



# A Time for Caring

## ‘I don’t know what I’d do without them’

*By Ted Pease*

The unsung heroes of elder care are the caregivers, health-care professionals who perform some of the most mundane — and the most important — functions for seniors on a day-to-day basis.

At the Humboldt Senior Resource Center, it’s the Multipurpose Senior Services Program (MSSP) staff who make sure these essential tasks get done. They serve as a kind of health-care air traffic control for more than 100 elder participants, coordinating their care needs.

Over more than 30 years, MSSP social workers and nurses have been the front-line troops in the elder care business in Humboldt County, says MSSP program manager Robin Wolff.

“We are really one of the best-kept secrets in senior services in the county,” Wolff said.

The program is part of a statewide network of 35 MSSP sites throughout California, with services funded under Medi-Cal, serving about 12,600 chronically ill or disabled adults statewide, 65 and older, who are medically eligible for nursing homes. The program is designed to provide care to seniors in their own homes, giving them options for remaining independent without having to move into care facilities.

“I don’t know what I’d do without them,” said Mary Ann Diaz, 77, referring to the team of caregivers organized by MSSP case manager Dora Abrahams.

Diaz, who lives with her son in Eureka, has undergone eight surgeries in recent years—“my back, my neck, my shoulder, my foot . . .” she said — and the support from MSSP caregivers makes the difference between staying in her own home and having to move into a care facility.

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**A CARING RELATIONSHIP** — Social worker Dora Abrahams confers with her friend and client Stephanie Case-Robin of Ferndale, a participant in the Multipurpose Senior Services Program (MSSP) at the Humboldt Senior Resource Center. “Dora’s wonderful,” Case-Robin says. Ted Pease photo.

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## Tedtalks: It's Always Time to Care

By Ted Pease

Every year about now, marketers deluge us with messages about this “time of caring,” in efforts to drum up holiday spending.

But, as the contributors to this month's issue of Senior News remind us, *every day is a time for caring if you are a caregiver.* For us here at the Humboldt Senior Resource Center (HSRC), caregiving is the focus of everything we do every day, from meals to medical service, to home visits, Center activities and transportation.

A hidden gem of HSRC's caregiving efforts is a low-profile unit with a huge heart — the Multipurpose Senior Services Program (MSSP) — whose staff quietly help more than 100 seniors daily with the care management they need to stay in their own homes.

**In other news:** There is always a little something extra special about caregiving at this time of year, and we're happy to be able to report one such story here.

Last month, Leonard Shumard of McKinleyville wrote about “New Troops, New Life at the Arcata Veterans Hall” in Senior News. Shumard mentioned that the vets need a van to transport members to VA meetings and

doctors appointments.

Diane Moxon LaFleur of Dow's Prairie and her sister June Moxon of Arcata saw that story and had a brainstorm. Since their father, Art Moxon, died in February at age 90, the siblings (June, Diane, brother Jack Moxon and sister Susan Moxon Alto) have puzzled over what to do with their dad's minivan.

“Dad would love this,” Diane said, as she and June introduced the van — named “Artie” — to

Shumard and other Veterans Hall members. Art Moxon served in the Navy in the South Pacific during WWII, Diane said, and he'd like knowing that other vets would be using Artie.

“This is perfect,” both Diane and Veterans Hall Commander Jeff Sterling said. “All Artie needs is a little love,” Jeff added.

Who knows? Maybe someone else with a big heart will donate a little bodywork to help get Artie back on the road.

*In the photo, (from left) June Moxon, Leonard Shumard, Jeff Sterling, Diane Moxon LaFleur and Phil Irvine show off the Arcata Veterans Hall's new transport, Artie.*

Ted Pease is editor of Senior News.



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# The Most Important Job We Do — Caring for Each Other

By JoAnn Schuch

It was hard being a caregiver for my parents for five years, but it was one of the most important things I've ever done.

In the early 2000s, my parents, Helen and Walter Schuch, were both in their 80s. They were still living independently, but they were getting noticeably older. My mother had dementia and memory loss, and my father, who was older but an active guy, was her caregiver.

But in 2005, my father got sick, and the fragile balance tipped. Needing more help, they moved in with me.

We had not actually lived together since I was in high school. Suddenly I was a teenager again and we were having the same fights over how I washed dishes. Mom, who was pleasantly demented, would happily call out, "Happy New Year!" to everyone who came in the house. Meanwhile, Dad and I were snapping at each other over the thermostat.

It was a crash course in senior issues. Suddenly I was aware of the difficulties with transportation for seniors, negotiating the medical system, insurance challenges, and trying to figure out what kind of help I could get from the various senior agencies and businesses.

Fortunately, I had already taken the Caregiver Certification class at the Humboldt Senior Resource Center. That gave me a basis for helping my mom with toileting and showers, as I learned about things like wound care and managing edema.



Helen and Walter Schuch in the 1950s. Photo courtesy of JoAnn Schuch.

I felt great isolation as a caregiver. I had no family or partner to help. My Arcata neighbors were no help. My friends mostly disappeared. Some friends disapproved of my choice to help my parents; for others, it was just too hard to watch. Things I did every day were not things I could talk to most people about, nor express the sadness of watching my mother's memories slip away, or of witnessing my father's fear of dying.

Because I totally believe the adage, "You can't take care of them if you aren't taking care of yourself," I embraced self-care when I could. I took morning walks in the Arcata forest with my dog. I appreciated friends who asked me to dinner, and

let me sit like a person in shock while conversations flowed around me. They didn't comment when I had an extra glass of wine.

Caregiving is hard, and it is not for everyone, but it was something I could not refuse to do. I am temperamentally suited to helping; I had the skills, the job flexibility and enough money to cushion the shocks to my living situation. I took on the job willingly.

The years I had with Dad at the end of his life helped me understand him and myself better. I was the last witness to hear what he wanted to say about his life. I was also able to give my Mom the kind of care she had missed as a child, when her mother had to place her in a convent while she worked.

With me, Mom was safe and cared for in her second childhood, even if in her last years she did not know who I was.

For all its difficulties, caregiving for my parents was a profound experience and a privilege. All the things we do in life — getting jobs, achieving status, acquiring things — are not our most important work here on Earth. Caring for each other is.

And caring for each other is joyous. As my Mom would say, "Happy New Year!"

—  
**JoAnn Schuch, 61, of Arcata is a founding member of Redwood Coast Village and a kitchen designer at [finekitchendesign.com](http://finekitchendesign.com).**

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## I Don't Know What I'd Do . . . From Page 1

"I won't go to a home," she said adamantly. "I won't do that. I saw what my mother went through."

