

# Aging & Ageism

## Here's to Old Age

By Ted Pease

As if we needed any help getting older, scientists reported in a recent issue of the journal *Nature* that the pandemic has accelerated the aging process — not just for those who have caught the virus, but for all of us whose lives have been disrupted.

"I was 43 when the pandemic began," wrote columnist Steven Kurutz in the *New York Times*. "Now I am 60."

Kurutz said that when he told psychologist and geronologist Ken Dychtwald that, the doctor — who is 71 — replied that the remark demonstrated "a profound level of ageism."

But Dychtwald and other medical care providers agree that the pandemic has taken a toll on everyone, of all ages.

Humboldt County is aging even without the pandemic. The 2020 U.S. Census reveals that nearly 24% of the county population is 60 or older (compared to 29% of California). Locally, statewide and nationally, the 60+ population is projected to be our fastest growing demographic.

Of course, everyone is getting older ("You're as young right now as you'll ever be."), but that's not necessarily a bad thing.

Young people can't wait to get older — or at least "old enough." At some point, our attitudes shift, and we start worrying about aging. For many, it's a dark day when that first

Continued on Page 22

## Rolling with the Punches

By Suzanne Simpson



Suzanne Simpson and sidekick, Molly, in her garden. Ted Pease photo.

Last year, my doctor's office called me to make an appointment, and asked me to bring my husband. I felt a surge of fear run through me, wondering if tests had showed cancer, which runs in my family.

I was completely shocked when I found out the diagnosis was early-onset Alzheimer's.

I have always been an active person, both physically and mentally, loving life, pushing myself to do more, and living life to the max.

At an early age, I gave my mother gray hair, and can still hear her bemoaning my high energy and desire to experience life at the fullest. Her eyes would fill with tears. "You are just like your father," she'd say.

As a child, I would sit on a big rock in our front yard and wait for him to come home from work. He'd wave

Continued on Page 18

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ASK THE DOC

HSRC

IN YOUR OPINION

Published since 1981 by  
**HUMBOLDT SENIOR RESOURCE CENTER**

For Ina  
Page 5

'March for Meals'  
Page 11

'Isms' & Empowerment  
Page 21

# Sr. News

Published monthly since 1981 by



Humboldt Senior  
Resource Center

**Circulation 10,000**

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**Submissions:** Senior News may accept unsolicited readers' stories, up to 400 words. Contact the editor, Ted Pease, at 707-443-9747, x1226, or [tpease@humsenior.org](mailto:tpease@humsenior.org) at least one month prior to publication.

**Advertising:** Call Elizabeth Whitley at 707-443-9747, x1227, or visit [www.humsenior.org](http://www.humsenior.org).

**Subscriptions:** \$25 a year. Call 707-443-9747 or mail to Senior News, 1910 California St., Eureka CA 95501.

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## TEDtalks: Father William

One of the things my parents passed along to me that makes my life easier as I age is a sense of humor. Which reminds me of a Lewis Carroll poem that my mother could — and would — recite at the drop of a hat:

*"You are old, Father William," the young man said,*

*"And your hair has become very white;  
And yet you incessantly stand on your head  
— Do you think, at your age, it is right?"*

This is a good model for me. My hair is very white, and although I've never been able to stand on my head, the attitude (and worldview) that comes with turning yourself upside down is one I embrace.

Contributors to this month's Senior News grapple with the many questions that come with aging — some happy and some sad. Except for those who can emulate Father William, most of us are not as physically nimble as we once were, and that gradual (or not so gradual) decline, replacing strength with aches and pains, is hard.

"Some days, life is not easy," commented Marsha Hays of Fortuna in a recent email. Not only is that a perfect encapsulation of what many of us feel, but it's a great six-word story on aging (see others on page 4).

Everyone worries about inevitable loss of physical strength and ability, but perhaps an even greater fear is mental decline as we age. Between 10%-14% of Americans 65 and old-

er develop Alzheimer's and other dementias, says the Centers for Disease Control (numbers are projected to triple by 2060). One of those is Suzanne Simpson of Arcata, who describes receiving that stunning diagnosis in a courageous and upbeat article (page 1).

"Greet each day with a sparkle in your eye, bless each moment and reach out to others with a loving heart!" she says.

Good advice, but for many of us, the walls of our lives close in as we age, however much we resist.

Writer Garrison Keillor described this diminution in a recent column. "Being on the verge of 80 as I am, I'm used to being kindergarten by the young," he wrote. "I went to a physical therapist once who said, 'Wonderful,' when I stood with my eyes closed and didn't fall over.

"The message was clear: you're a burned-out wreck and it's amazing you're still mobile," he wrote. "Next stop: Happy Acres." (See more on elderspeak on page 15.)

Not so fast! As you'll see in this issue — from becoming invisible (page 3) to bucket lists (page 4) to controlling (page 9) and affirming aging (page 15) to our inaugural Senior News Poets' Corner (page 23) — our hair may be white (or gone), but we're still on our game. Even if not everyone is doing headstands.

**Ted Pease, temporarily 66, is editor of Senior News.**

### IN THIS ISSUE AGING & AGEISM FEATURES

Here's to Old Age.....	1
Rolling with the Punches 1	
Invisibility .....	3
Aging in 6 Words .....	4
Bucket Lists & 'That Man'4	
Talking Past Dad.....	6
Too Old to Change .....	7
To Age . . . or Not? .....	9
Still Aging, and Learning 9	
'Get the Most Out of It' 10	
Get Rid of Elderspeak ...	15
The Upside of Aging .....	15

### COLUMNISTS

Tedtalks: Father William. 2	
The Doc: For Ina .....	5
Fulkerson: Naming .....	6
Kellermann: [Whisper] ...	8
Heckel: Wisdom .....	10

### HSRC NEWS

'March for Meals' .....	11
Saluting Social Workers	11

### & ETC. . . .

Good Deeds.....	5
Fortuna Activities .....	14
Historical Society is 75..	17
Crossword.....	20
In Your Opinion.....	21
Poets' Corner.....	23

### COMING NEXT MONTH What's So Funny?



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# Invisibility — the Superpower of Old Age

By Jane Hill

*Taken from her original monologue, “Now What?” Jane Hill plays “Esther,” an elderly woman, who stands and begins speaking to people at a luncheon at the “Zero to Fierce” Women’s Festival in Arcata. She carries a clipboard and wears an afghan over her shoulders like a cape.*

Hello. Sorry to bother you. I think I’m probably in the wrong place. Happens a lot.

I had a recent realization. See, I went into a shoe department, and the salesperson chose to wait on a younger woman. Even though I was there first.

I realized that was happening a lot. I am not seen much anymore when I walk by people on the street. Or when I am at a party. It is a little discomfiting, a little bittersweet. Conversation whirls around the table. Snippets of this or that experience are shared.

I remember when I competed for the storyteller spotlight. But you don’t need to speak in order to exist, right? So, it slowly dawned on me — as I have aged, I have become invisible.

Here’s another sign. I have been job hunting. I had a career; now I just want a job, something to augment my Social Security, you know? I have a good résumé and lots of skills. That makes me “overqualified.” What a concept, huh?

I no longer have to worry about dying young. I have to worry about living too long. I’ve applied for about 10 jobs, even had two interviews. No offers. It’s illegal to ask about someone’s age. But the interviewers aren’t blind.



**Jane Hill is not invisible.**

Did you know that professional orchestras have “blind auditions?” The people listening are not allowed to see the musician — they can only judge their playing. Wow. With that system, I might stand a chance. Being invisible could be an advantage instead of a handicap.

Aging is the beginning of a disappearing act. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, the Jesuit paleontologist and philosopher, says that this “diminishment” is how we prepare for the great merging with the cosmos that occurs when we die: “There is a slow, essential deterioration which we cannot escape: old age little by little robbing us of ourselves and pushing us on to the end. In death, as in an ocean, all our slow and swift diminishments flow out and merge.”

Sorry, don’t mean to depress you.

Wait — raise your hand if you can see me. *(Some people raise hands,*

*but there are always a few who won’t. Esther nods sagely.)*

Yeah, I knew it. Don’t be polite. I’m invisible. Every now and then, it is still a shock to my ego. A voice in me wants to scream. I want to stick my tongue out or do something crazy. Bad choice for a job interview.

The 20- and 30-somethings among my relatives laugh and roll their eyes at each other and at me. But the littlest ones — the 2- or 6-year-olds — seem intrigued by a little craziness from an elder. The brave ones run up to hug me. I am not invisible to them.

There is an upside to this condition. I mean, think about it: invisibility is a Superpower. When I walked in here, I was really looking for something else.

Everyone knows that Superpowers are never just ONE thing. So I’m on a purposeful journey to discover what other Superpowers I have. I tried leaping a building with one powerful bound — well, it was just a dog house — but I didn’t quite make it. The dog was really surprised though.

Then I realized what was missing — a phone booth. Remember? That’s where all the Superheroes went to complete their transformations. Try and find a phone booth these days! No wonder so many fools are running the world. The Superheroes are out there pounding the pavement to find something that has disappeared.

But I’m not giving up. I made my own cape.

