



# Sheltering Alone — Together

## Pals to the Rescue! One Dog at a Time

*By Mary Wells*

Out on the Arcata Bottom, some five years ago, is where I first met Mara and Jim. They were on a Saturday morning “pack walk” with like-minded individuals and their rescue dogs.

I’d heard about Redwood Pals Rescue (RPR) — a volunteer nonprofit founded in 2010 and dedicated to aiding local dogs at risk — but didn’t know much about it. Since I was a new retiree and waning runner with some time to volunteer, I wondered if I could help walk dogs.

Mara linked me up with a robust pit bull whose longtime foster could no longer walk him. Since then, I’ve logged thousands of dog miles, and have come to understand and appreciate that dog-walking is the upside of rescue efforts.

Mara Segal, Jim Marlatt, and Jim’s wife Jeanne Wielgus Marlatt are the lifeblood of Redwood Pals Rescue. Well-known in the dog rescue community, their outreach goes far beyond helping dogs at the Humboldt County Animal Shelter, where dogs are divided between those up for adoption and those that aren’t — including those that don’t pass muster for adoption and are classified as “rescues.”

Mara recruits, trains, oversees, and coordinates animal shelter volunteers to walk the adoptable dogs. That’s the most visible part of the volunteer effort — akin to the tip of the iceberg.

Behind the scenes, Mara and Jim are dog whis-

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**SERVE & PROTECT** — Humboldt Sheriff’s Deputies Efrain Sanchez and Naveed Ahmed, and Lt. Mike Fridley, outside the County Jail in Eureka. Humboldt Sheriff’s Department photo.

## OK, We Won’t Call You Heroes. But . . .

*By George Ingraham*

We began, a million or so years back, as families living more or less close to each other. The women waved at each other on their way to get water, the men growled at each other when neighbors tres-

passed on their turf. Over time, the kids mingled — as kids will — and extended families grew.

Then, with the right blessing of climate, groups

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**HSRC**

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**HUMBOLDT SENIOR RESOURCE CENTER**

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Page 5

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Page 11

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Page 23



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# TEDtalks: Extra-Special June

June has always been a special month in my book. When I was a kid in New England, school ran at least until Memorial Day, so summer never really got going until June.

My dad was a high school teacher, so he got summers off, and the family spent two months on an island off the Maine coast — a place that, coincidentally, is a lot like Trinidad, where I live now. (Except that, unlike Maine, Humboldt's climate allows us to enjoy it more than a few weeks out of the year, as I tell my dad, who at 93 still endures Maine winters.)

June has also always been special because my birthday is June 25, making me a crab, astrologically speaking (no surprise there, as many have noted).

This particular birthday comes with some freight attached. I'll be 65, which for many Senior News readers makes me a "whippersnapper," I've been told. But if I'm not yet in old age, I can see it from here.

It means I graduate to the insanely complicated joys of Medicare, and will be a Social Security recipient in another year. These are gifts I never contemplated during those care-free summers on the Maine coast.

I heard a public service announcement on the radio the other day that got me worrying about this birthday: "*If you are over 65, this virus is especially dangerous to you . . .*" So I'm safe now as I write this, but after June 25 — look out! I hear that scary *dumDUM* music from "Jaws" swelling in the background of my life.

We know that COVID-19 is particularly dangerous to seniors: about 75% of all deaths from the pandemic are 65+. But it's not automatic, is it? I mean, there are a lot of fit and healthy 65-year-olds. I like to think I'm one of them, unless I suddenly become a wreck as I teeter over my birthday cake in a few weeks.

In my 60s, June is still a special month, as I take the winter tarps off the boat — the mighty Toad 3.0. "Toad," as the literati among you know, was the name of a fat, drunken toad in "The Wind in the Willows," who drove a large motorcar too fast and frightened his friends. "Poop poop!," he'd yell, pounding the horn, "I'm Toad!"

I will head out from Trinidad Harbor as often as I can in search of potential dinner guests, happily self-isolating on the ocean, just as I have since I was a kid.

**One last note:** While we're recognizing local heroes this month, here are a few of ours. Our volunteer newspaper carriers drop thousands of papers at dozens of stores and businesses all over Humboldt every month. We couldn't do it without them: Three Eureka routes: Steve Courington (feel better, Steve), Judy Silvers and Joe MacTurk; Dave Woodson in McKinleyville; and new recruits Erin Cotton and Raxian Rax, HSRC drivers who have added our newspaper to their routes in Fortuna and Arcata, respectively.

Stay safe out there, everyone, and happy summer. Poop poop!

*Ted Pease is editor of Senior News.*

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# So Who Is Teresa Frankovich, Anyway?

By Ted Pease

Before the coronavirus pandemic hit, few Humboldt residents knew that we had a Public Health Officer, let alone who that was.

But then in mid-March, Humboldt County residents over 65 were ordered to “shelter-in-place,” and the stay-at-home order was extended to everyone in the state on March 20.

“As of midnight last night, the Health Officer’s Order is the law of the land,” Humboldt County Sheriff William Honsal said, deferring to Dr. Teresa Frankovich.

Who?

Frankovich, a primary care physician from the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, has the open, smiling face and demeanor that goes with her specialty in pediatrics. This calm and gentle bedside manner has served her and her new neighbors well since her appointment as Humboldt’s health officer on Jan. 30.

A Michigan native, Frankovich completed her M.D. at the University of Michigan in 1985 and served a residency in pediatrics at Children’s Memorial Hospital in Chicago. While completing a master’s degree in public health at Berkeley in 1990, she worked in pediatrics in the East Bay, and then worked in Fortuna for three years at Redwood Pediatric Medical Group.

Frankovich moved back to Humboldt in October to work at Open Door Community Health Center in Eureka. Her extensive background in rural public health in Michigan made her an obvious candidate when Dr. Donald Baird stepped down as county health officer in late 2019.



**‘A ROCK STAR’ is how Open Door’s medical director describes Dr. Teresa Frankovich, Humboldt County’s Public Health Officer. County supervisors ranging from Rex Bohn to Steve Madrone agree.** Screen capture of Frankovich’s regular media briefing.

“She got the job, and it was supposed to be a half-time position,” said Dr. Bill Hunter, Open Door’s medical director. “Then came COVID,” and Teresa Frankovich became the face and foundation of public health and the pandemic in Humboldt.

In recent months, the press and public have come to depend on Frankovich’s calm, sensible and clear discussion of the COVID-19 fight during her regular video reports.

COVID-19 first appeared in California in early February, and Humboldt County recorded its first confirmed case on Feb. 20. Since then (as of May 27), Humboldt has had 94 confirmed cases, 12 hospitalizations and two deaths.

County officials applaud Frankovich’s leadership. “No one is head over heels . . . No one is head over heels with their public health officer, as they really are the bearers of bad news,” said Humboldt 1st District Supervisor Rex Bohn. “They are basically the umpire, enforcing rules and making calls, and nobody likes the umpire.”

“Dr. Frankovich and [deputy health officer Josh] Ennis are doing a good job in dealing with a worldwide epidemic that has killed over a quarter-million people,” he said.

Fifth District Supervisor Steve Madrone agreed. “She is calm in an emergency, resolute in her decisions, and acts based on the best available science and data,” Madrone said. “We are lucky to have her as our health officer.”

Open Door was excited to land Frankovich as a pediatrician. “She has a great reputation as a doctor,” said Hunter, who has called her “a rock star.”

“I called her a rock star because of how she is leading this crisis,” he said. “She is so smart, so clear, and she listens carefully to all. We are really lucky to have her in that role.”

“Who knows when we’ll ever get her back to Open Door,” Hunter said.

—

*Ted Pease is editor of Senior News.*

## COVID-19 Q&A with County Public Health Officer

Public Health Officer Dr. Teresa Frankovich has been both the chief architect and the public face of Humboldt County’s fight to contain COVID-19. Multiple times each week, Frankovich answers questions from the media about the virus in video sessions. Search online for “Dr. Teresa Frankovich Media Availability” to see them.

### **What COVID-19 test is Humboldt using?**

“The RT-PCR test is probably the most sensitive

test that’s available, distributed by the CDC (Centers for Disease Control). . . It really is one of the gold standards.”

### **What are the most common symptoms?**

“The symptom range is really much broader than originally thought with COVID. Including things like headaches, muscle aches, sometimes diarrhea, sometimes more vague symptoms like sore throat. I’ll talk to our epidemiologist and see if we can

update those on an intermittent basis.”