Diaz and the other 100 or so local MSSP clients are assigned caregiving teams that include a nurse, a social worker, mental health resources, and a raft of other services geared to individual needs, from rides to doctor's appointments and the grocery, to personal financial counseling.

Diaz said her team can even arrange services such as

repairs to the screen door of her small home. "A lady came and put handrails in my bathroom after my surgery," she said.

Stephanie Case-Robin, 75, is a widow who lives alone and depends on her MSSP caregivers. "I have a wonderful little house in Ferndale and I want to stay here," she said. "[MSSP] keeps me in contact with people who can help. If you don't have that, you're really in a pretty poor state."

### MSSP Services

Multipurpose Senior Services Program (MSSP) participants must be 65 or older, and Medi-Cal recipients whose health makes them eligible for nursing home care. MSSP services help keep them in their homes.

- Case management
- Mental health care
- Personal care services
- In-Home Support Services (IHSS)
- Respite care
- Home-delivered meals
- Home equipment
- Minor home repairs
- Transportation
- Chore services
- Personal emergency response system communication device
- Adult day care/support center/health care
- Protective supervision
- Money management



**Mary Ann Diaz at her home in Eureka. MSSP "is really wonderful," she says.** Ted Pease photo.

Abrahams, who directs care teams for both Case-Robin and Diaz, says, "these clients are very easy for me to love." And that works both ways.

"Dora's wonderful," Case-Robin said. "She just understands people who want to stay in their own home. She really connects with you. I look forward to talking with her. She gives me both empathy and sympathy."

Diaz agreed. "She's been a lifesaver."

Abrahams is care manager for about 25 clients. "I am constantly humbled and honored to be able to do the work I do," she said.

She says it's difficult for her to put into words how rewarding her job is. "My clients let me into their homes, they tell me their histories and their fears, they are vulnerable with me, and they

(usually) let me help them," Abrahams said.

"Working with this population, I am constantly reminded of what is truly important in life."

The "service" in MSSP really is multipurpose, the program's clients say, whether it's day-to-day care or deeper life issues.

Case-Robin's husband died seven years ago. "I'm still grieving," she said. "Many's the time I've cried in front of Dora. She helps me understand that grieving is a process."


"It's hard getting old. They didn't warn us about this. It's hard," Case-Robin said. "It helps to know that there are people who can help you, but you have to be able to depend on other people."

—  
**Ted Pease, 62, of Trinidad**  
*is Senior News editor.*

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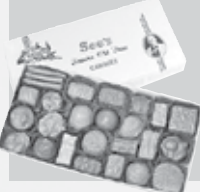


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## ASK THE DOCTOR

# Health-caring Is a Gift

By Jennifer Heidmann, M.D.



In this modern era, doctors are called “healthcare providers” — along with our colleagues who work in clinics, hospitals, care homes, physical therapy centers, rehabs, and so on.

I have never liked this term. While it is technically correct, it does not begin to capture the scope of what I do, or what any of my colleagues do. It sounds like we are part of an assembly line in the factory of human brokenness and suffering.

Delivering a baby is “providing health care.” Hospice is “providing health care.” The surgeon plunging her hands into someone’s abdomen to save their life is “providing health care.”

As has recently been pointed out, health care is complicated, at least in terms of the payment structure in our country, the multitude of forms, electronic medical records, and understanding all the many technological advances we have available to treat diseases. But the work done by people who have chosen to be doctors, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, nurses, therapists, medical assistants, phlebotomists, aides, personal-care attendants, and all the others tending to people in illness and health is not actually all that complicated.

Yes, it takes special training and expertise. For physicians, that can mean many years of school and residency and fellowships. But what it comes down to is this: a human being meets another human being and offers cure sometimes, relief

often, and comfort always.

In our work at the Humboldt Senior Resource Center, we get to interact with many people in our community of elders, some in robust health and others needing extra support. Redwood Coast PACE (Program of All-inclusive Care for the Elderly) recently turned 3 years old, and is especially geared toward offering support for those who need it.

We do provide health care, but our team does not look at it in those narrow terms. PACE is actually a community that includes both the people who work here and the people who participate in our program.

Our participants help each other, develop relationships with staff, and bring their own personalities and talents to our organization. We are honored to usher people through sickness and health, to define health as more than just medicines and medical care, and to be present for those who are going through the end of life.

I do not think we are unique in our desire to provide excellent care, though we are fortunate at PACE to have a team of people with a rich variety of expertise and gifts. Other healthcare “providers” in our community — hospice, the hospitals, Resolution Care, the IPA, physical therapy centers, clinics, midwives, radiology centers and labs — are also filled with people who chose to be caregivers. Sometimes the enormity and chaos of our health-care system can diminish the sense

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## Jitterbug or Foxtrot — Get Dancing!

Two left feet? Don’t let that stop you, say German neuroscientists — get out there and dance!

Scientists at the Center for Neurodegenerative Diseases in Magdeburg, Germany recruited volunteers averaging age 68 for a study of the effect on dancing on seniors’ balance, mobility and cognitive functions.

Volunteers in the study were placed in two groups; one learned dance routines, and the other did weight training and endurance exercises.

“Because of the added mental challenge of remembering dance steps and sensorimotor demands, dancing may be a better form of exercise than traditional fitness training when it comes to slowing the signs of aging,” say reports on the study, published in *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience*.

After 18 months, both groups showed improvements in the area of the brain important to memory, but the dancers came out with better cognitive skills, and higher balance, posture and sensorimotor scores.

The study confirmed other research, including a larger 2003 study of various leisure activities that found dancing most associated with staving off dementia.

“Dance is a complex activity that combines mental, physical, emotional and social aspects that together can be beneficial to your brain and overall health,” says neurology professor Dr. Joe Verghese.

The other great benefit? Dancing is a lot more fun than lifting weights.

—Ted Pease

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# Team Carla: Sometimes It Takes a Village

By Janine Volkmar

Eighteen years ago, when Carla Powell was almost 83 years old, I helped her in her garden. She could walk with a cane and her trusty hoe, but knew she shouldn't be alone outside.

We weeded together, holding our prizes with their long and dangling roots aloft, exclaiming to each other, "Oxalis!" or "Sorrel!" She was the best weeder I'd ever seen, diligent and sharp-eyed. I'd carry the buckets of weeds away and help her up at the end of our session.

My gardening help morphed into caretaking as the ataxia took its hold on her, making walking more difficult and any bending up or down a source of dizziness. She was using a walker then, and seemed unsteady. I followed her around the house, and anywhere she grabbed for a door jamb or handhold, I would slap on a Post-it. Her handyman installed grab bars on those spots.

