



Humboldt Holds Its Breath



GOOD TO BE TOGETHER — Greg and Janelle Poulton of Arcata brought their newborn, Ruby, to grandparents Marijane and Cliff Poulton's house in Trinidad when the coronavirus hit. "Moving in with Cliff and Marijane has really helped ease the isolation and stress," Janelle said. Ted Pease photo.

When Baby Makes . . . Five

When the coronavirus crisis started to hit, Greg and Janelle Poulton of Arcata had other things on their mind. One really big thing — their first child, Ruby.

As they were starting to adapt to baby-makes-

three, however, life changed for everybody in Humboldt County.

New parents need support and company, so self-isolating was doubly hard on the Poultons.

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Docs Can't Predict Return of 'Normal'

By Ted Pease

As stressed as many are about the coronavirus pandemic and a sense of impending doom "out there" in the world, physicians and healthcare providers are under even more intense pressure.

"There's lots of anxiety," said Dr. Bill Hunter, medical director of Humboldt's Open Door clinics. "Staff are anxious. None of us are really sure how anxious we should be."

So Humboldt County is holding its breath. As we go to press at the end of April, the number of COVID-19 cases continues to rise nationally and globally, although the number of known infections had leveled off here — so far.

That is thanks in part to "heroic" work by local medical staff, Hunter said, from county Public Health officer Dr. Teresa Frankovich and her staff right through all the clinic and hospital staff on the front lines.

"We have people volunteering and jumping in," Hunter said. "It's been inspiring to see how people have stepped up to work with high-risk patients — running toward the fire."

Humboldt County — which was the first rural county in America to report a coronavirus case on Feb. 20, according to the New York Times — also was among the first in California to issue stay-at-home orders and to recommend widespread use of masks in public, thanks to Fran-

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TEDtalks: Too Distant

By Ted Pease

A lot of people have been complimenting me on my mask — at the grocery, the gas station, at work.

Some are total strangers, who admire my friend Gail's fine hand-sewing. But I suspect that people who know me are just grateful to see less of my face.

It's a strange time when friends don't recognize each other on the street, and veer away to maintain a "safe" distance. Just when we all could really use some companionship, we have to avoid each other.

From the beginning of this pandemic, I have objected to the term "social distancing."

What the term is supposed to mean is *physical* distancing to reduce spread of the virus. But *social* distancing is the last thing we need. What we need to comfort ourselves and each other is to connect with other people, talking and laughing and sharing.

Many seniors live alone, and already find their lives and horizons shrinking. For them, the last thing they need is more isolation.

My dad, who will be 93 in May, lives alone in a nice apartment in a retirement complex in Maine. He's a little wobbly on his feet — uses "sticks" when he goes out — but until the virus hit, he still drove to the grocery, to church, to the bank and the dry cleaner, got together with my siblings for dinner.

Now he can't do any of that, of course. It's

not that he really minds being "incarcerated," he says, but there's a big difference between choosing to stay at home, and being ordered to.

Instead of the usual congregate dining, he gets one meal a day delivered to his door.

Each afternoon, he removes his hearing aid and glasses, loops a mask over his ears, and grabs his sticks for a walk down the hall to the front desk to pick up his mail and fill out a form for the next day's meal.

"Which I promptly forget," he said with a laugh.

Every few days, my sister's husband or their son buys him groceries, which they leave outside his patio door. They wave at each other, and shout through the glass.

That's about it for socializing for a lot of people these days.

"Social distancing" is an unfortunate term for what we all have to do to fight the coronavirus. Let's do the opposite, and find ways to grow closer during the pandemic, and after it's over.

Ted Pease is editor of Senior News.

Page 1 top photos: Humboldt County is masking up to fight the COVID-19 infection. From left: Alex Stillman, Katie Buesch, Milton Phegley, Barry Evans and Louisa Rogers.



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How Humboldters Are Living Through ‘The Plague’

By Ted Pease

“I’m terrified,” the woman emailed. “This thing has paralyzed me. I can’t sleep, I can’t focus, I can’t breathe, I won’t go outside farther than my backyard. I can’t read the news . . . No, I can’t even talk about it.”

This woman from Eureka, who asked not to be identified, isn’t alone. A couple of weeks ago, New York Times columnist David Brooks asked his readers for feedback: “*Would you do us a favor? Would you be willing to describe how the coronavirus is affecting your mental health?*”

Within days, Brooks was plowing through more than 5,000 responses. Many were “weeping,” he said.

We asked our readers a similar question: *How are you coping?*

The responses, too many to print, varied from fear to acceptance to some measure of personal rediscovery, as Humboldters change their lives and their view of the world outside.

“Totally freaked,” more than one person replied. For many, the adjustments have been hard. Will we ever be normal again?

“This isolation is raising some interesting questions about how we will behave socially when this is over, and about the now-enormous use of electronic interactions,” said Ann King of Eureka. “All because of a teensy little critter that we can’t even see well enough to scream at.”

King had thought of herself as “the prototypical Madame Cool.” Not so much.

“I am surprised to find I harbor a pitchfork-armed demon named Ann-xiety,” she emailed. “I flit from one idiotic pursuit to another in no particular order, accomplishing very little.”

“Although I ordinarily consider myself an introverted loner, I find

I miss personal contact,” she said.

“Even with Zoom, the damned computer screen remains an indifferent, uncaring, unhuggable rectangle.”

A neighbor does King’s shopping so she doesn’t have to go out. “Bless her heart,” she said. “But I feel so guilty, asking for specific items like a certain kind of cheese or bread (or wine) or whatever.”

She has her garden to keep her sane: “Other folks talk to their pets; I talk to my plants,” King said. “The spurt of daffodils never fails to make me feel good. So does watching as seeds germinate. The apple tree has tiny blossoms, and here come the rhodies. There’s hope out there, isn’t there?”

Like many, Barry Evans and Louisa Rogers of Eureka had to cancel travel plans, but “we’re surprisingly at peace,” Rogers wrote. Evans, a science writer, is studying up on the virus, while Rogers is building an online course.

They kayak on Humboldt Bay and walk on the beach, write letters, connect electronically with family and “cook great meals.”

Still, “We’re in that paradoxical place where we’re very happy personally, yet anxious for the world,” Rogers writes. “Will we, as a society, learn from this great opportunity? Will it be our wake-up call?”

A lot of us are making the best of things. “I’m not stressed out. Yet,” emailed Julie Fulkerson of Eureka. “I’m aware of how good my situation is: great neighbors, books, internet, a kitchen (baking, cooking, canning), garden, music and paint.

“I just worry about others who are living in crowded conditions with reduced opportunities,” she added. “At



Barry Evans and Louisa Rogers of Eureka are “surprisingly at peace.” Barry Evans photo.

my age, reflection is valuable.”

Richard Salzman of Arcata usually works from home, so not much has changed. But staying home because you like to is different from being told not to go out.

“The three big changes are not going to the gym, missing Wednesday night poker, and — what I miss the most — not seeing the grandkids,” he emailed. Beyond that, he’s taken more walks in the forest and more phone calls to friends.

“Learning to shop only once every two weeks is another big change, as I used to enjoy going to the market almost daily for a few fresh items,” he said. “I’m very thankful for the workers at the grocery store and for our delivery drivers.”

Maggie Kraft of Eureka is executive director of the Area 1 Agency on

Aging, and her job doesn’t stop just because she’s confined to quarters.

“Personally, I realize just how much of a homebody I already was,” she said. She misses friends, “but, mentally, being home alone isn’t a big deal.” And she gets to watch a lot of “The West Wing” on Netflix.

“I worry more about my friends and family who I am unable to see in person, and that impacts my mental health,” she said. “I know eating healthy foods, getting enough sleep and exercise, and laughing whenever I can are the most important things I can do for myself.”

