Editor:

A wonderful gift came to us local seniors in the waning weeks of 2020.

After the first COVID shutdown, a lot of Humboldt seniors were cut off from one of our most important good health practices — daily exercises in the S.A.I.L. (Stay Active for Independent Living) program offered through Area 1 Agency on Aging (A1AA).

Physical therapist Phoebe Smith and S.A.I.L. instructors researched the “how to’s” of Zoom classes. After lots of research and goodwill by instructors, we were in class again. Well, some of us were. Many others were unable to join for lack of a techno device.

So it was back to more research, calling a small group of us together (electronically) to find what other areas were doing, and to look for funding possibilities. We found that the Humboldt Area Foundation (HAF) was working specifically to help the Humboldt community mitigate challenges to living healthy during the COVID lockdown.

A1AA applied for a grant to put digital tablets in the hands of seniors who had been disconnected from precious health-building/maintaining exercise classes. HAF’s grant allowed 30 seniors to rejoin the four weekly S.A.I.L. classes per via technology. Phoebe and our “Tech Angels,” Caroline Roche and DD Orlandi, worked to set up the devices and to train participants.

US Cellular offered a generous discount for 10 months of internet service and St. Joseph Health pays two of our instructors. This has been a true Humboldt County-style group effort.

Through all these efforts, a huge technology gap between generations has been a bit narrowed. That’s a gift. For S.A.I.L. participants, rejoining classes via Zoom has really intensified the camaraderie and social connection we all crave and need. That’s another bonus gift.

Humboldt seniors living healthy lives — that’s the biggest bonus of all.

**Judy Wyland, Fortuna**

**Please Stay Home**

To the Editor:

My husband and I very much enjoyed the December issue of Senior News (we always do!), but were concerned for John Heckel [“A Painful Insight,” page 10].

We hope Mr. Heckel’s knees are better, but what bothered us was that he and his wife would travel to visit friends and family while the COVID-19 [pandemic] was on the rise.

About the time Mr. Heckel’s column came out, the U.S. death toll

passed 250,000, and the C.D.C. [Centers for Disease Control] was warning everyone to stay home and isolate for the holidays.

We miss our grandchildren and friends, too, but we believe it is irresponsible to ourselves and to them to travel to see them until the virus has been contained.

Wishing that comes soon, and that everyone has a healthy and happy new year!

**Jan & Bob Goodman, Arcata**

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## ‘Now Is the Time’

By Suzy Smith

It has been a bittersweet goodbye to almost 20 years of working with senior services, mostly with the Area 1 Agency on Aging (A1AA) in Eureka and, before that, at the Del Norte Senior Center. But now, at 60, I have a new career as a self-employed real estate broker with Community Realty.

Working life for me started at Don’s Photo and Jewelry in Juneau, Alaska, during four years of high school. I knew all the local photographers and made friends with tourists visiting my beautiful town.

I began night classes at the university with big dreams of becoming an architect. That didn’t work out, but I landed a job as a draftsman for the State of Alaska instead. I met my husband, John, had two children, and we moved to Crescent City, where I worked as a civil engineering draftsman for 12 years. When that business shut down, it was time for a career change, working first at the Del Norte Senior Center and then at A1AA.

During this same time, my mom had a massive heart attack, which led to rapid health decline. Her illness and need of care opened my eyes to the lack of help and resources to care for an aging parent, so my job at the A1AA was a perfect fit.

But I had always dreamed of being self-employed. After moving to Eureka for John’s employment, and the kids out of school and off to their own lives and careers, I thought, “Now is the time. But doing what?”

During a drive to a Dixie Chicks concert, a friend was talking about getting her real estate license, and that got me to thinking. After talking it through with my family and friends, I began evening classes and online licensing training, and eventually got

my real estate license, too.

Focusing on my own business was the career change I wanted, I discovered. As soon as I had put in the required time learning the ropes at Community Realty, I passed my brokers’ exam in November 2019. I was ecstatic, and ready to be my own boss.

The A1AA had been a huge part of my life and identity; it was a place I loved and believed in. One part of my plan that I had not thought through was how to leave the A1AA, and I found it extremely difficult to make the decision. I kept at both jobs as long as I could, but realized that my health was taking a hit.

Last January, the A1AA’s constantly recurring funding challenges presented a solution: combine my part-time position with another part-time employee. It was a win-win.

Then COVID hit. I thought, “What have I done?” I had started my new career in the midst of a pandemic.

All these months later, however, I am happy with my change. I am still on the learning curve — I am finding out that every real estate sale and every purchase is different. But I’ve also always known that learning is good for us as we age; it keeps us active and engaged.

With my knowledge and experience, being able to help those who are more advanced in years will always be near and dear to my heart. I’ve also discovered that learning, studying, determination and the encouragement of family and friends are the best recipe for change.

—  
**Suzy Smith** of Eureka is always learning new things.

