



An Incomplete & Unauthenticated History of Humor

By Ted Pease

Archeologists now report that the first recorded example of humor is a cave drawing on the Indonesian island of Sulawesi. It is the earliest known graphic depiction of the “banana peel gag,” showing an unsuspecting creature with a tail slipping on fruit while humanoids point from nearby bushes.

The drawing, attributed to a cave-man named Ooog (or perhaps “Ug”), is 40,000 years old, rivaling more staid cave art in France and Spain that had been thought to be the oldest human drawings (and that are a lot less funny).

“Hidden away in a damp cave on the ‘other’ side of the world,” Jo Merchant writes in Smithsonian Magazine, “this curly tailed creature is our closest link yet to the moment when the human mind, with its unique capacity for imagination and symbolism, switched on.”

Naturally, in “switching on,” the human mind also spontaneously invented humor.

Scholars can surgically remove humor and humanity from just about anything, and this topic is no exception. “Humor is a complex cognitive function which often leads to laughter,” write two

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What’s So Funny?



ROLLING ON THE FLOOR LAUGHING — That’s part of laughter yoga, demonstrated by (clockwise from top left) laughers Heather Leigh, Gil Friedman, Joanne Fornes, Sue O’Kieffe and Kathleen Krauss. Ted Pease photo.

‘Let Your Silly Out’ with Laughter Yoga

By Joanne Fornes

No matter where you wander, roam or land, you will discover that laughter is the universal language. Laughing with someone else provides an

instant bond, proving that laughter truly is the shortest distance between two people.

Once a week for the past 10 years,

a dedicated group of Humboldt laughter yoga enthusiasts have been gathering just for laughs.

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SINCE 1981

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Tedtalks: Make 'Em Laugh

By Ted Pease

It's April, so Senior News celebrates what is conceivably the single greatest human achievement: humor.

At least, scientists say that only *homo sapiens* have a sense of humor — no offense to the laughing hyena — although they haven't seen the kind of looks I get from my dogs.

It's hard to define humor, but we all know it when we hear it. Comedian Steve Martin explained his secret in 2007. "You know," he said, "a lot of people come to me and they say, 'Steve, how can you be so funny?' There's a secret to it. Before I go out, I put a slice of bologna in each of my shoes. So when I'm on stage, I *feel* funny."

But seriously, folks.

In this issue we participate in the annual April homage to foolishness by tapping into the wit and wisdom of Humboldters and others who understand the therapeutic value of a good laugh.

There is plenty of scientific and scholarly evidence that a developed sense of humor is good for us, physiologically and emotionally, both as individuals and as a society. We asked experts from all over to weigh in.

We caught up with former Humboldt resident Dave Berman in Vietnam. The co-author of "Laughter for the Health of It" didn't teach Humboldt County to laugh while he lived here, but he could be credited with introducing us to laughter yoga. Now laughing from Ho Chi Minh City, Berman conducts online laugh sessions with hundreds of people all

over the world every day (see page 4).

Locally, Joanne Fornes and Kathleen Krauss carry on the laughter yoga tradition with a dedicated group of laughers every week in McKinleyville (see page 1). "Once I got into it, it's a lot of fun," says class regular Gil Friedman. "We feed on each other's laughter,"

We also hear from former ABC newsman Jim Slade, who invented an online "good humor co-op" to keep him busy when he retired. "Laugh as much as you can," Slade advises (see page 4).

Laughter is serious business for Michael Fields, the artistic director at Dell'Arte in Blue Lake, who might be termed a humor health professional. "Laughter is essential to community health," Fields says (see page 3).

Even HSRC's medical guru, Dr. Jennifer Heidmann, prescribes laughs in her regular column, "Ask the Doctor" (see page 5). And Betsy Goodspeed recounts the day clarinetist Hollis Bridwell fell into Jack Benny's pool in remembering days of "Hollywood Hilarity" (see page 6).

We hope this April Fool's edition of Senior News can get you readers to crack a smile or two. We want you to feel funny, without having to put lunchmeat in your shoes.

Note: *Page 1 top photo by Bobby Kintz, courtesy of Dell'Arte International.*

Ted Pease is humor editor of Senior News.

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‘A Day Without Laughter Is a Day Wasted’

By Michael Fields

One of my early mentors said that life is 51 percent comedy and 49 percent tragedy. One pushes against the other and creates the space for laughter.

This is what I do for work. I explore the tension of that space to provoke laughter. It is interesting that babies laugh 300 times a day, but the average adult only 20. This confirms the adage, “We never really grow up, we only learn to act in public.”

Humans are inherently funny creatures. This is especially true when we lack the ability to laugh in the face of the serious. Then we have what my grandfather called “the fart higher than your ass” syndrome. You know, the “I’m right. I am very important, and you are an idiot to make light of that.” My grandfather had no tolerance for that kind of pretentiousness.

And seriously, I would rather die peacefully in my sleep, like my grandfather, than screaming and yelling like the passengers in his car. OK, that’s a terrible bit of humor and grossly ageist. But funny.

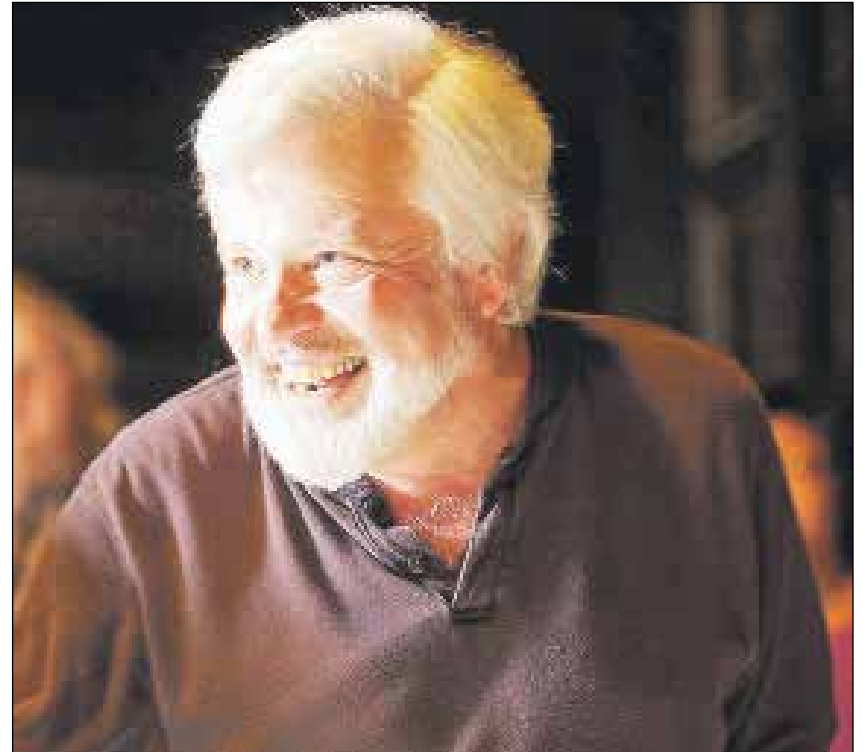
I think that laughter is absolutely critical to a healthy community. Physiologically, laughter is an involuntary movement of the body that reveals recognition. It can literally move us to action.

When I worked in the National Theatre in Holland, the Dutch had a phrase for this dynamic: “walking the edge of the knife.” It is what true “popular” theatre, like we make at Dell’Arte, aspires to do.

It seeks to engage the human comedy, which reveals the foibles of us all. It places us all — rich, poor, educated or not, rural, urban, young, old, powerful, oppressed — on an even playing field where we are all revealed for who we are: human beings, driven by dreams, aspirations, appetites, and desperately trying to keep the mask of sanity firmly in place.