**Jane Hill** is co-founder of Dell’Arte International in Blue Lake and new executive director of the Humboldt Historical Society.

## On Aging

“Today is the oldest you’ve ever been, and the youngest you’ll ever be again.”

—Eleanor Roosevelt

“No stranger ever comes up and talks to me. I’m the invisible woman.”

—Siobhan Fahey, musician

“I think, for a woman, the hardest thing about growing old is becoming invisible.”

—Amy Grant, singer

“Aging seems to be the only available way to live a long life.”

—Kitty O’Neill Collins, author

“You can live to be a hundred if you give up all things that make you want to live to be a hundred.”

—Woody Allen, movie director

“It’s paradoxical that the idea of living a long life appeals to everyone, but the idea of getting old doesn’t appeal to anyone.”

—Andy Rooney, journalist

“A man growing old becomes a child again.”

—Sophocles

“I look forward to growing old and wise and audacious.”

—Glenda Jackson, actress

“When granted many years of life, growing old in age is natural, but growing old with grace is a choice.”

—Billy Graham, minister

## Aging in Six Words

Stories in only six words have been a popular challenge to writers ever since Ernest Hemingway responded to a bar bet with, “For sale: baby shoes, never worn.”\*

Senior News readers pitch in with some six-worders about aging and life:

*Camera has an old-person filter.* — **Marna Powell**

*Don't worry, it'll soon be over.* — **Barry Evans**

*Been here, done that, now what?!* — **Jane P. Woodward**

*Now making coffee for only one.* — **Roger Hone**

*Never again as young as today.* — **Eva Janson**

**Sara Turner**, 95, needed only four words: *Hold tight; walk sideways.* But she had to explain:

“My experience in recent years involves getting up and down the four steps to the outdoor hot tub at the Arcata Community Pool,” she said. “Disregarding any attempt at dignity, I grasp the rail firmly and go up or down sideways, and manage to submerge into the warm water with no trouble.”

“BTW, it is a great place to chat with people of all ages, from all areas of this country and others. Yesterday, it was a 27-year-old man from France, traveling around looking for a short-term job.”

Good stories come in all sizes.

\* It turns out Hemingway probably didn't write this, but it's a good story, anyway

## Bucket Lists and ‘That Man’

By **Debbie Topping**

Somewhere deep in a notebook that contains a travel “bucket list” and other journaling notes is a list titled “When I Retire.” It's a bulleted roster of projects ranging from “refinish that yellow chair” to (at the bottom of the list) “catch up on scrapbooking.”

Just four months into retirement, I've pondered the list, but it's this last item that looms as most important.

As an amateur genealogist, I have boxes and books of family photos, having become the designated keeper of the archives. Our families did a reasonably good job of documenting and identifying — photos of my mom's early life as a teen in Wisconsin “cuttin' up with Beets and Art” are a hoot.

My husband Mark's maternal grandmother traced her lineage back to Steven Hopkins, which qualifies him for membership in the Mayflower Society, and his paternal grandmother was in the Daughters of the American Revolution, but some photos remain mysteries.

Who were the Lees and why did Mark's grandparents travel to visit them in Michigan? I have no record in any tree of Lees, and still struggle to identify “Uncle Warren.” Trust me, I have tried.

My family has a more . . . colorful . . . immigrant past. My maternal grandmother died when my mom was 9, and her husband would never discuss his trip across the ocean from Austria in 1910 with a teenage son. The journey had to have been a cakewalk compared to Grandma's two months later — two weeks in

the belly of the SS Fredrick the Great with six children, including a toddler and one in diapers. If only she had Instagram to document every step of the trip, complete with hashtags.

I also wish for a real explanation of who sponsored my paternal grandpa, who came here indentured in 1913 from Italy, or the REAL reason why few photos exist of his Sicilian family.

For this reason, my box of mementos and travel ephemera beckons me to organize and explain in greater detail than ANYONE will care about.

I once glued photos in books with typewritten tags, but that stopped more than 15 years ago, about the time I stopped getting photos printed from film. My children tire of my tales of ancestral discoveries, but I hope someday one of them (or their children) will have an interest.

When that day comes, I want my scrapbooks to be everything I wish I had, with stories of the families, every name noted, dates scribed and events depicted. I don't want them to end up, as I have, with a snapshot of “That Man,” as I call him, sitting in a chair reading a book with no other identification.

Maybe I should refinish that yellow chair first; I feel like this is going to take a while.

**Debbie Topping** of Eureka recently retired as office coordinator at the College of the Redwoods Police Academy. She's working through her short-term project list, feeling merely “on holiday,” but hoping to feel REALLY retired very soon.

“Growing old is mandatory; growing up is optional.”

—Chili Davis, baseball player.



**I'm Larry Doss and I'm asking for your vote on June 7th.**

As owner of Ming Tree Realty, I have helped many people secure their dreams of home ownership.

As a father, rancher, business owner, and community leader I see the need for leadership in our county government.

As a rancher in Orick and the northernmost District of the county, I see a need for the Fifth District Supervisor to advocate for our rural way of life both locally and statewide.

### In service to our community:

As a Humboldt Bay Harbor, Recreation and Conservation District Commissioner for the First District for over 6 years, I accomplished environmental, alternative energy, dredging, and international port development projects. County residents reap benefits from those now.

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## ASK THE DOCTOR

BY JENNIFER HEIDMANN, M.D.

### For Ina

In mid-February, I said goodbye to a friend dying with dementia in their 50s. Just prior to that, I said goodbye to a friend dying at age 99.

In my work, I have witnessed the death of many people, and in my 20s said goodbye to both of my parents.

This experience is universal. Everyone dies. Everyone loses people they love. During these past two pandemic years, mortality has been daily news with the on-going count of mounting losses to COVID. What do we do to cope with this kind of grief?

Heading into spring, with azaleas and rhododendrons and pussy willows starting to bud, and the days getting longer, I do feel a lift in my heart. The optimism of spring permeates myth and religion and gardening almanacs. It reminds me of the way a very sick person can turn a corner for the better, and start requesting food and getting ornery (almost always a good sign).

I have seen people admitted to hospice only to get stronger and graduate back to regular medical care. I believe sometimes this is because hospice allows people to just *be* without having things done to them by the medical system. Sometimes that is the key to healing.

The pandemic has taken another toll — on medical providers. Many are leaving the profession because

of the strain of the pandemic and the things they have witnessed, compounded by people accusing them of making up a fake disease and profiting from it. The pandemic showed us the brokenness of our healthcare system and of our communities. But it also showed us that so many people can be generous and kind. It is important to remember that aspect, the people

who brought food to others, who Zoomed and Facetimed with isolated and lonely people, who

found ways to keep local businesses intact.

Sadness versus gratitude, and grief versus hope — these are things I have been pondering as a human being and as a doctor. What is the best thing to say to someone who is dying? To someone who has lost a loved one? To someone who doesn't want to believe a pandemic could happen? To those who are angry at the world and taking it out on others?

When families are struggling with a dying loved one, I sometimes share Dr. Ira Byock's suggestions from "The Four Things That Matter Most" (2014) as a way to help cope: "Please forgive me." "I forgive you." "Thank you." And, "I love you."

I used to write them down on a prescription pad. They are a helpful

**'Sadness versus gratitude, and grief versus hope'**

Continued on Page 19

## Do A Good Deed Today

"Indifference and neglect often do much more damage than outright dislike," writes Harry Potter author J.K. Rowling.

Rowling is correct, scientists say. Not only do these negative behaviors harm others, but they can make us sick as well.

Stated more positively — being kind to others will make them feel better, and make us healthier, too. "Scientists have discovered that the small brave act of cooperating with another person, of choosing trust over cynicism, generosity over selfishness, makes the brain light up with quiet joy," writes Pulitzer Prize-winning science writer Natalie Angier.

Research shows that those who are nice to others regularly — a friendly word, a random act of kindness, a good deed — create more of the

hormone oxytocin, which reduces inflammation in the body.

The warm feeling that being kind can produce may also slow the aging process, boosting the immune system and reducing anxiety.


The theory is that attitudinal negativity is an artifact of our primitive nature, when we were cave people who had to be constantly alert and on guard against danger. Constant vigilance is wearing, both physically and psychologically.

Another study found that people who find purpose in their lives — through volunteering, for example — not only increase their "feel good" hormones, but tend to take better care of themselves.

So do a good deed today. You'll feel better.

—Ted Pease

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**As Virginia Bass said on February 3** when introducing and endorsing me as the best choice for the next 4th District Supervisor: "What sets Mike apart from the others is his experience at the County level with his years on the County's Measure Z Committee and Planning Commission. He can take the ball and run with it without having to learn the plays."

My priority is the future of our families, businesses, and community. That's why I am running for 4th District Supervisor of Humboldt County, ready to roll my sleeves up and get back to work for you!

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**HOME GROWN** BY JULIE FULKERSON

# Naming

What’s in a name? I am curious about what it is about humans that we feel the need to name things — ponds, lakes, schools and highways — after people. With that in mind, I made up two “word search” puzzles.

Take a look at these two Puzzle Blocks and note which words pop out at you. Circle for fun.