—
Ted Pease is learning how to make a newspaper from his spare bedroom in Trinidad.

Lynn Crosthwait, Still Hiking & Discovering the North Coast

By Rees Hughes

I first met Lynn Crosthwait more than six years ago when working on a local walking guidebook.

At a coffee shop across from her volunteer work at the Tailwaggers Thrift Shop in Henderson Center, she handed me a long list of hikes taken by the Fortuna Senior Hiking Group since 2007. I was struck by her encyclopedic knowledge of walks throughout Humboldt and Del Norte counties, and how her face lit up when she described some of her favorites, walks that have since become some of my favorites.



MASTER HIKER — Lynn Crosthwait is always hiking over that next hill. Below, a dusty road over School House Peak beckons. Nancy Spruance photo (above). Rees Hughes photo (below).

A diminutive figure with her grey hair pulled back and a soft voice, Lynn describes herself as a “planner and not a leader.” It is in this way that Lynn has quietly made her mark.

Some 13 years and 600 Friday walks ago, Lynn established the Fortuna Senior Hiking Group, which has grown to include an active mailing list of nearly 150 and also has spawned a Monday walking group and a first Wednesday group. Much of the success of the Fortuna Senior Hiking Group has been due to Lynn’s devotion to identifying unusual walks that explore the “rare and awesome beauty” of the North Coast.

Lynn grew up in Ferndale but left at 17 to pursue a career in nursing that took her to major metropolitan areas all over the United States, including a year-and-a-half in England. She eventually found her way to Ukiah where she lived and worked for three decades.

From Ukiah, Lynn would make the drive back up to Humboldt County for Sierra Club outings that exposed her to some of the “uncommon natural beauty I had missed growing up.” In 2003, 50 years after departing as a teenager, Lynn moved back to Humboldt County.

During World War II, when gaso-

line was rationed, “everyone walked” in Ferndale, she said. Further, Lynn said her mother “didn’t believe in using the car to transport children.” Although her independence and freedom in those early years were dependent upon her willingness to walk, Lynn lamented that she had not spent more time exploring the countryside around Ferndale or Miranda, where her grandparents had a rustic summer home.

Since her return, however, Lynn’s walks have taken her all over the North Coast. While she may prefer a hike in the redwood forests, her favorite walk (and mine) is along Upper Bear River Road in the spring.

Although she does not rely on a daypack like the rest of us, she does bring a sack to collect trash. When I walk with Lynn, if I dawdle I know that I will need to hustle to catch up with her.

At age 83, Lynn had advice for someone like me about living my next couple of decades. “Stay active,” she said. “Volunteer. If you spend all of your time in your house, soon you won’t go anywhere.”

And, to add the words of John Muir, “Of all of the paths you take in life, make sure some of them are dirt.” Lynn would agree.

—
Rees Hughes of Arcata is an avid hiker and author of “*Hiking Humboldt: 101 Shorter Day Hikes, Urban and Road Walks.*”



ASK THE DOCTOR**The Conversation***By Jennifer Heidmann, M.D.*

This is a good time to have “the conversation.” Not about the birds and bees, but the “goals of care” discussion, where we share with our loved ones who we would want to make medical decisions for us if we are incapacitated and what kind of treatments we want if we were suddenly very ill.

My hope is that this pandemic passes and, with our attention to shelter-in-

place, masking, hand-washing and self-monitoring for symptoms, we do not end up with a new surge of cases of COVID-19 in Humboldt County.

But as Dr. Atul Gawande, a Harvard surgeon and renowned author, says, “Hope is not a plan,” which is to say that hope is great, but preparation for possible unpleasant scenarios we may face is also important.

This pandemic has bared the gaping holes in our social infrastructure. For those who have jobs they can keep during the pandemic, it is nice to remain financially stable, but it can be stressful if we cannot shelter in place. For those navigating work from home, there are other stresses. And for those who have lost their jobs or do not have homes, or do not have family support or resources to ride through this crisis, it is very difficult to cope.

What makes us able to get through tough times is to come to-

gether as a community and support each other, and to have systems in place with specific plans for supporting each other.

So I would like to encourage everyone to complete your advance care directives now, if you haven't already. These designate your durable power of attorney for health

care, and allow you to express your wishes should you become very ill.

Actually, I encourage everyone to do this starting at age 18 and throughout their lives.

Right now, though, the question becomes more specific: If you get COVID-19 and become critically ill, how would you want to be treated?

What we know about this virus is it can affect different people in different ways. Some may have few or no symptoms (underlining the importance of masks, hand-washing and social distancing, as you can transmit the virus without even knowing it). Some may get pretty sick but not need the hospital. We do know a certain number of people get very sick, and can end up hospitalized and ultimately requiring intensive care.

This could be anyone, but most at-risk are those with chronic medical conditions (heart and lung disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, cancer, suppressed immune systems) and those who are over 65.

Our experience as a nation and globally is that those who end up in

**‘If you become ill,
what would you want?’**

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Questions for the Doctors

In preparation for this issue of Senior News, we asked readers what they'd like to ask Humboldt County's medical leaders, if they had the chance.

Here are some of the questions and concerns that are bothering you about the coronavirus crisis. We don't have the answers yet, as Humboldt medical leaders discuss in “Doctors Can't Predict,” page 1, but we can keep asking.

- “Given that seniors are more vulnerable, should we be planning to continue some form of social distance until coronavirus is no longer a danger? For instance, will we be avoiding sporting events, crowds, airports, and wearing masks and gloves for a long term?”

—Peter Jermyn, Bayside

- Related: “What's your advice concerning activities after the current pandemic subsides, but no vaccines are yet available? For example, would it be safe/wise for a 70-year-old to reschedule a canceled trip to Molokai to late September?”

—David Hankin, Westhaven

- “What is the end-game? Can anyone project an end to the crisis, and what the overall impact will be then? I think we'll never be the same.”

—Anonymous

- “What is being done to mitigate the mental health issues already prevalent in the county that are being exacerbated by the necessary isolation and concurrent anxiety?”

—Jennifer Savage, Manila

If you have questions for our doctors — or anyone else — send them in and the crack Senior News investigative team will try to get them answered. See page 2 for the editor's contact info or email tpease@humssenior.org.

—Ted Pease

- “So far, we have 50 cases in Humboldt County, but no one has died. Why not? We have the impression of fatality of this virus among certain groups. What can we learn from the profile of these 50 individuals who have survived — young, middle-aged, seniors, men, women, racial categories?”

—Joan Rainwater-Gish, Eureka

- “The numbers seem to show that elders age 65+ in California are not the age group in whom COVID-19 has been most diagnosed. Does this indicate that the risk is not greater for seniors after all?”

—René Arché, McKinleyville

- “Do we know that someone who gets this and recovers won't get it again? And do we know how long someone who is asymptomatic could spread it?”

—Maggie Kraft, Eureka

- “What do you do to stay safe and to take care of yourself emotionally?”

—Ann King, Eureka

“You need a good bedside manner with doctors or you will get nowhere.”

—William S. Burroughs (1914-1997),
Beat Generation writer.



HEAVENS TO BETSY

BY BETSY GOODSPEED

Imagination

Let's consider the vital connection between imagination and what actually happens.

People tend to think of health in physical terms, especially as they age. I think about how our immunity is affected by our attitude. That leads me to consider how dreams, faith and politics — everything that enters our minds — is correlated.

We are not limited by the physical elements that make us who and what we are. Imagination can liberate us from what we believed, acted on, or experienced. It's a safe way to become whatever we wish.

What is a proven fact and what is imagination? What is the sixth sense? Are there more than six senses? What is intuition?

We say, "My heart isn't in it," when what we really mean is that the brain can't go along with it. Some scientists suggest we may have a brain in our heart as well as our other vital organs. Medical opinions have been reversed so often that we no longer know what's true and what is contrived. And if we try to use common sense, what is that?