It is this human comedy that can deliver us to that delicious realm of communal laughter. We all want to make something of this life. When we, as individuals and as a community, aspire to the true greatness of this effort, we find we must nurture and cultivate in the collective the ability to imagine life other than it is lived.

To do that, we must have the necessary perspective, and we must understand that laughter is an essential part of it all. As Charlie Chaplin said, “A day without laughter is a day wasted.”



‘Laughter is essential to community health,’ says Dell’Arte’s Michael Fields. Photo courtesy of Dell’Arte.

Michael Fields of Arcata is producing artistic director at Dell’Arte International in Blue Lake. To see a video of his 2012 TEDtalks on this topic, search online for Michael Fields on YouTube.

An Incomplete and Unauthenticated History of Humor . . . From Page 1

psychiatry professors in the scholarly journal *Evolutionary Psychology*.

Humor (or as our funny cousins the Brits call it, “humour” — see how much funnier that is?) comes from the Latin for “human bodily fluids that control health and emotions.” In fact, many dictionaries start their definitions of “humor” with “bodily fluids” and medieval physiology.

See how that takes the

funny out of humor?

It’s not until the third alternate definition that Merriam-Webster comes to “that quality which appeals to a sense of the ludicrous or absurdly incongruous.”

Over centuries, however, human beings have naturally been able to recognize the funny, the ludicrous and the zany without the help of researchers and lexicographers. We can’t define what’s funny,

maybe, but we sure know it when we see it.

The writer E.B. White was often dryly funny, even quietly hilarious, in his stories and columns. But he knew better than to try to poke at humor, or even to talk very much about what’s funny.

“Humor can be dissected as a frog can,” White wrote in 1941, “but the thing dies in the process and the innards are discouraging to any but

the pure scientific mind.”

Which is why jokes that need explaining are failures, and why I still think dissection is funny, even though it’s really, really not.

For a nice look at “a knee-slapper of a century” of American humor, do a Google search for “history of humor,” and find a 2014 Boston Globe article illustrating gags from Charlie Chaplin and the classic spring-loaded snake

nut can from 1915, through the Three Stooges, Laurel and Hardy, and the whoopee cushion, the golden ’60s of Johnny Carson, Don Rickles, and the Smothers Brothers, to Jon Stewart, Stephen Colbert, SNL and Tina Fey.

Keep laughing.

—

Ted Pease, editor of *Senior News*, is not as funny as he thinks he is.

A Dose of ‘The Gadfly’: Don’t Take Life So Serious, Son

By Jim Slade

An older lady went to the clinic with a case of hiccups that just would not go away.

In the middle of the young doctor’s examination, she began screaming, grabbed her coat and ran down the hall in panic.

“What in the world did you do?” asked an older physician.

“I told her she’s pregnant.”

“Pregnant? Pregnant! My god, man, she’s 63 years old! Why would you ever tell her such a thing?”

“Does she still have the hiccups?”

...

I like that one.

It’s the kind of story I look for when I put “The Gadfly” together. It’s short, deals with something we all know about, ends with a surprise, and nobody gets hurt.

Good.

I tell my friends I started Gadfly as a way to let them know I’m still alive and thinking. The truth is, I was bored.

While puttering with my computer, I noticed that among the many “dirty” jokes in my email every day, a scattered few were actually funny, well written and clean enough to tell to your ornery Aunt Matilda.

So I made a list of friends’ email addresses and started a “good humor co-op.” I’d put it together, I told them, with material they sent in, and it would come out once a week because that was as hard as I wanted to work.

Since its first issue on Jan. 17, 2002, the little email publication has grown to include readers all over the world.

Laughter is healthy; it’s good for your heart, lungs and digestion. It sparks imagination, lights your synapses, stokes your fire. It’s particularly



Veteran newsman Jim Slade takes five at the ABC News bureau in Houston in the mid-1990s. Photo courtesy of Jim Slade.

good when you can identify with it.

About 70 percent of the stories I receive have something to do with being old or getting old. The rest deal with sex, alcohol, golf or a combination of all three. Looking over those numbers, it’s clear to me that we like to laugh at things we either fear or fantasize about. Maybe things aren’t so bad if you can poke fun at them and see that everybody else is laughing, too.

Try this from a Gadfly contributor:

Even a typo can make your life hell. I recently penned a short, romantic note to my wife

while I was away on a fishing trip, and I missed one small “e.”

No problem, you say? Not so. This missing “e” prompts me to call for police protection just to enter my own house.

I wrote, “Hi, darling. I’m enjoying the best time of my life. I wish you were her!”

...

As Porky Pine said to Albert Alligator in Walt Kelly’s classic comic strip, “Pogo,” back in 1950: “Don’t take life so serious, son. It ain’t nohow permanent.”

Truer words were never uttered.

One of the best lines I ever wrote in Gadfly was “Growing old is no job for sissies.”

It’s still true. Laugh as much as you can.

—

Jim Slade, 81, of Morgantown, West Virginia, is the inventor and chief good humor man at The Gadfly. He covered space news for 40 years on radio and TV for Mutual Broadcasting, Westinghouse and ABC News. To subscribe to The Gadfly, email him at jimslade@aol.com.

Laugh, and the World Laughs with You

By Ted Pease

Dave Berman has written the book on laughter as a source of health and well-being. Literally.

The certified hypnotherapist first started teaching Humboldt County to laugh in 2010 through his therapy practice and laughter yoga classes. Now living and working in Vietnam, Berman is teaching the world to laugh.

In his 2015 book with mind-body therapist Kelley T. Woods, “Laughter for the Health of It,” Berman explored “the global health craze of laughter yoga,” and why and how laughing can promote significant health benefits.

Skyping from Vietnam, where he leads laughter sessions worldwide through daily online videos, Berman explained the importance of something as simple as a laugh.

“Laughter is essential, and it’s also innate,” Berman said. “Babies all around the world laugh before they can speak, before they have the cognitive skills to understand what’s funny. It’s just a natural process that we have within us that activates so many helpful biological processes, chemical processes, neurological processes.”

A physician in India, Dr. Madan Kataria, first recognized those health benefits in 1995. Wanting to test whether laughter is the best medicine, he organized a group of people to laugh together.

He found that the physiological, psychological and emotional benefits of laughter were the same for a “real” guffaw as for an intentional ha-ha-ha. Soon, forced laughter becomes the real thing.

In either case, Berman said, the brain produces “happy hormones” when we laugh — dopamine, oxytocin and endorphins.

“Laughter is the sound of joyful breathing,” Berman said, pointing to one of laughter yoga’s core tenets: “When you laugh, you change. And when you change, the whole world changes.”

Find out more about Berman and the benefits of laughter on his website, dailylaughs.com.

—

Ted Pease often laughs while editing Senior News.

ASK THE DOCTOR

Prescription: Take 2 Laughs and Call Me in the Morning

By Jennifer Heidmann, M.D.



It is difficult to study the health effects of humor and laughter scientifically. This has not stopped researchers from trying to do so, however.

People have made research subjects laugh then draw their blood and check

their urine for levels of stress hormones

(laughter reduces stress hormones like cortisol and epinephrine). One researcher took PET scans of people, and found that social laughter (hanging out with friends and laughing for awhile) induced endogenous opioid release (which made people crave being with others and laughing more).

A 2007 gerontological study in Japan found that laughter therapy four times over one month improved depression, insomnia and quality of sleep. Scientists have done controlled trials of elders doing laughter yoga versus those not doing it, and found a better mood and decreased blood pressures in the laughter yoga group after six weeks.

Others put clowns into a nursing home for those with dementia, and found behavioral and psychological problems decreased with the residents who had clown exposure.

Personally, clowns terrify me, but the idea is that laughter seems to be a positive thing. What makes it hard to study is that a sense of humor

is hard to define, and it is almost impossible to randomize and blind a trial looking at induced or prescribed laughter versus placebo.