Carla's goal was to stay in her own home until she died. Eventually, a dedicated group of seven caregiving women and one man, and awesome neighbors, made that possible. When extra hours were needed, we'd recruit another friend to join the group.

Our routine was as she wanted it: a few hours in the morning for help with bathing and dressing, making breakfast and washing up, housework as needed, and a lunch that we left ready for her to serve herself. In the evening, we made dinner, did more housework, helped her get ready for bed, and then left her, peaceful and content in her lift chair, doing the crossword or watching television. She'd get herself to bed. Carla valued her privacy and independence and she didn't want someone in her house "all the time."

We took her shopping and to doctor's appointments, did errands, paperwork, and anything else that needed doing.

Bladder infections are an old person's *bête noir*. Young women recognize the symptoms and reach for the cranberry juice. Older folks, both men and women, often don't feel the pain, so the infection progresses, causing spikes of high temperatures and a confusion often mistaken for dementia. It was such an infection that sent Carla to the hospital in 2011 and put her plans at risk.

Some distant relatives had taken her out to dinner. They brought her home and, at her insistence that she was "fine," left her in her kitchen chair. After they'd gone, she fell out of the chair and was on the floor for hours before pushing her help button, which she always wore but sometimes didn't remember.

A week in the hospital cleared up the bladder infection but resulted in a hospital-garnered lung infection. When she

was released, her nieces wanted her to go to a skilled nursing home. Carla freaked.

"We'll do 24-hour care," the caregivers said. The relatives were skeptical but, with the help of the hospital home care staff, it worked. Carla, frugal by nature and a child of the Depression, told us, "I don't want to pay you to sleep." We weren't sleeping but we knew she just wanted her privacy back.

"Get better and fire us," we told her, and soon she did. We went back to the morning and evening hours and she was happy.

What we learned from that experience became a routine that kept Carla safe in her own home. Every day we'd fill a water bottle that she had to drink over the next few hours. And we recorded her temperature twice a day, and kept a journal with detailed notes to each other.

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# Adventures with Mom: It's Hard to Let Go

By Janet G. Patterson

My 98-year-old mother lives at Spring Lake Village in Santa Rosa, a facility with three levels of care: independent, assisted, and skilled nursing. My brother lives in nearby Sonoma, my older sister in Oakland, and I have a younger sister who lives in Montana. I live here in Humboldt County.

My mom suffered a series of seizures in early February, and required 'round-the-clock care. It was I who broke a family tradition of passivity, insisting that she be moved to a private room in skilled nursing. The suggested move from her home in Assisted Living for the previous three years was difficult for the entire family.

She was scheduled to make the transition in mid-October, but on Oct. 9 the fast-approaching wildfires forced everyone at Spring Lake Village to be evacuated. My mom was taken to Oakland, near my older sister. I soon realized that disasters affect people in multiple ways. For my mother, it was the

sudden move. Mostly lucid before the fires, she became what more rational folks call "confused."

One social worker explained that this was a normal response at my mom's age, and warned us that she might never go back to her former lucidity.

**"She wants us to care for her, as we do, but not to hover over her, as we tend to."**

She hasn't.

On Nov. 1, after more than three weeks in Oakland, my mother returned to her new skilled nursing room in Santa Rosa. My husband and I spent the first weekend after she was back choosing her

paintings, photos, and a few furnishings, transforming the room into her new home. Mom is nearly blind due to macular degeneration, but the environment feels good.

It's hard to watch my mother struggle with her losses. Once an avid reader, she has given that up because of her failing eyesight. Her own writings have been a comfort to her, I suppose, as we each read her memoirs over and over again to her.

The principal reason my mother came here in her late 70s was to live independently, so that no one would be burdened with her care. She wants us to care for her, as we do, but not to hover over her, as we tend to.

It's hard to let go, no matter what fires or forces of nature tell us.

**Janet G. Patterson** of Eureka is retired elementary Spanish teacher with a PhD in psychology.



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## SONGS WE TELL EACH OTHER

BY MARGARET KELLERMANN

# What I Learned From Helen's 'Dimensia'

Except what I pick up from The New York Times cross-words, I know nothing about medical terms. But the condition of dementia might better be labeled “dimensia” — sensing multiple dimensions.

If we called it dimensia, the term would remind us that we could learn much from our friends with the condition. Often, those I've met want to share what they seem to sense on another level.

I spent a few years getting to know — and slowly saying goodbye to — a friend I'll call Helen, whom I met in 2013 while passing through Humboldt County on a road trip. Helen seemed okay then.

But maybe she was already experiencing twinges of dimensia. When I asked if this area of Northern California might be a good place for me to settle down, Helen only said, “There's dark and light. Just know that.” It was just one of many bald, other-worldly statements she'd make, until she died a few weeks ago.

Year by year, her dimensia deepened.

2014: At a café, I noticed Helen having trouble speaking. Haltingly, she told me about two friends: Lori and Lori's husband. “He made everything beautiful for her by just....” Running out of words, she arranged a spoon and cloth napkin near a vase of sweet peas.

“Like those flying animals by the harbor,” she concluded.

“You mean,” I tried to guess, “he arranged simple things beautifully for his sweetheart, like a flock of seagulls can make a harbor beautiful?”

She pointed at me: “Correct.”

2015: When we walked around town, Helen viewed sidewalk cracks as though they were chasms. Even though I assured her they were lines, not chasms, she stood paralyzed, not knowing which reality to trust.

2016: Helen could often be found talking to herself in the mirror, enjoying what seemed a pleasant, two-way conversation. I could only hear her side of the dialogue. Even those muttered phrases were difficult to parse. She could see and hear something I couldn't, but what?

2017: I was saying goodbye to Helen for the day, having given her husband time away from constant demands of her dimensia. I had spent the hours following her as I used to trail after my toddlers, offering snacks and juice, nodding at all the questions.

Suddenly, she switched back to the Helen I'd known. “I'm so sorry you have to go through this,” she empathized, incredibly. “All we can do is keep moving forward.”

**Margaret Kellermann** travels around the county and plays therapeutic music to those who are sick. Schedule a time at [bluelakestudio.net/contact](http://bluelakestudio.net/contact).

## Dog Owners May Have to Vacuum More, But They Live Longer

For your heart and for your health, you really should get a dog.

That's what Swedish researchers say after studying 3.4 million people over 12 years. Swedes age 40 to 80 who live alone cut their risk of death by 36 percent by putting up with dog hair, barking, drooling and snuggles on the sofa.