Listening to the nightly news, we can see that there's nothing common about having sense.

I believe that imagination is being sold short. That's the heart of it. That's what your brain will tell you if you start asking questions. After all, whatever we don't use, we can lose. But most of our abilities are recoverable. Of all the gifts humans

are born with, imagination is the least life-threatening. Exercised consciously, it can provide sanity.

If a seed is healthy, something will grow: a plant or an animal, a human being, or an idea. This concept won't get an argument unless one's greatest pleasure is arguing. We can't argue with imagination, because there's nothing to prove.

Do you fear where your imagination can take you? Are you afraid you'll get high or depressed? Both could occur, but as long as your reality is a breath away, you will be in control.

Picking up a pencil to write, "What would I change in my life to make it better?" is a simple start.

All that's required is to understand the vast role that imagination can play in your life, how your imagination can work for you instead of against you. With practice, you can make it your best friend instead of your worst enemy.

When your imagination begins to provide what is dear to your heart and vital for your brain, your reality will change. —

Betsy Mills Goodspeed, 93, of *Eureka* has made good use of her imagination as an author, professional musician and vocalist, and *Senior News* columnist since 2017. This will be her final column for a while, because Betsy has more ideas than time to write.

'Your reality will change.'

Anticipatory Grief and Laughter in Hard Times

By Terry Uyeki

One week into our new shelter-at-home reality, I began to experience what has been described as "anticipatory grief."

Death and grieving expert David Kessler says this is "that feeling we get about what the future holds when we're uncertain. Usually it centers on death. We feel it when someone gets a dire diagnosis or when we have the normal thought that we'll lose a parent someday.

"Anticipatory grief is also more broadly imagined futures. There is a storm coming. There's something bad out there."

I am not a stranger to anticipatory grief. Nearly 12 years ago, my husband was diagnosed with cancer, and just with his terrible diagnosis — as any spouse of a cancer patient well knows — I began to experience anticipatory grief, dealing with the dread that he could die.

Learning how lethal coronavirus could be, and how potentially widespread, my anticipatory grief left me constantly on the verge of unfocused weepiness, knowing that it was likely that people close to me would die.

And so, when songwriter John Prine died from complications of coronavirus on April 7, the anxiety that I'd been feeling broke open into full-fledged grief.

I knew John Prine in the way that millions of people knew him. His music represented precious memories from my young adulthood — early romance with my husband-to-be, and memories of college friends who adored John Prine and his irreverent and tender songs.

My tears also brought a sweet release. So many friends and complete online strangers have bonded — people who loved John Prine and his wonderful songs, who appreciated his poetry, his humbleness and authenticity, and who cherished the memories of what life was like when we first fell in love with John Prine.

Our sadness is transformed by his gift — his poetry and humor will always be with us.

The last song on his last album, "The Tree of Forgiveness," is "When I Get to Heaven," which now leaves me laughing through my tears.

When I get to heaven, I'm gonna shake God's hand

Thank him for more blessings than one man can stand

Then I'm gonna get a guitar and start a rock-n-roll band

Check into a swell hotel; ain't the afterlife grand?

And then I'm gonna get a cocktail: vodka and ginger ale

Yeah, I'm gonna smoke a cigarette that's nine miles long

I'm gonna kiss that pretty girl on the tilt-a-whirl

'Cause this old man is goin' to town.

—
Terry Uyeki, 67, is a community activist and music lover who lives in McKinleyville.

A Hero at a Distance

By J.C. Williamson

Who's a hero? In these strange new times, as rampant contagions keep people apart, unable to directly assist, unavailable for even a heartfelt hug, what does a hero even look like?

I know one. She's a very young woman — the daughter of a close friend, and a newly minted physiotherapist — who recently moved to London, her first youthful life adventure. That suddenly took a turn due to the COVID-19 crisis.

Like many dense urban centers, London is scrambling. Healthcare professionals of all stripes have been drafted into service, from retirees to those who are pregnant. The UK's national health system has called in every level of caregiver as well, so even a fledgling physiotherapist is now on the general roster.

This young woman is from New Zealand. She might have simply returned home when the COVID threat burgeoned — after all, New Zealand has been far less impacted by the virus, so far. But she has a calling to help vulnerable people. Her clients are often elderly and in need of consistent care. They depend on her, and so she stayed.

Strict safety precautions were soon mandated, including extensive protective gear. She kept working, physically assisting patients while clad in plastic from head to foot, in an outfit that makes a hazmat suit look comfortable.

A week later, she was being trained

to work on the ventilators. And just like that, there she was, on the front lines.

Now, she and her fellow healthcare workers are effectively being sequestered. She's starting 12-hour shifts, four days on, three off. She's already been told to anticipate post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) when it's over.

What drives her? What makes this one small person a willing soldier in a war that most of us are sitting out in the comparative comforts of home?

Her mother, back in New Zealand, worries about her. And she is also rightfully proud. She wonders if innate givers like her daughter are considered "collateral damage," unflinchingly utilized by the system.

How do we thank these dutiful people, who continue to care for us when the chips are really down? From London to Auckland to Humboldt County, many individuals are quietly, stalwartly and diligently doing their jobs — stepping up beyond their normal duties, simply because it is asked of them.

While the rest of us certainly have valid reason to fear our own losses and our own exposures, it's sobering to reflect on — and be grateful for — the kindnesses of strangers.

In times of great uncertainty, heroes abound.

J.C. Williamson is a writer sheltering at home in Arcata.

“As you get older, it is harder to have heroes.”

—Ernest Hemingway (1899-1961), writer.

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PAINTING THE OCEAN

BY MARGARET KELLERMANN

Essential Work

*It is only with the heart that one can see rightly,
what is essential is invisible to the eye.*

—Antoine de Saint-Exupery

As I write my daily blog entry on an April morning during breakfast alone, heedless of spillage, it's been three weeks since our state officials clarified essential and non-essential work to be done (or not) outside our homes.

Essentially, we still get to forage, pick up meds, and walk the dog. In the nonessential category, we can't travel for fun, visit our friends, or create much noise outside, really.

But where's the list of essential and nonessential work to be done *inside* our homes?

I suppose I must answer this question myself, just as I must use my knife's nonserious end to bang the edge of the honey jar lid. I'm trying, fitfully, to open it without help. When I have before me this lovely breakfast of eggs, bacon, coffee with a skosh of cream, and toasted English muffin, I need my honey.

So again, what qualifies as essential inside work?

For example, I see my kitchen trim could use some touchup paint. In this essential/nonessential world, should I repaint the trim? But "should I" is such a harsh term now, in dealing with in-home tasks. Better to ask, "Could I, perhaps next week, summon the energy? Would it ultimately matter, epistemologically? And why is this even on my list?"

These are fresher questions to

pose, when approaching any do-it-myself project in this Age of Nobody's Going to See It Anyway.

I sit here crunching my dry English muffin (I can't open the honey jar unless I break glass in case of emergency. My honey might not qualify as emergency food, except it would be so nice), studying the kitchen trim. Would I benefit from freshly touched-up kitchen trim? Then yes, I've decided, it's essential.

I gather materials at hand: one square of used sandpaper, masking tape, sponge brush, toothbrush, dental tool. Okay, I'm ready. Now where's the paint?

But just as easily, I muse, I could research kitchen paint trims on design blogs from now until nightfall, switch off the lights, and not see the trim 'til tomorrow, at which time the All Clear signal might ring out, and we would all run outside, maskless, dancing into the streets, tossing bunches of wildflowers to one another, kissing and fearless.

That probably won't happen yet. But it May. Yes, it *May* — get it? Am I spending too much time alone?