Rod Martin, a retired psychologist from the University of Western Ontario, developed a validated ques-

tionnaire that is now used in humor research.

Called the “Humor

Styles Questionnaire,” it helps describe which kind of humor a person leans toward, with four categories: affiliative, self-enhancing, aggressive, and self-defeating. The former two are adaptive, the latter two less so.

We know that physiologically, laughter has positive affects. But not all humor is positive, and therein lies the more subtle question of how we can use humor to help ourselves and those around us.

When my father was near death awaiting a heart transplant, I recall the “gallows humor” my brother and I used in order to cope. I see this often in those I treat as well. As long as the dark humor is not hurting someone else, it can actually help by lightening the sorrow and shifting perspective and how we respond to stressors.

Similar to mindful meditation, which has been well studied for positive affects on health, laughter and humor actually light up parts

“Personally, clowns terrify me . . .”

Continued on Page 19

Where to Find Health Info

Advice is cheap, especially about health issues. But just because your neighbor met a guy who wraps kelp around his knees and hands six hours a day to ease joint pain doesn't mean you should.

But where should you go for dependable health and wellness advice? Well, your doctor is an obvious source, but who wants to wait a month for the appointment? Unless it's a chronic or critical issue, look elsewhere.

One ready source rich in nutritious and easily accessible information is the National Institute on Aging (NIA), part of the federal National Institutes of Health. On its website (nia.nih.gov), the NIA offers long lists of readable health articles arranged A to Z. (Well, not really — there are no X-Y-Z entries.)

There are dozens helpful items,

from advanced-care planning and Alzheimer's, to constipation, hospitalization, mourning and grief, prostate, sexuality, shingles, vitamins and men's and women's health.

There's nothing about kelp, but if you click on “pain,” you get articles on managing pain with exercise or alternative medicine. Tired all the time? Click on “fatigue” for information about causes of fatigue and chronic fatigue syndrome.

The NIH website offers other focused articles as well, on healthy diets and meal planning, caregiving, driving issues, cognitive health and clinical trials.

If you're not computer-savvy, ask a friend or family member, or ask for help getting online at your senior center, and do a little reading.

Beats kelp around your knees.

—Ted Pease



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Memories of Jack Benny & Hollywood Hilarity

Appearing on stage with comedians provided the most fun of my career. Touring with Spike Jones led to singing “Did Your Mother Come from Ireland?” to Eddy Cantor on St. Patrick’s Day 1951, the

first live telecast from the West Coast to the East Coast. Red Skelton sang folk songs with me on my harp, and a strange sequence of events led to my playing The Jack Benny Show.

Here’s a backstage gem from my memoirs:

Hollis Bridwell played clarinet with Phil Harris’s orchestra in the 1940s-’50s, and he told me about the day Jack Benny fired Phil.

“Jack and Phil argued incessantly for the pure pleasure of winning,” Hollis said, “and [guitarist] Frankie Remley is a peacemaker at heart. I’m an observer by nature, which makes me favor action over reaction.

“The four of us were sitting around Jack’s pool having a drink when Jack and Phil went into a deadlock, and Jack said, ‘You’re fired, Phil.’

“That was nothing new,” Bridwell said, “but Remley dared to say, ‘You can’t do that, Jack. Phil’s been with you too long, and your audience won’t accept any other bandleader on your show.’

“... a strange sequence of events led to my playing The Jack Benny Show.”

“Jack said, ‘I can do anything I want, Remley. Phil’s been with me too damn long, and so have you. So what do you think of that?’

“Phil and Remley were looking to me for a rescue and Jack was glaring daggers at me,” Bridwell said. “I knew anything I would say would hang me at that point, so I fell backward into the pool.”

Bob Crosby replaced Phil Harris a week later,

but Hollis Bridwell was still in the band because Jack laughed at him instead of firing him. Hollis kept recording with Phil and his buddy Remley, whose name had become the property of the Benny Show, which hired an actor to play Frankie Remley, proving that showbiz can do whatever it wants to keep a legend alive.

I was invited to play Crosby’s opening show because my harp added dignity, and the humor benefitted from a heavenly note. It was a total trip, but my favorite moment happened during the rehearsal.

A natural comic, Hollis brushed at his music when he blew a sour note and said, “Damn fly lit on my music and I played him.”

—

Betsy Mills Goodspeed, 91, sang and played the concert harp on stage and radio/TV shows for decades. Visit her blog at annthatswhy.wordpress.com, or see her 1964 TV performance by Googling Betsy Mills and YouTube.

Aging in April: No Joke, Remember Who’s Driving

By Gina Subia Belton

A woman in her 50s was driving with a friend. She went through two red lights.

The friend said, “Do you realize that you just went through two red lights?”

“Oh,” she said. “Was I driving?”

...

In April, our senses are heightened just a bit as we peer around each corner, waiting for the prankster to jump out. What if this coyote archetype is inviting us to explore how humor affects a healthy aging process?

As we age, we may want to ask ourselves, how do I want to navigate this experience? Am I living unconsciously as I get older — like the woman driving through the red lights — wondering, who’s driving? Or do I want to be fully aware as I journey into a third act, acknowledging the potential for spiritual, emotional and psychological growth?

Choosing conscious aging is an opportunity to acknowledge and welcome our own wisdom, as well as a chance to deepen our connection with others, sharing what used to hold meaning for us, and what still does. Often, this sharing and connecting are woven together through an amusing tale in small groups or great gatherings. Or, if we are lucky, on a quiet afternoon in the sun, at the knee of a beloved elder.

Some gerontology research documents that humor is one of the most important human experiences enjoyed daily throughout life and across cultures. Our capacity for humor plays a role in myriad contexts — social, behavioral, cognitive, developmental, emotional and biological.

As one might guess, a primary function of humor is using it to cope with our daily stressors. Studies show that we use humor as a coping mecha-

nism more often as we age.

One prominent life-cycle study found that children with high capacity for humor didn’t fare so well in their elderhood, often experiencing higher rates of smoking, alcoholism and earlier mortality than others with a less-developed sense of humor. Researchers theorized that those with high humor capacities might not take health issues seriously enough to follow up with their doctors.

Humor is as unique as the individual, and can be expressed as a personality trait, an attitude, a habit or a capacity, all with the potential to support or inhibit healthy aging.

Whatever your age, remember who’s driving.

—

Gina Subia Belton, Ph.D., 56, of Arcata is an authorized conscious aging facilitator at Redwood Palliative Psychology.

LAUGHTER YOGA . . . From Page 1

“When we laugh and play together, as we do in laughter yoga, it raises our levels of ‘happy hormones’ — serotonin, oxytocin and dopamine — bringing mental and physical well-being,” said Kathleen Krauss, of Arcata, a retired psychotherapist who is also a laughter yoga leader and teacher. “We simply feel good, and, best of all, it’s fun.”

Some of the regulars at the weekly laughter yoga classes at the Church of the Joyful Healer in McKinleyville explain.

Barbara Penny of Garberville describes how laughter erupts out of play.

“It gives me a place to let my ‘silly’ out, a time to be playful and let myself have fun,” she said. “I feel content when I really let myself drop into the connection of laughter.”

It builds connection with others, too. “It’s amazing how smart it is to act so silly,” said Val Hall of McKinleyville. “There is a wonderful sense of companionship. I always feel better after a class.”

It doesn’t take long, said Gil Friedman of Arcata.

“At first I felt stupid about laughing for no reason,” he said, “but once I got into it, it is a lot of fun.

“We feed on each other’s laughter,” he added.

The class appeals to all ages from the young through older seniors, including Arcata High students who chose to be late for first period to come laugh with us.

Laughters come away feeling mentally and physically better.

“I have a chronic, progressive, debilitating disease,” said Joy Hardin of McKinleyville, who says she was “dubious” about laughter yoga.