Researcher Tove Fall, an epidemiologist at Uppsala University (and owner of a 5-month-old puppy), says owning a dog can “neutralize the effects of living alone.”

The Guardian newspaper also reports that the head of Britain's general practitioners medical group, Helen Stokes-Lampard, “warned that loneliness is as bad for human health as a long-term illness.”

She said that the estimated 1.1 million Britons who live

alone “are 50 percent more likely to die prematurely than those with good social networks, making loneliness as harmful to the nation's health as diabetes.”

In the Swedish study, dog owners who lived alone were 33 percent less likely to die than those without canine family members.

What dogs are healthiest for humans? People with hunting breeds — terriers, retrievers and scent hounds — had the lowest risk of heart disease, the study found. Of course, people with such dogs may be more physically active in the first place, and those breeds need more exercise.

But Fall thinks there's more to it than dog-walking. “My impression is that this has to do with social support,” she said.

—Ted Pease

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# Empathy and Tips for Caregivers

Wendy Lustbader, MSW, a Seattle social work professional, has nothing but empathy for caregivers, who often are overworked and feel underappreciated.

“In many senses, the sickroom or house becomes a world to the person confined within its limits,” writes Lustbader and her coauthor, Nancy R. Hooyman, in “Taking Care of Aging Family Members.” Caregivers must try to recognize the losses their patients may have experienced:

- Loss of social contact beyond family members and caregivers.
- Loss of purpose: How can I be useful or contribute to others?
- Loss of independence: Lack of privacy and control over daily living.

- Loss of mobility.

- Loss of sensory pleasures — taste, smell, eyesight, hearing or touch.

Those who require regular caregiving can feel lonely, trivial and dull, taking out their frustrations on those who come to help.

“What do difficult people want?” Lustbader asked. “They want recognition. Attention. They want to be heard. They want to matter to somebody else. They want to have control of their lives.

“They want to be liked,” she said. “The very thing they want the most is the thing that eludes them the most.”

See Wendy Lustbader and Nancy R. Hooyman, *Taking Care of Aging Family Members* (New York: The Free Press, 1994).

## TEAM CARLA . . . From Page 6



**Carla Powell, a former opera singer who lived in Trinidad for more than 50 years, depended on her friends, neighbors and “Team Carla” to remain at home until her death in May 2017 at age 100-3/4. Janine Volkmar photo.**

## Give the Gift of Music This Holiday Season

**Eureka SYMPHONY**  
World Classics, North Coast Musicians | 2017/2018

### Winter Dreams

Dec. 1 & 2, 2017, at 8 p.m. *Overture to Hansel and Gretel*, *Russian Christmas Music*. David Powell and Fiona Ryder-Gadd & the Eureka Symphony Chorus sing holiday favorites from Messiah and Gustav Holst's *In the Bleak Midwinter* ending with a sing-a-long

### Chamber Music Benefit Concert

Sunday, February 11, 2018, at 3 p.m. at the Eureka Woman's Club, \$30 per person

### In Like A Lion

March 2 & 3, 2018, at 8 p.m. Vivaldi; Benda, Flute Concerto in E minor Guest artist, Paula Thomas, flute; Dvorak, Symphony #3 in E flat Op. 10

### The Language of Love

April 13 & 14, 2018, at 8 p.m. Chopin, Guest artist, Robert Satterlee, piano, Tchaikovsky, Rota & Bernstein

### Transitions of the Past

May 18 & 19, 2018, at 8 p.m. Cherubini with the Eureka Symphony Chorus

Buy tickets online at [eurekasymphony.org](http://eurekasymphony.org)

Or by phone (707) 845-3655

Performances are at the Arkley Center for the Performing Arts, Eureka unless otherwise noted.

It tired Carla to do the transfers in and out of a car to get to a doctor's appointment, and we tried several times to get Hospice help and the services of the on-call nurse. Hospice came twice but deemed her “too healthy and well-cared for.”

But they were there at the end. The last month of Carla's life was a downhill slope, and with the help of the wonderful folks from Hospice and 24-hour help from her caregivers, she got her wish to die in her own home on May 12, 2017. It was peaceful.

Her caregivers went out to breakfast to celebrate her 101st birthday on Aug. 16. After raising our coffee cups to toast her, I looked around at Team Carla and said, “Pat yourselves on the back. We made it possible.”

**Janine Volkmar, 68, first came to Trinidad in 1972 and is a librarian, writer and photographer.**



AGING IS AN ART — BY JOHN HECKEL

## Life's Too Short for Waiting

**M**emo to the Medical Community: Let's talk waiting. You know, that activity I do when we make an appointment for 2 in the afternoon and you do not see me until 5. You do know, don't you, that as we age we have less time left to spend waiting?

Now, I don't mind a bit of waiting, but it came to me the other day while — you guessed it — waiting in a waiting room, that there should be a formula to determine how long you have to wait.

If I am 71, does it make sense that I should wait as long as the 35-year-old sitting next to me? No. Given life expectancy and all, make that person wait longer. When I arrive (always at least 15 minutes early, mind you), you have me sign in; there should be place on that form to indicate age. The older you are, the quicker you get seen! Simple.

When 95-year-old Edgar comes in (on time, of course) for his annual physical, someone should immediately announce, "Right this way, Mr. Peterson, the doctor has been waiting for you."

The chances are also greater that we, the older ones, are waiting to hear we have some terminal disease. Does it seem fair to make us wait, and use up what little life we have left to hear that news? If you are going to tell me that I have some Stage 4 cancer, I want the nurse to announce to the entire waiting room, "Ah, Mr. Heckel, right this way! Excuse me, he does not have

that long to live and we need to get him in and out of here as fast as possible so he can get on with living the weeks he has left."

Make me wait? Not on your life!

And please, get rid of those waiting room TV monitors that recycle snippets about diabetes, fibromyalgia or migraines. The waiting is difficult enough without the every-30-seconds recycled, semi-educational lecture about what I should do if I suspect I am in danger of becoming diabetic, or the latest FDA-approved way to dispose of outdated drugs.

Please! Life's too short.

I recently sat in one waiting room with a group of eight other waiters, each of whom, statistically, had only probably 10 or 15 years left. Think for a minute about what that means.

And why call it a waiting room? Are you trying to make a point?

A "reception room" implies receiving; a "welcoming room" is to welcome, and a "greeting room" suggests a greeting. Which room would you prefer — one in which you are greeted, welcomed, received, or one in which you wait?

Please?