### **How do Humboldt’s first COVID deaths affect reopening efforts?**

“No single piece of data dictates us moving forward. The deaths are obviously difficult for us and sobering. . . but we need to take in the full context,” including hospital capacity, contact tracing capacity, and epidemiological data.

**Continued on Page 4**

# A Few of My Humboldt Heroes in Scary Times

By *Patty Berg*

People throughout the country are out on their porches, decks or the street every night at 7 o'clock or 8, cheering and applauding first responders and health care professionals, who work exhausting hours to protect us while we stay home and safe during this pandemic nightmare.

I, too, applaud all of our Humboldt County first responders and the hospital and clinic health professionals who risk their lives on a daily basis to save and protect our lives.

In addition, I want to thank two key leaders we are so fortunate to have in Humboldt County. They are essentially responsible for the county's rational, science-based response, and for establishing and building an agile system to identify and care for those who test positive.

As far as I am concerned, Dr. Teresa Frankovich, our newly appointed Public Health Officer, and Dr. Roberta Luskin-Hawk, CEO of St. Joseph Health-Humboldt, walks on water.

While I have not yet met Teresa, I have been so impressed with how she has organized and expanded COVID-19 testing, secured necessary equipment for healthcare workers, taken the lead as community spokesperson on this pandemic, and her thoughtful but directive orders to the residents of Humboldt County — all geared to ensure community safety.

I do know Roberta. She is great. For those of you who might not know, her medical background is in infectious disease and clinical research. She formerly worked with Dr. Anthony Fauci, and it was Roberta who got St. Joe's designated as one of the country's clinical trial test sites for the antiviral drug remdesivir, which Fauci now says is the "new standard of care for COVID-19 patients."



**'WE'RE LUCKY' — Patty Berg is grateful for people who are doing heroic work to keep Humboldt safe.** Contributed photo.

There is no doubt in my mind that Roberta is absolutely the right person for the job she now holds at this moment in time.

These two women are the ones whose advice I listen to and follow when I venture out of my home and yard.

In addition, my other five local heroes are:

**Anne Holcomb**, executive director these past 20 years of Food for People. Anne works non-stop to make sure local families have food on the table.

**Joyce Hayes**, who recently retired after 16 years as executive director of the Humboldt Senior Resource Center, which since mid-March has run a five-day meal curbside pickup service for seniors.

**Brenda Goosby, RN**, executive director of Mad River Home Health Agency, who ensures that her staff of nurses, therapists and social workers see and treat patients in their homes following hospitalization.

**Hospice of Humboldt Nurses**, who continue to make regular home visits to terminally ill patients, providing them with their necessary and vital care.

**Jim Marvel**, head of maintenance at Seaview Rehabilitation and Wellness Center. Jim goes to work every day between 3 and 5 a.m. He works long hours. While he is responsible for fixing anything that breaks down in his facility, his focus is always on the patient — making sure cleanliness standards prevail and that every mechanical device in the facility works.

Humboldt County has many unsung heroes. Those are just a few of mine.

**Patty Berg, 77, of Eureka, is a former State Assemblywoman and founding executive director of the Area 1 Agency on Aging.**

## COVID-19 Q&A WITH COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICER. . . From Page 3

**People are asked to continue to stay home while non-essential businesses are reopening. Why?**

"We've all agreed as a community that there's no way for us to remain in shelter-in-place until a vaccine is available because we don't know what that timeframe is. . . . While we recognize the need to get some businesses open, we are asking people to still not spend the kind of time outside their home — extended shopping or in groups — that they might've enjoyed before. We'll get there, we're just not there yet. We need both things to happen."

**Why not approve people to attend self-help or support groups as a mental health tool?**

"It really goes to this issue of the number of people who can gather. . . . I agree that it is always great to be able to meet in person. What we're looking at is when is that moment. . . .

"People need to understand that increasing our group sizes increases exposures. We plan to do it, it will happen, hopefully very soon."

**Why do you believe it is not in the public's best interest to reopen casinos?**

"Gatherings of people are a significant risk. . . . Larger gatherings have the potential for allowing a lot of transmission of virus. . . . [In casinos,] you cannot get away from the fact that we're pulling large numbers of people into a common space indoors for extended periods of time. I don't think it's time to introduce that kind of exposure in a large setting."



## ASK THE DOCTOR

## Side Effects

By Jennifer Heidmann, M.D.



Many medications have side effects — unintended and often unpleasant reactions to a pill that must be taken. Some claim that the shelter-in-place approach to battling this pandemic has too many side effects — mental, emotional and economic.

I suggest, though, that we are not seeing side effects of a necessary public health measure.

Instead, we are seeing that the emperor has no clothes.

Hans Christian Anderson told

the tale of the weavers who made the emperor a stunning new suit of clothes that would be invisible to stupid or incompetent people. When he paraded around naked, no one wanted to admit they saw no clothes, though a kid finally called him and everyone else out.

Was it the pandemic that caused seniors to feel isolated? Did the pandemic make people live paycheck to paycheck with no margin? Did the pandemic make health care unaffordable and difficult to access? Did the pandemic remove needed infrastructure from our national public health and disaster response teams? Is it the pandemic's fault this was all predicted, and no one planned for it adequately?

Don't get me wrong. I am fed up with this virus, too. It is such an odd adversary, not even being exactly alive. It cannot reproduce without using other organisms' living cells.

Two virologists put it nicely: "viruses live a kind of borrowed life" (Marc V.H. van Regenmortel and Brian W.J. Mahy, *Scientific American*, Aug 8, 2008).

This particular virus, being new to us and pretty nasty in its effects, has definitely stopped humanity in its tracks. But it doesn't have any feelings about it one way or another.

In fact, a truly successful virus would be better off not hurting or killing its host, but rather just hanging out

and using the host's cellular machinery without causing such a fuss.

Back to the concept of side effects, and the suffering this pandemic has bared: Should it be possible for things to so profoundly fall apart due to a vaguely animate, microscopic, and predictable (and long predicted) phenomenon? If things go back to "normal" in a year or two, I think we will have missed a crucial opportunity to improve our lives as a nation and as a world.

"Normal" has become setting aside elders and isolating them from society. What if, instead of that "normal," we looked to our elders for ideas on how to survive hard times, and actively made society a more welcoming place for those who have finished their 9-to-5 existence, and still have a huge amount to offer the world?

What if we ensured that our

**'A crucial opportunity to improve as a nation and a world.'**

## Getting the COVID-19 Test

By Elizabeth A. Whitley

The announcement in early May for free COVID-19 testing at Redwood Acres Fairgrounds in Eureka got my immediate attention. I wasn't sick, but didn't know if I was asymptomatic.

Telecommuting from home in Kneeland to work for Senior News, I had been pretty isolated and safe. But maybe getting tested would be a good idea.

I clicked the link (lhi.care), where I was asked a lot of questions, including personal information and a contact for my employer.

To my surprise, an appointment was available the next day, even though I had no symptoms and am not yet 65. After the initial signup, I received several emails confirming my appointment and was assigned an eight-digit number.

This number is *very important*. You must have it with you when you go for your test, or you will be turned away.

Promptly at 1 p.m., mask on, I entered Redwood Acres main entrance and was guided by yellow tape to the building to the left. One person was in front of me (at least six feet!), and then five more arrived. All but one young woman were seniors.

We were invited one or two at a time to come in, sit and wait to be called for testing. The big hall, usually an exhibit space, was empty except for a receptionist desk and two testing stations inside see-through, plastic walls, where two people in hazmat suits waited.

The receptionist asked for that important number, and asked if I had any symptoms.

"No," I said, and she sent me into the plastic-bubble testing station.

One of the hazmat people warns that there will be "some discomfort," which I knew from news reports. I'm ready. An oversized Q-tip is inserted into my left nostril, farther than I think possible, and then farther still. For about three seconds, it was more than "uncomfortable," but then withdrawn.

The swab goes into a plastic bag, and I'm done. That was it — testing took about 5 minutes. Most people get results in 48 hours although mine took six days.

I have been more than careful with masking and distancing because there's always a doubt. Did I not wash my hands enough? I only went to grocery stores that were very strictly enforcing social distancing and masking. Did I wipe down the gas pump handle enough before filling up?

I had a few sleepless nights waiting for the result, which finally came by email on May 12. Negative! That is, I was negative when I was tested on that day at 1:20 p.m.

But every day is another opportunity to become infected. I'll most probably have more sleepless nights.

