



# After a Long Year, Silver Linings



PHOTO HIKES through parts of Humboldt new to them helped Sydney Larson and her husband, Mark, navigate the year-long pandemic shutdown. Mark Larson photo.

## Hitting the Pandemic Trail

By Mark and Sydney Larson

A look back at our photographs evokes many memories for us of how we spent our COVID year.

On March 16, 2020, we started our “shelter-in-place” walks. Over the next 12 months, we

walked 351 out of the 365 days — as far as 11 miles or as little as .5 miles each day. By mid-March of this year, our total mileage was 1,350 miles, an average of 3.7 miles per day.

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## The Brain Fog Is Lifting

By Ted Pease

2020 will be remembered as a terrible year — as it should be. But humans are resilient, and for many Humboldters, the enforced isolation and mandated alone time have not been all bad.

Not that anyone wants a repeat of the past year — “I feel stuck,” said Jen Whitmer. “I just stand in the kitchen and stare: ‘What was I doing?’”

But Whitmer and many others have pushed back against the brain fog and pandemic-induced inertia with new interests, rediscovered skills and a sense of humor. For Whitmer, it’s been sewing and yoga (“not at the same time,” she said).

For Catherine Mace, “This isolation was a wonderful slowdown time for me, one that got me away from all the things I was doing because I thought I should. Those ‘shoulds’ have ruled my life for way too long!”

Mace has rediscovered needlework and a creativity she didn’t have time for 50 years ago. “I am braver from the joy in this renewal of creativity and entered a contest and an art show,” she said. “Where this will go remains to be seen, but I am having fun with it.”

Wendy Pickett: “After 5 years, I finally built a library in the loft and unpacked all of my books. What was the first thing I did? More books, of course.”

Several Senior News readers offered some 6-word snapshots of silver linings of the past year, and where they are now:

“Not buying gasoline since last April,” said George Ingraham, who is also looking forward: “Not shopping for groceries before sunrise.”

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## TEDtalks: We're Still Here

Ever since the coronavirus first hit, the question was, "When will we get back to normal?"

Now, more than a year later, that question seems more than a little naïve. The answer, which we couldn't really get our minds around a year ago, is that we may never see what we used to consider "normal" life again.

Almost exactly a year ago, I interviewed Dr. Roberta Luskin-Hawk about how the then-looming pandemic would affect us in Humboldt County. At that point, we were about a month into statewide stay-at-home orders, and it seemed impossible that such draconian measures could last long.

"Everyone wants to know when will we see the biggest impact and when will our lives return to normal, and those answers aren't clear yet," Dr. Luskin-Hawk said back then. But she noted that Dr. Anthony Fauci, the nation's top infectious disease scientist, was "thinking maybe there's going to be a vaccine in 12 to 18 months."

It turns out that Dr. Luskin-Hawk and Dr. Fauci were spot-on. One year to the day after I had that talk with the doctor, people are getting their shots. Humboldt County reported 22% of its population fully vaccinated; nationwide, between 3 million and 4 million Americans are being vaccinated every day.

That looks like the road to "normal," but at the same time, the U.S. still sees more than 70,000 new infections every day; worldwide, more than 3 million people have died with COVID-19, including 566,000 Americans.

Thirty-seven Humboldters had died as of April 20.

So, as I heard someone tell a cashier in Murphy's the other day, "'Normal' is overrated."

Still, as our contributors discuss this month, humans are resilient and fundamentally forward-looking creatures who find ways to cope and even thrive in tough times.

Some of these upbeat Humboldters describe the silver linings they have discovered during the past 12+ months of the pandemic, from cooking to hiking to needlework. "Whatever it takes to get through the day," one said.

•••

Last month in this column, I made a plea for subscriptions to Senior News to help ensure that our readers receive the paper as other means of distribution decline.

I am so pleased and grateful that more than 30 of you responded not only with checks to subscribe (\$25 for the year), but with notes of appreciation for what you find in Senior News each month.

Senior News is still alive and well, but we couldn't do it without our community of friends. If you'd like to subscribe, call 707-443-9747 and we'll make it happen.

Meanwhile, May is Older Americans Month, so let's celebrate ourselves. We're still here.

*Ted Pease is editor of Senior News.*

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#### Great Outdoors



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# Road Trip! Self-Isolating Safely on the Lonely Road

By Donna Bacon Ulrich

My husband Larry and I have been photographing beautiful landscapes for the almost 50 years we have been together, making a living by marketing the images. The lonely road was always our friend, beautiful places were our home.

So when the pandemic hit, we panicked for a while and hunkered down, trying to keep ourselves safe. After a month of that, though, we shook out our sleeping bags, cleaned the old camper and hit the road once again.

We are used to finding secret (and free!) places to camp and isolate. Until recently, when the general public caught the See-the-USA bug with their new campers and RVs, we could easily — and happily — stay a safe distance from others.

For the past 40 years, we have been fishing in Montana each summer. Last spring, as the summer of our collective discontent approached, we thought, “Dang it, we have to go,” and proceeded to figure out how to create our own “normal” for our first big COVID-era trip. We carefully planned and shopped for food that would last the trip (think salami, Annie’s shells and hard cheeses) to minimize our stops; no fast food on this trip!

On the road, rural America appeared to us rule-following Californians a maskless and mandates-be-damned territory, so gas was all we

stopped for on the four-day drive to our destination.

When we arrived at the campground, we found that all the other campers were respectful of each other’s space. The campground host sprayed the latrine and water faucets with bleach twice daily. And fishing? If you fish, you know you don’t want to be near others anyway — no brainer.

Since that successful trip, we have taken many other forays to favorite places — Colorado, Utah, California deserts, Sierra Nevada. Confined to our camper, we managed to keep loneliness at bay and sanity fulfilled.

Recently we spoke to an old friend who also makes a living in photography. Because of health problems, he was not comfortable with traveling, so he stuck close to home. He and his wife have had a few ups and downs in their relationship, so we were pleased when he told us that they had an amazing lockdown time together: Their friendship deepened, the 50-year bond was renewed and they are as happy as they were when they first married. We could feel the contentment in his voice.



**MAPQUEST — Donna and Larry Ulrich spread maps on the hood of the trusty old camper (250,000 miles and counting!) to plan their next escape into the back country.** Ted Pease photo.

That brought smiles to our COVID-free faces.

They say that absence makes the heart grow fonder, but as with our friend and his wife, being together is a better bonder.

—  
**Donna and Larry Ulrich live in Trinidad, when they’re not on the road self-isolating.**

# A Year of Medical Misadventures? Keep Smilin’!

By Marna Powell

My patron saint has always been the Goddess of Irony, and she has stayed by my side over the past few years as one thing after another hit. For example:

- I was under treatment for chronic Lyme Disease when I came down with COVID-19, so I was treated for Corona with Lyme.

- I’ve now recovered from Lyme brain, chemo brain and COVID brain fogs. When dementia hits, I’ll be an expert.

- They say scars add character. I have a LOT of character.

- They also say, “That which does not kill me makes me stronger.” So I guess I must have super-powers, too.

- I like the new video medical appointments very much. I tried to get my mammogram on Zoom: I squished my boobs against two iPads. I’m not greatly endowed, so next time I’ll try using a flip phone.

- After years of bad knees, I tell everyone I’ve got the kneezles.

- Oh, yeah. And I can attest that meningitis is a huge pain in the neck.

- I’m the only woman I know who did not need a haircut in 2020. Chemotherapy in 2019 took care of it for me. If you’re going into a lockdown it really helps to start off bald.