**John Heckel, Ph.D.**, a regular Senior News columnist, is a former HSU theater and film professor with a doctorate in psychology.

## Turning 70? Time to Spend Some IRA Funds

By Mike Cunningham

If you are about to turn 70, you need to think about starting to take funds out of your IRAs every year.

The Internal Revenue Service's required minimum distribution (RMD) rules mandate amounts that taxpayers must withdraw from IRA accounts annually. The withdrawals should begin in the year that the taxpayer turns age 70½.

There is a grace period for the first withdrawal, which can be as late as April 15 of the following year. If you do wait until April of the following year, however, remember that you must make two distributions that year.

Roth IRAs do not require withdrawals until after the death of the owner.

The amount of the RMD is based on the total value of your IRAs, and your expected lifespan, and there are various methods of calculating it. You may take all of the RMD out of one IRA if you wish.

Most IRA custodians, or any tax professional, can help you calculate the amount. Brokers and custodians normally do it for free. Tax professionals will charge for the service.

The distribution is included in income on the Form 1040 Income Tax form, and can result in a considerable amount of tax.

**TIP!** If you donate the required amount to a 501(c)(3) charity, the distribution is non-taxable, but you do not also get an itemized deduction for gifts to charity.

The key points about RMDs:

- You must be 70½ or older at the time of the distribution.
- All or part of the required minimum distribution may be made to charities or other recipients.
- The non-taxable distribution is limited to \$100,000 per taxpayer.
- The deduction is allowed only to the extent the distribution would otherwise be included in taxable income. (**TIP!** If the deduction would not, for some reason, be included in taxable income, it might be better to take the distribution and then claim an itemized charitable deduction. Consult your financial advisor.)

Many will remember this provision as a temporary item in the tax code; it is now a permanent part of tax law

**Mike Cunningham** of Eureka is a licensed professional fiduciary and a founder of Cunningham, Malone & Morton, Inc., a tax preparation service.

**"You can do anything,  
but not everything."**

—David Allen, productivity consultant



1910 California Street, Eureka CA 95501

**HSRC News**707 443-9747 • [www.humsenior.org](http://www.humsenior.org)

# From Piper Cubs to B-28s, Bob Ford Loved to Fly

*By Hannah HagQuist*

Bob Ford, 84, has always loved planes. At the ripe age of 14, he learned how to fly single-engine Piper Cubs over the tall trees of Scotia.

A native of Willits, Ford moved to Weott in Southern Humboldt as a kid, and still considers the SoHum redwoods his home. He graduated from South Fork High in Miranda in 1950 with the ambition of becoming a pilot in the U.S. Air Force.

After finishing high school, Ford went to Santa Rosa Junior College for two years, majoring in aeronautics, and then transferred to Chico State University before enlisting in the Air Force.

Ford says his best day in the military was when he graduated from Reese Air Force Base in Lubbock, Texas, in November 1954, assigned to fly B-25s. "I finally made it," he said, "I was declared a light bomber pilot and didn't have to go to Korea."

"Not everyone and their crew made it out of there," he said.

Ford missed the Korean War by one year. He was stationed with the 82nd Airborne as a carrier pilot, mainly transporting troops and supplies. He was stationed in Normandy, France, and in the Black Forest, Baden-Württemberg, Germany.

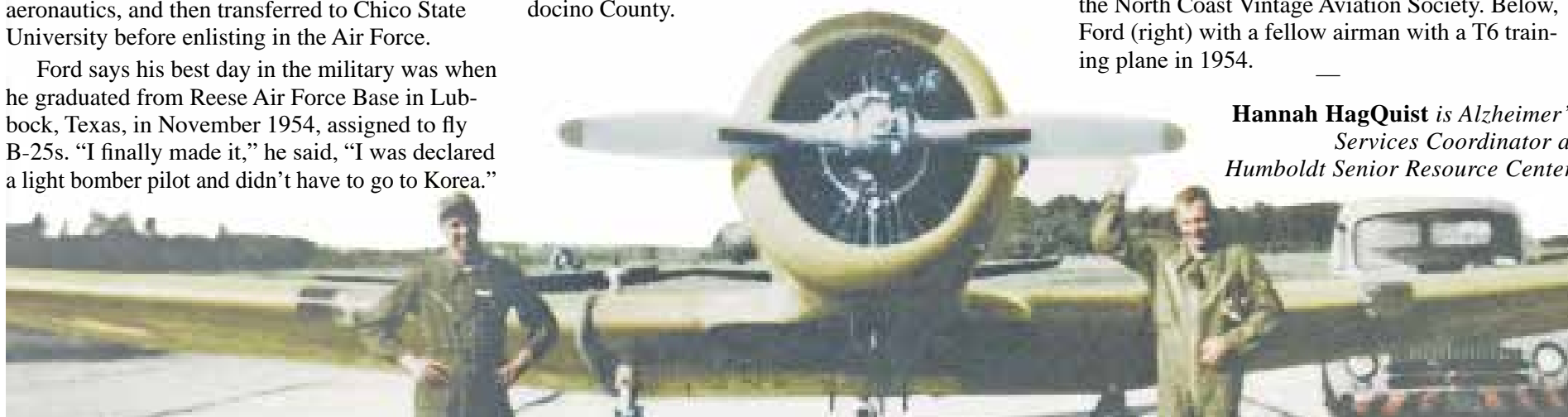
Although he values his military experience, Ford said, "I was glad to get out and didn't ask to stay."

After the Air Force, Ford became a commercial pilot and managed the Little River Airport in Mendocino County.

Ford said his military service and training helped him immensely in his career as a commercial pilot. "When I started training, I only knew how to fly Piper Cubs, which are very small planes," he said. "Then I learned how to fly T6s, which were a bit bigger, T28s which were even bigger, and B25s which were the biggest and most modern."

Ford now lives in Eureka and is a participant in the Adult Day Health Program at the Humboldt Senior Resource Center. He is an active member of the North Coast Vintage Aviation Society. Below, Ford (right) with a fellow airman with a T6 training plane in 1954.

**Hannah HagQuist** is Alzheimer's Services Coordinator at Humboldt Senior Resource Center.



**SUBARU share the love® EVENT**

Purchase or lease a new Subaru from Nov. 16, 2017 - Jan. 2, 2018, through their annual Share the Love Event and you can support homebound seniors in McKinleyville, Arcata, Eureka, Fortuna, and across the country.