NUMMBECHTELCLARKBELLOTTIWOODPENCEMONAGOJORGENSEONRAINEPOLENRUSSELLHUNTERBREEDALLENJOHNSONWARLOWARCHULETABOWERSREAGANLEHNPIERCEBARCCABEBOYERSANDERSONWALKERHRIEIVESCONLEYBACHEAVEVALO COLLIERBASILONEDRURYAUDRYEDAVISFRANCOMUDGETTBARRONFRAZIERGUTHALLPRIBBLENELSONLEWISDRURYLOPSE

ARTESIABIGMOODYLONGBARNREDWOODWORLDVETERANSBIGTREESAVOCADOWEEDPATCHOAKFLATVIETNAMSERVICEMENCIVILIANWOMENSTAGEGULCHSECRETVALLEYCRYSTALSPRINGSMILITARYSERVICEWOMENDEVILSSLIDEPACIFICCOASTKOREANWARVETERANS GOLDSTARDONNERSUMMITHAPPYTRAILSPEARBLOSSOMHUMANRIGHTSELEPHANTBUTTEDISABLEDVETERANSFILIPINOAMERICANGATEWAYPINNACLES AIRMENMEMORIAL

The first block includes names of roadways. Do you know who these men are? Would someone born in the next generation know them?

The second set is also names of roadways. Which names are most likely to remain with you?

I’m going to guess that the second puzzle was easier to sort out. For me, at a glance, nearly every name is distinct. Each creates an image in my mind of who or what is honored.

Names are currently being removed from public schools, museums, public buildings for connections to slavery, KKK, opioids, mayhem and corruption.

Fortunately, we have place names around us that remind us of history, heritage, who we are or what our environment reflects: Sumêg Village, Tuluwat Island, College of the Redwoods, Hupa, Honeydew, Mad River, Rio Dell, Willow Creek, Hikshari’ Trail, Bear River, Horse Mountain. And soon, Earth Center and Sorrel Place.

Some names (and renamings) not connected to local history and culture may be harder to connect with.

**Julie Fulkerson** remembers how uncomfortable her father was that a university building was named after him, as he was deeply aware of those came before him, those who worked with him, and others who would follow. Contact: [juliefulkerson@mac.com](mailto:juliefulkerson@mac.com).

# Talking Past Dad

By *Debbe Hartridge*

In the years before my dad’s death at the age of 90, I helped him with the various needs of life.

This included chauffeuring him to medical appointments, where, in the course of three years, we visited two surgeons, an ophthalmologist, and three primary care providers. These folks are the ones I have clear memories about, though there were others connected with hospital stays.

All the visits to medical offices gave me a chance to compare and contrast the way different physicians and mid-level providers communicated with Dad, an old guy whose hearing and vision were not what they used to be, and whose memory and understanding often, but not always, seemed on a par with his hearing and vision.

Some of these folks always seemed to be talking to me, not Dad, but there were others who never did that. Maybe one key to the more direct communication was that these particular specialists saw Dad as a former colleague (he’d been a doctor in family practice in Eureka for many years), and they afforded him the respect they’d want if they were talking to someone about their own health situation.

These guys I’m thinking of all had deep, booming voices, and they spoke clearly to Dad without ever being patronizing. It was a joy to behold him hearing and understanding what they were telling him and being engaged in the process, asking pertinent questions and making observations.

I suspect this was their standard modus operandi with all their patients, that they didn’t default to talking to the younger person in the room.

At least two of the others, however, gave up (in my view) trying to talk to “the patient” — Dad — and skipped past him to converse with me, the daughter who took less effort to get through to.

This is my clearest memory of experiencing a sort of ageism, though I was observing it rather than having it directed toward me. All these health-care professionals were good people with great intentions, but the memories I have are almost like a case study in how not to communicate with an older person.

**Debbe Hartridge** of Arcata is former education director at Six Rivers Planned Parenthood.



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# Too Old to Change

By Roy Grieshaber

Ageism? I have thought about other *-isms*, but I haven't given much consideration to ageism. Have I experienced prejudice or discrimination because of my age? My first response was, "No."

But then I began to wonder about my thoughts and feelings about age. Do I have negative age stereotypes and prejudices I have internalized over the years?

My own image of growing old is influenced by my experience of older people in my family. My maternal grandmother developed dementia in her old age, as did my mother and her siblings. I live with the likelihood that I may become demented as well. I monitor myself. When I have a moment of confusion, I wonder if this is the beginning of my dementia.

I notice I have many "old geezer" stereotypes.

When I see images of President Biden walking (he and I are the same age), I think he walks like an old man. Sometimes when I see my reflection in a storefront window as I walk by, I notice I also walk like an old man.

It is my perception that we tend to complain more and more about things as we grow older. When I notice myself complaining about something, I often wonder if this is because I am old.

I remember telling a very funny joke about an older couple and their

inability to remember common details in a conversation with each other. This is poking fun at older people and making light of the common belief that with age comes memory lapses. This is unproductive ageist humor at best.

When I needed hearing aids, I chose the style that fits inside the ear because I thought they were less noticeable. I didn't want to look like an old man.

I am quite healthy for a person my age, but I look in the mirror and see an unattractive old body with sags and wrinkles and tufts of unappealing wiry gray hair here and there. I am comparing myself to my more youthful standard of body image and being judgmental because of my age.

I had believed I had a positive attitude toward growing old; I am active and happy and comfortable with my senior life. Yet I now see I have bought into thoughts and judgments about growing old that influence my life.

Would I benefit by changing some of my attitudes toward aging, knowing that how we think about things influences how we experience them? Yes, definitely!

But unfortunately, I am too old to change.

**Roy Grieshaber, 79, enjoys a happy and comfortable life in Eureka.**

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**"You know you're getting old when you stoop to tie your shoelaces and wonder what else you could do while you're down there." —George Burns, actor.**





## PAINTING THE OCEAN

BY MARGARET KELLERMANN

### [Whisper in Brackets]

Here's a column I've written freestyle, as skaters skate freestyle, "in which there are few restrictions on moves or techniques" (Oxford Languages). It may work best if you read it aloud twice. First, read without words in brackets [and then read the entire thing while whispering the bracketed words].

It was near Newport, Rhode Island, where I first studied poetry [at a time when the following bracketed words would have been unspoken -- at least by me] in fifth grade.

I attended a school [a.k.a. musty museum] with a strict poetry class, where I was advised not to raise [my voice or questions or a rabble or] my hand. When I did bring up [possibly salient] points about the writing of poetry [e.g., not needing to rhyme every freaking line], my teacher often told me, "Margaret, you're not in California anymore" [hammered home every day of my three-year exile].

These were the Late Sixties [of American Revolutionary Berkeley days]. When our principal, Miss Crocker, stopped by [for surprise inspections], she'd remind us, "Sit up straight, children; this is a classroom [prison ward]."

Each morning, we stood beside our old wooden desks and "pledged allegiance to the flag" [a phrase I couldn't understand, yet knew I couldn't get an answer to]. After that, we sang "My Country, 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty" [for some]. Or we chanted "O beautiful for spacious skies" [but were

forbidden to look out the window. Teachers told brazen violators' parents on Open House Night: "Your child is not unintelligent, Mr. and Mrs. So-and-So, but she/he does keep looking out the window."]

This was the era of [Bob Dylan, Rebel of Babble; Maya Angelou, friend of Malcolm and MLK; and] Walt Whitman, whose lilacs last bloomed by a dooryard [but we were never taught that this 1865 poem symbolized Lincoln's assassination], and Emily Dickinson [whose most creative burst of writing was 1861-65, precisely the Civil War Era — but, again, did we learn historical context for all that death talk? No].

Yes, we studied poets who had [conveniently] died long ago [because studying living poets would bring up contemporary reality, in the most explosive years of Vietnam]. We recited venerable poets' greatest works in class [without comprehending that what they wrote had bearing on questions dogging our 10-year-old lives].

Back then — as often now — a school offering poetry was [not a school of thought as much as a school of fish and] an [odd,] ancient library where there was safety [ha!] in rhyme, meter, and keeping everyone [complacent, noiseless, and] well-mannered.

**Margaret Kellermann** has taught poetry in schools in Ireland, Canada and across the United States. To ask about her books of poetry, reach her at [bluelakestudio.net/contact](http://bluelakestudio.net/contact).

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# To Age or Not to Age. Is That the Question?

By Jane P. Woodward

We all age, because our cells age (that is, until we discover how to reverse cellular aging, and we're well on our way). But the pace of aging is very much under our control, barring accidents.

It's use it or lose it. Inputs and outputs. If you put in junk, you get junk out. You also are what you think, because thoughts are manifested in cells.

Our energy production mitochondria (a form of bacteria in our cells) reduce in number over time unless our lifestyles protect them, which is why you feel you have less energy as you age. This is scientific fact.

The older you get, the more time and effort is required to slow the process. You have to exercise your body, not just aerobically, but by stretching, flexing, moving all the parts on a regular basis so you don't "freeze up." Aerobic exercise stimulates neurogenesis (production of new neurons). It's not enough to walk slowly around the block on level ground — you have to up your game by pushing yourself a bit more, going faster, up and down hills, raising your heart rate, perhaps sweating a bit (also a detoxifier).