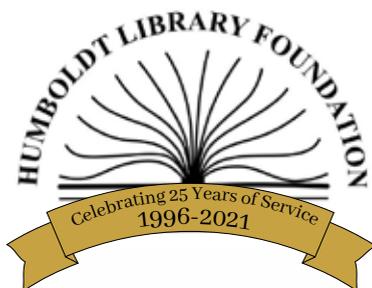
- Bubonic Plague has typically been transmitted

through rats. People hate rats, but think chipmunks are cute. I got it from chipmunks. Chipmunks are not cute.

- Tell Julie Andrews that I took her advice, but a spoonful of sugar makes the medicine stick in my throat.

- There seems to be an old lady filter on the mirrors in my house, and on my selfie camera, too. At least she’s smiling. I hope you are, too.

—  
**Marna Powell, 62, laughs at germs and sick humor from her home in Orick.**



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# Lithadora is Lovely in the Backyard

*By Sara Turner*

When we moved to Arcata in late summer 1965, we lived first in a state-owned house on the Humboldt State University campus, moving to one we bought nearby a year later.

Its yard was small and sloping. We placed fill dirt on the side for a patio and concrete for a basketball hoop for our three boys, and did not much else to the yard for 40 years.

By the time the boys left home and my husband died in 2003, our neighborhood had changed. Houses were demolished and I was alone on my block, with the community forest on two sides and the Arcata Lutheran Church on a third. It was time for me to move.

When I saw the “For Sale” sign on J Street, I called immediately, toured the house and made an offer, which was accepted. I welcomed the larger lot, prominent location between the Veterans Memorial Building and the high school, with the Community

Pool a couple of blocks away. My love of swimming had been renewed soon after the pool opened in the mid-70s.

I waited six months to move in while the previous owner, also a widow, built her smaller home in McKinleyville, wondering why she would leave this nice home. Perhaps, I thought later, it was the big yard.

Since the yard was mostly level, I decided it was within my (then) abilities and bought a lightweight, battery-operated lawn mower. I actually mowed the lawn a few times before realizing it took more than just mowing the grass. Then I took a Miller Farms class on ground covers. As much as I love and enjoy flowers, my thumb never was actually green, so the idea of a ground cover sounded great. I hired a contractor to remove the ragged grass and put in various plants, including lithadora.

I soon realized that I had lucked onto a winner.

Beginning in March, the lithadora’s blue flowers cover my front and back yards. Bees begin early and, within a few weeks, are actively buzzing all over the place. Tulips start even earlier and take turns showing different colors. The Meyer lemon produces fruit in abundance.

People often compliment me on the sea of blue, and ask if they can have some lemons, which are barely an arm’s length from the sidewalk. I am happy to oblige as I couldn’t possibly use that many.

The thing I can depend on lasting all summer are the bees, as more flowers opening mean they have good reason to remain in my yard, gathering the nectar so necessary for their survival. In a way, it has helped my survival as well.

—  
*Sara Turner, 94, of Arcata  
is a retired HSU professor of  
social work.*

# Harvest Boxes at Farmers’ Markets

*By Megan Kenney*

reevaluate their priorities.

Booker T. Whatley, a Black Alabama farmer and Tuskegee University professor, first introduced the concept of CSAs to Americans in the 1960s to support farmers with up-front fees to cover the purchase of seed and supplies.

Many Humboldt farms offer CSAs. Shakefork Community Farm, Earthly Edibles and Luna Farm all offer traditional CSA produce boxes, while Fair Curve Farm runs a free-choice CSA. Several ranches also offer meat CSAs.

Community Supported Agriculture (CSAs) gained more popularity nationally in 2020.

CSAs are a way for customers to support farmers during winter. Customers buy “shares” in a farm over the winter and redeem them for fresh produce during the summer. The produce is often packed into boxes for quick and easy pick-up at farmers’ markets or farm stands, minimizing physical contact during the pandemic.

While programs like this are not new, they may be a trend that continues past the pandemic as people

The North Coast Growers Association has created the Harvest Box program, with produce from various farms. These are available at the Arcata market and the Jefferson Community Center in Eureka. This summer, boxes will also be available in Blue Lake, Valley West and Trinidad.

—  
*Megan Kenney is the North Coast  
Growers’ Association manager of  
cooperative distribution. Check out  
northcoastgrowersassociation.org/  
harvestbox for information and to  
sign up.*



## ASK THE DOCTOR

BY JENNIFER HEIDMANN, M.D.

### Public Health Crises

Most people probably didn't think too much about public health until around March 2020. At that time, with a global pandemic expanding, we learned how important public health is for our international, national, state and community wellness.

Traditionally, public health departments are underfunded; most people tend to think about public health as something other countries that are less wealthy than the U.S. need, not us. I hope awareness is better after over a year of having the pandemic managed largely by local public health departments in the absence of a cohesive national response. Locally, the Humboldt County Public Health Department has done a very good job in helping us avoid overwhelming the hospital system, and reducing risk of death in our county.

But what is public health? Yes, it can refer to the population-wide responses we make to an infectious disease like COVID-19. Other diseases they help track are tuberculosis, hepatitis and sexually transmitted diseases. They notice outbreaks or emergence of new pathogens.

More broadly, public health promotes healthy lifestyles in a community, and develops projects and policies that help a community thrive. This might include ensuring safety of water and waste management, facilitating access to vaccinations and other preventive services and providing resources to people who are hungry or to people who are experiencing violence. Public

health departments also may work toward harm reduction in drug use, such as providing Narcan (opioid reversal) to police officers and others who serve the community at large. The idea of public health extends to anything that might affect our individual and collective health.

Coronavirus is an ongoing public health concern. We are not out of the woods yet. To get there, we need as many people vaccinated as possible. Until that happens, even vaccinated people should continue protective measures like masks and distancing when in public places.

But there are other equally pressing concerns occurring right this moment in terms of public health. In fact, three concerns are at crisis level, meaning that if we do not engage and fund solutions for them, people will die.

First, racism. In recent months, there has been a large increase in attacks on the Asian American and Pacific Islander population, and there is ongoing systemic racism with daily violence against all people of color.

It is essential that everyone work to reduce violence and eradicate racism, whether overt or subtle. We need to educate ourselves and our children about this now. We need to step up to protect others who might be in harm's way, even when the harm is verbal attacks or careless "jokes."

Second, gun violence. Guns are lethal. People should not have to

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**HOMEGROWN** BY JULIE FULKERSON

## Anti-Establishment Mom

**M**y mother always said Mothers' Day was a Hallmark invention and that every day is mothers' day. I believed her and still do. She was right about most everything.

As I get older, I am more aware of her influence in an almost imperceptible way. I grew up with very few rules, but had strong modeling and clear hints.

Jean appeared conventional, but was anti-establishment to the core. Her proper Bostonian mother was a proud member of the Daughters of the American Revolution, but my mother would not discuss her heritage at all.

As a teenager, I was discouraged from joining any group or attempt to be like the other girls. When I wanted a cardigan sweater because "everyone" had one, she would tell me, "We do not have to keep up with the Joneses." I had no idea who the Joneses were, but I got the message. I loved my hand-me-downs from older friends.

I went to an elementary school where we were not graded, so I didn't really learn much about competition. As a young teenager, I wanted to join Horizon Girls because my best friend was one. Nope, no need to belong to an exclusive group. But Yes! to the all-inclusive Camp Fire Girls.

As I got older, my mother didn't worry how late I stayed out, but she was not happy when I became a cheerleader/songqueen (or queen

of anything). She made it clear she would not support me being a member of a sorority in college. She was more worried that my use of pronouns matched the subject of the sentence than if my skirts matched my sweaters!