“To my utter amazement, I found it relieves pain and makes me feel quite sociable,” she said.

“When I was in rehab for a broken hip, I’d call a friend and laugh before they took my vitals. My oxygen level registered 99 or 100 percent. The nurses couldn’t believe it, and soon they joined me in laughing.”

Laughing can change your worldview.

“When my sons told me that they rarely heard me laugh, something had to change,” said Heather Leigh of Arcata. “Life was supposed to be fun, magical, a joy, but the stress of single parenthood

had taken hold and shaken out the humor within.”

Then she started laughter yoga. “Just laughter — sheer, wonderful laughter,” she said. “Chortles that don’t stop when I leave. Everyday events transformed from dull to amusing. The blahs of life slapped away, and replaced with bubbles of giggles.”

For 45 minutes each week, laughers leave their fear of making fools of themselves at the door, and just enjoy a flood of healthy happy hormones.

Discover how a good laugh helps jumpstart your day with a smile, Wednesdays from 8:45 to 9:30 a.m. at the Church of the Joyful Healer, 1944 Central Ave., McKinleyville (enter at the rear).

For information, call Joanne Fornes (840-0754) or Kathleen Krauss (498-4210), or go to the Humboldt Laughter Yoga Facebook page.

Joanne Fornes, 74, of McKinleyville, co-leads the Joyful Healer laughter yoga group, and is a movement/exercise specialist who also teaches Pilates Plus and senior exercise classes.

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PAINTING THE OCEAN

BY MARGARET KELLERMANN

Customer Assistance?

8:30 a.m. Dear Diary: Found dreamy vacuum cleaner online, a.k.a. Suction 3100X, by researching key phrases like “dust bunny destroyer.” Online research is effective. But buying from real people builds community, boosts the local economy. Plus, it’s simple.

1:30 p.m. Called local BigBox store. Employee Diane wondered, “Customer Service?”

1:50 p.m. Diane reported BigBox had only one Suction 3100X in stock, promised to hold it.

3:15 p.m. I arrived at BigBox. Sales rep (I’ll call X) approached, rubbing his hands.

Me: Hi. I called your store today about your vacuum cleaner Suction 3100X. Diane from Customer Service said there’s only one left, on hold for me. I’m paying cash.

X: Well, now, you can’t pick it up if you didn’t pay for it.

Me: I’m ... paying today. In person. With cash.

X: I’ll see if it’s in stock. Paying today?

Me: Right ... now. (X leads me to Merchandise Pickup and disappears into Back Room.)

3:35 p.m. X: You’re in luck, Missy. There’s one left! How will you pay? BigBox card? No? Extended warranty? No? Cash? Yes? Hmmm! Caaaash. All rightyyy ... Name, address, email? It’s for Merchandise Pickup.

Me: There’s nobody else here. Just say my vacuum cleaner’s ready, and hand it to me.

X: I need a name.

Me: No personal information. I just paid cash, and I’m picking up my purchase.

X: I’ll write down Foster Gump.

Me: Must I call myself that from now on?

X: Call yourself anything you want.

4:11 p.m. Waiting alone eternally in Merchandise Pickup. In Back Room, X argues with woman (Diane from Customer Service?). Then:

X: Well, Miss Gump: out of stock.

Me: But ... I just paid for it! It was in stock! Diane checked! You checked!

X: Checked the first three numbers. So! Can we get you another model?

Me: No, I want the model I just purchased.

X: That’ll take ... a week. And (checking computer) ... discontinued. How about our floor model?

Me: (Prolonged sigh) I’d need a discount.

X: Not promising anything. (Disappears for 18 minutes.)

6:30 p.m. I arrived home victorious with Suction 3100X (used floor model, bag filled with BigBox lint, only 10 percent off retail). What a joy to buy local. Next time I’m ordering online.

Margaret Kellermann, an optimist and artist, still believes in shopping locally. Find her at bluelakestudio.net.

BRIEF ENCOUNTERS WITH GOOD BOOKS

‘Manifesto Against Ageism’

By Carol McFarland

Ashton Applewhite, an activist for healthy aging, assures us that “aging is a natural, lifelong, powerful process,” but she also wonders why “so many of us *unthinkingly* assume that depression, diapers and dementia lie ahead?”

Seeking answers, Applewhite decided that the cultural myths about aging depicted in film, television and newspapers create self-limiting scenarios about frailty and disease that put the “awfulness of getting older” into common parlance — and she condemns it as ageism.

In “This Chair Rocks: A Manifesto Against Ageism,” Applewhite calls on exhaustive medical research and literature to unmask and challenge the myths, misinformation and stereotypes that form what she calls “discrimination that sidelines and silences older people.”

In place of handwringing about the inevitable aspects of aging, she wants readers to “imagine the benefits to health and human potential by replacing negative stereotypes about age and aging with more nuanced, positive and accurate portrayals.”

Applewhite makes some encouraging observations that contradict common beliefs or fears about aging: “People are happiest at the beginnings and the ends of their lives,” she

writes. “The vast majority of Americans over 65 live independently. The older people get, the less afraid they are of dying.”

So why do Americans have so much angst over the aging process?

Whether you see yourself as teetering on the fault line of 50, or if you’ve settled on “boomer” or “gray panther” to describe yourself, Applewhite explains that letting go of ageism in society is a matter of both personal and public health.

Our culture’s assumptions

and predictions about the diminished minds and bodies of people as they age is “way out of proportion to the threat — and those fears *themselves* put us at risk,” she says. For example, she points out, research on brain diseases like Alzheimer’s shows that dementia rates have fallen between 25 percent to 30 percent since the 1990s.

Look for this inspiring approach to realistic aging in bookstores or at the Humboldt County Library. You can see more of Applewhite’s thoughts on aging online at thischairrocks.com, or watch her 2017 TEDtalks by searching for Applewhite Let’s End Ageism on Google.

Carol McFarland, 77, of Arcata, is a member of the Senior News Community Advisory Board.

“It turns out that the longer people live, the less they fear dying, and that people are happiest at the beginning and the end of their lives.”
—Ashton Applewhite

Romance, Lust or Both, They Love an Adventure

By Janet Ruprecht

In June, my parents, Joan and Ted Ruprecht, will celebrate 63 years of marriage. When asked the secret to their success, my father, a Humboldt State emeritus professor of economics, offers an answer based on statistical data.

“We never faced the usual problems that cause marriages to break up: financial problems, substance abuse, or affairs.” He paused. “That I know of.”

My mother, however, tells romantic stories of how they met at UC Berkeley when she operated the switchboard in his dormitory, of the low-necked dress she wore when he took her to the dance, about the first time he took her home to meet his mother, when he asked her to go steady, and how he proposed on both knees.

My father dismisses the dress. “That wasn’t romance. That was lust.”

The man who cries at weddings in TV commercials claims he has no romantic memories. Instead, he describes watching a beautiful sunset with my mother in Bali from a bluff overlooking the ocean, with a procession of people passing before them down on the beach. It was some kind of a formal occasion, and it took my parents a while to conclude it was not a wedding.

“Definitely a funeral,” said my father. “They were carrying the corpse on a litter.”

My mother says that living in foreign countries strengthened their marriage. My father’s research took the family to the Philippines, France, Australia and Bulgaria.

My mother has always had quite a taste for adventure. Tell her not to go somewhere, and she must. But the

economics professor is quite a cheap-skate. The combination is not always a good one.

In the Philippines, my parents made a bet to see who could find the cheapest hotel room. My mother took along my 14-year-old sister with the long, strawberry-blonde hair down to her waist.

They inspected a room so cheap that the wooden bed didn’t even have a mattress. When they came back outside, men were forming a line. Mother had almost rented a room in a brothel.