Margaret Kellermann writes daily blog entries during this challenging time, to keep up our essential spirits. Find them and comment at bluelakestudio.net/studio.

Protecting Public Health

By Ann Lindsay, M.D.

I retired as Humboldt County Health Officer in 2011 after serving for 18 years. I have great respect for our public health heroes during the COVID-19 pandemic. Let me share some of what goes on at the Public Health Branch.

Every California county is required to have a physician health officer. Our current health officer is Dr. Teresa Frankovich, who looks after the well-being of the entire county, using her scientific knowledge to protect us all.

With the help of the public health laboratory, public health nurses, and the epidemiologist, she assesses risk and formulates local health policy. She must be decisive, but flexible as conditions change. She must communicate with the public in a forthright manner to earn their trust and compliance with public health recommendations, such as physical distancing and use of masks.

Behind the scenes, public health staff follow up on possible cases of COVID-19, conducting contact tracing to recommend quarantine of those with significant exposure. The environmental health staff work on food safety, and health education and community health workers reach out to vulnerable populations.

In an emergency like this, the health officer communicates regularly with other county health officers and state and national partners to learn and share what works. A health officer from a small county like Humboldt has to advocate for equitable distribution of disaster resources so that we get functional baseline funding, not merely a percentage based on population numbers.

I suppose that the fact that one of the first COVID-19 cases in Califor-



COUNTY HEALTH OFFICER
Dr. Teresa Frankovich answers questions online. You can watch her by searching for YouTube Dr. Frankovich media availability.
Screen capture.

nia, and the first diagnosed in a rural area, was here in Humboldt County has drawn attention to the fact that the public health network is only as strong as its weakest link.

Dr. Frankovich works with local leaders, including the Board of Supervisors, to coordinate local response. Special attention is given to the safety of those working in essential services, as well as to vulnerable populations, such as elders and people with chronic health conditions (85% of the deaths in New York City have been seniors with pre-existing conditions).

There were several times in my public health career when, ironically, the very people who criticized the day-to-day work of their public servants demanded immediate response when disaster affected them. I hope readers appreciate the heroic efforts of local government to minimize adverse effects of the COVID-19 disaster on our community, while also caring for their own health and the well-being of their families.

Ann Lindsay of McKinleyville is a family practice physician.

Fine Dining with the Quarantined Gourmet

By George Ingraham

Being quarantined need not mean that one cannot enjoy a delightful gourmet diet, even those of us living alone who lack kitchen skills . . . or much of a kitchen.

This week's recipes are easily prepared, simple, nutritious and satisfying.

MONDAY *The Four-Poster:* Creamy Jif layered upon a slice of white bread, joined with a slice adorned with Smucker's blackberry jam. Cut into quarters; impale each with a toothpick crowned with a single luscious grape. Serve with chilled Pepsi Cola. On special occasions, small candles may be substituted for the grapes.

TUESDAY *The Hole in One, or Golfer's Delight:* Lightly toasted whole wheat bread buttered and

spread with Smuckers marmalade (alas, King Kelly is no more) and Skippy smooth. Press together firmly, sprinkle with green food coloring and, using a biscuit cutter or small tin can, cut a hole in the middle. After plating, place a scoop of cottage cheese in the hole (caution: must be eaten with utensils, not hand-held). Serve with favorite *apres* golf beverage.

WEDNESDAY *The Surprise Package, or Damn! My Inlay!* Two slices of white Wonder Bread, a thin layer of margarine, strawberry jam layered thinly on one, Skippy smooth on the other. Nestle a single Brazil nut or unshelled almond into the peanut butter. The goal is to eat the sandwich without breaking a tooth. Serve with tap water, and a novacaine chaser as needed.

THURSDAY *Off with His Crust!* or *The Bare Naked Lady:* Remove the crust from two slices of white or whole wheat bread. After buttering, layer one with Skippy crunchy, the other with Bon Maman Raspberry jam. Assemble, and slice diagonally. Serve with chilled flute of Champagne.

FRIDAY *Winter Wonderland,* or *Cold Comfort:* Prepare 3 hours ahead. Two slices whole wheat bread buttered and layered with Skippy Crunch and plum jam. Leave crusts on. Assemble, sprinkle a snowy layer of powdered sugar and refrigerate. At lunchtime, relive last winter's memories with this icy treat. Serve with hot buttered rum or mulled wine.

SATURDAY: *Ye Olde English:* Toast and butter English muffin halves.

Discard the halve knots. Layer one with Marmite, the other with imported English marmalade. Serve on delicate white china salad plates accompanied by hot Earl Grey served from a pot. Sip from teacup (no mugs, IF you please!) with pinky extended.

SUNDAY *Sabbath Stripes, or Make Up Your Mind!* One slice each white and whole wheat, buttered and spread with Skippy Smooth and jelly (chef's choice). Assemble. Slice into three quarter-inch strips, and arrange with alternate white and whole wheat showing. Serve with hot latte.

—
George Ingraham, M.D., 84, dines in solitary splendor in Eureka. From his experience as a physician, he suggests removing mask before eating.

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AGING IS AN ART — BY JOHN HECKEL

Not Ready Yet

The rush to return to some kind of post-coronavirus “normal” has begun.

Politicians, authors, sociologists, slam poets and New Age gurus, all ask us to contemplate our post COVID-19 lives: “We will not go back to normal,” they say. “Normal never was.” Or, “Use this time to consider which parts of normal are worth rushing back to.”

Others point out, “Historically, pandemics have forced humans to break with the past and imagine their world anew.” And, “We are being given the opportunity to stitch a new garment, one that fits all of humanity and nature.”

The internet invites me to a live, interactive discussion with best-selling author Malcolm Gladwell, entitled “How Will the World Change after COVID -19?”

No, thank you, Mr. Gladwell. Before I “stitch a new garment,” I need to mourn the one I lost. To rush headlong into an image of what the world will look like after COVID-19, and to not be fully present with the grief many of us are feeling, would in itself be disastrous.

David Kessler, an authority on death and dying, described our pandemic grief in a recent virtual session with The Harvard Business Review staff. “The loss of normalcy; the fear of economic toll; the loss of connection,” said Kessler. “This is hitting us and we’re grieving. Collectively. We are not used to this kind of collective grief in the air.”

But what is it, exactly, that I have lost? I am retired. Financially comfortable (I hope). I live on four acres in beautiful Humboldt County and I have someone to get my groceries for me. What have I lost?

Kessler’s advice to all of us is to name the grief. “There is something powerful about naming this as grief,” he says. “It helps us feel what’s inside of us. When you name it, you feel it and it moves through you. Emotions need motion. It’s important we acknowledge what we go through.”

Then songwriter John Prine, one of America’s great storytellers, died.

His death made my grief specific. I could name it. I loved his stories. He embodied an American cultural perspective that may very well have died with him. COVID-19 killed him, and before I contemplate what my life will be like post-pandemic, I will fully mourn, fully live this grief.

Having a focus and understanding of my personal grieving allows me to participate fully in what Kessler labels “collective grief,” and we must be present with that collective grief in order to “imagine the world anew,” post-COVID-19 — and post-John Prine.

—
John Heckel, 73, of Eureka is a retired Humboldt State University theater professor with a Ph.D. in psychology. Contact: john.heckel@humboldt.edu.

COAST CENTRAL CREDIT UNION

New Temporary Hours

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HSRC News



MEALS TO GO — Arcata Senior Dining Center coordinator Anna McClure hands out frozen meals and canned goods to dining program participants at the weekly meal distribution at the Arcata Community Center. Some 18 cars were lined up at the Humboldt Senior Resource Center drive-through, which provides packets of five meals for people 60 and older. Details in story at right. Ted Pease photos.