My mother was a Humboldt State Faculty Wife. Her favorite story reveals her subtle approach to memberships. Once a year, she went to the Faculty Wives Tea. Jean and her

best friend Gayle had to attend. Gayle was the wife of a dean, so she would put on a hat and

gloves, greet the hostess at the front of the reception line, go to the side of the house and pass the hat and gloves to my mother so Jean could come in the front door. I now realize that wasn't just anti-establishment; it was a quick hand-me-down-turn-around.

Recently I've reflected on how fortunate I am that these deep-rooted values penetrated my beliefs and choices. I have never joined a socially appropriate membership organization. I don't feel left out, as I did as a teenager. I do still feel left out in other ways from time to time, but not around group-think.

This makes it difficult for me to understand cults like QAnon, and makes it easy to be grateful I have no need to belong to a group.

**Julie Fulkerson** of Eureka is not a joiner, but she does like belonging to string quartets. Contact: [juliefulkerson@mac.com](mailto:juliefulkerson@mac.com).

### Grateful for Mom's values on Mothers' Day.

## Parenting Faux Pas

By Margot J. Genger

When my son was a newborn, I couldn't quit saying, "He's so beautiful." He was so beautiful, I tried to hide him from other new mothers so they wouldn't be jealous.

When my husband told me I had to stop saying it, I walked around holding my breath until finally he said, "Oh go ahead."

"It's just that he's so beautiful," I said. But I look at his baby pictures, he looks like, well, a baby!

Our son was quite "exacting," and we wanted him to know it was okay to make mistakes. I devised a few plans and my husband agreed.

First, Dad sat working on papers at the table and "accidentally" ripped one. He said, "Oh, no! Well, that's no big deal. We all make mistakes."

Later, at my prodding, he walked into the front room and "accidentally" slipped and fell. "Oh, no!" I said. "Are you all right?"

"Sure," he said, "happens all the time."

Our son remained oblivious.

I remember making a brilliant yellow paper-maché smiley face piñata that was so tough that none of the 5-year-olds could break it. When an adult finally launched a baseball bat into the huge smiling face, the hard candy flew out and hit some of the kids who, obviously, started crying.

One time my son was dancing all around the living room. I said, "Chris, do you want to take dance lessons?" Chris said, "No, Mom. I already know how to dance."

We have many family stories like these, and some with darker endings and hard lessons learned. But we've survived them all and enjoy retelling them over holiday dinners. For all our parenting good intentions, mistakes and utter failures, our kids survived childhood and are now living lives of their own.

We are so grateful for our children, as they have been our most valuable teachers.

—  
**Margot Genger**, 69, was 33 when she gave birth to her first child.

## Adventures in Agriculture

By Laurene Thorpe

I am a notoriously bad gardener. Except for a few hardy ones, most plants die slowly in my care.

Nonetheless, in the spring of 2020, I thought it would be an excellent idea to raise snow peas (which is the only kind of pea I like). To my surprise, the little plants soon grew into lovely twisty vines with tiny growths sprouting everywhere.

One day I was checking my green babies in their patio pots while my husband, George, was nearby in the

garage. Suddenly, I cried out with excitement. One of the sprouts had become a full, gorgeous snow pea.

"I got a pea!" I yelled.

George shouted back, "Well, don't go out here."

The snow peas produced well into the fall and were delicious. So I actually can do something I thought for years I couldn't.

—  
**Laurene Thorpe**, 70, grows surprises in McKinleyville.

# Gardening Brought Us Here

By Suzanne Simpson

The old, beat-up Saab was loaded down. We were on a grand adventure! Lew was driving, and I was sitting in the passenger seat with a 100-pound Russian wolfhound scrunched at my feet.

We were joyfully driving from Sausalito to Burnt Ranch, a long six hours, with the back seat and way-back filled with flats of baby vegetable plants I'd grown at home on top of our houseboat.

We had just purchased five acres of raw land with a tiny cabin (luckily including a bathroom) and another run-down building we named the bunkhouse. My dream was to make this property, with its glorious views of Ironside Mountain and the Trinity River, a Garden of Eden.

Confined only to container gardening on our houseboat, my gardening genes bloomed rapidly. I feverishly drew up plans for a large vegetable garden, two long grape arbors, and fruit and trees to plant, eagerly waiting to bring the property back to life. It was an enthusiastic gardener's dream.

We met some people who lived in a commune closeby, and took a page out of their gardening book. They got us started off on the right foot. I learned from a retired Humboldt State

professor who had a cabin next door how to use a McCloud rake (they're heavy), and put in trench rows for irrigation that would keep the soil moist for up to two weeks.

During that time, we met a couple who had a cabin above us, and became good friends. She became my gardening partner. At one point, we realized that we would like to get out of the Bay Area rat race, so we decided to move.

The rest is history. We found a sweet little house to rent in Arcata, and then, while walking the dog, saw a For Sale sign on a house up the hill that we had always admired.

Unable to help myself, I walked up to the front door, rang the bell and, when answered, dumbly blurted out, "This is my house!"

I felt so foolish, but they invited me in. I looked around, and said to myself, "Yes, this *is* my house."

We left Sausalito and never looked back, and I have gardened every inch of this property on my hands and knees, putting in fruit trees, vegetables, berries and lots of flowers.

—  
**Suzanne Simpson, 80, loves her dirt and roots and shoots in Arcata (and in Burnt Ranch).**

## One-Day Book Sale

The Friends of the Redwood Libraries (FRL) has received public health permission for a one-day book sale — fiction only — on Saturday, May 8, from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. in the parking lot of the Eureka Main Library, 1313 3<sup>rd</sup> St.

The sale will be COVID-19 compliant and masks will be required.

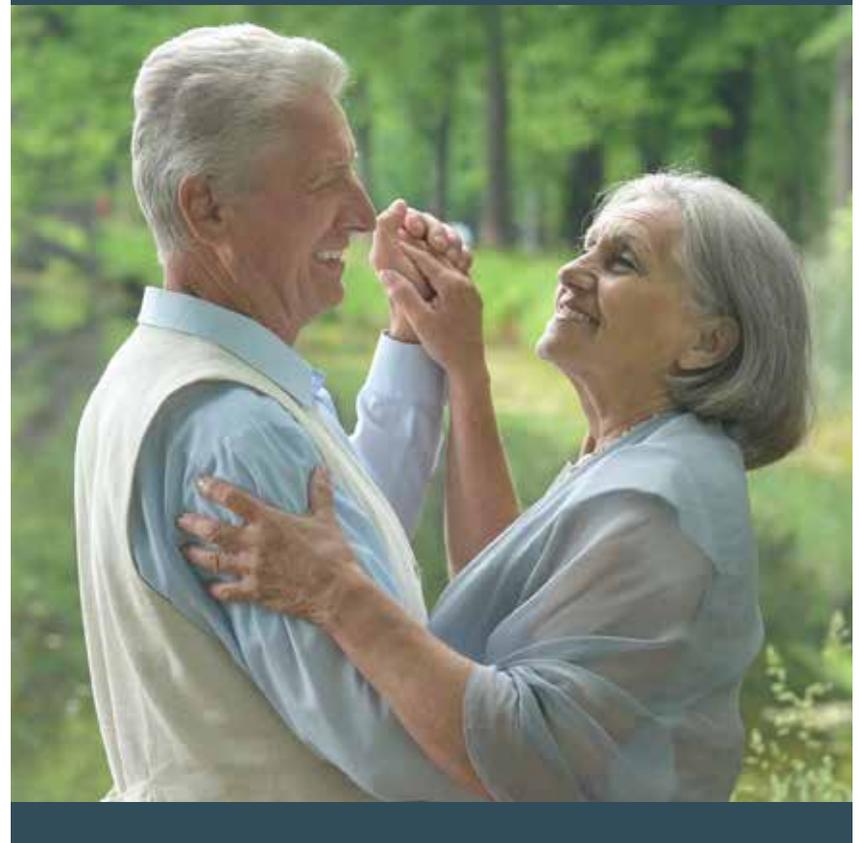
All books will be \$1; exact change will be appreciated. Checks will be accepted and can be made out to FRL. Proceeds support the Humboldt County Library system.