After their year in Bulgaria, my parents decided to save money by taking a bus across Yugoslavia instead of flying. Never mind that this bitterly divided country was sliding into civil war and ethnic cleansing.

“It wasn’t just the money,” my father clarifies. They had befriended a family whose teenaged daughter, Slavi, wanted to study in the United States. Her grandfather was certain that Slavi was going to be sold into white slavery, so he was waiting at the airport to intercept them. But they were at the bus station.

Obviously, my parents are romantic in the swashbuckling sense. And maybe this shared sense of adventure, with a dash of danger, spices up their marriage to this day.

Anyone who has seen them slow dancing, cheek to cheek, knows for a fact that they are romantic. Or maybe it’s lust.

—
Janet Ruprecht, 60, of Dow’s Prairie, is Humboldt Senior Resource Center Fund Development coordinator.



NEVER A DULL MOMENT — Ted and Joan Ruprecht of Trinidad, shown in the 1980s and today, have built a rock-solid, 62-year marriage with travel, shared adventure, horses, kids and a dash of danger. Top photo courtesy of the Ruprechts. Ted Pease photo below.





AGING IS AN ART — BY JOHN HECKEL

It's a Good Thing to Get a New Grip on Life

Some associations are hard to break. For my whole life, Cadillacs, for instance, have been cars for old people.

Now *I* am old.

For my whole life, grab bars have been for old and vulnerable people.

Now *I* am old and vulnerable.

Given that I do not have the money or the inclination for the Cadillac, I went for the grab bars; two, to be exact, in the upstairs bathroom.

Installing grab bars in a ceramic tiled bathroom is beyond my skill set, however, so I called the Area 1 Agency on Aging. I talked to a very friendly woman named Erica, who immediately gave me four handyman referrals. I chose the third suggestion, Jimmy.

You would think that putting grab bars in a bathroom would be a fairly straightforward process. Warning: a bathroom can put you in a very exposed place.



Do not underestimate the vulnerable and therapeutic aspects of stepping into your own bath tub to show a man some 40 years your junior where you need support when taking a bath or shower.

Not only do you experience the physical difficulties of getting in and out of your bathtub, fully clothed, but also the emotional vulnerabili-

ty of having to describe to another human being where in the bathing process you feel most at risk.

Jimmy was good. He was respectful. You could tell he had done this before — dealt with old people, that is. He knew what questions to ask and which to avoid. Once we both felt confident that he understood my risky bathing process, I left him

alone to do his magic.

The grab bars are in. The work is done. And I, at the age of 71, am safer.

Now that I have my new grab bars, I have to remember to use them when I get into or out of the tub. If I slip or get dizzy, I tend to reach out by instinct. It takes practice to make reaching out for my new grab bars instinctual.

They say a picture is worth a thousand words, so I share with you, my friends, not a picture of me and a new Cadillac, as many of our uncles did when we were younger, but a picture of me and my new grab bars. And I do so proudly.

Jimmy charged for his work, a tad more than I thought he should have, but then, the therapy was free.

—
John Heckel, Ph.D., a regular Senior News columnist, and former HSU theater and film professor, has a new grip on life.

Humboldt's June Vote-by-Mail Ballots Available May 7

The Humboldt County Office of Elections is prepping for June 5 statewide elections by gearing up for early voting-by-mail.

Mail voting is a big deal in Humboldt County and in California generally, according the California Secretary of State's office, which oversees balloting. A mere 2.6 percent of Californians used mail ballots when the option was first introduced in 1962.

But that percentage topped 58 percent of all votes cast in the 2016 general election, both in Humboldt County and statewide.

Lucinda Jackson, an analyst in the Humboldt elections office, says she uses the vote-by-mail option herself. It's convenient, and she says she can spend plenty of time at home researching candidates and issues before casting her vote.

Others use mail ballots because

they plan to be traveling on election day, or if they can't easily make it to the polls.

Mail voting is even more popular during midterm primary elections, like the one coming up in June. In the last midterm primary, in 2014, only 37 percent of registered Humboldt voters cast ballots, but 60 percent of those were by mail, Jackson said.

If you're interested in voting by mail, you can request a mail ballot

beginning Monday, May 7, through Tuesday, May 29, at the county Office of Elections, 2426 Sixth St., Eureka, (707-445-7481). Visit the website, humboldt.gov/1300/Vote-by-Mail, for more information.

Mail ballots must be postmarked by Election Day, and received by hand or mail no more than three days after the election (June 8).

—Ted Pease

1910 California Street • Eureka CA 95501

HSRC News 707 443-9747 • www.humsenior.org

Home Delivered Meals Connect with Homebound Elders

Spring is the time when community members and organizations come together in communities across the country to show support for senior nutrition programs and their role not just in providing meals for older adults, but also in fighting the isolation experienced by many elders.

Each March, Meals on Wheels America sponsors a nationwide “March for Meals” awareness campaign to highlight the benefits of meals delivered directly to vulnerable seniors who rely on the vital service to remain independent in their own homes.

In Humboldt County, Humboldt Senior Resource Center’s (HSRC’s) Home Delivered Meals program provides meals to homebound elders in the Arcata, Eureka, Fortuna and McKinleyville areas.

St. Joseph Health Care for the Poor has made a \$20,000 grant to HSRC to support the Home Delivered Meals (HDM) program. The Care for the Poor grant supports local nonprofits that help meet the needs of underserved individuals in Humboldt County.

“This program is just so important to the community,” said Becky Giacomini, chairperson of St. Joseph Health – Humboldt County’s community benefits committee. “There are so many seniors in our area who live alone and can’t get out, and that

number is only going to grow.”

Last month, Giacomini rode along with HDM driver Mary Wynne, who delivers fresh meals to seniors every day, to see the program’s impact firsthand.

“They all love Mary and look forward to seeing her,” Giacomini said. “They get a little contact, a little conversation, somebody checking on them, real personal contact. It’s a great thing.”

That’s exactly why the HDM program is so important, said Barbara Walser, director of Nutrition & Activities at HSRC.

“We thank St Joseph Health as well as the other foundations, businesses, and individuals who support Home Delivered Meals,” Walser said. “This vital program provides a wellness check and human connection along with every meal we deliver.”

The national March for Meals campaign commemorates President Richard M. Nixon created a national nutrition program in March 1972 for American seniors 60 and older that, in turn, launched public-private partnerships to provide these meals.

For more information about Home Delivered Meals, call HSRC at 707-443-9747, x1228 or visit humsenior.org.

—René Arché



For many seniors who live alone, like Dorothy Flocchini of Fortuna, visits from Mary Wynne, left, means both a freshly cooked meal and a little company. Becky Giacomini, right, of St. Joseph Health – Humboldt County, rode along last month to meet meal recipients on the route. Ted Pease photo.