—

**Elizabeth A. Whitley, 63, of Kneeland is staying home as much as possible and hoping for the best.**

**Register for a COVID-19 Test**  
**lhi.care/covidtesting**  
**No internet? Call: 1-888-634-1123**

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## LIVE VIGOROUSLY

BY JOAN RAINWATER-GISH

# Staying Motivated

The National Institute on Aging (nia.nih.gov) recommends strength training for seniors to maintain or increase muscle mass.

Strength exercises include lifting weights, even your own body weight, and using elastic resistance bands, which they suggest doing at least two days per week. This will help you stay independent, make everyday activities easier to do, and keep muscles strong, which helps prevent falls. It also improves posture, sleep and mood.

Improving one's mood while quarantined is a good reason to start lifting weights. But with gyms and exercise classes closed, how does one do strength exercises at home? So I asked my quarantined S.A.I.L. (Stay Independent and Active for Life) class members what are they doing. Here are some of their answers:

**Jackie, 72:** "I'm using 8-pound weights I have at home. I can tell it's working as I feel my biceps are strong. I lift bags of soil and 40-pound bags of birdseed, pound steel garden stakes, and pull the big greenwaste bin around the yard. I'm so lucky to be able to do that stuff in my 70s, and I give all the credit to lifting weights."

**Debby, 67:** "I'm doing strength training online and using 5- and 6-pound weights. But it's getting harder to motivate myself as time goes by. However, I still walk regularly with my dog."

**Evelyn, 82:** "If I did what I know to do, I'd be a centerfold in Muscles Buff-fitting Elders Maga-

zine. Attending class makes all the difference. Routine and habit are essential. I do exercise at home, but seldom as much as intended. I visualize what you/others say/do. Mostly I use the mat, ball and weights. What I never fudge on is walking."

**Judy, 77:** "It's a real mind-over-attitude battle for me. I've been considering hooking up with a friend by iPhone so we can see each other and talk, grunt, laugh together . . . unlikely. Connection in any form is key."

**Yvonne, 66:** "I'm walking daily and doing weight training two or three times a week. I have several different weights, resistance bands, and a stability ball. My motivation is to stay strong and independent for as long as possible. I don't want to be the helpless old lady. Also, I want to be able to keep up with Evelyn when we can get back in class again."

**Patty, 74:** "I'm adjusting to working from home. For exercise, I'm taking 20-minute walk breaks around the house and yard twice a day. I am using weights and bands, but not consistently. I'm still trying to prioritize a regular exercise routine into my new 'normal.'"

Whatever our "new normal" ends up being, make sure exercise is part of it.

**Joan Rainwater-Gish, 77, is a personal trainer and S.A.I.L. group fitness instructor who shelters at home vigorously in Eureka. Contact: jrainwatergish@gmail.com.**

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# These Are My Real Heroes

By John Meyers

Who are the heroes in my life? I'd have to say that they are the people who influenced me the most by giving me the best advice in my formative years.

My father, certainly. I remember the words he said to me the day I left home, when he said, "And don't come back!" My dad . . . he had some sense of humor.

I'm pretty sure he meant not to come back until I had had some of the adventures in life that he had discovered as a young man. I took this advice to heart and have traveled most of our country and met people I could never have imagined on my own.

My older brother had a huge impact on my life. I remember when he took me aside and said, "Get a job!"

Jim has a doctoral degree from Harvard University. I struggled for four long years to get an associate of arts degree, attending two different junior colleges back home.

I looked at his work ethic and determination to get his degrees (the first in our family), and I said, "Yeah, I don't think so."

I hated school. That's why I've had four distinctly different careers in my life: fireman, traveling entertainer, support staff for adults with developmental disabilities, and now writer.

You might think, "So, he couldn't

hold a job." I prefer to think of it as a life rich with experiences. And I owe a lot of it to Jim: "Get a job!"

My first boss at my first job out of high school, Alvis Kirby, is one of my heroes. He was the foreman of the first fire crew I worked on. Dedicated to his work as a firefighter, Kirby (nobody called him Alvis) spent his entire work life with the U.S. Forest Service.

I looked at him and said, "I don't think I can do that." I was a firefighter for 12 years before moving on. The longest I spent on any one job was 18 years. If it wasn't for Kirby, I may have been stuck in the same job all my life.

Finally, my wife, of course. Sheryl is my real hero. Patience isn't one of my virtues. Neither are finances, romance, art, social skills . . . well, you get the idea. Fortunately, I have Sheryl to learn from and to lean on. We've been married for 50 years, and I'll figure it out eventually.

In the meantime, I rely on her to help me through life. I often look at her and think, "Boy, did I luck out or what!"

Family and friends — those are my real heroes.

—  
**John Meyers, 71, admires his heroes from his home in Trinidad.**

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**"Experience is not what happens to a man; it is what a man does with what happens to him."**

—Aldous Huxley (1894-1963), author.



## PAINTING THE OCEAN

BY MARGARET KELLERMANN

### Suggestions A to Z

*Like cold water to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country.*

—Proverbs 25:25

Adopt a puppylike attitude.

Be here (in spirit) now.

Call your sister.

Do the next thing.

Everything will be brilliant soon (repeat this phrase).

Find an outfit that makes you the hero of your own journey today, because you are.

Go outside and play responsibly.

Have some more coffee!

Ice cream can be used as a flotation device, a life preserver.

Just check in with a word in season: good news from a far country.

Keep remembering our essential work is what we are after.

Love your own cooking.

Maybe, for a twist, sing and dance to Bob Dylan:

*"She's got everything she needs, she's an artist. She don't look back."*

Now's a good time to journal your dreams again and have faith in those good prophecies.

Open the door to your heart, or at least leave it ajar so someone can enter, saying, "Honey, I'm home!"

People-pleasing didn't work before, and it certainly won't work now.

Quiet your heart to hear your dog breathe.

Rest on the sunny back porch.

Seek peace and, when you find it on the trail, pursue it like a hound.

Thank the spring rains and the summer stretched out before us.

Understand the way you are is, in fact, diamond-sparkling.

View things from all different angles to find the freshest perspective.

What joy-making project can you complete in the next hour?

eXactly how much fun, using any suggestions above, can you imagine for June?

Yes, we are just what we need right now.

Zoom.

—

**Margaret Kellermann** writes a daily blog these days to keep up our essential spirits. Visit and comment at [bluelakestudio.net/studio](http://bluelakestudio.net/studio).

# THE MEADOWS

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# Making Social Connections

By Rowetta Faye “Stapp” Miller

I found Ted Pease’s article, “TEDtalks: Too Distant” [Senior News May 2020, p. 2], interesting. He mentioned that it’s a strange time when people don’t recognize each other on the street because of their masks.

Yesterday, I had a different experience. As I was passing in a store, I heard someone say, “Bonnie.” Bonnie is not my name, but I turned, as it sounded like the man was addressing me.

He was a tall, friendly, handsome man. He said, “I thought you were my daughter-in-law because of your hair. You’re tall and have hair just like her.”

My hair has always been curly, dry, frizzy, and now gray in color. From my youth to adulthood, whenever I visited my mother, the first thing she always said was, “When was the last time you combed your hair?”

The day I was passing by this man, my hair was poking out in many directions from under and above my mask. And the tie-string of the mask was entangled in my hair and the bow at the back of my head. We both said, “Sorry.”

Actually, I felt it a compliment, as he didn’t look old enough to be my father-in-law. Truly, though, I have no idea of my father-in-law’s looks.

I’ve never been lucky enough to have a father-in-law. My husband’s Dad was killed working in a train accident when my husband was only 7.

My husband doesn’t know that much about his father except for all the good things his Mom relayed to him. Mothers have a special way of telling the very best things to those who will listen.

In his TEDtalks article, Ted shared his thoughts on the difference between social distancing and physical distancing. He made a good point in that physical distancing reduces the spread of COVID-19. But, he said, we can all use more social time connecting with each other instead of being distant.

Telephone and internet use today are huge assets in being social. I never had either growing up until I was through high school, and I am so glad to have them now.

Recently, one cousin never returned my phone call. When I saw him, I asked him, “Why?”

He replied, “You talk too long.”  
So much for social connections.

—  
**Rowetta Faye “Stapp” Miller**  
*wears her mask and makes connections in Fieldbrook.*



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## Kid Artists Wanted

The Friends of the Redwood Libraries has an idea for your stay-at-home 5- to 12-year-olds. They’re looking for original artwork to illustrate the 2021 Friends of the Redwood Libraries calendar.

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and lots of bright colors.

Take a photo of your creation and email it to [frlcalendar@gmail.com](mailto:frlcalendar@gmail.com), or mail the original to FRL, P.O. Box 188, Eureka, CA 95502.

Deadline for entries is August 1. Everyone wins a gift certificate to the Serendipity Book Store.