FRL is still unable to accept donations of books.

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## PAINTING THE OCEAN

BY MARGARET KELLERMANN

### Whaletalk

Entries from my pandemic file, started a year ago March:

*March 28, 2020* — Early yesterday morning I walked with two friends (6 feet apart) with our dogs (not 6 feet apart), all three of us humans alone on the wide beach discussing the gloomy global situation. I looked up at the ocean horizon and saw — for the first time in years — a large pod of breaching whales, having a field day.

They seemed ridiculously happy to surface, blow steam, roll, flip fins and dive just yards away from us. “Oooh, there’s another one!” They might have been singing in whaletalk.

Some Native people see the whale as one who tells the people to trust their best instincts in times of crisis, to go with deep knowledge. When feeling lost, stop and ask for directions, yes, and choose someone who knows the way.

*March 29, 2020* — The gray whales hugging this very local coastline, breaching and blowing just yards from the beach, have appeared again. I can’t tell if they are the same whales day to day or others migrating through. The past two mornings, the whales have been joined by a great and wild menagerie: seals spyhopping, sea lions surfing, sea otters cavorting, and a dolphin or porpoise, all close in and seemingly curious about us strange, rare beach pedestrians.

I wonder if the relative quiet of the sea, with fewer ships and fishing boats moving about with their grinding engines, has made these creatures so engaging, so almost approachable, making me feel so close to Eden.

*April 12, 2020* — A fortnight after being shocked by whales three mornings in a row, I walk the same tideline tightrope. I can’t help but watch for more revelation. Who

knows? It may be the Four Horsemen this time, chariots of fire, or something just as wild.

As it turns out, the morning’s revelation is a seal pup, a few hours or at most a weekend old, beached in camouflage while its mum forages in the waves close by. Gazing with enormous, intuitive eyes the mum skims the surface, watching me. She knows full well her pup lies on sand up ahead in my path.

I call the dog close to me and skirt well around the seal pup, then wave to the mum: all’s well. She ducks under the close, abiding waves, down under the teal-gray whitewater where so much mystery swims.

*Margaret Kellermann’s stories can be found at [bluelakestudio.net](http://bluelakestudio.net). And see her recent interview on staying creative during the pandemic at [janetleecarey.com/dream-walks/creating-on-the-edge/](http://janetleecarey.com/dream-walks/creating-on-the-edge/).*

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# Playing Through the Pandemic with Our Pickleball Pod

By Karen Suiker

How does one survive and thrive during a pandemic? By being part of a pickleball pod.

Pickleball — sometimes called ping pong on steroids — combines tennis, badminton and ping pong. Played with a paddle and whiffle ball, it is the fastest growing sport in the United States, especially for seniors.

Locally, there are well over 200 local players, compared to maybe a couple dozen five years ago. Before the pandemic, it was offered on public indoor courts, but has moved outdoors over the past year, among other places, at College of the Redwoods, and in Blue Lake and Arcata.

Nationally, the average pickleballer is 55. For seniors, it's not only good cardio exercise, but because pickleball is played on a smaller court than tennis, there is less wear and tear on joints and tendons, and slower reaction times are required because the ball flies slower than a tennis ball.

For many of us, pickleball is addictive — I actually quit an enjoyable and rewarding job for no reason other than it interfered with my ability to play more pickleball. Another player came bounding onto the court one day to announce gleefully that she had been laid off from a lucrative

high-tech position and could therefore play more pickleball. Whee! High fives all around!

When the pandemic hit, we didn't play for a few months, feeling despondent that a pickleball tour in Ireland had been canceled. But then a few of us, all very serious about avoiding the virus, formed a pickleball pod with strict rules to keep us safe (masks required at all times, no sharing of chairs, quarantining if anyone traveled out of the county, etc.).

Our pod meets as often as six days per week for two to three hours of raucous laughter, socializing at a distance, camaraderie and — oh yeah — pickleball. We have supported each other through serious illnesses, and lifted each other up during unanticipated and devastating life changes.

Everyone in my pickleball pod also gives time back to the community to help make our world a little bit better — filling and distributing food bags for Betty Chinn, mowing the Myrtle Avenue Cemetery, helping prepare Food for People fundraising mailers, or walking for Alzheimer's



**PICKLEPOD** — Pickleball has kept these people smiling through the pandemic. Standing (left to right): Jan Mueller, John Murray, Ward Headstrom with dog Pep, and Patty Long; kneeling: Tim Clohessy, Karen Suiker, Mary Pieratt and Jerry Phillips. Contributed photo.

Awareness.

I am so grateful and thankful for my pickleball pod peeps. When the world returns to “normal,” consider joining the pickleball community through the Humboldt Bay Pickleball Facebook page. Check with the public

venues to find out when pickleball has resumed, and come see for yourself what all the laughter is about.

—

**Karen Suiker**, 69, of Eureka is an ambassador for USA Pickleball in the Northcoast Region.

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AGING IS AN ART — BY JOHN HECKEL

## Memory as Renewal

At this time of the year, our entire Humboldt environment — the rivers, the ocean, the smells floating in the warmer-than-usual breeze through the redwoods, even the flowers and vegetable starts in our gardens — remind us of what is to come.

It is our memory that reminds us.

It is memory that knows that those basil seeds will soon sprout and that I will make more than enough

pesto for the entire neighborhood.

Most will be with Parmesan cheese, and some with brew-

ers' yeast for the lactose-intolerant among us. It is memory that knows it is time to spend an afternoon at Moonstone Beach, or to take a walk through the Arcata Community Forest.

It is my memory that knows it is time to celebrate another beginning.

"Memory is who you are," says brain performance coach and memory expert Mark Channon. "It's all those experiences that have happened in the past. Those stories make up your life. They determine what you believe, what you value, the decisions that you make."

They say every telling of a memory changes that memory. Maybe that is why we tell the stories based in memory so often. We want to get it right. As the makeup of my life changes and what I believe and

value changes, I want my stories to reinforce and nurture those new values and beliefs. Having a consciousness of the limited amount of time we have left may also radically alter the context for the stories we tell.

When you hear some elder re-telling a story based in memory, remember that you may be listening to someone who is trying to find the proper version of it, aware that they have a limited amount of time left to tell that story.

**'Stories based in memory help us develop and nurture a sense of connection to one another.'**

Stories based in memory also help us develop and nurture a sense of

connection to one another. Stories increase empathy and can bring us into contact with the "better angels" of Channon's suggested beliefs and values, such as compassion and kindness.

As we try to make sense out of this pandemic experience and re-connect with each other, let us make a promise to listen to each other's stories, stories that are being told in an attempt to make sense of something difficult to understand, and stories that serve to reconnect us all.

Please, be kind to yourself and remember to find a sympathetic ear for your own stories.

—  
**John Heckel, Ph.D., 74, of Eureka is a retired HSU theater and film professor with a doctorate in psychology.**

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# HSRC News

## A Master Plan for California's Aging Population

*By Patty Berg*

California's population is aging, impacting our collective ability to provide and pay for the range of services needed for an increasingly diverse population of older adults and people with disabilities. This past year, COVID-19 has magnified longstanding systemic challenges, health disparities and inequities.