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** For times see the Activities at Senior Centers calendar for Eureka, Arcata & McKinleyville.*

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APRIL SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES

Humboldt Senior Resource Center in Eureka

1910 California Street • www.humsenior.org
Lunch: Tuesday-Friday at 11:30 a.m.-12:15 p.m.
For more information call the Tasha at 443-9747 x1228, tromo@humsenior.org

Every Weekday	9-1 Library (Closed Thursdays after 4/05) 9-3 Senior Services Office 12-3 Billiards	Thursdays	10-11 Grocery Bingo: Bring 1 grocery item 10-11:30 Intermediate French class 11:30-12:15 Lunch – Menu page 15 1:15-2 S.A.I.L. w/ Muriel 2:10-3:10 FABS/S.A.I.L. w/ Beth & Lois Apr. 5 & 19 10-12 Genealogy group Apr. 19 12:30-1:30 Covered CA/Medi-Cal assistance drop-in clinic Apr. 26 8:30-11:30 Medication Interaction & Consultation
Mondays	9:30-10:30 Karate with Jerry Bunch 10-12:30 Mah Jongg 1:15-2 S.A.I.L. w/Muriel 2:10-3:10 FABS/S.A.I.L with Beth & Lois 2:30-4 Memoir Writing Class Apr. 9,16 & 23 3:30-4:30 Jin Shin Jyutsu (See page 14)	Fridays	9-10 Falun Dafa 10-11 Beginning Tai Chi Movements 11-12 Beginning Yoga 11:30-12:15 Lunch – Menu page 15 1-4 Bridge Games Apr. 6 & 20 1:30-2:30 Conscious Living Book Club Apr. 27 11:30-12:15 Birthday Celebration
Tuesdays	10-11 Harry's Bingo (not April 3) 11:30-12:15 Lunch – Menu page 15 12:30-1:30 Bunco (not April 3) 12:15-2:15 Pinochle 2:10-3:10 FABS/S.A.I.L with Beth & Lois Apr. 3 11-2 Foster Grandparents Training Apr. 3 & 17 1:30-3:30 Ukulele Play'n Sing Apr. 3 10:30-11:30 Dine & Dance w/Ray, Dave & Lois Apr. 17 9:30-11:30 Foster Grandparents Program Apr. 24 6-9 Stamp Club	Saturdays	Apr. 7 Noon <i>Sassy Seniors:</i> Sizzler, Eureka Apr. 21 Noon <i>Nooners:</i> Gallagher's, Old Town Eureka
Wednesdays	11:30-12:15 Lunch – Menu page 15 1:15-2 S.A.I.L. w/Muriel 1:30-3:30 Intermediate Line Dancing 2:10-3:10 FABS/S.A.I.L. by Beth & Lois Apr. 4 & 18 1-2 Caregiver Support Group Alzheimer's Library, 1901 California St., Bldg. B, 2nd Floor, Eureka Apr. 11 11:30-12:15 Emblem Club serves lunch Apr. 18 10-11:30 Commodities distribution Apr. 25 8:30-11:30 Medication Interaction & Consultation	LUNCHTIME MELODIES at the Eureka Dining Center performed by Lois Sullivan, Dave Sullivan and Ray Pecolatto. Ted Pease photo.	

Fortuna Dining Center

HSRC at Mountain View Village • 2130 Smith Lane • Call Launa at 725-6245
Lunch: Tuesday-Friday at 12:00 p.m. - Menu page 15

Tuesdays	12 Lunch	Thursdays	12 Lunch Apr. 5 & 19 12-1:30 Caregiver Support Group United Methodist Church Fireplace Room 922 N Street, Fortuna
Wednesdays	Apr. 4 10:30 Music w/Bill Corena & friends 12 Lunch 5-8 BINGO	Fridays	Apr. 27 12 Lunch 12 Birthday lunch

For info call 443-9747

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McKinleyville Senior Center

Azalea Hall • 1620 Pickett Road
Open Monday-Friday 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
azaleahall@att.net • 839-0191

Mondays	8:30-9:30 Tai Chi 10:30 Walking Group at Hiller Park 12-3:30 Computers* (*call for availability) Party Bridge Apr. 30 11-12 Low Vision Workshop	Tuesdays	9-11 TOPS 9:30-10:30 S.A.I.L. Class 10:40-11:40 Stretching 12:30-3:30 BINGO 1:30-2:30 Exercise
Wednesdays	8:30-9:30 Tai Chi 9-12 Computers* (*call for availability) Needlework 10-12 Walking Group at Hiller Park 1-4 Pinochle Apr. 4 10-11 Genealogy Apr. 18 10:30-11:30 Executive Board Meeting Apr. 25 12-1 Monthly Luncheon: Chicken Noodle Casserole, Salad, Dessert (Sign up by 4/20) \$5 Heart Healthy Club	Thursdays	9:30-10:30 S.A.I.L. Class 10:30-12 Pinochle Lessons 10:40-11:40 Stretching 12:30-3:30 BINGO Apr. 5 11-11:30 Taco Salad, \$3 Apr. 12 11-11:30 Meatball Soup, \$3 Apr. 19 11-11:30 Lentil Soup & 1/2 Sand., \$3 Apr. 26 11-11:30 Mac & Cheese, Salad, \$3
Fridays	8:30-9:30 Tai Chi 10:30 Walking Group at Hiller Park 1-4 Pinochle Apr. 6 10-11 Sweet Spot Apr. 27 10-11 Full Board Meeting (Open)		


Arcata Community Center

An HSRC Dining Center
321 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway
Lunch: Tuesday-Friday at 11:30 a.m.
Call Vanessa at 825-2027


Mondays	Apr. 9 & 23 11-12 Silver Quills Writing Group	Every Tuesday	9-11 Katie's Krafters 10-11 Senior Pool Hour-HealthSport \$5 fee (prior registration required) Bread distribution 11 Bead Jewelry Class Apr. 3 10-11 Blood pressure check Apr. 3 & 17 10-11 Caregiver Support Group Mad River Community Hosp. Minkler Education Room 3800 Janes Road, Arcata <i>For info call 443-9747</i> Spring Fling & Psychadelvis Apr. 20 10-11:30 2 Arcata Slow Walk-Arcata Marsh Apr. 24 10-11 Walking Group w/Chris
Every Wednesday	10-11 Chi Gong-RSVP 443-8347 10-11:15 Karaoke 10-11:15 Bread distribution 11:15-12:15 Tai Chi for Arthritis Advanced 12:30-1:30 Tai Chi with Kathy-Beginning Apr. 11 10:30-11:30 Chuck Clarke & the Old Gold Band	Every Thursday	9-10 Tai Chi w/Tim (\$3 donation) 9-11 Katie's Krafters 10-11 Senior Pool Hour-HealthSport \$5 fee (prior registration required) Learn Tech with Brett Apr. 5 10:30-11:30 PJ's Musical Group Apr. 12 11-12:15 Cal Fresh Sign-up assistance Apr. 19 10:15-11:15 Swing 'n' Sway Trio Apr. 19 10:30-11 Commodities Distribution
Every Friday	10-11:30 Ping Pong with Pete Apr. 13 10-11:30 Site Advisory Council Meeting Apr. 13 10-11 Music with the Half Notes Apr. 20 10:30-11:15 Movie: "Locally Grown" Apr. 27 11:30-12:15 Birthday Celebration Lunch		

“The wonderful thing about true laughter is that it just destroys any kind of system dividing people.”
—John Cleese, *British actor.*


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WHAT'S HAPPENING AT HSRC

Relax with Jin Shin Jyutsu

For three weeks in April, Denny Dorsett, RN, will offer classes in the Asian light-touch art of Jin Shin Jyutsu at Humboldt Senior Resource Center in Eureka.

Jin Shin Jyutsu originated in Japan, where it's been used since antiquity to improve health by balancing the subtle energies of the body. The easiest way to pronounce it is to break it into parts: "Gin" like the drink, "Shin" like your leg, "Jute" like rope, followed by "Sue."

Various specific areas of the body are touched through the clothing in sequences called "flows," and held for varying lengths of time.

One translation of Jin Shin Jyutsu is "now know myself." All practitioners apply the art to themselves, and the self-help techniques can easily be taught to new students.

Benefits include pain reduction and a feeling of peacefulness as the techniques calm the sympathetic nervous system and activate the parasympathetic nervous system. As a result, Jin Shin Jyutsu can provide relief from anxiety, insomnia, indigestion and many related complaints.

Besides being a registered nurse, Dorsett has about 200 hours of training in Jin Shin Jyutsu, including a course in teaching self-help, and she runs her own practice at the Arcata Wellness Center.

Dorsett will lead Jin Shin Jyutsu classes on three Mondays, April 9, 16 and 23, from 3:30-4:30 p.m. in the HSRC dining room, 1910 California Street in Eureka.