**Subaru America & McCrea Subaru will donate \$250 to charities on your behalf — selected by you.**

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[www.humsenior.org](http://www.humsenior.org)

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Alzheimer's Services

Multipurpose Senior Services Program (MSSP)

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Home Delivered Meals

### Activities Programs

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### Senior News

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## Subaru Shares Love and Turkey



More than 120 seniors and their family members gathered at the Eureka Senior Dining Center in mid-November to kick off the holiday season with a turkey dinner with all the trimmings, pumpkin pie and good company.

Among the dignitaries helping serve the meal was Lee Dennis, a salesman with McCrea Subaru in Eureka, which is partnering with the Humboldt Senior Resource Center's Senior Nutrition program for its annual "Share the Love" sales event through Jan. 2.

Subaru buyers can designate HSRC's meals program to receive \$250 for each car sold or leased from McCrea and Subaru America.

"Our partnership with Subaru is a wonderful program that lets the Humboldt community share the love with its needy seniors," said Barbara Walser, director of HSRC's nutrition and activities program.

**At left, Lee Dennis offers meals to Diane Simas. Ted Pease photo.**

## December *Dining Menu*



Humboldt Senior  
Resource Center

Nutrition & Activities Program

### FIRST WEEK

Dec. 1 Tuna Casserole

### SECOND WEEK

Dec. 4 Dining Centers closed

Dec. 5 Soft Taco

Dec. 6 Chicken Curry

Dec. 7 Beef Ravioli

Dec. 8 Baked Citrus Salmon

### THIRD WEEK

Dec. 11 Dining Centers closed

Dec. 12 Swedish Meatballs

Dec. 13 Chicken Cacciatore

Dec. 14 Cheese Manicotti/Tomato Cream

Dec. 15 Baked Ham, Mashed Potatoes,  
Candied Yams, String Beans,  
Dinner Roll & Apple Pie

—Holiday Meal—

### FOURTH WEEK

Dec. 18 Dining Centers closed

Dec. 19 Loaded Baked Potato Soup

Dec. 20 Honey Baked Chicken & Apples

Dec. 21 Meat Loaf with Gravy

Dec. 22 Chicken/Fire Roasted Tomatoes

### FIFTH WEEK

Dec. 25 Dining Centers closed

Dec. 26 Dining Centers closed

Dec. 27 Broccoli Cheese Soup

Dec. 28 Chicken Cordon Bleu

Dec. 29 Apricot-Glazed Pork Loin

—New Year's Meal—

**People 60+ are invited**

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For those under 60 there is a fee.

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# Letters to the Editor

## Mobile Homes Excluded

To the Editor:

The October issue of Senior News included a story about property tax assistance for homeowners ["Property Tax Deferrals"]. After (excitedly) calling the phone number and listening at length about the criteria for the program, at the end I was told that mobile homes do not qualify.

Given that so many seniors and other low-income residents of Humboldt County pursue mobile home purchases as a way to avoid paying our area's high rents, perhaps the Humboldt Senior Resource Center or another agency focused on issues relevant to seniors might offer an informational meeting on the process and costs of purchasing a mobile home.

Since Measure V passed in November 2016, protecting seniors and others who reside in the county's many mobile home parks with rent stabilization, such information would be timely. (The Arcata City Council is currently considering a similar ordinance.)

When I was looking into buying a mobile home, I wasn't told that I would be paying for the owner's property taxes. Although we own our homes, we rent the space from the owner(s) of the mobile home park. It was a challenge to get financing for a mobile home, and there are few companies that provide homeowner's insurance for mobile/manufactured homes. It was a very educational process to go through, and real estate agents don't necessarily talk with their clients about these matters.

**Lori Cole, Arcata**

Editor's Note: *The state's Property Tax Postponement (PTP) Program is accepting applications — but not for mobile homes! — by calling 800-952-5661 or emailing [postponement@sco.ca.gov](mailto:postponement@sco.ca.gov).*

**Letters Policy:** Senior News welcomes letters to the editor. To be considered for publication, letters 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 [tpase@humsenior.org](mailto:tpase@humsenior.org) or mail to Senior News, 1910 California St., Eureka CA 95501.

## More Smoke

To the Editor:

I am pleased to see letters addressing the problem of wood smoke in Humboldt. The fresh air was one factor that drew me to this area, but with smoke from heating in the winter and the burning of yard waste much of the year, clean air can be scarce.

The official air pollution statistics for the region generally are irrelevant when smoke from a neighbor's stove drifts to my home. Many days I must keep all my windows closed and stay indoors.

What can we do to insure people are not cold while reducing the bane of wood smoke in Humboldt?

**Lynne Page, Eureka**

## LGBT Seniors

The American Society on Aging (ASA) has joined in a lawsuit heading for the U.S. Supreme Court over a gay couple denied a wedding cake in Colorado.

The lawsuit involves a Denver-area bakery that refused to make a wedding cake for a same-sex couple in 2012. The couple sued and won in Colorado, the bakery appealed, and the high court will hear the case this month.

This ruling will matter to the 4 million Americans age 60 and over who self-identify as LGBT, and may be denied services, ASA said.

"Discrimination of any kind erodes quality of life," ASA said.

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## Senior Giving Tree

Humboldt Senior Resource Center's Multipurpose Senior Services Program (MSSP) and Broadway Medical will partner again this holiday season to provide some holiday cheer to homebound seniors.

Drop by Broadway Medical at 1034 Broadway in Eureka, over the next month to support the annual Senior Giving Tree to benefit MSSP participants.

Your donations will be used to purchase gift cards to provide seniors with groceries or warm winter items, making the holiday season a bit brighter for individuals who otherwise would receive little to nothing at this time of year.

Thank you in advance to our generous community and to Broadway Medical for the ongoing support of local elderly.



**The Animal Shelter's Patty West and a friend get ready for the open house.**

Ted Pease photo.

## New treatment for painful, numb feet

by Ed Handl

Do you have painful, numb feet? You may be suffering from a nerve disorder called peripheral neuropathy.

An estimated 15 million people nationwide suffer from this painful disorder. The symptoms can be burning, sharp and aching pains, cold feet or hands, tingling and numbness that gradually progresses from the toes or fingers to involve the feet or hands.

Another common experience is that the severity of the symptoms increases at night. Some people eventually begin to lose their balance as nerve signals become poorer.

There are many different causes of peripheral neuropathy. Diabetes is the most commonly recognized but not the most commonly diagnosed.

Idiopathic peripheral neuropathy is the most commonly diagnosed form. Idiopathic means that it is of unknown origin.