Details and sample of past calendars at [eurekafrl.org](http://eurekafrl.org).



## AGING IS AN ART — BY JOHN HECKEL

### Just a Postcard

I got a postcard last week.

Not an email. Not a typed letter, but an actual, handwritten postcard.

Now, this may not seem like such a big deal to you, but, honestly, when is the last time you received one, or, better yet, sent one? The last one I got turned out to be a printed promotion for some cellular service that was specifically printed to look like it was hand-written.

Then came Victoria's hand-written postcard.

In the midst of all this social distancing, she did what I

had promised myself for weeks to do — she took the time to reach out to friends and connect in what, in these ever-increasingly virtual days, is very rare: she sent handwritten postcards with a thought or two of love and appreciation.

I wasn't the only friend to receive one, which in a great way made it even better. I was part of something much larger than a momentary connection between old friends.

The literal communication was simple enough. She wrote to tell me that she enjoys reading my thoughts on aging in this column, and that she appreciates the one-minute videos that Janet and I have been creating and posting on Facebook.

I am not disparaging emails. I am grateful for their speed, convenience and economy. I am also not dismantling my keyboard or deleting my Microsoft word-processing

program. These, as I age, continue to give me great joy.

But I have also come to notice more and more “endangered” and “extinct” traditions that are an essential part of being human. Handwritten notes of love and appreciation unfortunately are sliding into those categories, but that will depend on us.

With hand-written notes, you get to experience more of the writer; you get to feel their moods, humor and passion.

The handwriting, the movement of pen on paper, reflects

personality. Victoria chose a blue pen; you can tell from the writing she likes the pen.

How hard would it be if we all took the time Victoria did and sent out handwritten notes? It doesn't have to be a long letter; a postcard will do the trick. A postcard might even be better, because with limited space, you would have to decide what two or three things to say to a person to make them feel good. That would be your intention, to make them feel good.

Who better, in this age of cynicism, sarcasm and conspiracy theories, than us older folks to send out into this world a bit of handwritten, self-reflective love and hope?

**John Heckel**, 73, sends and receives messages, both electronic and hand-written, at his home in Eureka.

**'Send out a little  
handwritten love & hope.'**

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# HSRC News

## Demand for Senior Meals Rises 65%

By René Arché & Barbara Walser

Shelter-in-place orders designed to keep high-risk citizens safe amid the coronavirus pandemic have created a sharp increase in the number of seniors who rely on the Humboldt Senior Resource Center (HSRC) Nutrition Program as their primary source of food.

This, coupled with supply chain and workforce disruptions, has made providing large quantities of meals to a growing number of seniors more expensive and challenging for HSRC than ever before.

Humboldt County's shelter-in-place order forced HSRC to close its three Senior Dining Centers on March 13. A plan for modified services was quickly developed: weekly deliveries of five meals for Home Delivered Meals participants, and weekly take-away packages of five meals apiece available at each dining site for seniors 60 and older.

These modifications were made to reduce potential exposure for both participants and staff.

The Nutrition Program continues to see a weekly increase in demand for meals — more than 150 new individuals are now taking part in the program. Although Home Delivered Meals already had a waiting list, HSRC has continued to enroll new participants.

In addition, thanks to a grant from Meals on Wheels America, HSRC has been able to provide an additional 10 shelf-stable meals for all participants to help with food insecurity.

Through a partnership with Food for People and the Area 1 Agency on Aging, bags with groceries were delivered to Home Delivered Meals recipients in May, and will be provided again the first week in June. The Nutrition Program has also provided cloth facemasks, donated by community members, and staff make telephone calls to participants, and connect them with other resources as needed.

As the virus continues to spread, and discussions about how and when to end the shelter-in-place orders continue, HSRC expects demand for food assistance to grow even more.



**HSRC kitchen staff Tasha Stone puts the finishing touches on a tableful of chef salad in preparation for packaging.** Elizabeth A. Whitley photo.

With rising need comes increased costs. So far during the crisis, the number of meals the program provides weekly has increased by 65%, not including the additional shelf-stable meals.

Community support has continued during the COVID-19 crisis, but donations are now needed more than ever. Visit [humsenior.org](http://humsenior.org) or call 707-443-9747 to learn more about how to support HSRC's efforts to meet the senior community's growing demand for nutrition services during this unprecedented time.

*René Arché is director of communications and marketing, and Barbara Walser is director of nutrition and activities at HSRC in Eureka.*

## Cuts to Meals

Meals on Wheels California (MOWCA) is appealing to state legislative leaders to turn back Gov. Gavin Newsom's proposal to cut senior nutrition programs in California by \$8.5 million.

Newsom's plan is part of an effort to cover a \$54.3 billion budget deficit caused by the state's coronavirus response.

Cutting Meals on Wheels "will result in 6,000 seniors not being able to access nutrition programs" statewide, advocates say. Humboldt Senior Resource Center's meals program is among those receiving funding through MOWCA.

During the pandemic, senior advocates point out, the number of home-bound seniors using these program has increased as residents are asked to stay home. The proposed cuts represent 600,000 fewer meals for California seniors, they said, which could force those most vulnerable from their homes into care facilities.

Calling the cuts "a terrible and tragic mistake," MOWCA and other senior programs are urging California residents to contact their elected representatives and ask them to fight these threats to senior health.

- Governor Gavin Newsom: 916-445-2841 or [gov.ca.gov](http://gov.ca.gov)
- 2nd District Assemblymember Jim Wood: 916-319-2002 or [a02.asmdc.org](http://a02.asmdc.org)
- 2nd District State Senator Mike McGuire: 916-651-4002 or [sd02.senate.ca.gov](http://sd02.senate.ca.gov)

**"Friends show their love in times of trouble." —Euripedes (480-406 BC), Greek playwright**



# Proposed California Budget Cuts Impact HSRC Programs

By René Arché

The revised California state budget for the 2020-21 fiscal year released by Gov. Gavin Newsom on May 14 outlines new cuts, including the proposed statewide elimination of funding for two local programs: Community-Based Adult Services (CBAS) and the Multipurpose Senior Services Program (MSSP).

Both are programs of the Humboldt Senior Resource Center (HSRC); Adult Day Health Services is HSRC's CBAS program.

The Governor ties these cuts to possible federal funding; if the federal government grants significant aid to the state, part or all of the funding to these two programs could be restored,

essentially "triggering off" the proposed cuts.

MSSP is a care-management program for Medi-Cal recipients 65 or older who are at risk of nursing home placement. By providing supportive services such as care coordination, money management and care advocacy, MSSP helps its participants continue living at home by delaying or heading off their placement in skilled nursing facilities. HSRC's MSSP program currently is contracted to serve 104 participants.

The Adult Day Health (CBAS) program serves adults 18 and older who have chronic conditions or disabilities, and who are unable to care for them-

selves. CBAS programs provide social and health services to these at-risk adults. They also assist their families and caregivers with much-needed respite, and may provide them with opportunities to work outside the home. HSRC's Adult Day Health program currently serves more than 80 participants.

Without the MSSP and CBAS programs, these participants would lose an essential support and care system, leaving them at greater risk for placement in long-term care facilities.

Advocacy on behalf of these programs is ongoing. If these programs are eliminated, HSRC would work with state and local agencies to determine

what other services are available to assist affected participants.

Details of the revised state budget can be found online at [ebudget.ca.gov](http://ebudget.ca.gov). The budget was revised in response to the economic financial changes brought about by precautions taken by the state to deter the spread of the coronavirus, which created a budget gap of \$54 billion.

The budget must be approved by state lawmakers before any cuts can be implemented.

*René Arché is HSRC's director of communications and marketing.*

## HSRC Program Status

**Administrative Services and main phone line:** Open as usual, however, please call before coming to our Eureka campus and we will assist you remotely if possible. In an abundance of caution, we have locked the doors of our buildings. Staff are available to answer the doors for those who need on-site assistance.

**Activities:** The Senior Services Office in Eureka is now closed. Please call 443-9747, x1240 for information on purchasing Dial-a-Ride tickets through the mail. All other activities are temporarily suspended until further notice.

**Adult Day Health & Alzheimer's Services:** The Day Center is closed. Staff can be contacted by phone.

**MSSP (Multipurpose Senior Services Program):** MSSP services continue, primarily via phone. Staff are available during normally scheduled hours. Referrals are being accepted; call 707-443-9747, x1259.

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

**Senior News:** Operating as usual. The June issue can be found at open distribution sites. Or read Senior News online at [www.humsenior.org](http://www.humsenior.org).