Vary it, so you don't get bored. Tackle new skills (paddle boarding?), be adventurous. Embrace

novelty. Experiment with new activities.

Your brain requires exercise, and not just cross-word puzzles, so challenge your brain by learning new languages, new skills (e.g. Zooming, computer

gaming, chess). Any new field — physics, geography, music, etc. — is a "new language" because its terminology and concepts are new to you, challenging the brain to build new synapses.

Develop new skills — texting, painting, tai chi, gardening, piano. A daily meditation practice increases the thickness of your cerebral cortex. Become a lifelong learner (think OLLI). Be curious.

And it's about what you consume — food

for both the body and mind, and avoidance of toxins in all forms, including toxic people. That's not easy in today's chemical-laden environment, with online sites and TV that spew negativity.

Make your mantra, "Eat food, not too much, mostly plants," as Michael Pollan said, and avoid processed foods. The bacteria in your microbiome produce the majority of the vital neurotransmitters (e.g., dopamine, serotonin) that determine mood. Real food feeds your "gut buddies," which determine your health.

A sugar- and simple carb-based diet (think pasta) feeds the bad bacteria and can lead to "leaky gut," resulting in systemic inflammation and almost all chronic disease. This is scientific fact.

Get good, consistent sleep, because deep sleep is when your body's glymphatic system drains toxins from your brain (the amyloid that can lead to Alzheimer's).

Find a purpose in life that makes you want to "rise and shine," whether it's grandchildren, a special project, a hobby or a new puppy (just ask me) — something that makes you feel needed and that you're making a contribution.

And socialize. Loneliness is the new smoking (along with sitting.) Hug a lot (it triggers the bonding neurotransmitter oxytocin). Ask yourself what and who bring you joy.

Ultimately, you have the power to slow down the aging process. Use it.

**Jane P. Woodward** of Arcata is a retired attorney/policy analyst/educator/advocate who is active in OLLI.



**Jane Woodward has a strategy.**  
Kellie Jo Brown photo.

## After All These Years, Still Aging . . . and Still Learning

By Louise Bacon-Ogden

Aging is not just for the old: Even at 5, a body is aging. No one escapes.

Personally, I like being my age. It is a challenge since I have never been this age before. I am wise enough to know it will be a challenge, yet young enough to TAKE that challenge.

The image in the mirror is often surprising. How could I look wrinkly yet feel like I can still do lots of what I have been doing for ages? All I did was slow it down.

I am still up for learning and doing new things. Ask 30-year-olds about their bucket lists, and they laugh. They think it is only for old folks. But how often do we say, "Wow, I wish I had done that!" Only to find that, sometimes, waiting makes the task almost impossible.

My next thought on "ageism" is this: I DO NOT like being my age and finding that things I want to do aren't possible anymore. If not physical, it could be mental. I have learned not to climb trees any-

more to trim them. That is because I know I can fall (and did). Wisdom and experience have taught me.

My biggest problem with aging is computers. After five years, I finally learned how to reset my car's clock — it got embarrassing going to the dealership for that. But even the mechanic often needs to ask his grandchild to help. Now doesn't THAT make you feel ancient?

**Louise Bacon-Ogden** is still plugging away in Eureka.



AGING IS AN ART — BY JOHN HECKEL

## Recognizing Wisdom

A friend recently gifted me with a book, an act that always rekindles my belief in an optimistic future. The book, “What Do I Know? Wisdom Essays” (Sidekick Press, Bellingham, Washington) is a collection of musings pondering wisdom and the aging process, written by Jack Remick.

Jack struggles with the knowledge that there may not be anything he knows worth passing on to the next generation, his children and grandchildren.

“You have no wisdom after forty,” he writes. “After forty your ideas are obsolete, irrelevant and redundant. So what do you tell your grandchildren? Is there anything I can teach them, tell them, leave with them, that isn’t already dead? What can a grandfather possibly give his grandchildren?”

So much for my belief in an optimistic future!

Thinking back on my own childhood, I remember no paternal words of wisdom from my father. While living at home and going to high school, anything he decided to say mattered not. He had very little understanding of my world. Sadly, I never knew my grandfathers, and even if I had, I am almost certain I would have dismissed as irrelevant anything they may have shared.

Jack is correct in that anything I might think of as being wise

enough to share with my own children or grandchildren has already been said by others, and with more artistic merit than I could ever muster. Think of the linguistic beauty of Beckett, Shakespeare, Nabokov or Eudora Welty.

Once I come to terms with what I know and how irrelevant, obsolete and redundant anything I might

have to say is, I am left with silence.

When everything I might choose to say is

stripped away, I am left with a silence that is an action, an action that reflects a choice. Is it wisdom to know what not to say and when not to say it?

Maybe my father possessed that wisdom, because my love and admiration is based not on what he said — he was mostly silent — but on what he did.

I realize now, thanks to Jack and my dad, that I want all of our grandchildren to be affected not by what we say, but by what we do. I want to act knowing that their lives will be affected by what I do, and I want to be present enough in their lives to know my actions will make a positive difference.

I can feel that belief in an optimistic future returning.

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

‘Is it wisdom to know what not to say?’

## ‘Get the Most Out of It’

By Melissa Hooven

Our editor extraordinaire and ace reporter says, “Hey boss, why don’t you do a piece on aging and ageism?”

There are so many things that can be said on the topic, so I’ll just provide you with my perspective and what that means to me.

I have never found aging to have a negative connotation. In my mind, aging is a badge of honor. If we are allowed the opportunity to “age,” we are living life. The alternative is obvious.

Perhaps my perspective is due in large part to my upbringing. I spent a significant amount of time with my maternal and fraternal grandparents. I looked forward to weekend fishing trips in the pickup with the camper shell and my grandma’s insatiable urge to shop, anywhere and for anything.

I spent years as my grandpa’s sidekick at his feed store, listening to his stories with a piece of alfalfa hanging out of his mouth, riding shotgun in the big trucks doing hay deliveries, and playing hide and seek in the endless pallets of grain with my siblings. Those were magical times for me.

What is interesting is that I never viewed my grandparents as “old.” I viewed them as people whom I loved deeply and had a tremendous amount of respect for. Sure, there were times

as a teenager that I would get annoyed and give them the side-eye eye roll. The one my teenage daughters have also perfected. It goes with the territory.

Today, I watch my daughters with their grandparents. It is a fascinating relationship to observe. They adore these people who have such a tremendous impact in their lives, and I’m proud of that.

My upbringing showed me the value that our older adults have in our lives. It’s what I’ve carried with me throughout life and one that I’ve carried into my professional life.

Those who have gone be-

fore us have a perspective and wisdom that should be recognized and respected. No one should be discounted because of their age, older or younger, as everyone has something to contribute. We may not always agree, but we always have something to learn.

Aging means we have the opportunity to experience life as it’s intended, to experience childhood, adulthood and elderhood. It’s not always pretty and it’s complicated, but we have one shot at this, this thing called life, and we should surround ourselves with people of all ages to get the most out of it.

**Melissa Hooven is CEO of Humboldt Senior Resource Center.**



**CAKE! — 7-year-old Melissa Hooven with her grandparents, Art and Marlyn Moxon.** Submitted photo.



# HSRC News

## ‘March for Meals’ Is 50

*By Tasha Romo*

In observance of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Older Americans Act Nutrition Program this month, the Humboldt Senior Resource Center (HSRC) will participate in a special March for Meals celebration.

President Richard M. Nixon signed legislation in March 1972 amending the Older Americans Act of 1965 to include a national nutrition program for seniors 60 and older. The measure helps fund community-based programs like Meals on Wheels and HSRC’s Home Delivered Meals program.

Throughout March, HSRC will join the national Meals on Wheels network to raise awareness and rally support for this vital public-private partnership that has helped provide the seniors in Humboldt County with an essential service needed to remain healthy and independent at home.

These programs are essential in addressing food insecurity and malnutrition, combating social isolation, enabling independence, and improving seniors’ health.

“The Older Americans Act Nutrition Program is the only federally supported program designed to be an antidote for both senior hunger and isolation,” said Ellie Hollander, president and CEO of Meals on Wheels America.

“Despite decades of proven success and bipartisan support, funding for this program has failed to keep pace with the rapidly growing need for its services,” she said. “With the nation’s senior population increasing dramatically, now is the time to support local Meals on Wheels programs —

through volunteering, donating and speaking out — to ensure we are able to deliver for another 50 years.”

HSRC plans various activities throughout the month, including inviting local elected officials to help distribute meals curbside at our three dining sites in Arcata, Eureka and Fortuna hosting an informational Zoom session about our nutrition program, and sharing the importance and impacts of senior nutrition services through social media.

Our Home Delivered Meals program delivers nutritionally appropriate, balanced meals to older adults from Fortuna to McKinleyville — about 38,000 meals to 268 individual participants in the past year. Participants receive five meals each week, wellness checks from dedicated delivery drivers, and social worker support as needed. Meal options include regular, low-sodium, vegetarian, and shelf-stable. The program serves about 150 seniors and has capacity to serve even more.