On Jan. 6, Gov. Gavin Newsom released a Master Plan for Aging that establishes a vision for meeting these challenges by 2030. The plan offers a once-in-a-generation opportunity to advance solutions over the next 10 years, while providing a roadmap for coordinated, system-wide change that equitably uplifts older adults, people with disabilities and family caregivers.

The Master Plan presents a comprehensive blueprint for public and private entities at the state, regional and local levels to address system issues and transform services across housing, transportation, health care, and long-term services and supports. With an emphasis on equity and inclusion, the Master Plan outlines five goals with 23 strategies, and more than 100 initiatives to drive action and results in the first two years of implementation.

The plan will be updated yearly with progress updates and recommended changes. The website's "Data Dashboard for Aging" will document progress and provide transparency and accountability (see [mpa.aging.ca.gov](http://mpa.aging.ca.gov)).

The plan also calls for local planning through a "Local Playbook" designed to help communities,

private and philanthropic organizations and government leaders to build environments that promote age-friendly and disability-friendly outcomes at the local level.

The Master Plan also includes key recommendations of the Governor's Task Force on Alzheimer's Prevention and Preparedness, chaired by Maria Shriver, former first lady of California, addressing ways California can prevent and prepare for the rise in the number of cases of Alzheimer's.

One of the goals of this comprehensive plan is to reframe aging in California. Negative stereotypes and fears of aging have historically pushed aging issues into the background of societal discourse. The COVID-19 pandemic has magnified longstanding system problems that for years have been neglected. We know this to be true across the country, with other states facing similar challenges.

California's Master Plan has the potential to re-imagine aging, affecting how society thinks about, plans for and responds with equity and inclusion to the needs of a diverse aging population that is often forgotten. With strong state leadership, engaged stakeholders, public/private partnerships and an overarching commitment to system change, it can be done. Many said it would be impossible to accomplish in California, but today there is hope for meaningful reform.

During these difficult times, the Master Plan provides a critical template for a better life for all Californians, not only for our older generations, but

for all of us, to age with dignity and independence. Everyone, young and old alike, shares a stake in planning for this future. Enabling older Californians to age well at home, with innovative solutions to address isolation and loneliness, enriches all of our communities. The plan provides a strong platform from which to build these efforts.

A truly impactful plan requires leadership, clear goal-setting that is backed by data, a comprehensive approach to system change, an engaged stakeholder process and accountability for implementation.

As the state embarks on implementation of the Master Plan, we all play a role in transforming services across health care, housing, social supports, transportation and workforce in order to meet the needs of a diverse aging population. No single entity can do it alone, and meaningful system change relies on committed, ongoing partnerships and leadership from the state, local, public, private and philanthropic sectors.

Let's work together, alongside leaders across public, private and philanthropic sectors, to implement a Master Plan for Aging that will well serve Californians for generations to come.

—  
*Patty Berg, 78, of Eureka is a member of the Governor's Master Plan for Aging Task Force, a former California State Assemblywoman and founding executive director of the Area 1 Agency on Aging.*

### Free Brain Health Workshop

The Humboldt Senior Resource Center's Adult Day Health & Alzheimer's Services programs and the Alzheimer's Association will offer a free hour-long Zoom workshop, "Healthy Living for Your Brain and Body: Tips from the Latest Research," on Monday, May 10, from 2-3 p.m.

The program will offer tips from recent research on lifestyle choices

to keep your brain and body healthy with good diet and nutrition, exercise, and social and cognitive engagement.

Learn hands-on tools to help incorporate these recommendations for healthy aging.

To register and receive the Zoom link, go to [tinyurl.com/HLBB-21May10](http://tinyurl.com/HLBB-21May10) or call 707-443-9747, x3203, for more information.

### Cinco de Mayo Benefit Meal

The Eureka Woman's Club will offer a special Cinco de Mayo meal to-go in May to benefit the Humboldt Senior Resource Center's Home Delivered Meals Program.

This drive-up meal is chicken enchiladas in a special red sauce or the vegetarian option - spinach enchiladas with jack cheese, served with black beans, Mexican-style rice and

cold corn salad with sweet red pepper and red onion and a dessert of Mexican-style ginger cookies.

Meal pick-up at the club at 1531 J St., Eureka, is on Friday, May 7, between 4:30-6 p.m.

Meals are \$20, with pre-payment by Saturday, May 1. Go online at [eurekawomansclub.org](http://eurekawomansclub.org) to register or call 707-442-3458 for more information.

### Humboldt Senior Resource Center Is Open and Here to Serve You



**H**umboldt Senior Resource Center (HSRC) provides a wide range of programs and services to help older adults in our community remain as independent as possible. We now have Centers in Eureka and Fortuna. All HSRC programs are providing services with pandemic safety in mind:

- **Adult Day Health** – A therapeutic day program for ages 18 and older with chronic conditions
- **Alzheimer’s Services** – Resources for anyone with a dementia-related diagnosis
- **Multipurpose Senior Services Program (MSSP)** – A care management program to help frail elders remain at home
- **Nutrition Program** – Offering meals for pick-up by senior diners or delivery to homebound elders
- **Redwood Coast PACE** – Providing comprehensive medical care and in-home support for qualified adults



**Referrals are being accepted for all programs. For more information, call us at 707-443-9747 or visit [www.humsenior.org](http://www.humsenior.org).**

**Humboldt Senior Resource Center**  
1910 California St., Eureka CA 95501  
3200 Newburg Road, Fortuna CA 95540

## Scenes of Pandemic Solitude, Beauty Across Humboldt



**RANDOM SNAPSHOTS** from our year of wandering, from top left: paths taken and not taken in the Arcata Community Forest; Lupine blossoms with driftwood near Redwood Creek; Sydney and Mark Larson in Redwood National Park; Great Egret fishing at Arcata Marsh & Wildlife Sanctuary; large murmuration (flock) of shore birds at Arcata Marsh & Wildlife Sanctuary. Photos by Mark & Sydney Larson.

### THE PANDEMIC TRAIL . . . From Page 1

We recorded some of the upsides of the past year:

Sydney: *“During this time, we did not leave Humboldt County. I am not thankful for COVID-19 and the isolation it brought. I miss family and friends. I long for hugs, shared meals, out-of-area travel and live music.”*

“However, I am grateful for the opportunity to slow down, explore my community and to see it in new ways. We are so fortunate to live amid such beauty.”

Mark: *“An unexpected silver lining was to spend so much time with Sydney, whom I married 34 years ago this month. We were daily companions on our walks around Humboldt County, photographing our finds together. Sydney has a gift for spotting red flowers — very helpful, given my red-green color blindness — and has been using her*

*iPhone camera to create some beautiful imagery.”*

“Another silver lining is that we discovered many more trails in Humboldt County in the past 12 months than we had experienced in the prior 40 years.”

We walked more than 60 different trails, ranging from old favorites in the Arcata Marsh & Wildlife Sanctuary and the Arcata Community Forest; to southern destinations such as Shelter Cove and Humboldt Redwoods State Park; inland to Headwaters Forest Reserve and Horse Mountain; up to Trinidad and the Lagoons and on into the Redwood National and State Parks . . . too many and too varied to list.

We have been using a variety of smartphone apps to help us identify plants, insects, mushrooms and other life forms on our walks.

Our goal has been to learn one new plant a day, and the iNaturalist app has helped enormously. The old joke is that, after a certain age, there are no reruns on television; it turns out that after a certain age, one can see a lot of new plants every day on the trails.

We have enjoyed posting our photos on Facebook and elsewhere on social media, which has help create a sense of shared pandemic experience with many others.