For more information, contact the HSRC Senior Services Office at 443-9747, x1240.

Stunning Aerial Images of Humboldt

Local photographer and licensed drone pilot Garrett Nada takes us into the skies above Humboldt County, from its spectacular coastline to its inland hills and forests, in the latest collection of local art on exhibit at the Humboldt Senior Resource Center in Eureka.

The scenes captured by Nada in his collection, "Humboldt Aerial Images," all taken from a drone hovering overhead, are stunning.

"From jagged mountains to gnarly coastlines, and from majestic forests to rolling oak hill-sides," Nada says, "Humboldt has an infinite number of breathtaking views."

The collection explores familiar spots in Humboldt County "from unfamiliar angles," he says. From a bird's-eye view of Clam Beach north to Trinidad, or the perspective of an eagle soaring above Kneeland, Nada's drone images show perspectives only birds



Mad River looking north. Garrett Nada photo.

and low-flying aircraft have enjoyed.

"The aerial perspective seems to invoke a sense of tranquility that speaks to me in this fast-moving world," Nada says.

The exhibit is free and open to the public at HSRC, 1910 California St., Eureka, weekdays from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Senior Day of Caring for low income seniors 60+

Sponsored by **Companion Animal Foundation**



Exam and Vaccine Clinic
for your pets (limit 2)
Sunday, May 6th
11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Bayside Community Hall
Jacoby Creek Road @ Old Arcata Road

Exams	\$8	Vaccines	\$6-15
Pet Tags	\$3	Microchip	\$20

Pre-registration is required



Call (707) 826-7387
to find out if you qualify and
to schedule an appointment

April 2018

Dining Menu



Humboldt Senior
Resource Center

Nutrition & Activities Program

FIRST WEEK

Apr. 2 Dining Centers closed
Apr. 3 Salisbury Steak
Apr. 4 Bay Shrimp Salad
Apr. 5 Pot Roast
Apr. 6 Stuffed Baked Potato

SECOND WEEK

Apr. 9 Dining Centers closed
Apr. 10 Meatball Marinara Sub
Apr. 11 Chicken w/Fire-Roasted Tomatoes
Apr. 12 Beef Stroganoff over Egg Noodles
Apr. 13 Tuna Casserole

THIRD WEEK

Apr. 16 Dining Centers closed
Apr. 17 Lemon Herb Baked Fish
Apr. 18 BBQ Pork Rib
Apr. 19 Baked Potato Soup
Apr. 20 Chicken Cordon Bleu

FOURTH WEEK

Apr. 23 Dining Centers closed
Apr. 24 Meatloaf with Gravy
Apr. 25 Chicken Parmesan w/Spaghetti
Apr. 26 Green Chili Egg Bake
Apr. 27 Cranberry Chicken - *Birthday Cake*

FIFTH WEEK

Apr. 30 Dining Centers closed

LOW-FAT OR NONFAT MILK IS SERVED WITH EACH MEAL

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For those under 60 there is a fee.

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LIVE VIGOROUSLY

BY JOAN RAINWATER-GISH

Dance Now & Dance Often

This month's conversation is with Kay Escarda, 82, of Eureka, a retired teacher, civic volunteer, League of Women Voters member, and tango dancer.

I've wanted to interview Kay since learning she took up Argentine tango at the age of 74, and it has become her passion. My own brief exposure to tango dancing showed me it is both exhilarating and physically challenging. So to me, if you are a tango dancer, you are definitely Living Vigorously.

Q: Why tango?

Kay: I was my husband's caregiver and, when he passed away, I realized I needed more fun. I had been doing volunteer work, but it wasn't fun or physical, and I needed both. I saw a brochure for tango lessons and asked my friend, Dan Taranto, if he wanted to go. Together, we learned the tango and danced often until his stroke. (To see Kay and Dan dancing, go online to tangodelsol.net and click on Gallery and Student Showcase 2014).

Q: You continued to go dancing by yourself. Do you find it intimidating to go alone?

Kay: I go to Redwood Raks for lessons. It's important to know that you don't need a partner. When you get there, you are paired up for instructions and then you change partners for practice. This method is great for learning and dancing with different people, and helps one to not feel intimidated. When I go to

Tango Night, I'm the oldest person there, but I dance with everyone — young and old.

Q: How do you keep up your energy and strength?

Kay: Besides tango dancing every week, I also take Silver Sneakers classes. Together, they keep me physically fit. But dancing has other benefits. It helps develop balance and control. It's aerobic, and it ties the brain and feet together. A study published in the New England Journal of Medicine on seniors 75 years and older show dancing frequently reduced the risk of dementia by 76 percent. It also can make you more intelligent, improve your muscle memory, slow down aging, boost memory, and help prevent dizziness.

Q: What advice do you have for older adults wanting to take up tango or any type of dancing?

Kay: First, take lessons. There are several dance instructors and studios in the area to choose from. Then, practice, practice, practice. Be patient with yourself. For example, it can take a year to feel comfortable with tango. One could spend a lifetime perfecting the dance. And lastly, have FUN!

—
Joan Rainwater-Gish, 75, of Eureka is a certified personal trainer and group fitness instructor who leads senior exercise classes. Contact: jrainwater-gish@suddenlink.net.


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North Coast Co-op Events

April 4 • Wellness Wednesday

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April 3, 10, 17, 24 • Senior Day

Seniors 60 and over receive a 5% discount on Tuesdays.
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April 5 • Board of Directors Meeting

6:00pm at the Ten Pin Building, 793 K Street in Arcata.

Monthly Board Meeting.

Member-owners are welcome to attend.



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April Community Calendar

Homesharing for Seniors

The Area 1 Agency on Aging's (A1AA) new homesharing program aims to help both senior homeowners and seniors in need of affordable housing. Homesharing is when unrelated people live together in the homeowner's house in exchange for rent or services. Find out more at an informational meeting Monday, April 26, at 5 p.m. at the A1AA, 434 7th St., Eureka. For information, call A1AA at 443-3763, or go online to a1aa.org/homesharing.

'Locally Grown' Showing

Suzanne Simpson, co-producer of the Humboldt documentary film "Locally Grown: America's Food Revolution," will screen and discuss her film at the Arcata Senior Dining Center on Friday, April 20, at 10:30 a.m., followed by a Q&A discussion. The screening and discussion are free and open to the public. For information, call the Arcata Dining Center at 825-2027.

Living History Day

The Clarke Museum on E Street in Eureka will host its "Living History Day" on Wednesday, April 21, with biologist Phil Johnson's presentation, "Wildlife Tracking: Reading Nature's Language and Finding Animals," at 1 p.m. Johnson, who studies mountain lions and fishers, will discuss the historical and modern applications of wildlife tracking, from early hominids to modern wildlife conservation and research. For info, call 443-1947.

Spring Celebration in Song

The Ferndale Community Choir will perform three spring concerts in early April: Easter Sunday, April 1, 7:30 p.m., Assumption Church,

546 Berding St, Ferndale; Saturday, April 7, 7:30 p.m., Christ Episcopal Church, 15th and H streets, Eureka; and Sunday, April 8, 3 p.m., Ferndale Community Church, 712 Main St. Visit ferndalechoir.com for info.

Earth Day 2018

In celebration of Earth Day 2018, Sunday, April 22, Humboldt Baykeeper and the Wiyot Tribe will host the biannual Indian Island kayak paddle and cleanup on the island. It's free — kayaks, gear and guides will be provided — but an RSVP is required. Meet at the Humboldt Bay Aquatic Center in Eureka to get outfitted with wetsuits, safety vests and kayaks (or bring your own). We'll paddle out to the island, pick up trash, and paddle back. If this floats your boat, contact Jasmin Segura at jasmin@humboldt-baykeeper.org or call 407-6138 to reserve your spot.