**Nutrition Program:** Please note the following changes in HSRC Nutrition services:

**Home Delivered Meals (HDM)** service continues.

All three Senior Dining Centers provide take-out meals via drive-by pick-up only, and by reservation only for those age 60 and older and spouse. Reservations must be made seven days prior to pick-up day (see below). Call the Senior Dining Center of your choice to make reservations or for questions about menus. Each take-out package will include a variety of five meals.



• Arcata: Arcata Community Center, 321 Martin Luther King Pkwy. Pick up on Wednesdays from 11:30 a.m.-12:15 p.m. on the east side of the building (near the Senior Room entrance); staff will bring the meals to you. Reservations: 707-825-2027.

• Eureka: 1910 California Street. Pick up on Tuesdays from 11:30 a.m.-12:15 p.m. in the parking lot. Park near the back door, and staff will bring the meals to you. Reservations: 707-442-1181.

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

This information could change at any time without notice.

For questions regarding any program, call HSRC at 707-443-9747. We thank community members for their understanding and cooperation with our modified services and programming.



## Summer Medley

"The earth is like a child that knows poems by heart," said the poet. Just so. Clockwise from upper left: A wild Tiger Lily opens; walking and talking along Redwood House Road; ceonothus jostle for the view of Wedding Rock; puppy Piglet plots an escape; Echium bloom like a Dr. Seuss garden; and the sky's the limit at Trinidad State Beach. Photos by Rees Hughes, Mark Larson and Ted Pease.



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**Crossword Puzzle  
on page 22**

# Working Together, We Win

*By Patty Harvey*

In the fifth grade back in Walnut Creek, red-haired Daisy Burchard was our feisty, mercurial teacher. She read us stories every day and taught us — even the boys — to do Irish jigs.

She also had interesting ideas about pedagogy. She wanted to see 100% success on spelling tests, so promised free Popsicles for the entire class if we achieved that goal. We never got there, but we ended up forming a strong program of peer tutoring that improved spelling scores almost to perfection. But Daisy was unrelenting: a deal was a deal, so no Popsicles, which saved her cash and elevated student performance.

The same theory was applied when certain unruly students (always the boys; truly, she did not favor little boys) got out of control. Perhaps her classroom management skills were not so great, but she devised an effective tool: peer pressure.

“All right, class,” she would announce, “because certain among you cannot behave, all of you will take the consequences — no recess this morning!” The dirty looks and implicit threats directed to the miscreants ensured there would be no repetition of such behavior.

At the time, the unfairness of such a tactic rankled. But, grudging admiration has stuck with me for its effectiveness, and the group power and solidarity that resulted.

I have since seen the approach repeated in various settings. Not least is our current

conundrum of how to divest ourselves of an insidious and determined viral pandemic.

Most of us understand from the experience of former plagues and available scientific and evidence-based information that certain behaviors will work in our favor. This guiding wisdom is the Daisy Burchard of the COVID-19 outbreak.

It is incumbent upon us all to band together to subdue the virus by implementing, as a group, the proven path — washing hands, social distancing, masking in public and staying away from large gatherings.

When we do that, we will see “the curve flatten.” When we don’t, “the whole class must suffer.”

Hooray for California with its early shutdown and the general cooperation of its citizens. Hooray for Humboldt County, which has performed in stellar fashion, holding infections to a minimum. We wash, we isolate and we wear masks. These are acts of humility and generosity, of caring for each other in human solidarity.

In other parts of the nation, we see the opposite, as those who, whether through desperation or just plain ignorance, choose to flout the rules. Their arrogance and selfishness are working to keep everyone inside at recess for months to come.

**Patty Harvey** of Willow Creek is director of the Humboldt Chapter of Health Care for All/PNHP.

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# The Involuntary, Solitary Man

By Steve Pence

Most everyone has a story of loss occasioned by COVID-19's disruption of life. Mine is less harsh than many, except for the timing.

In October, I retired to a community where I knew two people. My wife, upon whom I was relying for company, is a physician. Now, with an 80-hour work week, her calling leaves little energy for anything else. Thanks, COVID. Having stolen my wife, you now want my life?

My only recent "distanced" contacts were the women next door. They just moved. The economic calamity of COVID came quickly for them.

My busy retirement — volunteering, playing sports and taking college classes — is gone. Happily, I still hike and bike, usually out the front door. Alone.

What to make of a diminished thing?

Northern California people were welcoming. We were delighted by the whimsy of redwoods growing near palm trees. The endless blooms of vibrant flowers were in harmony, with a farmers market showcasing lively, eclectic musicians and boldly dressed dancers. The temperate climate was unlike that of the Upper Midwest, with its six months of snow, no spring and a summer soon giving way to a colorful but truncated fall.

But now I am, again, a stranger, not just in a strange town, but in a strange time. Weeks into "social distancing," reality suggests a slow emergence into something new.

This is not my first taste of trauma, of life upended by startling circumstances. But previous setbacks were not universal, and no matter how difficult, easier to understand, cope with

and accept in a world which I resented only for not grieving with me.

Being home alone is not like prison. I know this through work in the law, and because several family members "did time." I also engaged in prison ministry, where I met "Blue." He knew how to do his time, going unnoticed, sometimes being useful or pliant. If that meant spurning his Christianity overnight for Islam, well, as Blue said, "You get to go home at night." Blue offered that unsolicited, as he passed by with a new band of brothers.

I have never been tested, unremittingly, like that, with both my physical and psychic survival at risk.

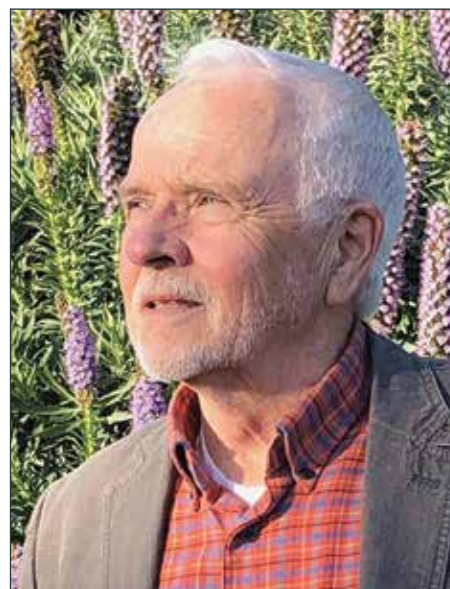
Still, losing all social contact and the easy companionship of my gentle wife is jarring. As was her insistence, seven weeks ago, that we update our wills!

It is a gift to have enjoyed good health longer than some contemporaries. Yet, to know the horrors of a COVID death, and its risk to elders, is to know dread. Moreover, COVID has now struck the families of several people whom I know well.

Lately, the discipline of exercise, reading, enjoying music and being "present" to a spouse who needs me have helped me accept this time and our unsettled future. Has the future ever been certain? And wasn't the world always impervious to our wishes?

I mostly miss the company of others, even those whom I did not know well.

I used to take a train far into the wilderness of Ontario. Near a trout stream of my choosing, I would signal the engineer to stop the train.



Steve Pence is trying to learn from his alone time. Contributed photo.

My canoe would be offloaded with my backpack. A week or more later, having seen no one and possessing a stilled mind — a mind that did not talk back to me — I would appear near the tracks, and return to my work and family life.

Enforced, prolonged solitude has an aspect not of reprieve, but of suffering and loss. The poet Rainier Rilke believed in the value of sadness, "when a stillness enters in." Can this time serve a purpose?

If this time alone means the days I have left are lived with more gratitude for a life of undeserved blessings, and that out of that thanksgiving I might live with greater generosity toward others, these austere days will not have been for naught.

—  
Steve Pence, 70, of Arcata is a retired lawyer from Michigan. This is his first experience living in a pandemic.

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# Sheltering at Home ‘Should Have Been a Breeze’

By Judy Webb

As the coronavirus began to spread, I read “The Plague” by Albert Camus. It takes place in a small Algerian seaport, but so many things that happened then are happening now, due to a strange and deadly plague of a different sort.

After Gov. Gavin Newsom issued his shelter-in-place order, I was hopeful that we could beat the virus. My husband and I have been retired for some time, and staying at home seemed like it should have been a breeze.

Let me tell you what I am so grateful for: Home alone every hour of every day with my friend and husband of 60 years has turned out to be such a pleasant experience. I don’t think that in all the 40+ years of living in the same house we’ve been together for such a stretch. We have food in the house, gas in the cars, and, since I went through our emergency provisions a while ago, we are set for the long run.