Whatever the cause, the effects on the peripheral nerves are similar and cause insufficient blood and nutrient supply to those nerves. This can result in loss of the nerves'

protective barrier (myelin sheath) and widening of synaptic gaps (junction points from one nerve to the next). This damage is what causes the symptoms of peripheral neuropathy.

Most people suffer from sensory nerve issues — burning, tingling and numbness. Fewer have motor nerve involvement, with muscle weakness, cramping and loss of balance.

### TREATMENT

The treatment for peripheral neuropathy has mostly consisted of a multitude of medications, from narcotics to antidepressants and anti-seizures. Popping pills is not what most people want anymore.

But there is a revolutionary new treatment for this painful nerve disorder. It is called the Sympathetic Therapy System (STS). At Humboldt Hand and Foot Therapy in Eureka, we have introduced a successful program designed to treat peripheral neuropathy patients with the STS (Sympathetic Therapy System) and infrared lights.

STS works by applying electrical stimulation over peripheral dermatome sites (areas of skin that are

mainly supplied by single spinal nerves). This unique form of stimulation is unlike any used before and gives dramatically different results.

By stimulating bilaterally over these peripheral nerve sites and communicating along these nerve pathways across the spine, we can target the sympathetic nervous system, calming and normalizing it. Lowering sympathetic nervous activity dilates peripheral blood vessels.

In essence, STS asks the body to calm these overactive nerves, as well as to increase blood flow out to the hands or feet. The increase in blood flow brings back the nutrients that those damaged nerves desperately need, creating a healing environment. Most neuropathy patients respond to this treatment at some level. Treatments are Medicare and FDA approved.



**Martha Longshore receives treatment for peripheral neuropathy at Humboldt Hand and Foot Therapy.**

Photo by Amy Landing

These comfortable, non-invasive treatments have no side effects and can potentially reverse the symptoms of this condition.

Call Humboldt Hand and Foot with any questions, at 441-1931.

*Ed Handl is a BS Athletic Trainer and therapist at Humboldt Hand & Foot Therapy located at 1587 Myrtle Ave., Eureka.*

**THIS IS A PAID ADVERTISEMENT**

## Go to the Dogs at Animal Shelter Fundraiser

Animal lovers from all over will converge on the Humboldt County Animal Shelter in McKinleyville on Saturday, Dec. 9, for the 13<sup>th</sup> annual fundraiser open house.

Proceeds from the silent auction and raffle go to the Emergency Medical Fund, administered by the nonprofit animal rescue Friends for Life. The medical fund pays for surgeries and veterinarian care that is not otherwise possible under the Shelter's regular budget, and saves animals from euthanasia.

The event, from noon to 4 p.m. at the Shelter, 980 Ly-

coming Ave., next to the airport in McKinleyville, includes a raffle and silent auction of holiday and animal-themed donations from more than 100 local businesses and individuals.

Staff and volunteers will introduce you to resident dogs and cats who need good homes.

Donations and contributions are still needed. Contact Patty West at 707-840-9132.

*Page 1 dog-elf photos by Shelter volunteer Cassie Moore.*

## Have a Tuba Christmas

It's Tuba Christmas time again as Humboldters will hear the sound of tubas and euphoniums playing Christmas carols wafting across McKinleyville, Eureka and Fortuna. For the 30th year, Fred Tempas and his Tuba Band will play seasonal favorites: Saturday, Dec. 2, at 1 p.m. at Eureka's Old Town Gazebo, and at 3 p.m. at the McKinleyville Shopping Center. The Fortuna concert will be the following weekend: Sunday, Dec. 10, at 4 p.m. at Fortuna's Christmas Concert at the River Lodge.

Ted Pease photo.



## December Community Calendar

### Ice Rink Opens

Fortuna hosts Humboldt's ice rink for a third year in Newburg Park, opening Friday, Dec. 1 through Jan. 7, 2018. For information, email [humboldticerink@gmail.com](mailto:humboldticerink@gmail.com) or visit [humboldticerink.com/](http://humboldticerink.com/). Get skating!

### Humboldt Artisans Fair

Redwood Acres will host its annual three-day Humboldt Artisans Crafts and Music Festival, Friday-Sunday, Dec. 1-3. See scores of Humboldt crafts and artisans in this holiday tradition. Admission is free with a gift for Humboldt Bay Fire Department toy drive, free for kids and seniors, and after 5 p.m. Contact: [humartscraftsmusic@gmail.com](mailto:humartscraftsmusic@gmail.com).

### History Lectures

Humboldt historian Jerry Rohde's final three lectures in the Pierson History Series take place in December. He will do "Hark. Hark. The Park" twice — Friday, Dec. 1, at the Bayside Community Hall, 2297 Jacoby Creek Road, and Friday, Dec. 15, at the Clarke Museum on E Street in Eureka. "Going Up the River" will be at Blue Lake Elementary School on C Street on Friday, Dec. 8. All lectures are free and start at 7 p.m.

### Chocolate Factory Tour

For a taste of the holidays (or any time, really), take in the chocolate factory tour and tasting at Dick Taylor Craft Chocolate, 4 W. 4th St. (4th & A), Eureka, in December — Friday, Dec. 8, 3-4 p.m.; Friday, Dec. 15, 3-4 p.m.; Saturday, Dec. 16, 1-2 p.m., and Friday, Dec. 22, 3-4 p.m. \$5.

### Ferndale Christmas Tree

Ferndale decks itself out for the holidays with the annual lighting of "America's Tallest Living Christmas Tree" on Sunday, Dec. 3, at 5:30 p.m. The whole town turns out, along with the Booster Band, Chameleon Singers, 4-H, Scout Troops, etc., for the lighting ceremony, followed by free cookies and cocoa. A Ferndale tradition since 1934.

### Light Up a Life

Hospice of Humboldt will host a community Light Up a Life Candle-lighting Ceremony to honor and remember loved ones, Wednesday, Dec. 6, at 4 and 7 p.m. This event includes reflections, music, candlelighting and light refreshments. Hospice of Humboldt, 3327 Timber Fall Court in Eureka. For information, call 267-9811 or visit [hospiceofhumboldt.org](http://hospiceofhumboldt.org).

### Fortuna's Holiday Parade

Come out for the annual Al Gray Electric Lighted Parade of trucks, floats and other vehicles from Redwood Village Shopping Center to downtown. Join downtown merchants for refreshments and visit with Santa. Friday, Dec. 8, starting at 6:30 p.m. Call the Fortuna Chamber of Commerce at 725-3959 for information.