Mark: *“I never thought much about my increased use of social media being a pandemic-year silver lining. I’ve learned so much about many acquaintances I’ve known for decades, and have met many new friends online, who I look forward to meeting in person.”*

In the absence of travel this COVID year, we have also regularly watched online pho-

tography webinars. They have introduced us to new locations around the world and taught us new skills. And we offer a special thanks to whoever invented the software to make Zoom meetings possible (and sometimes even enjoyable) in this pandemic year.

Both of us are now more than two weeks past our second Moderna vaccinations, but remain cautious — wearing our masks in public, physically distancing and avoiding large gatherings. We hope everyone gets vaccinated soon, and that we see you on a local hiking trail.

—

**Mark and Sydney Larson** head out on their daily adventures from their home in Arcata.

## Mama Wants A New Set of Wheels



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## HSRC Programs & Services Update

All HSRC programs are open and operating as follows:

**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:** The firewood 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 area groceries and businesses. Available online at [humsenior.org](http://humsenior.org). Subscriptions, \$25/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, May 20, 10:30-11a.m.  
Arcata Community Center  
321 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Pkwy

**Eureka**  
Wednesday, May 19, 10-11:30 a.m.  
Humboldt Senior Resource Center  
1910 California St

# Spinning & Quiche Lorraine

By Patricia Thomas

Travel — gone. Parties — gone. Crabs baseball — gone.

The silver lining? It's time for both discovery and rediscovery.

On the discovery side, once HealthSport reopened with limited outdoor activities, I tried something I had always ridiculed — stationary cycling, or “spinning,” as the young folks call it. What could be more ridiculous than riding on a bike going nowhere while an instructor yells at you to pedal faster?

Reluctantly, I tried it with some other skeptical seniors. Yes, we were going nowhere. No, our instructors did not yell. Yes, my behind hurt for a while. But a certain euphoria kicked in after all that pedaling.

My rediscovery was pulling out the “New York Times Cookbook” from 1961. As a young career woman in Washington, D.C., sharing a townhouse with three other women, this book was our bible.

The most popular dish at that time was quiche Lorraine. It was served in all the “fern bars” we frequented when we could pool our money together, ordered along with white wine spritzers, the trendy drink of the day.

At our townhouse, quiche was a

cheap dish to make: eggs, cream, cheese, onion and a couple strips of bacon. My roommate from Nebraska was a whiz at making pie crust. The four of us could squeeze two meals out of it easily. Or we'd serve it at our house parties cut into tiny wedges. Weren't we the brilliant hostesses of the era?

Over time, quiche fell out of favor — it actually became a punchline about our “Preppy” generation. Healthy versions appeared — milk instead of cream, vegetables instead of bacon. Variations without pie crust. Quiche Lorraine's time had come and gone.

But now I've rediscovered it and brought it back in all its “New York Times Cookbook” glory in my pandemic kitchen. My pandemic pod loved it. (Full disclosure: I used a frozen pie crust and threw in some chopped spinach, but went whole hog on heavy cream, Swiss cheese and bacon.)

Chalk one up for discovery at age 70.

**Pat Thomas** lives in McKinleyville, still pedals in place, and does not eat rich quiche for every meal.



**PEDAL FASTER!** Pat Thomas discovers a kind of euphoria while going nowhere and celebrating her 70th birthday on a stationary bike. Submitted photo.



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# Idle Daydreams of the Cougars in Our Midst

By *Patty Holbrook*

I am not so long in the tooth that I don't cast an appreciative glance at a handsome young man in a sport coat and a good haircut. If he smiles at me, I am 25 again.

Some ladies, usually aging actresses or wealthy socialites, enjoy having good-looking young bucks around them all the time. These women are called cougars. Those of us of more modest means and lifestyles just enjoy the view and move on, content to be closet cougars.

One suspects there are more than a few walking among us.

The reigning queen of all cougars is actress Joan Collins. She collected gorgeous hunky toyboys like she collected wigs. Tabloid photos of the aging dowager, resplendent in ermine and emeralds, always showed her with male-model types hanging from each arm, along with her diamond bracelets.

Often they were wannabe actors, hungry for a job, who relished sharing the limelight with Miss

Collins. By escorting her to all her Beverly Hills social events, they could rub elbows with the show biz elite, possibly connecting with a casting director or producer to wangle an audition for a part in a TV movie or commercial.

Miss Collins might have downsized her collection of young escorts by now because, at 87, she is busy with her fifth husband, 32 years her junior. Getting five men to the altar, even in her later years, was a major feat in itself. Maybe there is something more to her than her \$50 million trust fund.

I loved the Hollywood glamour days of the '40s and '50s, the beautiful actresses that kept it glamorous, the movie fan magazines, and the powerful gossip columnists like Louella Parsons, who would breathlessly report on the radio about the latest cheating scandal or divorce.

All the husbands they had! Collins' five marriages are modest compared to Liz Taylor's seven, Lana Turner's eight and Zsa Zsa Gabor's nine. These divas of the silver screen didn't keep their husbands

around very long and, seemingly, had a serious husband-attention-deficit disorder.

Whenever Miss Collins exited a star-studded event at a posh hotel and spotted the line of TV cameras and radio reporters with their microphones, she would make a beeline for them. Looking ravishing in a glittering beaded coat and gown, she delighted in the popping flashbulbs, the paparazzi pushing and shoving to get the best shot of her and the screaming fans. Smiling and blowing kisses to the crowd, she looked radiant as her two broad-shouldered Lotharios *du jour* helped her into a waiting stretch limo.

Here's to you, Miss Collins, Jesus loves you more than you will know, whoa, whoa, whoa. You are an inspiration for 80-plus-year-olds who might be aspiring cougars. May you live many more years and never run out of husbands or hunky toyboys.

—  
**Patty Holbrook**, formerly of Hollywood, now gathers inspiration from her home in Eureka.

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# Auntie Sis's Memoir

By Rowetta Stapp Miller

Doing some year-ending cleaning, I discovered this memoir written May 15, 2010, by my Auntie "Sis" — Muriel "Sis" Ida Marie Stapp. She did not care for the name Muriel, which she said sounded like an old mule. She'd had difficulty with mules in her younger days.

Sis was born Dec. 9, 1916 — a generation older than myself — and was raised on a homestead off the Mad River. She was 93 when she wrote this:

*Today I give honor to all the elderly people I knew years ago. And to the mothers . . . at today's [Mothers' Day] family celebrations, we get to see the younger*

*ones and give praise to all who came. No one knows the price it cost the parents to raise a family.*

*In my day, we got our freedom at 21 years, I thought.*

*The parents did the best they could with not much money, but heartaches, accidents and pleasures. But the answer was not in money. There is no feeling in it. Feeling is in love of the parents. The baby's arms and smiles put a joy in your heart. The older ones with arms of love and the words you love to hear. Then they reach the age where U.S.A. says, "You are of age to go to work."*

*During all these years, both parents and young people have a deep love way down in their hearts, and re-*

*alize they did their best for each other. The answer was not money. But, love for each other. For years I planned on what I would do on my 21st birthday on Dec. 9 [1937]. I found out.*

*A death in family, [my] folks went to Eureka, and I kept the little ones*

*'cause it was so cold and stormy-looking. Well, the wind started blowing our tin roof up in the air. I had to get a ladder, nails and hammer, and climb up the roof and go down part-way on the other side. I was there for hours trying to get it to stay down, then back to the children.*

*This was not my plan. But, I learnt a good les-*

*son. At 21, things are not free. I had no way of doing what I wanted. Now I [was] responsible to find a place to live, buy all my own needs, pay rent, walk, or get a job to buy a car.*

*Mother and Dad's love for their family kept them fairly in need of things they had no money to buy. But they had treasures of love for all nine children and their grandchildren, too. What is a family worth to you? Holding them in my arms, loving them, and their returning love to me. Nothing else matters.*

*Written by a little country girl sister.*

**Rowetta Stapp Miller**, 77, lives in Fieldbrook.



**AUNTIE SIS** was often honored as a **Mother of the Year**. Submitted photo.

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## THE BRAIN FOG IS LIFTING . . . From Page 1

“One year longer now: my hair.” — Bob Fornes

“We don’t need no stinkin’ hair-cuts.” — John Meyers

“More eye brow pencil, less lip-stick.” — Joan Rainwater-Gish

“Missing hugs. The garden, writing flourish.” — Margot Genger

“Zoom life excellent. Hoping zooming forever.” — Alex Stillman

“Timelessness: I live in the moment.” — Joanne Fornes

Writer Glory Ralston needed a few more words: “COVID isolation taught me I could write a story in less than 2,000 words, but being who I am and all, I can’t tell you about this amazing discovery in six words.”