We hear from family and friends via the internet,

and appreciate the Instagram messages our adult granddaughters send from Homer, Alaska. My Girl-friends group meets via Zoom. Friends have offered to shop for us.

Staying at home has made me appreciate all the travel we have been able to do. And I appreciate where we live, and that we can take walks on the beach, to the Hammond Trail, to Hiller Park and sometimes up Dow’s Prairie to check out the goats at Cypress Grove.

I can get up in the morning and watch the sun rise through the woods. We now make it a point not to get up and dressed until the sun hits the waves on Clam Beach.

Since the crisis began, the daffodils have faded, the wild iris are blooming, and the foxglove has suddenly shot up. Boy, do we have the time to appreciate that, and to listen to the birdsong in the morning. Robins are busily making nests, and the



Judy and Buzz Webb of McKinleyville have spent 60 years together. Still no complaints. Submitted photo.

Continued on Page 18

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# Hammond Trail Steward Is a ‘Diehard Nature Lover’

*By Rees Hughes*

Humboldt County’s Volunteer Trail Stewards (VTS) program celebrated its “aluminum anniversary” this year (for those like me that don’t think in those terms, that is the 10<sup>th</sup>).

The program provides an avenue for community members to become the eyes and ears for many different trails locally, with volunteers assisting with maintenance, removing invasive species and graffiti, and, in some cases, building new trails.

Since Day 1, Stacy Becker of McKinleyville has been an essential part of making this program happen. She has played a key role in promoting the program, developing policies and procedures, and has coordinated the Hammond Trail Stewards for the past decade — all while working full time.

Stacy grew up in a Southern California beach town, where her sister labeled her “a fish out of water.” She found her way to Berkeley and then to Humboldt State for teaching credentials.

Following a detour to Stockton, where she taught elementary students about nature using art as the medium, she was drawn back to Humboldt County to teach. She also coordinated the Volunteer Center of the Redwoods (VCOR) and the Retired & Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), and for the past nine years has served as the community partner coordinator, helping place HSU students with local agencies.

The threads of nature and service are constants in Stacy’s life.

“I’m a diehard nature lover, like most of us in this area,” Stacy said.

She’s a big believer in the community value of trails, to help people “interface with nature and create community in healthy ways. Look at

how popular trails have been amidst both the lockdowns and power outages.”

She has been devoted to the Hammond Trail, organizing more than 100 volunteer workdays to clean up and maintain the 5+-mile trail linking the Arcata Bottom to Clam Beach.

“What a privilege and pleasure it has been to meet the many wonderful people who have been involved over the years,” she said.

Some of her most memorable volunteers on the trail: a Coast Guard helicopter pilot and crew, who were devoted for the several years they were posted at Humboldt air station; the McKinleyville Elementary Bilingual EcoClub, consisting of students and their families; the strong and sassy Humboldt Roller Derby team; Cummins Pacific employees; members of several local churches; countless HSU clubs; the California Conservation Corps, and many other groups and individuals.

“People can be so much fun,” Stacy said.

Anyone who has worked with



**TRAIL TOUCH-UPS** — Members of the Volunteer Trail Stewards (in the days before physical distancing) repaint the bridge over Widow White Creek on the Hammond Trail in McKinleyville. Rees Hughes photo.

Stacy knows that she is irrepressibly positive and encouraging, and, in her humble way, quick to deflect attention away from herself and recognize the contributions of others. “These 10 years have gone by in a breeze,” she said.

Eventually, she will have time to make a return visit to Italy, and dive back into her artwork; she wants to illustrate the Russian folktale, “Wise Little Girl.”

And she’d like more time to walk the trails she has worked so tirelessly to support.

“I don’t have the energy of youth,” she admitted. “I wouldn’t mind a little

coordination assistance on the Hammond [Trail]. But I love this program.

“The Trail Stewards are fantastic proof of Margaret Mead’s belief in the power of a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens.”

Anthropologist Mead’s full quote is, “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”

Stacy Becker is proof of that.

—  
**Rees Hughes** of Arcata, a trail devotee himself, is author of “Hiking Humboldt: 101 Shorter Day Hikes, Urban and Road Walks.”



## PALS TO THE RESCUE . . . From Page 1

pers, tirelessly working to socialize the rescue dogs. They find foster homes; take home abandoned litters of puppies or dogs surrendered at spay/neuter providers; work with other rescue groups to transfer dogs and coordinate their transportation as far away as Washington state; provide assistance to dog owners in need, especially the homeless; pay for myriad dog expenses, like shelter fees, spay and neuter services, vaccinations and medications, food, treats, leashes and collars; and do whatever else is needed to reduce the number of dogs the Shelter staff are forced to euthanize.

This spring, two game-changing events took place at the Animal Shelter. One was a directive from the sheriff's office to get dogs out of the shelter: "Get them out or put them down." These were dogs that Redwood Pals had been working with to make them adoptable.

RPR made a plea for outside help, but many rescue partners were already at capacity. So

Mara and Jim focused on placing the targeted dogs in foster homes — to save their lives. One dog was reunited with his owner, a young man who had been incarcerated and thought a friend was caring for his beloved dog.



Upward Hound Pet Rescue found local adopters for other dogs. A local German Shepherd rescuer took in two others, and some were driven to rescue groups in Oregon and Washington.



**DOG PEOPLE — Redwood Pals Rescue organizers Mara Segal and Jim Marlatt really like dogs. At left, Segal takes a little time for herself and two of her (current) dogs in Arcata — 12-year-old Lily and a 4-month-old foster named Fern. Above, Marlatt gives a little lovin' to someone who needs it, a Chihuahua brought in to one of Redwood Pals' free veterinary checkups for homeless pets in Eureka.** Segal photo by Chris Daugherty. Marlatt by Ted Pease.

The second major event was the coronavirus lockdown. Overnight, volunteers were no longer allowed to walk dogs at the shelter due to stay-at-home orders. But the dogs were still there. Volunteers found emergency foster homes for about a

dozen dogs that were up for adoption, plus some rescue animals, and a new husky with her litter of 11 puppies.

It takes a certain quantity and quality of compassion to take on the rescue mission for unwanted and lost dogs. Redwood Pals Rescue and its cadre of volunteers and partners are the main reason that the Humboldt County Animal Shelter has such a low euthanasia rate.

—  
**Mary Pincini Wells** of Arcata, a former Humboldt Senior Resource Center dietitian in the early 1980s, is a volunteer at the Humboldt County Animal Shelter. For more on Redwood Pals Rescue, visit [redwoodpalsrescue.org](http://redwoodpalsrescue.org).

## SHELTERING AT HOME. . . From Page 16

I can get up in the morning and watch the sun rise through the woods. We now make it a point not to get up and dressed until the sun hits the waves on Clam Beach.

Since the crisis began, the daffodils have faded, the wild iris are blooming, and the foxglove has suddenly shot up. Boy, do we have the time to appreciate that, and to listen to the birdsong in the morning. Robins are busily making nests, and the swallows have returned.

Still, the news gets me down, and I often don't sleep well. Some days, I wake up feeling sad. Why? I think I am in mourning for all the people I can no longer see. Like my Girlfriends for our weekly walk through Sequoia Park down to the Duck Pond

and out the other way. A nice workout and a chance to catch up. Some of us have been walking together for 40 years. I miss the gym and my friends of over 20 years of going to HealthSport.

Interestingly, I miss recycling. A lot. You can take trash to the transfer station, but they accept nothing else. After years of washing Ziploc bags and recycling jars and bottles and newspapers, everything now goes into the landfill. It used to make me feel pretty virtuous, like we were doing our part for the environment.

All my old backpacking bandanas are waiting to be made into masks. I painted our 60-year-old mailbox periwinkle blue, and got compliments from the Mail Woman. I've pulled out some old art supplies

and have been looking at them for weeks.

We planted a small kitchen garden, and the romaine lettuce is perfect for Caesar salad. Cutting my own hair was not so successful — a real whack job.

My greatest fear is that the government is not capable of handling this huge public health crisis or what seems to me to be a recession. Nothing next year will be the same, although I know that the daffodils, iris, pear trees, apple and plum trees will reliably be back to bloom again.

—  
**Judy Webb**, 80, of McKinleyville is former director of Planned Parenthood of Humboldt County.

## ASK THE DOCTOR . . . From Page 5

elders do not live in poverty, and that food, entertainment, social interactions and medical care were accessible — because that is just what an advanced human society should do? What if we did not demand everyone work so hard just to barely get by, constantly at risk of losing their housing, or having to choose between food, medication, education and child care?