A message from: HSRC Nutrition & Activities

Thank you to everyone as we work to adapt to our current “normal” during this COVID-19 pandemic and the ‘stay in place’ order from the state. Our intent is to continue providing meals and to adapt to the ever-changing situation. We will continue to provide well-balanced, tasty meals during this time. It is our pleasure and goal to support the older adults in our community.



The HSRC staff can also accommodate those without cars. Anna McClure gives Arcata resident Scott Brown his bag of goodies.

Status of HSRC Programs

Humboldt Senior Resource Center programs and services are operating as follows:

Administrative services and main phone line: Open as usual, but please call 707-443-8747 before coming to our Eureka campus so we can assist you remotely if possible. In an abundance of caution, doors of our buildings are locked. Staff are available to answer the doors for those who need on-site assistance.

Activities: The Eureka Senior Services Office is closed. Please call 707-443-9747 x1240 for information about how to purchase Dial-a-Ride tickets through the mail. All other activities are temporarily suspended.

Adult Day Health & Alzheimer’s Services: The Day Center is closed to facilitate social distancing. Staff can be contacted by phone if needed.

MSSP (Multipurpose Senior Services Program): MSSP services will continue, but contact with clients will be primarily via phone. Staff are available by phone during normally scheduled hours.

Nutrition Program: Home Delivered Meal service continues. All participants will be notified of delivery schedule adjustments. Packets of five meals will be available weekly at Senior Dining Centers via drive-by pickup only for people 60 and older and their spouse. The usual menu has been suspended for the duration of the stay-at-home order, but meals will be well balanced and tasty as always. **Reservations are required.**

- **Arcata:** Pick-up Wednesdays, 11:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m., at the Senior Room entrance on the east side of the Arcata Community Center building. Staff will bring the meals to you. 707-825-2027.
- **Eureka:** Pick-up Tuesdays, 11:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m., in the parking lot at the back (west) door of HSRC, 1910 California Street. Staff will bring the meals to you. 707-442-1181.
- **Fortuna:** Pick-up Thursdays, noon-12:30 p.m., in front of the Fortuna Senior Center. Staff will bring the meals to you. 707-725-6245.

Redwood Coast PACE: The program is open, but the Day Center is closed.

Senior News: Operating as usual. Contact information on page 2.

For questions regarding any program, call HSRC at 707-443-9747. See our website, humsenior.org, for any updates in services.

We thank the members of our community for your understanding and cooperation with our modified services and programming during this time.

Thank You

Senior News Volunteer Distributors

Steve Courington, Dean Davenport, Joseph MacTurk,
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'STAY SAFE!' is the message from Arlene Roberg of Eureka, who sits in her driveway on nice days during the coronavirus crisis to wave at neighbors and passersby, while waiting for groceries to be delivered by her friend, Milton Phegley. Arlene is about to turn 99. Milton Phegley photo.

MASK UP, HUMBOLDT! Can



UNMASKED — As you see at right, Humboldtters are taking the order to Mask Up! seriously. Behind the masks (by number) are: 1. Janet Patterson and John Heckel, Eureka; 2. Connie Stewart, Sunny Brae; 3. Sydney Larson, Arcata; 4. Barbara Olsson and Jim Lahman, Eureka; 5. Alex Stillman, Arcata; 6. JoAnn Schuch and Molly, Arcata; 7. Sheila Donnelly, Manila; 8. Margaret Kellermann; 9. Patti Stammer, McKinleyville; 10. Vijay Roy (whose human is J.C. Williamson), Arcata; 11. John Meyers, Trinidad, unsure of the concept; 12. Milton Phegley, Eureka; and 13. Joan Rainwater-Gish (at right) with her family at Easter (From left: Kasidy Parker, Rick Olson, Bob Gish, Dalton Weber and Suzi Olson), Eureka.

You Identify Your Neighbors?

3



4



7



8



9



12



13



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Staying in Balance Is Essential

By *Darian Harris*

Independence in the home is essential as we age, and balance skills are essential.

Loss of balance skills can easily result in increased risk of falls, injuries and negative lifestyle changes, including loss of independence.

Sensory nerves in the feet facilitate balance by relaying information to the brain about ground temperature, texture and pressure. Once the brain receives the information, it sends a message to the muscles via the motor nerves telling them to contract.

This communication is necessary in creating neuromuscular coordination, and allows us to balance and walk on both flat and uneven surfaces.

At a more advanced level, organs in the middle ear help us know where all the parts of the body are relative to each other, and the orientation of the body relative to gravity. Recruiting another sense such as sight helps us balance as well. This is what we call proprioception, which helps us balance without having to consciously do so.

As we age, vision, muscle strength and the inner ear organs begin to deteriorate and may result in loss of balance. This is why cardiovascular and balance exercises are extremely beneficial to increase muscle strength and

improve one's balance. Balance exercises vary from single leg balance, balance beam exercises, and weight-shifting.

Cardiovascular exercise is important, because when the heart is strong, it pumps oxygen-rich blood from the head to the toes to supply energy needed for physical activity. The muscles need sufficient oxygenated blood supply to work effectively, so we can regain body stability.

It is wise to seek professional advice for both encouragement and support, especially at the beginning of a lifestyle change that involves an exercise program. A qualified professional can implement different clinical treatments to improve balance and create individual specific exercise programs to improve overall health.

Such qualified professionals include occupational therapists, physical therapists and certified athletic trainers, and can be found at outpatient rehabilitation centers.

Ask your doctor for a referral if you are interested in knowing more about a balance program that is suitable for you.

Darian Harris is a rehabilitation specialist at *Humboldt Hand and Foot Therapy in Eureka.*

How To: Advance Care Directives

The Coalition for Compassionate Care of California (CCCC) offers online tools to help people plan ahead with documents outlining their healthcare preferences in case of serious illness and death.

As Dr. Jennifer Heidmann, medical director of Redwood Coast PACE, advises in her column this month ("The Conversation," page 5), this kind of planning is always important so that medical providers and family members know your preferences. Now, during the dangerous COVID-19 pandemic, advance care

directives are especially important.

"Our goal is to transform health care so that medical care is aligned with individual patient's preferences — so that people get the care they need and no less, and the care they want and no more," the group says.

The CCCC (coalitionccc.org), an "interdisciplinary partnership" of healthcare professionals, government agencies and the public, is designed to help people make decisions about their care as they approach the end of life, and can have those preferences honored.

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Strong-Willed Feline Takes Charge

By Joe MacTurk

Maya, our 90-year-old neighbor, had a 10-pound problem.

Ho Chi Minh, her striking part-Siamese, was not happy with his accommodations. Living with two females — Maya and the docile feline Kitara — was not the life Ho Chi envisioned for himself. Something had to be done.

He began his rebellion quietly, climbing on tables and shelves, and being a general nuisance whenever possible. When this failed to gain significant traction, it escalated to Ninja-like attacks at random moments on the undeserving Kitara.

For Maya, this was not the relaxed vibe she was seeking at this stage of her life.

Moving into the final stage of his revolution, Ho Chi began climbing up on the garage roof. Moaning pitifully, he would look at Maya and meow, “I cannot possibly get down. I have one, maybe two hours left before I cease to exist. Get help! (But not the vet.)”

Apprised by my wife of the situation, I dutifully grabbed the ladder, crossed the street, and climbed up to where I could snatch the suddenly cooperative rebel with one hand. Cradling him onto my shoulder, I gently returned him to earth.

“Hey genius, if you can’t get down, stay on the ground!” Ho Chi smiled and casually groomed himself.

We repeated this dance several times over the next few weeks. His rooftop ramblings now coincided with my dish washing. He’d sit patiently while looking directly at me through the kitchen window. Maya the middleman was no longer needed. This sped up the entire charade.

The last time I “rescued” him, I returned him to earth and said with true admiration, “Well played.”