### Tractor Parade

The 25th Annual Lighted Tractor Parade down Ferndale's Main Street rumbles off on Sunday, Dec. 17, from 4:30-7:30 p.m. Local farmers and ranchers parade their decorated tractors and wagons through the Victorian Village. Tractors line up at 4:30 p.m. for judging; the parade begins at 6.

## North Coast Co-op Events

### December 6 • Wellness Wednesday

The first Wednesday of every month, save 10% off our entire Wellness Department.

### December 5, 12, 19, 26 • Senior Day

Seniors 60 and over receive a 5% discount on Tuesdays. No membership needed, but we'd love for you to join!

### December 24 • North Coast Co-op Closing Early

Both stores will be closing at 7pm.

### December 25 • North Coast Co-op Closed

Both stores will be closed all day for Christmas.



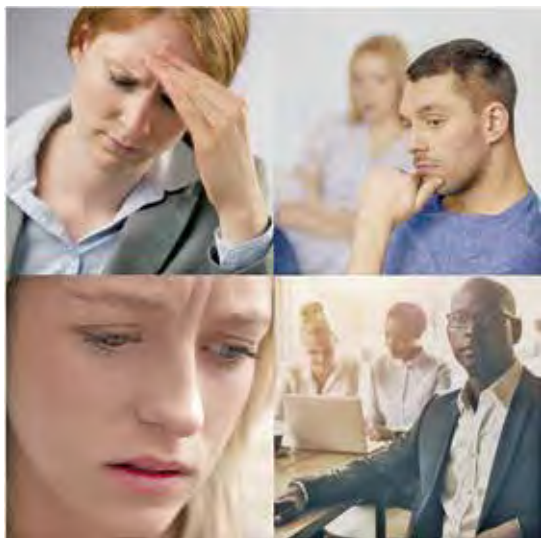
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Mon-Sat

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(Wheelchair Lift)

**Tish Non-Village**  
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## ASK THE DOCTOR . . . From Page 5

that there are caring individuals who show up every day to help others. But I see it all the time in my colleagues, a sense of dedication and joy despite the constant witnessing of suffering.

At Redwood Coast PACE, when one of our participants dies, it impacts us all deeply. When one of our participants overcomes hardship and becomes healthier and happier, it impacts us all deeply.

Some days we wish we could do more. If you ever wondered what your doctor, nurse, or any "health-care provider" is thinking and feeling, it can be summed up by this: our work impacts us deeply.

My usual column involves some advice or recommendations. This time I offer an ode to the caregivers in my field, and to the people in our community who entrust us with their illness and health. Being in the business of health-caring is a gift.

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



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# Dungeness Crabs — From Junk Food to Delicacy

By Ted Pease

For 2,000 years or more, fisherfolk have pulled bounty from the waters off the Humboldt coast. After Chinook salmon, perhaps no sea creature is more iconic than the Dungeness crab.

The Wiyot people lived and fished all along the coast, and when the Josiah Gregg party reached Humboldt Bay overland in 1849, the Wiyot village of Goutsuweljik welcomed the starving white men with elk, shellfish and crabs.

(Eleven years later, white settlers in what became “Buck’s Port,” next to the Wiyot village, massacred the natives, wiping Goutsuweljik from the map. But that’s another, sadder story.)

North Coast native tribes routinely collected crabs, historians report, plucking them from tidal pools, and spearing them with sticks.

For most immigrant white settlers, crabs were “poor man’s food,” or just a nuisance. Italian fishermen on San Francisco Bay “would sometimes catch nothing but crabs,” according to 1870 records, damaging nets and so irritating fishermen that they left them on the beach to die.

Irene Simoni of Arcata remembers when there was too *much* Dungeness. “My grandparents’ friend, Candido Rolandelli from Genoa, Italy, was a commercial fisherman in Eureka,” she said. “Every few days he would bring



**“OCEAN STRAWBERRIES!” — This was the call from crabseller Dad Pooler on the streets of Eureka in the early 1900s as he hawked giant Dungeness crabs, which turn pick as strawberries when cooked.**  
Photo courtesy of the Swanlund-Baker Collection, HSU Library.

huge sacks of crabs, and my poor mom ran out of ideas of how to use them.”

Neighbors didn’t want any more, Simoni said, “so in desperation, mom would put them into Jolly Giant Creek, which ran through our back yard, and they would happily swim back to Humboldt Bay.”

In the early 1900s on San Francisco streets, crabs fetched 40 cents to \$1.25 per dozen. Nowadays, of course, Dungeness is an \$8/pound luxury.

Commercial crabbing hasn’t opened yet this year, but sport fishermen with skiffs and kayaks crowded the beaches in early November. The catch in Trinidad Bay was so hot that fishermen quickly limited out (10 crabs per person). Some had too many: “Anyone need some more?”

One kayak crabber’s trap was so full that he needed help from a passing boat

to get it aboard without capsizing.

A few years ago, this letter from appeared in a local newspaper: “Dear Santa: Could you bring me lots of crabs for Christmas?” So far, signs are good.

**Ted Pease, 62, is a Trinidad sport fisherman, crab lover and editor of Senior News.**



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## 'Santa for Seniors'

Humboldt Bay firefighters are proud to announce their 10<sup>th</sup> annual "Santa for Seniors" program, this year in partnership with the Humboldt Senior Resource Center (HSRC).

All donations to "Santa for Seniors" will go to HSRC's White Bag Program, which provides local seniors with holiday bags decorated by local school children, and filled with food treats for the holidays, as well as a warm, nutritious meal.

HSRC aims to assemble, wrap and deliver more than 400 bags this year.

Make a cash donation to "Santa for Seniors" and help share the gift of Christmas with elders in our community.

For further information regarding "Santa for Seniors" or the Humboldt Bay Firefighters' "Share the Magic of Christmas" Toy Drive, contact John Goodman at Humboldt Bay Fire at 843-9781.

## When Mom Moves In

When the time comes to think about where your aging parent should live when she can't live alone any longer, you may decide Mom should live with you.

If so, there are many considerations before you become a caregiver, experts say — financial, emotional and practical.

- Set a joint budget that takes



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new expenses into account.

- Outline expectations for who does what.
- Know how much care and attention your parent will

need, from meals to transportation to hygiene, bathing, healthcare and medications.

- Don't change your own life.
- Avoid old parent-child pat-

terns. You are both adults.

- Ask for help.
- Everyone gets private time.

For more on this topic, see Gina Roberts-Grey's "10

Ways to Cope When an Aging Parent Moves In," at [nextavenue.org/cope-aging-parent-moves-in/](http://nextavenue.org/cope-aging-parent-moves-in/), and read JoAnn Schuch's story on Page 3.

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