What if we treated our “essential workers” like human beings that we value, making sure they can have sick days, time off, medical care, and opportunities to grow and learn and stretch themselves?

Why does it take a pandemic reminiscent of The Plague for us to notice that so many people are in trouble during good times, much less during a disaster like this?

What gives me the right as a physician even to talk about this in this column about staying

healthy? What we do as doctors — including heroic frontline workers literally risking their lives to help people with this coronavirus — is worth nothing unless our patients have their basic needs met.

How can I treat your diabetes when you can barely afford food? How can I treat your asthma if you don't have a home? How can I treat depression and anxiety when society tells you that you are less important than others because of your age or chronic medical conditions? How can I put you on a ventilator for a virus when we cannot even discuss the reality of serious illness, death, and the limitations of medical care in our society?

And how can my colleagues, without enough equipment to protect themselves, their patients and their families, keep persevering when people shout at them on the street that this is all a “hoax”?

I propose a calm trust in real science, leadership by experts, equitable pay, guaranteed health care, modelling of compassion by those in charge, and accepting that we are literally in this thing together. This crisis offers us a golden opportunity to open our eyes, open our hearts and restructure our society to be more compassionate and better prepared for the next wave, the next pandemic.

Our lives, our humanity and the fabric of our society depend on it.

—

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

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## HEROES . . . From Page 1

became too big to be families, which is what you have when everybody lives close together but everybody doesn't know everybody. You get conflict, so you make rules, and then you need to make sure the rules are obeyed. Because without that you will not have community.

So you invent mechanisms to keep the rules: a police department. You appoint some people to settle quarrels, deal with violent situations, and give the guy who is not bothering to use the latrine a reason to do so.

To enable them to keep order, which can entail significant risk to their personal safety, you grant them some status and certain privileges denied to others in the community. Because without them, there would be no community.

Nowadays, we call them the Highway Patrol, the County Sheriff, or the Police Department — “the cops,” for short. Serve and protect.

These days, with the appearance of the COVID-19 pandemic, Humboldt County cops are accepting still another risk. In addition to the normal run of violence and criminal activity, they face verbal abuse of people who blame them for the restrictions ordered by the state and county, and they deal with violence triggered by the simmering anger of people cooped up together too long.

Cops don't have the luxury of sheltering in place, which so many



**ALTERNATE CARE SITE — Humboldt County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) staff set up a 100-bed facility at Redwood Acres Fairgrounds in case of hospital overcrowding. From left, Nikki Powell, Sofia Pereira and Harold Dyar unload supplies. Humboldt Sheriff's Department photo.**

complain about; every dawn and every evening they fall in for their shifts, mask up, and patrol our streets. They confront situations that place not only themselves but their families at risk for a potentially deadly disease, protected by nothing more than thin gloves and cloth masks.

They'll keep it up as long as it takes, because that's what cops do. Without them, the community starts to fall apart.

Of course, lots of other folks also accept increased risks on behalf of our community these days: health-care workers, social workers, grocery employees, utility crews, Food for People staff, and bus drivers — to name only a few.

They, and the cops, feel embarrassed if we call them “heroes,” so I won't. But what I will do, when I see a black and white rolling along the street, is wave and give them a thumbs up. Perhaps you'll join me.

—  
**George Ingraham, M.D., 85, a retired ophthalmologist, waves at passing cops — and everyone.**

## It's the Itsy Bitsy Things

By Annie Kassof

One day during the pandemic, I make a video call to a 13-year-old girl I love. She shows me her mask. It has butterflies and polka dots, and after I admire it, I demonstrate how I sometimes use a scarf as a mask, wrapping it around my mouth and nose, pulling down on its ends.

She tells me she'll try that, too.

In stores, we all avoid getting close now, eyeing each other warily but with mutual understanding, perhaps shifting ridiculously close to a frosty ice cream case in order to maintain the six-foot rule.

Normally, when I talk to my 13-year-old friend on the phone, I ask her how school's going. At this time of the year, I might ask what her summer plans are. Instead, I ask when the last time was that she saw a friend, and if she'll be getting grades.

I'm not the first to suggest that life during the pandemic feels like a sci-fi movie, even though my day-to-day routine hasn't changed much since it began.

I live by myself in a house I bought recently. I still feed and ride my horse at a Carlotta ranch. I paint and read and write and take walks.

The 13-year-old girl I love comes from a background of neglect and hardship. She once lived with me, but now lives hundreds of miles away. I'm like her surrogate grandmother.

During our recent video chat, I

showed her the bedroom in my new house where I'd want her to sleep when travel feels safe again. Her face lit up when she saw the colorfully decorated room.

This is one of the itsy bitsy things I do that helps me stay positive — giving a video tour of my cute new house to a 13-year-old eager to visit me again. Or taking a country friend the rest of my Ibuprofen because her head

hurts, leaving it on a table by her door. Helping a technologically challenged man reprogram his phone, washing my hands carefully afterward. Cleaning up after the horse of another friend who has a compromised hip.

Then, yesterday, I played silly

harmonica tunes in a video call with a Bay Area granddaughter who's barely seen other people; I long to hold her again.

These are drop-in-the-bucket, keeping-connected things.

I'm not on the front lines doing anything heroic, like saving lives in hospitals or working in a grocery store or picking up other people's trash. I have nothing but admiration for the folks who do those things.

But at least I try to smile at people (on the few occasions when they can see me doing it). It's always nice to see them smile back.

—  
**Annie Kassof of Fortuna recently turned 63, which nudges her concern a bit about this disease.**



# The Isolation Effects of Loneliness Are Complex

By J.C. Williamson

Loneliness. The word alone evokes a sad yearning that we've all experienced. Lately, though, the depth and breadth of loneliness have expanded, as medical and scientific researchers delve into the health consequences of those who live apart from others, for whatever reasons.

Their revelations have been shocking: Loneliness has now emerged as the most significant threat to healthful longevity there is. It surpasses even heart disease. It is the equivalent of smoking 15 cigarettes per day.

And you thought sitting too much was unhealthy? Now, it's *don't do it alone*.

You may also have thought that being alone was quite different from being lonely. After all, many of us choose a minimally socialized lifestyle, if not solitude. So this black swan warning — that simply living alone is hazardous to one's health — is alarming and difficult to accept. It's hard to get one's head around the concept that *feeling* lonely is not required — the prolonged separation from others is what takes the heavy toll.

In a TEDxTalk entitled "The Lethality of Loneliness," John Cacioppo, cofounder of the field of social neuroscience, observed: "We think of loneliness as a sad condition, but for social species, being on the social perimeter is not only sad, it's dangerous."

In short, alone is alone. We humans are hard-wired for social interdependence. Whether we personally feel the need for connectedness or not, our inherent physiology predisposes us toward interaction, and this basic need manifests in a complex array of behavioral signs.

Being on one's own triggers self-preservation mode, as even the most enthusiastic and willing loners perceive existential threats at an unconscious level. Thus, negativity and defensiveness increase. Stress and sleep difficulties are common. Depression is more likely. Empathy and compassion decrease. And harmful

self-medication is an all too frequent response.

"Living with loneliness increases your odds of an early death by 45%," as Cacioppo reiterates.

That's no problem for those with the desire and ability to socialize — for the rest of us, not so much. But take heart. Our intrinsic human need for connectedness is a malleable

reality, with many possible avenues.

In other words, joiners will join, but loners are not

obliged. Being connected does not require one to mingle, chat, do lunch or join a club. It doesn't have to be intensely personal; just finding access to a reliable support system is a step toward inclusion. Technology also offers innumerable options, still from a distance, yet effective. Volunteering may provide other ways of connecting on a variety of levels.

The take-away seems to be aware-

ness — especially if isolation has become your comfort zone.

This may explain some of the growing interest in a local life-plan community that would permit Humboldt seniors to live together while maintaining their own lives.

"Life Care Humboldt would enable independence and privacy," said Humboldt resident Gail Popham, "but also opportunity for socialization, personal growth, community involvement and intellectual stimulation in a setting that is safer, more secure, more environmentally responsible and more economically dependable than living alone in a house."

For every one of us, connectedness means different things. Just as loneliness is a spectrum, ranging from choosing to live a solitary life to enduring unwanted isolation, the ways in which we can nurture our human needs vary widely.

J.C. Williamson is a writer living in Arcata. For information on Life Care Humboldt, visit [lifecarehumboldt.org](http://lifecarehumboldt.org).