Maya and my wife Barbara, now co-conspirators, quickly made arrangements for détente. That evening, as I watched television, Ho Chi Minh jumped on my lap, sighed deeply, curled up and went to sleep. He has never returned to that rooftop.

Fast forward. Maya has passed, and her home is now an AirBnb, devoid of her fiercely independent spirit and feline companions.

It is the middle of a cold December night. I feel Ho Chi Minh ambling up from the foot of the bed, crawling over my body, being ever so careful to step on my “bits and pieces,” so I’m wide awake for our interaction.

“Hey,” he purrs, “you’re not using that entire pillow are ya? I only need 50, well maybe 75% of it.”

He shoves himself against the side of my head and is soon rumbling so loudly that I can hear nothing else. A little while later, now sufficiently warmed, Ho Chi suddenly gets up, strolls back down and curls up between my calves.

I take a moment to feel gratitude. Not just because he managed to miss my nether region on the return trip, but also that I am able to share my life, and bed, with a true revolutionary.

Ho Chi understands that sometimes you have to go to great heights in order to connect with others, and get what you truly need.

Joe MacTurk, 65, of Eureka is a retired kindergarten teacher who has been training his entire life for this period of sequestration. So has his cat.



KITTY KOMFORTER — Ho Chi Minh weighs down his human. Joe MacTurk photo.

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with Dr. Caroline Connor

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with Louisa Rogers

Thurs., May 7, 1-3 p.m.

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Conscious Grandparenting

with David Marshak

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Look for updates on the OLLI website and watch for future email announcements from OLLI.



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LIVE VIGOROUSLY

BY JOAN RAINWATER-GISH

Keep Walking

Last month, I wrote about the benefits of moving and how to keep it simple by looking for opportunities just to add movement into your everyday activities.

So now that you are moving more, this month, think about moving farther and longer and calling it a walk.

According to AmericaWalks.org, walking and other types of physical activity provide a healthy release of endorphins — feel-good hormones that can help reduce depression and anxiety. Even mild exercise also helps keep bones, lungs and heart healthy, helps manage chronic conditions like diabetes and high blood pressure, and boosts the immune system.

But, the coronavirus pandemic has created new concerns about walking outside, which can make us fearful. So we are pulled between doing something that's good for us, but that also may put us at risk of exposure to the coronavirus.

In today's changing environment, my husband Bob and I are still ardent walkers. Here's what we are finding on our daily walks:

1. Walking outside is still an approved activity during this "stay at home" mandate, so people are walking as a way to exercise and escape boredom.

2. Most walkers are maintaining the required 6-foot distancing from each other. Oncoming walkers will cross the street, waving "Hello" as we pass.

3. More families are out together, participating in physical activities such as biking. With closures of playgrounds, parks and the Sequoia Park Zoo near where I live in Eureka, there are not as many outdoor activities for kids, which is why walking is so important for everyone's emotional and physical health.

4. The Bayshore Mall, which was our rainy day walking place, is also closed, but I've found an alternative on YouTube called Indoor Walking Workouts. Search for it at youtube.com.

5. As we walk the neighborhood, we are seeing teddy bears in windows. Inspired by Michael Rosen's 1989 "We're Going on a Bear Hunt," people across the country are placing teddy bears, or pictures of them, in windows. Parents take their kids out for walks, and see how many bears they can find. So if you've got a teddy bear, put it in your window and watch the fun kids have as they walk by and spy it.

I hope this helps you feel better about going out for a walk. Besides the health benefits, you'll find that Mother Nature has not been restricted, and that spring is in full bloom. This will surely lift your spirits during this time of social distancing.

Joan Rainwater-Gish, 77, is temporarily sidelined from leading her senior group fitness classes, but she's still living vigorously in Eureka. Contact: jrainwatergish@gmail.com.



Women for Wellness

LEADING THE WAY IN SUPPORT OF COVID-19 Readiness

W4W is pleased to announce the allocation of \$105,000 to purchase three new ventilators for St. Joseph and Redwood Memorial hospitals during the COVID-19 crisis.

Women for Wellness (W4W) is about:

- Uniting like-minded women who make "giving back" a part of their lives through compassion, knowledge, friendship, and philanthropy.
- Learning of the community's most pressing healthcare issues, and working together to address those issues.

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Options for Aging Well

By J.C. Williamson

Aging well is everyone's goal. Likewise, remaining in our own homes "for the duration" is generally held as the gold standard. What if you could still live independently, yet within an environment of connectivity and support?

Life plan communities have been around for decades, and many more are emerging across the country. Simply defined, a life plan community incorporates graduated levels of elder lifestyle options, from independent living, to assisted living options, all the way up to skilled nursing facilities.

A 2019 Northwestern University study compared attitudes of life plan community residents to those of comparable age in the community at large. The study evaluated six dimensions of aging wellness: emotional, social, physical, spiritual, intellectual and vocational.

The Age Well study also examined several emotional wellness factors: satisfaction with life, resilience, depression, mood, hopelessness, perceptions of aging, optimism/pessimism, stress, perceived control and subjective age (how "young" one feels).

In all but one category, residents of life plan communities rated themselves higher than did those in the community at large. Why? They said they had increased social contact, fewer responsibilities, and more free time.

Social wellness factors included community belonging, social cohesion, loneliness, and various types of social contact (from in person to social media). Again, residents of life plan communities reported high levels of interaction overall. This holds with the expectation that such environ-

ments enable a greater variety of social engagement than those available in the general community.

Physical wellness factors assessed self-reported health, chronic conditions, levels of physical activity, and healthfulness of diet. Easier access to fitness facilities and health services, in addition to the availability of dining options, may explain why residents of life plan communities appear to enjoy higher levels of physical wellness than their general community counterparts, with significantly fewer chronic illnesses.

Researchers also explored three more wellness dimensions: spiritual, intellectual and vocational. Of these, only spiritual wellness ranked lower in life plan communities — perhaps because their residents were predominantly not aligned with particular religions. However, intellectual and vocational wellness ranked notably higher, which could be related to greater access to more on-site options and increased leisure time.

The most significant element of life care communities may be their emphasis on active and connected lifestyles, especially for those who join these communities while they are still quite capable of living independently.

While the availability of graduated levels of care remains a decisive factor in choosing a life care community option, elders today want more — not just a care home, but a home, a community, a place to live vibrantly, as well as safely.

J.C. Williamson of Arcata is a member of Life Care Humboldt (lifecarehumboldt.org).

The logo for Eureka Natural Foods. It features a circular emblem with a globe and the text "EUREKA NATURAL FOODS" and "Eureka, McKinleyville" above it. The background of the advertisement shows a building with solar panels and the slogan "Live Well and Be Healthy... Naturally!".

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Speaking of Marriage . . . It's Strictly for Laughs

By John Meyers

My first wife (and last), Sheryl, and I celebrated our 50th anniversary at the end of March, but this crazy coronavirus nearly spoiled everything.

I always like to do something special for her on our anniversary. For example, on our 45th anniversary, I surprised her with a trip to Las Vegas. This year, for our very special 50th Golden Anniversary, I knew I needed to do something extra special, so I thought I'd go back and get her.

But now that'll have to wait until this shelter-in-place thing is over.

I didn't start out our married life with big, elaborate presents. For our second anniversary I got her a mood ring. Those things really work. When she was in a good mood the stone in it turned green, and

when she was in a bad mood it left a red mark on my forehead.

I was talking to a friend recently, and he said, "I think it's cute the way you still call your wife honey and darling." I said, "Yeah, I forgot her name two years ago and I'm afraid to ask her."

We've never been ones to fight much with each other, but I remember one time when we had been arguing about something silly while driving home from town, and as we drove by a field with a couple of mules in it, I wittily said, "Relatives of yours?"

She didn't even look at me as she said, "Yeah. In-laws."