In addition to home deliveries, HSRC’s Nutrition Program has served nearly 95,000 meals to more than 500 diners this year. Seniors 60 and older pick up five meals weekly via a no-contact drive-through at each of our sites.

For more information on HSRC’s nutrition services, or how you can volunteer, contribute or speak out for the seniors in Humboldt County this March, visit [humsenior.org](http://humsenior.org).

**Tasha Romo** is HSRC’s director of Nutrition and Activities, 707-443-9747, x1228 or [tromo@humsenior.org](mailto:tromo@humsenior.org).

## Saluting Social Workers

*By Samantha Day*

Social work has a long and rich history, both globally and in the United States. Though social work is widely acknowledged as a major helping profession, and many have interacted with social workers in their life or work, the depth and breadth of social work skills and roles can often go overlooked.

Social workers have been an essential part of our nation for decades. They are present and prominent at every level, from providing direct support to individuals to advocating for policy change on national platforms. They have played key roles in social efforts to push for equity and inclusion, such as in the Civil Rights and Women’s Rights movements. They tirelessly advocated for social programming that is often taken for granted, including the minimum wage, a 40-hour work week, Social Security and Medicare.

Social workers provide vital services to individuals, families and communities surrounding basic security needs such as housing, food and financial stability. Social workers are in our school systems, identifying the social and emotional needs of our children, teaching them coping skills, helping families find resources, and supporting staff in managing challenging classroom situations.

Social workers are integral to the medical field, embedded in hospitals and clinics, making sure that patient needs are met, and that resources are put in place before patients are discharged. Some social workers pursue clinical licensure, offering

a wide range of behavioral health services, including individual and group counseling, family therapy, substance use treatment and therapeutic case management.

Social workers are in the political arena, evaluating, analyzing and advocating for policy changes that increase access and eliminate systematic discrimination. There are even social workers employed in public libraries, assisting community members and connecting them to resources.

There are nearly 720,000 social workers in the United States. That number is expected to grow by 12 percent by the end of the decade, according to the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics. More and more individuals are entering the field because of the life-affirming services that social workers provide.

This is especially true as our nation continues to grapple with the COVID-19 pandemic, systemic racism, economic inequality, climate change and other challenges.

With all of this, it is fitting that the theme on this Social Work Month 2022 is “The Time is Right for Social Work.” Here at Humboldt Senior Resource Center, we wholeheartedly agree and would like to express our gratitude to the social workers in our Adult Day Health, MSSP, Nutrition and Redwood Coast PACE programs, and all those throughout our community. The world is a better place with you in it.

**Samantha Day, DSW, LCSW**, is HSRC director of Social Services.

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## Free Tax Preparation

Just like a proverbial bad penny, income tax season has turned up again.

So it's good news that IRS-certified volunteer tax preparers will be available to help qualified individuals fill out and file their tax forms at Humboldt Senior Resource Center (HSRC) between now and the filing deadline, April 18.

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program has been assisting low- to moderate-income individuals, persons with disabilities, seniors and limited-English speakers file their taxes for more than 50 years.

The service is for qualified taxpayers whose annual income is \$66,000

or less, and does not include farm or residential rental income.

Tax preparation is in person at Humboldt Senior Resource Center, 1910 California St., Eureka, following COVID protocols — participants must be masked, maintain distance, and exposure time is limited.

For more information on VITA and what to bring to your appointment, visit [irs.gov](http://irs.gov) and do a search for VITA. The site includes detailed information on what documents to bring with you.

The sessions are by appointment only on Thursdays from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Call 707-443-9747, x1240, for appointments.

## Enroll in the My Safety Call program!

My Safety Call is a telephone reassurance program for those who live alone. To qualify for this program subscribers must:

- Live in the Arcata or Humboldt Bay fire districts.
- Be capable of answering the phone.
- Provide a house key to place in a lock box outside the residence, accessible only to emergency personnel.

There is a one-time \$12 fee for the service. To enroll or for more information, call HSRC's Activities Department, 707-443-9747, x1240.

## COMMODITIES DISTRIBUTION

### Arcata

Thurs., March 17, 10:30-11 a.m.  
Arcata Community Center  
321 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Pkwy.

### Eureka

Wed., March 16, 10-11:30 a.m.  
Humboldt Senior Resource Center  
1910 California St.

### McKinleyville

Thurs., March 17, from 11 a.m.-1 p.m.  
McKinleyville Family Resource Center, 1944 Central Ave.



# News

Arcata  
Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway  
[www.humsenior.org](http://www.humsenior.org)

**Fortuna**  
3200 Newburg Road

## HSRC Programs

All HSRC programs are open and operating as follows:

**Administrative Services:** Open as usual, but please call 707-443-9747 before coming to our Eureka campus or Fortuna Center and we will assist you remotely if possible. Our doors are locked, but staff are available for on-site assistance.

**Activities Program:** Senior Home Repair is open for Eureka residents. Call the Senior Services Office at 707-443-9747, x1240, for information about Dial-a-Ride tickets. All other activities are suspended. The Senior Firewood Program is discontinued.

**Adult Day Health & Alzheimer's Services:** Open in Eureka and Fortuna. New referrals are being accepted.

**MSSP (Multipurpose Senior Services Program):** New referrals welcome. Services continue, but contact with clients is primarily via phone. Staff are available by phone.

**Redwood Coast PACE:** Open in Eureka and Fortuna. New referrals are being accepted.

**Senior News:** Open as usual. Free copies available at area groceries and businesses. Available online at [humsenior.org](http://humsenior.org). Subscriptions, \$25/year. Call 707-443-9747 with credit card info, or mail a check to 1910 California St., Eureka CA 95501.

**Nutrition Program:** Status of HSRC Nutrition services:

**Home Delivered Meals** service continues.

**Senior Dining Centers** continue to provide take-out meals via weekly drive-by pickup only. Meals are available by **reservation only** for those 60 and older and their spouse. Reservations must be made no later than seven days prior to pick-up day. Call the Senior Dining Center of your choice below for reservations or for questions about menus.

Each package includes a variety of five meals. Pick-up schedules:

**Arcata:** Arcata Community Center, 321 Martin Luther King Parkway, Wednesdays 11:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. Drive to the main entrance on the north side of the building; an Arcata city staff person will direct traffic, and provide directions for those on foot. **Reservations: 707-825-2027.**

**Eureka:** 1910 California St., Tuesdays 11:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. Enter the parking lot from California Street and staff will direct you. **Reservations: 707-442-1181.**

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

Information may change without notice. For questions regarding any HSRC program, call **707-443-9747.**

We thank community members for their flexibility during this time as we continue to offer modified services.

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### MONDAYS

8 a.m. Walk the Riverwalk Levee (meet at the Riverwalk)  
 10-11:30 a.m. Tai Chi, Main Room  
 11 a.m.-noon Computer Class  
 1-2 p.m. Beginning Ukulele, Main Room  
 2-3 p.m. Book Club, Main Room (1st Monday only)

### TUESDAYS

8 a.m. Walk the Riverwalk Levee  
 10-11 a.m. Aerobics for Seniors, upstairs  
 1:30-3 p.m. Recorder, Art Room  
 2-3 p.m. Seated Tai Chi, Main Room

### WEDNESDAYS

8 a.m. Walk the Riverwalk Levee  
 10-11:30 a.m. Tai Chi, Main Room  
 12-1 p.m. Brown Bag Lunch (bring your lunch)  
 followed by sing-along with music  
 1-3 p.m. Art, Art Room (supplies provided or BYO)

### THURSDAYS

9-11 a.m. Cribbage, Upstairs  
 10-11 a.m. Aerobics for Seniors, Upstairs  
 12:30-3:30 p.m. Mah Jongg, Upstairs  
 1-4 p.m. Pinochle, Main Room

### FRIDAYS

9 a.m. Bike Club (call Pat Greene, 707-725-3602)  
 9 a.m. Hiking Group (call Lynn Crosthwait, 707-725-7953)  
 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Pinochle, Main Room  
 1-3 p.m. Scrabble, Main Room  
 7-9:30 p.m. Camera Club, Art Room (last Friday only)

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# 'Dearie,' Let's Get Rid of Demeaning Elderspeak

By Kaitlyn Boyes

Even though aging is ubiquitous, an unavoidable process that everyone experiences, American culture doesn't regard it as such. In fact, most Americans attempt to avoid it altogether.

How we talk about aging says much about how society sees this process, and often casts it in a negative light. We live in an ageist society, and how we talk to older adults — and how we don't talk directly to them — says a lot about how ageism is projected through discourse.

Out of curiosity, I looked in a thesaurus at synonyms for aging. I found "unyoung," "over-the-hill," "obsolescent" and "decrepit." Each of these words carries such heavy connotations to describe a U.S. population that is growing rapidly. A federal report, "Older Americans 2020: Key Indicators of Well-Being," predicted that by 2028, 20% of American's will be 65+ — about 73 million people.