**'For social species, being on the social perimeter is not only sad, it's dangerous.'**

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## Crossword

Directionless by Kathy Wienberg  
 Edited by David Steinberg

~ ANSWERS ON PAGE 14 ~

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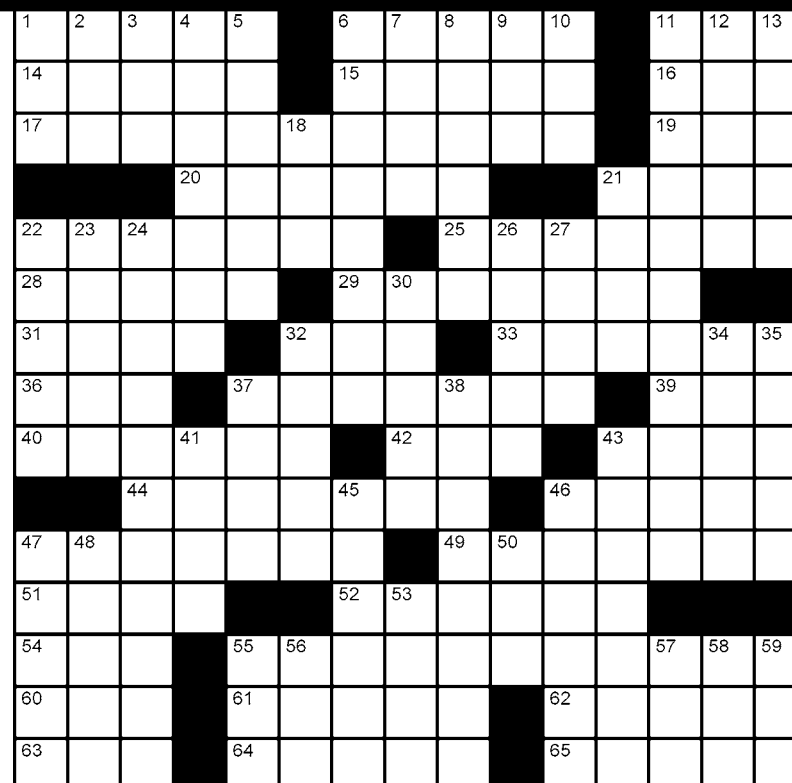
### ACROSS

- 1 Peach \_\_\_\_ (dessert)
- 6 Thyroid or thymus
- 11 Contains
- 14 Square footages
- 15 Indian currency
- 16 "The Addams Family" cousin
- 17 \*Radio network focused on a marsh bird?
- 19 Federal purchasing org.
- 20 What a contact contacts
- 21 "If I may interrupt ..."
- 22 Like a stegosaurus
- 25 Ramshackle building
- 28 Almost undetectable
- 29 Reject
- 31 \_\_\_\_ of the valley
- 32 Windows forerunner
- 33 Not too difficult, as a crossword
- 36 Request
- 37 \*Boggy green space?
- 39 Word after "grab" or "granola"
- 40 The Caribbean's \_\_\_\_ Islands
- 42 Browns, on scoreboards
- 43 Already cut, as wood
- 44 Get millions of likes, say
- 46 Toe woes

- 47 "I want to be alone!"
- 49 Many a CNBC employee
- 51 Bar on a party bus?
- 52 On fire
- 54 Hoppy beer, briefly
- 55 Have need for a map, and a hint to the starred answers
- 60 Movie critic Reed
- 61 Embellish
- 62 Protruding navel
- 63 Wily
- 64 It's tubular
- 65 Table tennis, for one

### DOWN

- 1 Put a ding in, say
- 2 Historic time
- 3 Floral necklace
- 4 Glass doors may lead to one
- 5 Arrange in groups
- 6 Junior's junior
- 7 Pear-shaped instrument
- 8 Queen's home
- 9 Recent: Prefix
- 10 Where Daniel encountered lions
- 11 \*Penthouse burglary?
- 12 Perplexed
- 13 Notary's implement
- 18 Uno + due
- 21 "\_\_\_\_ boy!"
- 22 Insurer with a duck in its logo
- 23 Wife of Mikhail Gorbachev
- 24 \*Whitish Samsung phone?
- 26 Agassi who married Steffi Graf
- 27 Seized
- 30 Humane org.
- 32 Durable pants fabric
- 34 Croquet venues
- 35 \_\_\_\_ & Young
- 37 Most-liked thing, informally
- 38 Without any assistance
- 41 Transport
- 43 Goes into hiding
- 45 Think logically
- 46 Small parts in films
- 47 Bears' retreats
- 48 Kick out
- 50 Bert Bobbsey's twin
- 53 Plant with spores
- 55 Swimming unit
- 56 Homage in verse
- 57 Intl. commerce group
- 58 \_\_\_\_ of mystery
- 59 On the other hand



## Letters to the Editor

### Anxious and Lonely

To the Editor:

I was so grateful for your May issue of Senior News, [Humboldt Holds Its Breath]. Right from the first headline, I realized that's what I've been doing for weeks — holding my breath!

Your "TEDtalks" column ["Too Distant," page 2] was so right — the last thing I want is to be any more "socially distant" than I am already. That's why the isolation order is so hard on people like me: I'm 79 and

live alone with no family nearby, and all my friends are alone at home, too. We have the phone, but that's not the same.

I was so pleased for people who said not much has changed for them except not going to the gym ["How Humboldters Are Living Through 'The Plague'," page 3]. I'm so jealous. I'm not "terrified," like the woman who emailed you. I'm more like Ann King: anxious and lonely.

**Helen Peterson, near Eureka**

### Would You Die for This?

To the Editor:

To expose citizens to the risk of death is — and perhaps ought to be — the prerogative of governments that feel that the "greatest good for the greatest number," "preservation of the union," "defense of the state against foreign invaders," or "stopping the undermining of our way of life" justifies putting some citizens at risk.

In the last century, though, exercise of this state prerogative was responsible for the deaths of "useless eaters" in the Third Reich — Jews, Roma, "mental defectives" and "homosexuals" — and, in the early years of the Soviet Union, the deaths of thousands of Armenians.

In the case of the coronavirus, it is proposed that getting the nation's commerce restored justifies excess mortality among the aging. At age 85, I find myself biased against that: I am not afraid to meet my maker, but I don't want to yet. If I were 35, with a family to support and no money coming in, I might feel differently.

The Declaration of Independence states that we're all entitled to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." From Bunker Hill to Baghdad, American men and women have, more or less willingly, died for those values. None, I believe, was willing to die for a booming economy. And neither am I.

**George Ingraham, Eureka**

### No Warning

To the Editor:

Lately I have been forced to consider the fact that I am now labeled "elderly"...worrisome sector of humanity across the globe as we stare down this virus. Me?! How is this possible?! Me of the mini-skirts,

flowers in my hair, peace symbols hanging from my earlobes, devoted fan of all things Beatles and Simon and Garfunkel? When did this happen? Why wasn't I warned?

**Sharon Winnett, Trinidad**

### Outrage Needed

To the Editor:

On April 25, Fintan O'Toole of the Irish Times wrote, "The world has loved, hated and envied the U.S. Now, for the first time, we pity it."

My hard-working, patriotic parents would never have believed that our fabulously wealthy nation would allow another epidemic and depression to devastate their country, as they witnessed in 1918 and 1929. In just weeks, America's economy and healthcare system collapsed to become "Number One" internationally for COVID-19 cases and deaths; tens of millions are unemployed, and for the third time since the 1980s, influential industries have looted the U.S. Treasury in massive bailouts. With imperial indifference, the U.S. president suggested, "Let Them Drink Lysol," and the U.S. Senate majority leader announced, "The states can declare bankruptcy."

Our privatized healthcare system is alone among industrialized nations, (where better outcomes have lower costs). Private health care is a throwback to America's inefficient 19th century private fire departments, when lives and homes were needlessly lost because uninsured house fires too often spread to insured homes.

Establishing America's first municipal fire departments took widespread public outrage to overcome a powerful industry's fallacious warnings against "communism," "infernos" and "job losses."

COVID-19's epicenters are impoverished communities where systemic neglect and prejudice guarantee its spread like fire, inevitably afflicting the wealthy and insured. Yet, despite ruinous responses and grave consequences, local and national government administrators, elected and appointed officials, pundits, experts, academics, scientists and journalists refrain from publicly sharing the outrage of tens of millions of working families, (including many healthcare workers), in demanding a universal healthcare system. Forced to fend for ourselves, store shelves lack basic supplies, sanitizers, alcohol, thermometers, gloves and masks — shortages familiar in third world countries.

Public outrage and demands for universal health care are positive, therapeutic and necessary. It would make our parents proud and our posterity grateful.

**George Clark, Eureka**

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