After so many years together, we know each other pretty well now. I was standing on the bathroom

scale the other morning, and Sheryl saw me suck in my stomach.

"That doesn't help," she said.

"Oh, yes, it does," I said. "It's the only way I can see the numbers."

How are we coping with the coronavirus crisis? With our usual sense of humor. What else can we do?

You know, people laughed when I said I wanted to be a comedian. Well, they're not laughing now. Wait . . .

—
John Meyers, 71, leaves most people in Trinidad laughing until they cry. It often doesn't take that long. Watch his Senior News stories on video: search for YouTube John Meyers Stories.

Lifelong Humboldt Resident Gives Back

By John Heckel

Meet Shirley Foster, a 78-year-old resident of Ferndale.

Shirley and husband Michael have spent the better part of 50-plus years living in various parts of Humboldt County. Shirley herself is surprised that they have lived here this long, especially after the flood of 1964.

"I am still amazed that we stayed in Humboldt County after that," she said, "it was a harrowing experience. I'd grown up on the Russian River and was used to floods, but I'd never been a victim of one before."

They lost everything. But they stayed, and Shirley and Michael went on to teach at South Fork High School in Miranda for some 35 years.

In 2005, they moved to Ferndale to be closer to their children. It may very well have been experiences like surviving the devastation of the 1964 flood that influenced Shirley to volunteer upon her retirement.

She has served on the Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury three times in the last five years.

"I have always been interested in government

and how it functions," she said. "My first real exposure was the political conventions leading to the 1952 elections. As an 11-year-old, I sat alone listening to them in my room, rushing updates to my folks every half hour or so.

"I think I probably drove them crazy, but I felt it was fascinating," she said.

So is volunteering for the Grand Jury, Shirley said.

"I volunteer because I think it is the right thing to do," she said. "Everybody needs to be involved with the world around them. We each have a duty to contribute to making our society fair, just and equitable.

"To me, 'politics' is not a dirty word. It is the basis of all we do: getting along with others, navigating our careers successfully, raising our families."

Her Grand Jury experiences have helped her see Humboldt County differently, she said.

"I am proud to have helped to improve and to bring attention to issues impacting the county," she said. "I feel I have become more aware of the

complicated nature of governance. I have made connections with people I would have never met otherwise.

"On the negative side," she added, "I am frustrated by the pace of change in the county."

Anyone thinking of volunteering for Civil Grand Jury service should talk to someone who has served, Shirley said. The work is time-consuming, and jurors must be able to "interact with people of all different personalities and viewpoints."

If you do volunteer, chances are good you will meet other compassionate and dedicated people like Shirley Foster.

For information, go online to humboldt.gov and search for Civil Grand Jury.

—
John Heckel of Eureka is a retired Humboldt State University professor who served on the Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury for two years, and now trains county grand juries statewide.

ASK THE DOCTOR . . . From Page 5

the intensive care unit on a life-support machine called a mechanical ventilator do not have good odds of survival.

Once hospitalized, and especially once in the ICU, you likely cannot be visited by your family/loved ones. The mechanical ventilator is not a cure, but rather a machine that tries to help you get adequate oxygen to your organs while your body tries to fight off the disease.

So everyone should think about what they would want if they become very sick with COVID-19. People with the virus can go from being OK to critically ill rapidly, which does not allow time for proper discussions about goals of care. The best time to think about these things is when there is no crisis.

Some reflections that can help frame this conversation include:

- If I were to survive a resuscitation attempt, what kind of post-illness scenario would be an acceptable quality of life?
- If it is my time to die, where do I want to be?
- What and who are important to me?

Only you know what goals of care make sense for you. But having the discussion while you can is important. Right now, we have the

unsettling but golden opportunity to acknowledge the fact that people get sick and people die, and that we all have some say in how that part of our journey on this Earth plays out.

Please consider talking this over with your doctor and, especially, with your loved ones. It is a good time also to tell your loved ones whom you would like to be your spokesperson (durable power of attorney), and what specific things you find important when you are being cared for by others and are unable to speak for yourself.

I remain hopeful that we, as a community — locally, nationally and globally — will come out of this pandemic stronger than ever, more prepared to face adversity and with a better perspective about what matters in life. I wish everyone may have good health, comfort and the support you need during this pandemic, and in the future, whatever the future may hold.

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

The San Francisco Chronicle's Leah Garchik offers this tidbit:

“I kind of wish this shelter-in-place thing had happened much earlier in our relationship.”

—Overheard between a senior man and his wife in Concord, CA



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DOCS CAN'T PREDICT WHEN 'NORMAL' RETURNS . . . From Page 1

kovich's decisive action.

"I think all the steps we've taken have made a big difference," Hunter said. "I feel real proud of our public health department — Teresa Frankovich is a rock star."

More widespread testing is needed, however, to get a better handle on true infection rates, both in Humboldt and everywhere else. The problem is the supply of test kits, Frankovich said. "We are in a constant quest and queue to get some of the things that might help us add even more to our ability to test," she said.

Despite the relative calm in Humboldt, and as hotspots like New York and Seattle and Los Angeles tentatively report that the infection curve is flattening, local physicians worry about a lagging wave of infections that may hit rural areas.

"We're in a very different place than the Bay Area or Washington state or New York," said Dr. Roberta Luskin-Hawk, CEO of St. Joseph Health in Eureka. "If we see a steady rise in cases, it's just going to be delayed here. The question is by how much."

The other question is when that might happen, she added. "Could we see more in May or June or

July? We don't know," Luskin-Hawk said. "It's impossible to predict right now when life gets normal."

Luskin-Hawk, whose medical specialty is infectious diseases, said a true return to "normal" — whatever that will be in a post-COVID world — may be more than a year away.

"The real end game is a ways off," she said. "Once there's a vaccine, the world will get much more normal. If you listen to Dr. [Anthony] Fauci, whom I really trust — a scientist with incredible integrity — he's thinking maybe there's going to be a vaccine in 12 to 18 months."

Fauci, an immunologist who is director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases at the National Institutes of Health, is the scientific face of the nation's anti-coronavirus effort.

Hunter, Luskin-Hawk and Frankovich all say that physical distancing measures, including stay-at-home orders and masks, are essential, perhaps for months.

"Continuing social distancing longer can make a big difference," Luskin-Hawk said. "They talk about flattening the curve, but you will still have the same number of vulnerable people."

And a surge of COVID-19 cases hasn't even come to Humboldt County and many rural areas yet, she said. Nationally, scientists are concerned that hard-hit areas will let up on restrictions too soon. "If you ease up prematurely, the epidemic can rebound right back to the level we are at now in a matter of weeks," infectious disease modeler Chris Murray told National Public Radio. "So the potential for rebound is enormous if we let up on social distancing."

In the long term, even if Humboldt County avoids a surge of COVID-19 cases, epidemiologists say residents won't be safe from the virus until a large percentage of the population — about 60% — develops immunity, either through a vaccine or exposure.

Hunter says he's an optimist.

"I think we're really lucky," he said. "One of the reasons we live in the country in the first place is to avoid the crowds. For me, I spend as much time thinking about the blessings as I do about the threat."

—
Ted Pease is editor of *Senior News*.

BABY MAKES 5 . . . From Page 1

Janelle, 35, was just starting to connect with new mothers groups and building her support system when the stay-at-home order was issued.

"Being postpartum in a pandemic is challenging," she said. "When the pandemic first started and we started sheltering in, I had a really hard time adjusting."

Ruby's new grandparents, Marijane and Cliff Poulton, were suffering a related problem up in Trinidad. How could they be doting grandparents in a time of social distancing?

The solution for everybody — especially for Ruby, now 3 months old — was to combine households for the duration of the pandemic.

"Living with Ruby and the kids is great," said Grampa Cliff. "We all like each other and, with the shelter-in-place stuff, we get to see each other."