The often dismissive ways that we speak to and about older people is called "elderspeak" — the use of terms that could be considered childish, that infantilize older adults by speaking slowly and in a

high-pitched tone, or even talking around them — for example, a healthcare provider who addresses a younger family member, not the elderly patient.

Elderspeak is sprinkled with sweet little "honies," "dearies" and "sweethearts." A few years ago, I discussed this topic with older adults in Humboldt County for my master's thesis.

"There are people who think it's cute, and I think, 'Oh well, they are just trying to be nice . . . ' But what is 'nice'?" said one study participant, Jess. "It's demean[ing]. It makes us smaller, it makes us less-than."

Being of a younger generation — i.e., a Millennial — I may not know firsthand what experiencing ageism or elderspeak feels like, but I do know it is important to talk openly about aging, and to reframe both how we talk about it and how we speak to those experiencing it.

This idea of reframing aging has become especially important to me in recent years as I have worked directly with the aging population. I confess that I have been guilty of elderspeak, which is why

I want to do my best to reframe my own approach to talking about aging and talking to older adults.

In her 2016 book, "This Chair Rocks: A Manifesto Against Ageism," ageism activist and author Ashton Applewhite says eliminating prejudice against elders "won't happen until we replace ageist stereotypes and stories with more diverse and accurate ones."

The time has come for everyone to talk about age. I mean, everyone is aging, so why not? By having open and honest conversations about aging, we can break those proverbial icebergs separating generations.

Conversations can help create bonds and understanding, and convey respect. So let's talk.

**Kaitlyn Boyes** is Alzheimer's Services coordinator at Humboldt Senior Resource Center. Her master's thesis was titled, "We're All Aging: A Discourse Analysis of Older Adults' Aging Experiences in Humboldt" (2019).

# The Upside: Affirmative and Adventurous Aging

By Deborah Sypherd

Welcome to the next steps of your life. Some people may face the prospect of aging with fear, feeling that it is only a time of loss and pain, but I'd like to present a more optimistic perspective of our elder years.

I feel so blessed to be sharing amazing opportunities in this next stage of my life. As I observe my blossoming cohort in Humboldt County, I am delighted to be part of such a vibrant community. I see around me so many inspiring examples of ways people are expanding the fullness of their lives.

Where to begin?

Many people I know (myself included) have discovered that aging has given them greater wisdom and patience through experience, permitting them to mentor others. We can increase our connections in service to others through a variety of volunteer

activities, community activism and caregiving, even in these times of COVID and its variants.

After my many years of teaching special needs students at both the elementary and high school levels, I've been making new connections in my community by working in the Fortuna library. After many months of closure through the early pandemic, it has been such a joy for staff and patrons that our doors are once again open to all. Unfortunately, we are still operating under reduced hours and are not able to welcome volunteers back yet.

I've also been exploring numerous ways of personal development — physical, spiritual, mental and emotional. Many of these elements have been present in OLLI classes, which also have the benefit of increasing my social connections.

Regular exercise continues to be a challenge for

me (as I know it has been for many folks), but the strategy that works with a little more success for me is to change the activity as frequently as possible. And it really helps to have a workout buddy to keep both of us motivated.

Other joys of our elder years can also be found in bonding with our adult children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. It can be a fun surprise to develop new hobbies with them, like the green thumb for gardening that I did not realize I had.

Attitude is a choice, and it's quite possible to replace fear with excitement, thoughts of hate with love, and boredom with curiosity.

**Deborah Sypherd, 72, embraces each day from her home in Carlotta.**



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## Godwit Days 2022 Registration

Registration for the 2022 Godwit Days Spring Migration Bird Festival in April is now open.

This year's festival will be a hybrid of in-person field trips and online programs and presentations on April 15-17. Planners have selected the most popular field trips with knowledgeable leaders for in-person experiences, and four virtual sessions, including a keynote lecture.

The basic registration fee is \$10 (down from \$35), which includes all virtual sessions plus one no-cost field trip (space permitting). Some 27 field trips, limited to 10 participants, range from \$20 for half-day trips to \$40 for full-day.

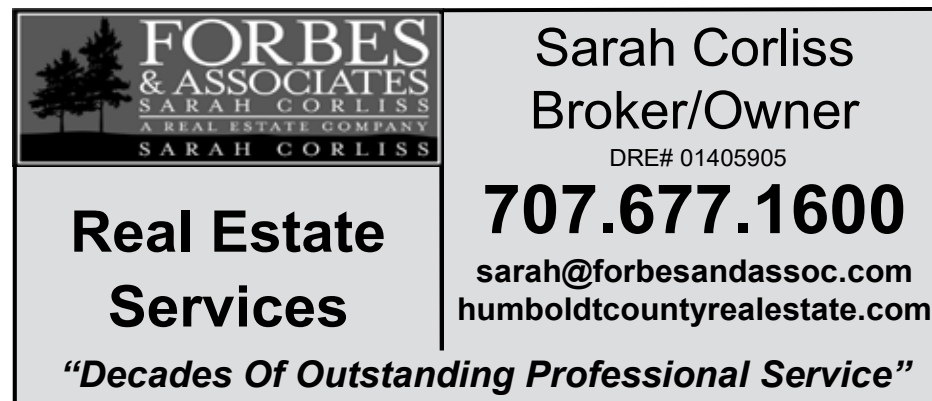
All field trip participants (including children) must provide proof of

COVID-19 vaccination. Pandemic protocols will be set closer to the event.

Visit [godwitdays.org](http://godwitdays.org) for the full schedule and to register.

"The Godwit Days Board hopes that our supporters will welcome this opportunity to experience our most popular trips in person in small groups this year," Godwit chairperson Alex Stillman said. "When the time is right, we look forward to offering the full range of festival activities and experiences that we all have enjoyed for so many years."

For more information, visit the website, email [goddwitdaysreg@yahoo.com](mailto:goddwitdaysreg@yahoo.com), or leave a message at 707-826-7050.



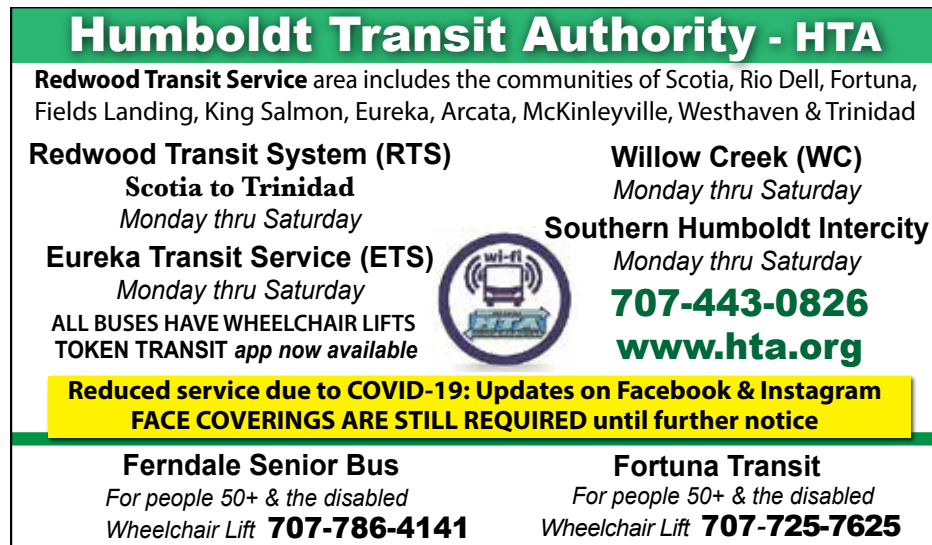
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# Happy 75<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Humboldt County Historical Society!

*By Pamela Service, Wendy Platt Hill and Robert Libershal*

*“What we choose to remember, and how we remember it, can influence the lives of individuals and communities.”*

—American Association for State & Local History

In 1850, North Coast settlers and gold seekers found what they were pursuing, and named their first settlement *Eureka*, classical Greek for “I found it.”

“Humboldt,” in honor of naturalist and explorer Alexander von Humboldt, was applied to the bay and county.

For many centuries previously, however, the area had been home to many others, most prominently the Wiyot, Yurok, Hupa, Karuk and Tolowa people. These groups shared similar beliefs, social structures and material culture.

Miners and early settlers decimat-

ed resources on which the native populations depended. Massacres, fortifications, forced resettlement and the introduction of diseases destroyed some tribes entirely.

Nearly a century after the settlers’ arrival, on March 3, 1947, 20 people “interested in the formation of a historical organization for northern California” gathered at the Eureka Junior High School library to devise ways to preserve historical materials and find a place to house them.

Today, celebrating its 75<sup>th</sup> birthday, the Humboldt County Historical Society (HCHS) still seeks to expand understanding and appreciation of all

peoples, places, events and activities of the Humboldt County region.

Since 1947, the HCHS collection has grown to include hundreds of maps, over 65,000 photographs, historic business records and government ledgers. Original documents are available to the public.

HCHS is a not-for-profit organization supported entirely by donations and more than 2,000 members, managed by a volunteer board, a part-time staff and many volunteers. Memberships range from \$30 and up, and include benefits such as the quarterly Humboldt Historian magazine.