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# Crossword Puzzle

**Good Start** by Pam Klawitter  
Edited by David Steinberg

**ACROSS**

- 1 Lightbulb measure
- 5 \_\_\_Ness monster
- 9 Private stockpile
- 14 Part of a large lot
- 15 Alexa’s home?
- 16 What a Realtor negotiates
- 17 Strap at a horse race
- 18 Mix together
- 19 Sported, as a sombrero
- 20 Where to store social media printouts?
- 23 Getting something done
- 24 Part of Q&A: Abbr.
- 25 What someone who joins a demonstration overcomes?
- 32 Lead-in to “correct”
- 33 Insect with a carpenter variety
- 34 Digs of “All American”
- 35 Tax-collecting org.
- 36 Connected electrically
- 40 \_\_\_ Man (Dorothy’s “heartless” friend)
- 41 Phoenix neighbor
- 43 Girl entering society, for short
- 44 Burnett on CNN
- 46 Certain royal investment gain?
- 50 Genetic molecule without thymine

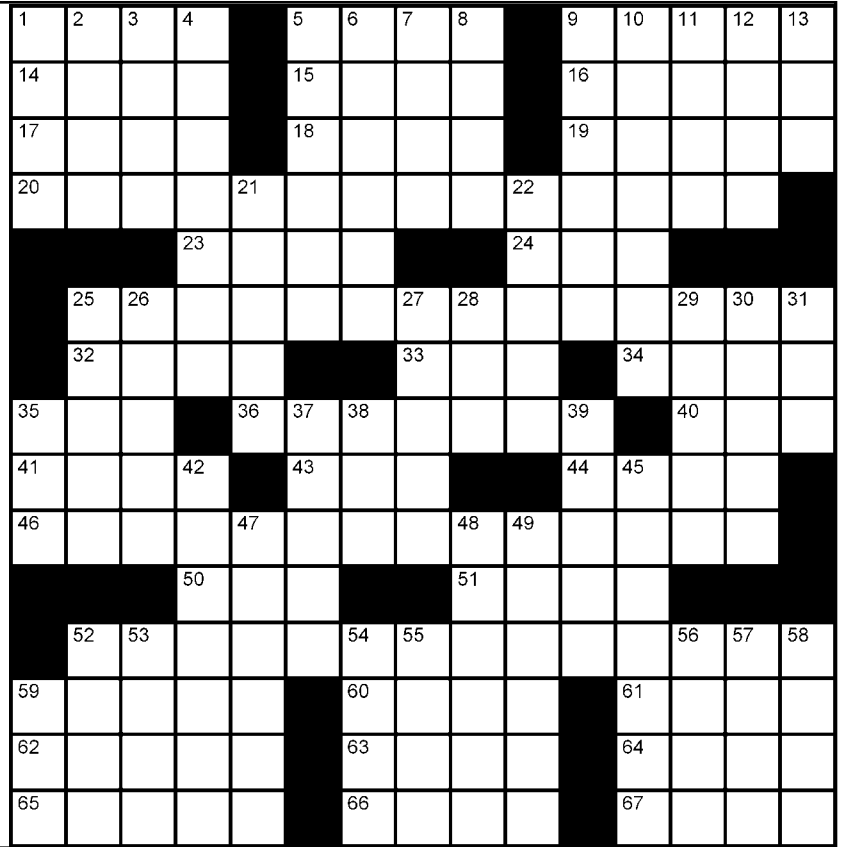
- 51 At the summit of
- 52 What to do when more expertise is required, or a theme hint
- 59 Basic pizza topping
- 60 Written reminder
- 61 Passed-down tales
- 62 Bones next to radii
- 63 Soulful Chaka
- 64 Broadway protagonist Hansen
- 65 Mix together
- 66 Daughters’ siblings, perhaps
- 67 Shoulder exercise target, briefly


**DOWN**

- 1 Buckle down?
- 2 Big name in PCs
- 3 The Chicks, for one
- 4 Like a metaphorical pole
- 5 “Airplane!” co-star Nielsen
- 6 Groups of eight
- 7 Stylish
- 8 60 minutos
- 9 Giza attraction
- 10 Subway travel, for instance
- 11 Helper
- 12 One may say “nae”
- 13 Brooding female bird
- 21 Like toddlers following a parent

- 22 Language heard in Tanzania
- 25 Peeling knife
- 26 Actress Rene
- 27 Workout system with punches
- 28 “Wait, there’s more ...”
- 29 Use DoorDash, say
- 30 Getting even with?
- 31 Longing
- 35 Little rascal
- 37 Employee’s badge
- 38 One who cries “Foul!”
- 39 Earl Grey alternative
- 42 Like some elephants
- 45 Flowed in waves
- 47 Requiring assistance
- 48 Outdoor furniture material
- 49 Plato’s place
- 52 Word after “crystal” or “disco”
- 53 Early letter
- 54 Tattoo parlor supplies
- 55 LA or NYC neighborhood
- 56 Have no fixed destination
- 57 Taken by mouth
- 58 Email folder
- 59 Temporary teacher, informally

**Answers on Page 12.**






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- **MARCH** is National Women's History Month. Let's celebrate the accomplishments of the women in our lives and our communities. Because where would we be without them?

Contact SN editor Ted Pease: tpease@humsenior.org, or 707-443-9747, x1226.

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