More Coming Attractions

- Naturalist Training: Sessions April 8, 22 & 29. Contact Dave Feral at Mad River Alliance, dferal@madriveralliance.org or 382-6162.

- Redwood Coast Music Festival, April 5-8. rcmfest.org.

- North Coast Farmers' Markets start Saturday, April 7, Arcata Plaza.

- Mad River Clean-Up on Earth Day weekend, Saturday, April 21, 9 a.m., with the Mad River Alliance. Meet at the McIntosh Farm Country Store, 1264 Giuntoli Lane, Arcata.

- Humboldt Int'l Film Fest, April 18-21, Minor Theater, Arcata. Go to hsufilmfestival.com for info.

- Arcata Marsh Birdwalks, every Saturday, 2-3:30 p.m., Interpretive Center, South G Street, Arcata. Info at arcatamarshfriends.org or 826-2359.



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ASK THE DOCTOR . . . From Page 5

of the brain that promote emotional and physical well-being, and may essentially redirect our brains to put a more positive spin on what is happening to us or around us.

Laughter does increase access to norepinephrine, dopamine and serotonin in our brains, which are the same hormones antidepressant medications target.

The Scandinavian Journal of Psychology had an article last month titled "A Joke a Day Keeps the Doctor Away?" It pointed out that the style of humor matters in terms of health benefits. Being mean to oneself or others does not seem to help health.

So the prescription is safe and likely effective, if taken with a tall

glass of kindness and on a regular basis: Laugh while doing yoga. See a funny movie. Have mirth with friends. Allow yourself to laugh even during times of darkness.

Mark Twain said it best: "Against the assault of laughter, nothing can stand."

—

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 and jokes to seniornewseditor@humsenior.org

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‘Planning for My Death’

The Funeral Consumers Alliance of Humboldt (FCAH) will focus its annual meeting on presentations about “Planning for My Death,” Saturday, April 28, from 1:30-3:30 p.m. at Hospice of Humboldt.

Founded in 1965, the FCAH is a local all-volunteer non-denominational nonprofit dedicated to consumer advocacy for dignified and economical end-of-life choices. When it’s time to have “the conversation” with a loved one about planning for end-of-life, the Alliance can help, said Catherine Hart of the FCAH Board of Directors.

The FCAH meeting and presentation is free and open to the public. Speakers will provide information and perspectives on how to make informed choices, Hart said.

Jean Okuye and Holly Blue Hawkins of the state Funeral Consumers Alliance will offer training in funeral planning basics. And Chuck Ayres of Ayres Family Cremation will discuss steps to take when someone dies.

For more information on the April presentation at Hospice of Humboldt, 3327 Timber Falls Court, Eureka, contact FCAH at 707-822-8599, by email at fcahumboldt@gmail.com, or visit the website at fcahumboldt.org.

“Maturity is a bitter disappointment for which no remedy exists, unless laughter could be said to remedy anything.”

—Kurt Vonnegut (1922-2007), author.

Crossing the Border at the “Indian Arrow Tree”

By Jerry Rohde

East of Blue Lake is an important but almost forgotten boundary. It's easy to visit on a Sunday drive.

Let's go.

Coming from the coast on Highway 299, we take the Blue Lake off-ramp and head east on Blue Lake Boulevard. Just past the Blue Lake Elementary School, we see the green-and-cream-colored Susie Baker Fountain House, where one of Humboldt County's leading historians long resided.

We continue eastward, skirting the north edge of Blue Lake, to the mill town of Korb. Here we cross the North Fork of the Mad River on a striking 1928 concrete and steel arch bridge. We leave Korb and begin climbing the road to Maple Creek. A mile later, we reach our destination part-way up the hill on the left — the “Indian Arrow Tree.”

Today the tree is more of a snag, but it once bore a sign stating, “Site of treaty between coast and

mountain Indians.” The information is probably incorrect, but it hints at an interesting piece of local Indian history.

In the 1840s, the Wiyot tribe had a village in the vicinity of what later became the town of Blue Lake. In the hills to the east were members of the Whilkut and Mawenok tribes, closely connected Athabaskan speakers who controlled the middle part of the Mad River and areas eastward to Berry Summit.

In summer, the Wiyots would send acorn-gathering parties east into the hills, where they were sometimes attacked by the Athabascans. Finally, either the Whilkuts or the Mawenoks or perhaps both sent a war party down to the Mad River and attacked the Wiyot village.

Most of the Wiyot men were killed, and the Athabascans took over the village, claiming the younger Wiyot women as wives. The older Wiyot women

went downstream to a place on the lower Mad River that became known as the Village of the Widows.

The Indian Arrow Tree may have existed before the attack, for it was close to the old tribal boundary. Indians traveling along the trail would stop at the tree. The men would shoot an arrow high into the trunk. The women would push a piece of tree limb into the lower bark. In these ways, they acknowledged the significance of the spot and left a record of their passing.

If you look at the top of the snag and the sun is just right, you can still see what appear to be arrow holes.

Jerry Rohde of Eureka is a retired HSU history professor and who teaches and lectures regularly on Humboldt history. He is working on the second volume of his trilogy, A History of Humboldt County Places.



The “Indian Arrow Tree,” a site of historical and cultural significance as a border sentinel between Indian nations, still stands up the hill from Korb on the road to Maple Creek. Above, the Korb Ladies Club at dedication ceremonies for a historical marker of the Arrow Tree in 1934. Photo at left by Ted Pease, at right courtesy of the Don Tuttle Collection.

Letter to the Editor

To the Editor:

Many of us are prescribed medications. It is so very important to be able to read the vital information on the medication label. Unfortunately, about 21 million U.S. adults have a vision loss that makes it difficult or impossible to see this crucial information. By 2035, this number is expected to double.

There is an answer to this problem — talking prescription labels.

As a result of advocacy work by the Humboldt Council of the Blind with Cloney’s Pharmacy, you now can hear your prescription label read aloud to you.

En-Vision America provides free label readers. Call them at (800) 890-1180 or fill out the form at envisionamerica.com/sign-up-for-accessible-prescription-labels.

Contact Cloney pharmacist Rich Spini at 840-9923, and tell him you are having trouble reading your prescription

labels. A tag can be placed on your bottle. Once you receive the specially labeled bottle, place it on the label reader, press the read button, and a voice will read you the label.

Android phones can be used as a label reader. Go to the Play Store and download the ScripTalk Mobile app. There is an iOS app for Macs coming soon.

Another good resource for those of us with vision loss is LightHouse of the North Coast at 268-5646.

Take advantage of this new service and technology so you can stay safe and independent as you follow a medication plan. To learn more about talking medication labels or to hear a demonstration over the phone, call Doug Rose at 839-0588 or email dougdrose@suddenlink.net.

— Doug Rose,
McKinleyville Low-Vision
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Redwood Community Action Agency (RCAA) will be helping income-qualified seniors sign up for its Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) and **FREE** Weatherization services Senior and Homebound/Disabled List. The HEAP program helps qualified households on a once per year basis with a credit on their PG&E bill or assistance with firewood or propane. RCAA’s weatherization program improves health and safety conditions and installs energy saving measures in the home.

To qualify for RCAA’s Senior and Homebound/Disabled List for the 2018 program, you must be at least 70 years old or a homebound/disabled person and meet the federal income guidelines below.

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You may call beginning January 1st through April 30, 2018 to be placed on the list. Please call 707-444-3831, extension 201 or 206 to speak to an RCAA’s Energy Specialist to be put on the list.

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). E-mail tpease@humsenior.org or mail to Senior News, 1910 California St., Eureka CA 95501.

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Coming in Senior News

We're looking for stories in coming issues of Senior News:

- **May:** "Glory Days" will explore stories of our past (and present) triumphs.
- **June:** "Animal Stories" looks at animals — from pets to mules — in Humboldt life.

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