The Society also publishes an annu-

al calendar on historical themes, and offers lectures and special events.

The Humboldt Historian’s spring 2022 issue is devoted to the Society’s 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary, including an article about Humboldt’s first woman lighthouse keeper.

Contact the Humboldt County Historical Society at 707-445-4342, or visit [humboldthistory.org](http://humboldthistory.org) for more information.

**Pamela Service and Wendy Platt Hill** are HCHS staff members, and **Robert Libershal** is a Board member.

  
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## ROLLING WITH THE PUNCHES . . . From Page 1

and honk, yelling out the window, “I’ll race you to the garage!” He died of cancer at 39 when I was 4.

Somehow, I always knew I was my father’s daughter. I took enjoyment in describing my wild adventures to my mother — flying a plane alone and crashing in a corn field (rescued by two handsome crop dusters), racing sports cars, or becoming a wine writer for three newspapers in the Bay Area (although I knew very little about wine). The highlight was a fully paid trip to France to tour the great wineries and write about them. The downside was gaining 40 pounds!

As a teenager, I sewed my own skirts and blouses from colorful chicken feed sacks, purchased at the local dime store for 25 cents apiece.

That led me to become a fashion designer for wealthy women in Sacramento. At one time, I had a small collection at Gump’s in San Francisco, part of a small but elite selection of women’s clothing.

Now I’m satisfied to spend hours gardening, writing, walking the dog at the beach, being with my wonderful husband, and grousing about what’s going on in the world.

I’m also lucky to have a male workout partner who takes me to the

gym. He knows my situation, and it’s comforting that he treats me as a normal person.

I do have a sense of loss, however. When I was first diagnosed with Alzheimer’s, I called my women friends together and told them, assuming they would be there for me. To my surprise, some of them faded out of my life, and that has made me very sad.

Life seems to be moving rapidly forward now, but I feel fulfilled in having accomplished most of the things I’ve wanted to do. There are only a few things I wish I had done differently.

It’s a wonderful thing to let go of the ego and be in each new moment, knowing I have a loving husband and dog, and a few friends that are there for me, as I am for them. I feel thankful for life’s experiences, and am open to seeing how each new day unfolds.

If I have any advice for elders, I would say, “Greet each day with a sparkle in your eye, bless each moment and reach out to others with a loving heart!”

*Suzanne Simpson, 80, a filmmaker, artist, publicist, teacher and cook, lives each moment and tends her garden in Arcata.*



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Mobile: 707-230-4046

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## ASK THE DOC . . . From Page 5

frame for conversations at difficult times, but I think these phrases also could serve us in day-to-day life, too. Instead of getting angry at the person cutting into line, say, "I forgive you." When someone lets you merge into traffic, say, "Thank you." And really mean it.

Our words and thoughts and actions have significant impact, even the little things. They can dilate blood vessels and bring down the heart rate — and do the same for other people.

How can we help each other as we emerge from the pandemic and try to recover from our collective grief? And as we face issues that have been hurting us as a society for centuries — like racism, gender inequity and economic injustice. How can we move forward and heal?

Some thoughts from a medical perspective include being kind to others and ourselves, and making sure we all have access to good food and clean air and appropriate medical care when needed.

How is kindness a medical

treatment? I invite you to spend one day being intentionally kind and see how that makes your body feel. What happens physiologically?

Life is short and amazing in its small details. Even 99 years is short. The poet Mary Oliver asks us in her poem, "The Summer Day" "Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?" Are we spending our lives in a way that promotes health in every way, for ourselves and everyone else?

The azaleas keep busting open with neon life every spring. May we all be so bold.

This column is dedicated to Ina Harris.

**Dr. Jennifer Heidmann,**  
*a regular Senior News columnist,  
is medical director and primary  
care provider at Redwood Coast  
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column should not be taken as  
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## What Should I Know About COVID-19?

Two of a series of four

### How are we stopping COVID-19?

There are several ways to prevent spread of COVID-19, but the best tools are vaccines. The US Government worked with the pharmaceutical companies to develop, manufacture, and quickly distribute vaccines across the country. There were no shortcuts in this process; the vaccines are safe and effective, based on years of research into similar virus types.

### Why is there conflicting information about masks?

Before the pandemic, there was little real-world research into the effectiveness of masks. Last year we learned that wearing masks and social distancing really help prevent the spread of COVID-19, influenza, and other respiratory viruses.



**Get vaccinated  
Mask when needed  
Talk to your care team**

Make a vaccination appointment at your health center  
or learn more at [opendoorhealth.com/covid-19](https://opendoorhealth.com/covid-19)

Crossword Puzzle										Musical Adaptation by Eric Houglund									
Sponsored by Sherman Schapiro										Edited by David Steinberg									
1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9		10	11	12						
13						14					15								
16						17					18								
19						20				21	22								
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27	28	29				30	31					32	33						
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67						68					69								
70						71					72								

## ACROSS

- |    |   |             |   |    |   |
|----|---|-------------|---|----|---|
| 1  | Came _____                                | 53          | "Didn't expect to see you!"                       | 22 | "The Sheep-Pig" pig                             |
| 6  | Final washer cycle                        | 55          | Group of nobodies                                 | 24 | Slice and splice, as film                       |
| 10 | Start of a texter's digression            | 57          | Terribly serious                                  | 26 | Channel covering Wash-<br>ington                |
| 13 | Like a bedroom at night,<br>typically     | 59          | "____ Croft: Tomb Raider"                         | 27 | ____ buddies                                    |
| 14 | California/Nevada lake                    | 63          | What TikTok can run on                            | 28 | Foolish   |
| 15 | Step below the MLB                        | 64          | Spot for Kacey Musgraves<br>to pluck some chords? | 29 | Thriller elements                               |
| 16 | Days in the studio for Cardi B?           | 67          | "As if!"  | 31 | Is ____ (probably will)                         |
| 18 | Zippo                                     | 68          | Unwieldy ships                                    | 32 | Lace again                                      |
| 19 | Lhasa _____                               | 69          | Studio stand                                      | 33 | The best ones are often<br>near the front       |
| 20 | Sentry's order                            | 70          | It helps a driver get around                      | 35 | Banquet   |
| 21 | Several steps below the MLB?              | 71          | Infamous day in "Julius<br>Caesar"                | 40 | Project manager's creation                      |
| 23 | Drink in a stein                          | 72          | Essay's language                                  | 41 | Crosby, Stills, ____ & Young                    |
| 25 | View from a beachfront house              |             |   | 44 | Shell movers                                    |
| 27 | Human or emu                              | <b>DOWN</b> |   | 47 | Train robbers' target in a<br>Western           |
| 30 | Spots to dance to Celia Cruz?             | 1           | Invisible quality                                 | 49 | Chinese fruit: Var.                             |
| 34 | On the condition that                     | 2           | Start of a football play                          | 50 | Places to unload ships                          |
| 36 | Baby food                                 | 3           | European range                                    | 54 | See 17-Down                                     |
| 37 | Largest fencing sword                     | 4           | Risk a time-out, maybe                            | 55 | Liveliness                                      |
| 38 | ____ Paulo                                | 5           | Dined   | 56 | Area in downtown Chicago,<br>with "the"         |
| 39 | Nuclear treaty topic                      | 6           | Breeze (through)                                  | 58 | Tattoo artists' supplies                        |
| 42 | Airport stat hidden in "ticket<br>agent"  | 7           | Development area?                                 | 60 | In addition                                     |
| 43 | Savvy about                               | 8           | Charged bit                                       | 61 | Regrets   |
| 45 | Word after "comedy" or "class"            | 9           | Iced drink brand                                  | 62 | Sufficiently skilled                            |
| 46 | "Anything you want!"                      | 10          | Slippery covering for a fruit                     | 65 | Arabian instrument that's a<br>twosome backward |
| 48 | Place to pick up Motley Crue's<br>latest? | 11          | Follow closely                                    | 66 | Casual affirmative                              |
| 51 | Black Friday attractions                  | 12          | Room divider                                      |    |   |
| 52 | Put on paper                              | 14          | Russian autocrats of old                          |    |   |
|    |   | 17          | With 54-Down, common<br>pronoun pair              |    |   |

Crossword answers are on page 22

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\*The production of this document was supported, in part, by grant number CDM 93-524 from the US Administration for Community Living (ACL), DHHS, Washington, DC, 20001. Grantees undertaking projects under government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their findings and conclusions. Points of view or opinions do not, therefore, necessarily represent official Administration of Community Living policy. \*Its contents are solely the responsibility of AHA/HICAP and do not necessarily represent the official views of ACL.

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# Opinion

## A Truth About ‘Isms’

By George Clark

If class-consciousness were taught in proportion to the real-world influence of the nation's oligarchs, (and every community's wannabes), much of the misdirected anger from our society's "isms" — i.e., age, race, sex, religion — would find common ground against the primary source of today's multiple and unprecedented crises.

In his recently republished book "Tragedy and Hope," Carroll Quigley, a former Georgetown University historian, begins with the premise that every past civilization collapsed when a few individuals were allowed to accumulate unbridled wealth and power, used — inevitably — to maintain national dependence upon their outdated industries, technologies and ideologies . . . until it was too late. Because Quigley names names, his book's plates were destroyed at the behest of the right-wing John Birch Society.