The house is a little cramped. Cliff, 62, works

from home in the breakfast nook as an estimator for a general contractor. Greg, 38, works from his mom's upstairs retreat, and the rest of the small house has been rearranged to accommodate three generations.

Ruby is the most important member of the household, of course. "Ruby and I go with the flow — neither of us does what we are told," Cliff said. "I'm somewhat better house-trained."

Marijane, 65, a veteran "nanny granny," orchestrates as the household settles into its new normal. It's been "a blessing and a challenge," she said.

Adjusting to new household routines can be awkward, she said. "Where are the lines between being helpful, imposing unwelcome advice, or taking unfair advantage?"

"We talk things out, move things around to make room, and are glad to know that at least these mem-

bers of our family are healthy and supported, as well as being able to help us out as we age-in-place as well as shelter-in-place," Marijane said.

Janelle, a school teacher, is grateful. "Moving in with Cliff and Marijane has really helped ease the isolation and stress," she said.

Marijane agrees. "Having Ruby here has been wonderful," she said. "At 3 months, she is like a little sponge, interested in the world around her, loves going outside, and is starting to become quite verbal whenever she focuses on a face."

"I hope to become as important to her world as I am to her older cousins," she said. "The garden can just wait."

—**Ted Pease**

Chilly Nights & Gloomy Days

By Patti Stammer

I just can't write about this virus. Daffodils give me hope, every year, not just when things are a mess.

Fading, cascading leaves, shivery nights, fleeting gloomy days and the melancholy of dead landscapes never leave until liquid sunshine comes in the form of daffodils: a cold, ghostly sun dotted with a hundred shades of yellow.

The blustery rain that punishes and pounds their vibrant faces into the dirt doesn't dim their souls for long. Daffodil, an aphorism, true year after year, strong, enduring, life-affirming; a golden promise.

When the sunshine blooms, another year passes. Navigating the dark, dead zone is a reminder to grieve, treasure what has gone, persevere and begin again. With a freshness of purpose, mark the occasion as one of renewal and relief. Celebrate the gift of spring.

Patti Stammer, 76, and her daffodils are trying to buck up in the fog of McKinleyville.



'LOVE YOU. WE'LL BE BACK,' vows a sign in the Trinidad Beachcomber's window. Humboldt restaurants and retailers have taken a huge hit during the coronavirus shutdown. Ted Pease photo.

Letter to the Editor Laugh Out Loud

To the Editor:

Just a big thank you for this [April] paper. Articles were great, and the one by John Meyers was hysterical. First time I've laughed out loud since this pandemic started. I've read most of his books and he's always entertaining.

We were packing for our move to Eureka when the lockdown started, so now we're basically confined to our apartment in San Jose. Numbers here are awful and going to get worse, I'm afraid.

So, again, thank you for this great paper. Can't wait 'til I can get it in Eureka!

Barbara Rebillot, San Jose

(See page 2 for Senior News subscription information.)

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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Crossword Head Fake by Debbie Ellerin Edited by David Steinberg ~ ANSWERS ON PAGE 14 ~ Sponsored by **ELITE CAREGIVERS**

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Memorial Day

By Sheila Donnelly

My family's Memorial Day outings were always spent visiting the graves of our relatives. Mom, dad, my six brothers, four sisters and I all piled into the family station wagon to travel to we visited three rural cemeteries in a 60-mile radius in Minnesota.

My mother's maiden name was Callahan; her mother was a Cunningham. Mom married Bob O'Leary, and his mother was a McCauley . . . the Irish lineage goes on and on.

Newry cemetery, where the O'Learys are buried, is on the wide-open prairie of southern Minnesota. A marble altar with life-sized statues of the crucifixion of Jesus dominates the west end of the cemetery.

My mother's parents, the Callahans, are buried 10 miles down the road from Newry at the Bath Cemetery. When I was growing up, tall pine trees stood as sentries at the graveyard entrance. Their gnarly roots snaked above ground and created hollows that filled with rain-water.

The water held by tree roots had magical powers to clear warts, dad claimed. So after paying homage and leaving flowers at our grandparents'

graves, and pausing to recite the Hail Mary over our cousins' graves, we dragged dad to the magical wart-removing trees.

Dad stood over us as, one at a time, as we crouched on the ground by a tree. We rubbed the water from the tree roots on our warts while dad recited: "Spunk water, spunk water, oatmeal short; barley corn, barley corn, swallow these warts."

Our warts were gone within a week.

The best family stories came out of our trips to the graveyards.

At Newry Cemetery, dad spoke of the smallpox epidemic of 1924. He was 7, and people were dying from the "pox."

The Newry priest wouldn't allow the funerals for three children who had died of smallpox in the church, dad said. Their father came to Sunday mass and loudly threatened the priest, but the priest stood his ground to protect the congregation.

Those children are buried in a far corner of the Newry Cemetery. The community respected the priest for his decision.

—
Sheila Donnelly lives in Manila.

Getting Fired with Style

By Patty Holbrook

Getting fired can ruin your day. Sometimes it's expected, sometimes a blow to the solar plexus. One of my firings (there have been a few, all with good stories attached) was the "expected" kind, but ended up being an adventure to the Arizona desert.

I worked part-time as a personal assistant to a rich and powerful Beverly Hills socialite who lived in the penthouse of the elegant Beverly Wilshire Hotel. Marje Everett — "Mrs. E" — leased a suite of offices across the street, which also included her lavishly decorated haute couture salon, with mirrored walls, satin drapes and crystal chandeliers, which catered to Beverly Hills' wealthy dowagers.

I had the usual secretarial duties, typing Mrs. E's correspondence, doing her banking, and running errands. My office had a view of the Beverly Wilshire's ornate entrance gate, where limos with flags on their fenders and police escorts sometimes arrived.

Another office contained several desks, each drawer stuffed with thousands of little scribbled notes. I was told to organize them. I had no idea how to do this, so avoided doing it for several weeks, thinking Mrs. E wouldn't notice, since she seldom crossed the street to visit.

I was wrong. She crossed the street, and fired me that Friday. But she had one last request: Was I was free that weekend?

The assignment was to take her sickly albino boxer and his full-time dog-nanny by limo to her home in Scottsdale. We were never to leave the dog alone. Her French chef prepared a picnic basket of croissants, lobster salad, fruit and eclairs for the trip, so we wouldn't have to stop at a restaurant.

We arrived at Mrs. E's sprawling ranch house in the late afternoon. My suite overlooked the Camelback Mountains, and had a marbled bathroom the size of my apartment's living room.

A dinner party was planned that evening, and I was surprised to be asked to join the guests. Thankfully I knew one of them, Jon, from when we had worked for Jack Webb's Dragnet TV Productions. We would fly home together to LAX.

The next morning, after brunch and mimosas, the chauffeur arrived to take us to the airport. Jon was afraid we'd miss our flight, but with a dismissive wave, Mrs. E called the airline and ordered them to hold the plane until her guests arrived. They did.

Later, Jon told me Mrs. E was a close friend of the airline's CEO.

Firings don't get better than that.

—
Patty Holbrook lives in Eureka, and hasn't been fired from anything recently. That she can remember.

"In a time when fear is running rampant, it is critical that we rely on facts and science. . . . let us choose knowledge, science, compassion and love."

— **Roberta Luskin-Hawk, M.D., St. Joseph Health, Humboldt**

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You Can Be in Senior News

- **JUNE** feels different this year because of the coronavirus. Let's celebrate some local heroes who have really made their mark on Humboldt County. Who's somebody you wish more people knew?
- **JULY:** Will this year be "A Different Summer"? We're looking for stories of favorite summer memories, and what's different, and what's the same about summer 2020? Contact SN editor Ted Pease, tpease@humsenior.org, or 707-443-9747, x1226.

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