Many of us spent more time with dogs — always a good thing — and some, like Lauren Thorpe, added a dog to the household: “She is our brave COVID girl and we love all 14 pounds of her.”

About 22% of the Humboldt County population now has two vaccinations, and many revel in a new sense of freedom.

“Looking so dang forward to being back, on my way!” said Penny Whitehead. “One more shot, and cheap airline tickets — \$19 to Burbank” to reunite with friends she hasn’t seen in two years. “Dana Point here I come!”

—  
**Ted Pease**, *editor of Senior News*,  
lives in a fog in Trinidad.

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## ASK THE DOCTOR . . . From Page 5

fear being shot in public places or when they are pulled over by the police. In recent weeks, we have had several incidents of avoidable death related to guns.

We must reduce access to guns because it is a public health crisis. We must promote public health research on gun violence and risk reduction (which has been historically underfunded and even repressed by legislators).

Third, climate change. Everything else we do to try to make our world safer for ourselves and our children (eradicating COVID, being ready for other pandemics, abolishing systemic racism, reducing mass shootings) is moot if we continue on the current path regarding global warming. The planet will become uninhabitable in places, increasing pandemic illnesses, and people will suffer if we do not invest in and act upon the evidence-based reality of a warming planet. This is the most pressing of our public health crises in its potential to wipe out our species.

Does all this sound dramatic? Good, because the consequences of ignoring these public health issues will make this past year look like a cakewalk. We must demand more of ourselves and our leaders. If you are serious about saving your children and grandchildren, and about even the possibility of having great-grandchildren and future generations beyond that, it is time to wake up.

If there is a silver lining to this current pandemic, perhaps it is that people will no longer take public health for granted. It is time to invest money, time and serious attention in public health locally, statewide and nationally.

**Dr. Jennifer Heidmann** is medical director and primary care provider at Redwood Coast PACE (707-443-9747). 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).



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## There's No Point Fussin'

By John Meyers

I hear a lot of fretting about the “new normal” we’ll all have to deal with because of this coronavirus. You know — all this stress from having to wear a mask in public and not being able to dine-in at our favorite restaurants and such.

That may be our “new normal” for a while, and we’re just going to have to get used to it. But every time I hear those complaints, I think about my parents, born in 1917 and 1919, and *their* parents, who had to deal with a “new normal” when the Spanish Flu hit in 1918. Although I suppose they were already thinking about a “new normal” since World War I ended that year, too. A world war can kind of upset normal life.

My parents were kids during the Great Depression, which started in 1929. I guess they had a “new normal” to deal with then as well. Life certainly changed for a lot of folks during that time (and pretty much forever for a lot of them). But I don’t remember my folks complaining to my brother and me about how hard life was, getting used to their “new normal” back then.

I think about couples who have to deal with a spouse developing Alzheimer’s, or a family whose child is diagnosed with cancer. Talk about your “new normal.”

I’m an old guy and I already get a flu shot every year, so getting vaccinated for COVID-19 really wasn’t a deal-changer for me, even if it does get included in my annual shots from now on. I suspect we won’t have to wear masks forever, so that doesn’t bother me much, either.

In fact, when I consider what others have gone through before me, not much of this bothers me very profoundly. Maybe it’s just a matter of perspective.

Generations before us got used to their “new normals.” I suspect we will, too. I just don’t see the point in fussin’ about it. At my age, every day is a “new normal,” with different aches and pains. I just have to get used to them. I’d rather worry about getting my afternoon naps.

—  
John Meyers, 72, of Trinidad hopes writing serious stories won’t be a new normal for him.

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# Take an Apple to Your Favorite Teacher

By Thomas Hannah

Retired North Coast teachers honor current teachers on May 12, the California Day of the Teacher, for their amazing work in balancing remote and in-class teaching.

This is the story of one of the founders of the North Coast Division of the California Retired Teachers Association — Mary Hannah, my mother.

She was born at Vance's Mill near Blue Lake in 1888 and grew up on a ranch on Old Stagecoach Road north of Trinidad. Her father, Isaac Day, was a tree faller for the Vance Lumber Co., one of Humboldt County's early lumber companies. She attended preparatory school for teachers in Eureka and, after one year, she passed the county examination in 1911, and received a life teaching credential from the State of California.

Mary Day's first teaching assignment was at Green Point Elementary near Redwood Creek. It was a log cabin with a dirt floor and benches for students.

She then taught at Patrick's Point in another log cabin in what is now Patrick's Point State Park, then at the Big Lagoon Elementary School and at the Trinidad School, where she became acquainted with the principal,



**SCHOOL DAYS — The students and teachers of the Trinidad School, where the author's parents, Mary Day and Shirley Hannah, met in 1913.** Photo courtesy of the Trinidad Museum.

Shirley Hannah — my father. They married in 1918.

As my father wrote some time later, "As the new teacher and I became better acquainted, it became evident to me that she would make an excellent 'boss,' so later on we got married.

"Her name was Mary Day and, believe me, I've had a 'merry day' of it ever since," Hannah wrote. "That surely was my lucky year."

During World War II, many teachers enlisted, creating a shortage in the classroom. The Humboldt County assistant superintendent, Oden Hansen, approached my mother to ask as to her interest in returning to the classroom, some 29 years after she'd stopped teaching to become a housewife and raise a family.

She went to teach in the Morek

Elementary School District, which was downriver from Weitchpec on the Klamath, a pristine area at the time. The district served the Yuroks, who had been living there for untold generations.

Mom would usually come home for the weekend twice a month. At first, she drove to and from her school by herself, selecting weekends when the weather was good. When I turned 15-1/2, I became eligible for an emergency

driving permit, and was drafted into providing transportation.

In 1948, Mom accepted a similar teaching position with the Hoopa Unified School District, retiring in 1952. Shortly after, my parents bought 20 acres upriver from Knight's Trailer Park on the Trinity River near Willow Creek and lived there for 13 years having the time of their lives growing a large fruit orchard and vegetables.

—  
**Thomas Hannah, 91, was a teacher and administrator in Eureka schools until his retirement in 1988. He lives in a care facility in Michigan. Fellow retired teacher Catherine McNally helped him put together his mother's story.**

**Letters to the Editor 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 tpease@hum senior.org.

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**Play the Crossword Puzzle**  
on page 22  
The crossword puzzle is a productive way to pass the time and helps keep the mind active.  
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# Crossword Puzzle

PH Factor by *Jeffrey Wechsler*  
Edited by *David Steinberg*

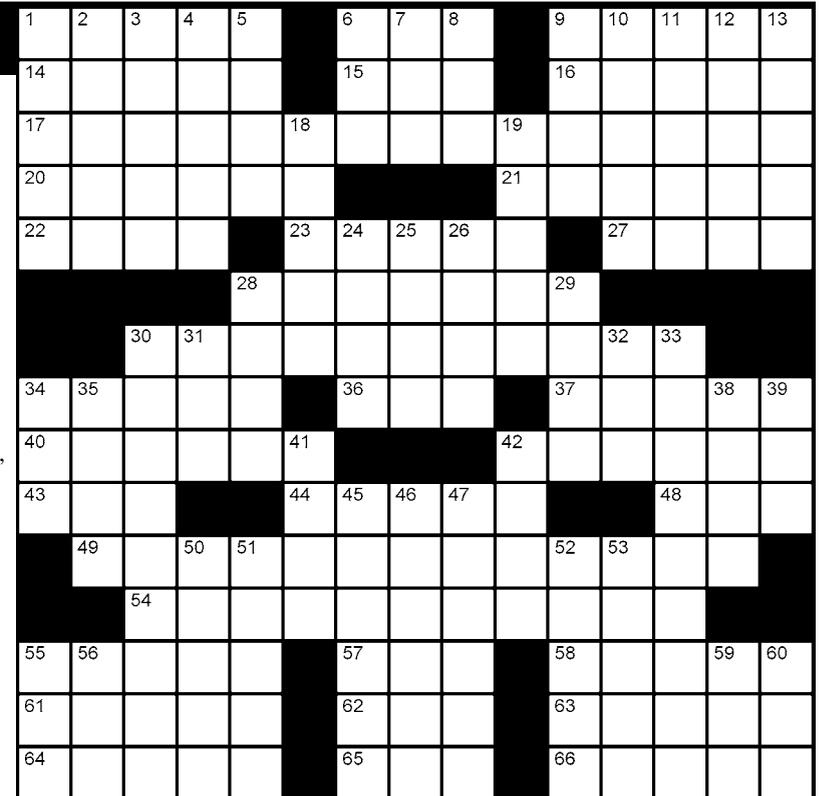
## ACROSS

- 1 Word in many public university names  
6 Lively dance  
9 Expansive view  
14 Unlike criminal actions  
15 "Skip to My \_\_\_"  
16 One who memorizes lines  
17 Practical reason for sending robocalls?  
20 Organ near the pancreas  
21 "In \_\_\_, all the interesting people are missing" (Nietzsche)  
22 Earth-turning tools  
23 Buckwheat porridge  
27 What you may take before a break  
28 Spartan  
30 Ancient oracle's beef, chicken and such?  
34 Spirited horse  
36 Hosp. areas  
37 The March King  
40 Western movie villain  
42 Crushes underfoot, with "on"  
43 "It's frigid out here!"  
44 Dianne with two Oscars  
48 Hiker's reference

- 49 Apt headgear for Abraham Lincoln?  
54 The pesky animal in "Caddy shack," for one?  
55 Starts the day's business  
57 Nickname that rhymes with "Nick"  
58 Spy's alternate name  
61 The Andes, for example  
62 "Yikes!"  
63 Sing "R-E-S-P-E-C-T," say?  
64 Reached effectively  
65 Monopoly quartet: Abbr.  
66 Writing-intensive 27-Across type

## DOWN

- 1 Symbol in a URL  
2 Presto, e.g., in music  
3 Like gymnasts  
4 Stories  
5 French fashion magazine  
6 "Second Act" star, informally  
7 Particle such as chloride  
8 \_\_\_ course (easy A)  
9 Use an e-cigarette  
10 Old Apple messaging app  
11 Appliance with burners  
12 Color gradations  
13 "\_\_\_ you ready yet?"  
18 Prepare for printing, as movable type  
19 Midwest air hub  
24 Arthur who ruled the court?  
25 Move a bit  
26 Lines on pants legs  
28 Alan with six Emmys  
29 Sunrise direction  
30 Source of harm  
31 Long fish used in sushi  
32 As well  
33 CliffsNotes offerings  
34 Weep  
35 Grassy surface for a horse race  
38 Minor argument  
39 Dangerous Egyptian reptile  
41 It included the RAF's "finest hour"  
42 "Go no farther!"  
45 "How shocking," quaintly  
46 Like French toast, compared to plain toast  
47 Wall Street investments  
50 Polynesian kingdom  
51 RCA product  
52 Abandon gradually, with "out"  
53 Gives a leg up  
55 End of the ACLU's URL  
56 Kung \_\_\_ chicken  
59 Chicken \_\_\_ king  
60 Sneaky



Crossword answers are on page 21.

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# The Boomer Troupe Presents ‘The Year That Was!’

By Tracey Barnes-Priestley

Like everything else last year, live theater came to a screeching halt. Venues were shuttered, plays were cancelled and audiences grumbled. Performers hunkered down to survive the loss of something near and dear to their hearts.

This development didn't sit well with members of Humboldt Light Opera Company's (HLOC) Boomer Troupe, a performing arts program for people over 50 that HLOC artistic director Carol Ryder and I co-founded. We had stories to share and songs to sing. We knew we had the will. Surely we could find a way ... and we have.

We've waited long enough. The Boomer Troupe is back, returning to the stage — virtually this time — to present another original production.

Since the pandemic has altered the lives of everyone, everywhere, the impact of COVID and tumultuous cultural issues felt like a logical theme. For this show, I created 26 writing prompts for the cast. The result? Nearly 60 pages of rich, thoughtful and sometimes humorous material for the script Carol and I then wrote. Carol also added a wide range of musical selections and — *voila!* — a show was born.

One aspect of the castmembers' responses really jumped out at us: Across the board, people have



**BOOMER ZOOMERS!** Members of the Boomer Troupe's cast for the upcoming virtual performance of 'The Year That Was!' Left to right, top: Barry Priestley and Tracey Barnes-Priestley, Bill Ryder, Kathryn Shaini; 2nd row: Jennifer Callen, Laurene Thorpe, Carolyn Ayres; 3rd row: Elizabeth Norton, John Schmidt, Ellsworth Pence; bottom: George Thorpe and Lynn Roberts.

carried on in the face of this adversity. Why? They were adaptable and made every effort to keep their perspective.

It is this resiliency older adults have that has helped many of us navigate these troubling waters for so long. Ironic, isn't it? Here we are, members

of the highest risk group, and yet, in many ways, we are the best suited for these challenging times. There's nothing like a lifetime of experiences to build a wide range of crucially important coping skills called resiliency . . . and resiliency will get you through a pandemic.

Granted, "The Year That Was!" will be performed under unusual circumstances. Carol and I knew our cast would need to be fully vaccinated. (We are.) We also knew any production would have to be outdoors. (It will be.) And it was clear that a "virtual" performance was our only option. (We are three for three!)

You'll laugh, you may cry, and, based on our experiences with our other Boomer Troupe shows, you'll probably even sing along as we address much of what the country has been experiencing during these rather grueling times.

So please join us from the comfort of your own home for "The Year That Was!" It will run via Zoom on June 5 and 6 at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$10. For more information and reservations, go to [www.hloc.org](http://www.hloc.org), email [info@hloc.org](mailto:info@hloc.org), or call 707-630-5013.

—  
**Tracey Barnes-Priestly, 69, is a writer and performer who pushes back on pandemic blues in Eureka.**



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## You Can Be in Senior News

- **JUNE** is National Great Outdoors Month, so let's celebrate by getting out of the house in Humboldt. What are your favorite outdoor activities and escapes? Take a hike? Hit the beach? Climb a tree? Bike to Canada? Let us know!
- **JULY** means patriotism, fireworks and family cookouts. What are your most memorable July 4ths? And your plans this summer as COVID recedes? Throw some goodies on the grill and send us your stories! Contact SN editor Ted Pease: tpease@humsenior.org, or 707-443-9747, x1226.

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