Human beings' inherent capacity for imagination and intelligence has inspired innovations that threaten the elite's centralization of capital accumulation. This is why research, truths and knowledge are effectively sequestered.

Some argue that civilization has come a long way after centuries of forbidding the poor to read. Aaron Swartz might disagree. A few years ago, his family was forced to raise millions in defense against federal prosecutors who sought a 35-year prison sentence after Swartz's innovative algorithm began releasing academic research and court records

to the public for free, circumventing prohibitive fees — the equivalent of stealing library books.

The saying, "Information everywhere and not a relevant word to read," has never been truer.

Uninformed people, deluded in seeing truths as "negative," are easier to blame for the consequences of their ignorance, which only works when convinced of their own "inferiority, hopelessness and stupidity," thus justifying elites' "superiority" and explaining the persistence of "isms."

Enter Darwin's biological "evidence" of the "inferiority" of the world's non-white majority; Locke's assertion of the inherent right to exploit nature to man's fullest extent; Calvin's religious "evidence" of most people's "spiritual hopelessness"; or Spinoza's assertion that most people are "irrational." See a pattern? Consequently, Thoreau's advice to, "Go downtown and change it" won him prison, not the elites' patronage.

Rapidly accelerating worldwide consequences from continuing (lucrative) delays and resistance to addressing climate change, the decline of fresh, clean water, biodiversity collapse, an epidemic and its economic fallout, are no match for local elites' self-destructive participation in the nation's outdated preference for profits over livability.

Will our era be known as the "Anthropocene Paradox"?

**George Clark** is retired and living in Eureka.

## Ageism: It's Up to Us

By Ann Lindsay & Pat Girczyc

*"Controlling your mindset is one of the most powerful #)\$(#! things you can do."* —**Bonnie Marcus**

To better inform the vision for Life Care Humboldt, the first non-profit life plan community in our area, we interviewed 14 older adults about their experiences and plans for aging.

Only two of the interviewees had an actual plan. For the others, the plan was, "I'll stay at home and hire help if I need it."

There was little consideration of the fact that home may not be safe or accessible, or that adequate help might be hard to find (and expensive).

We continue these conversations with community members. Often, when the topic turns to plans for aging . . . silence.

When the National Poll on Health Aging surveyed 2,000 adults (age 50-80), 40% said loneliness, depression and worry are a *normal* part of aging (healthyagingpoll.org). This internalized ageism projects a grim future that blocks our ability to plan and to acknowledge that we may need help. We hope to live well at home until an end that comes quickly.

Interestingly, these same older adults reported that as they have aged, they

- feel more comfortable being themselves (88%).
- have a strong sense of purpose (80%).
- feel more positive about aging (67%).
- think their life is better than they thought it would be (65%).

Life Care Humboldt represents an empowered future where we can explore and challenge misperceptions of aging — our own and others.

Institutional ageism is a barrier we have encountered locally in seeking financial support for Life Care Humboldt because older people, particularly those in middle-income brackets, are not seen as vulnerable populations worthy of funding. This lack of support carries an unrecognized cost to our local communities, as friends and neighbors move away to life plan communities elsewhere that can support the physical, social, economic and safety vulnerabilities that accompany aging.

Life Care Humboldt represents an empowered future. It is a true grass-roots effort. Thanks to our volunteers, more older adults are talking about aging with friends and family, and planning their futures.

We are building a community with up to 160 residences. Our efforts so far are financed by donations, pledges and grants — \$670,000 so far, a good start on the \$2 million needed in the next two years.

Join us with a sense of purpose as we challenge misconceptions of aging, celebrate the wisdom of age, and support a vision of a future life better than what you imagine.

**Ann Lindsay** is president and **Pat Girczyc** is vice president of Life Care Humboldt ([lifecarehumboldt.org](http://lifecarehumboldt.org)).

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\*Please follow the recorded directions and leave the appropriate information to get your name placed on the Senior/Homebound Disabled List. Please remember to speak slowly and clearly when leaving your contact information.

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Redwood Coast Village is a 501(c)3 California Non-Profit Organization.

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## HERE'S TO OLD AGE . . . From Page 1

AARP magazine comes in the mail.

Shortly after I became editor of Senior News, I remember watching a man in a local Murphy's picking up newspapers from the rack. He grabbed a copy of Senior News, glanced at the front page, and dropped it like it was red hot.

Dr. Dychtwald would call this behavior ageist, and anti-ageism author Ashton Applewhite would agree. "It's not the passage of time that makes it so hard to get older," she said. "It's ageism, a prejudice that pits us against our future selves."

Applewhite, author of "This Chair Rocks: A Manifesto Against Ageism" (2016), says we have to change the conversation about aging.

"Aging is not a problem to be fixed or a disease to be cured," she says in a 2017 TEDtalks. "It is a natural, powerful, lifelong process that unites us all."

This was a point made by Senior News reader Deborah Sypherd [see page 15], who was concerned that Senior News's focus on ageism would be too negative. "Sounds to me like you're focusing on the negative attitudes of a small minority," she said in an email. "I hope there will also be some balance by including positive experiences of the joys and blessings inherent in this stage of life."

Excellent point. In fact, researchers have found a positive relationship

between age and life contentment. Called the "U Curve of Happiness," it is a finding that people are happiest at the beginning and end of their lives — studies worldwide find the low point of happiness is at about age 40.

"You don't have to be a Buddhist or a billionaire," Applewhite said. "The curve is a function of the way aging itself affects the brain."

"Things get better as we age," researchers Carol Graham and Milena Nikolova of the Brookings Institution confirmed, "as long as we are reasonably healthy and in a stable partnership."

Dr. Dychtwald, the gerontologist, agreed. "Older people are more inclined to feel gratitude for what they have experienced and what they have," he said.

Author and neurology professor Oliver Sacks celebrated "the joy of old age," and said he was looking forward to being 80. "My father, who lived to 94, often said that the 80s had been one of the most enjoyable decades of his life," Sacks wrote. "He felt, as I begin to feel, not a shrinking but an enlargement of mental life and perspective. One has had a long experience of life."

And, of course, getting older does beat the alternative. (As far as we know.)

**Ted Pease, 66, is editor of Senior News.**

### Letters to the Editor Policy

Senior News welcomes letters to the editor. To be considered for publication, letters should be received by the 12th of the month, must not exceed 300 words, and may be edited for space. Submissions must include the writer's full name, mailing address, phone number and e-mail address. Senior News reserves the right to reject any letter. The same requirements apply to those interested in submitting longer commentary columns (up to 400 words). Mail to Senior News, 1910 California Street, Eureka, CA 95501 or E-mail tpease@humsenior.org.

### Crossword Puzzle on page 20.





# The Inaugural Poets' Corner

By Peter H. Pennekamp

The inaugural Senior News Poets' Corner debuts in this edition with "First World Last World" by Shaunna Oteka McCovey of McKinleyville.

Over coffee at Café Brio recently, Shaunna and fellow poet Jerry Martien recalled their first meeting 40 years ago near Pecwan on the Klamath River, Shaunna a child and Jerry a carpenter working on her family's cabin.

"Here is the story," Jerry says, producing a copy of his 1999 book of poems, "Pieces in Place," and turning to "Retrofitting Shangri-la," about the cabin renovation.

**Shaunna:** "I was the little girl in Jerry's poem. I recognized him when I heard him reading the poem years later. I was born near Pecwan on the Yurok Reservation in a little two-bedroom cabin. We were very isolated. When the carpenters came to fix up our cabin, they were like new beings to discover."

**Jerry:** "From outer space! The other carpenters and I worked for a contractor who had a grant to rehab houses on the reservation."

**Shaunna:** "I wrote my first poem when I was 6. One of the reasons I am here is that Jerry mentored me. I sent bad poems and he gave me good feedback. I went to HSU, and then received a master's in social work from Arizona State University and advanced law degrees from Vermont Law School. I wrote my first collection of poems, and then life happened."

**Jerry:** "Most poets get paid as teachers. We do it for the obsession of doing it. About elders, the role is more than writing poetry and publishing, it is also about community activism."

**Shaunna:** "'The Smokehouse Boys' [her 2005 book of poetry] was a way to talk about things hard to put in the light, the sadness that sits over the Hoopa Valley—drug use, colonialism, trauma. It was never our disgrace, but it is our forgiving."

**Jerry:** "Poetry as ceremony. . . ."

**Shaunna:** "Yes, poetry as ceremony. As elders, we need to talk our way out of cultural dead ends. I write poetry for my people. People see that they are valued and important. It is our shared humanity that connects us outside of our tribe."

**Jerry:** "My family also did destructive things. Who are those people? They are your family."

April's "Poets' Corner" will feature Jerry's "Waning Moon."

Shaunna's "The Smokehouse Boys" (2005), and Jerry's "Pieces in Place" (1999) and "Earth Tickets" (2017) are available in bookstores and online.

**Peter Pennekamp** is Senior News Poetry Editor. To submit a poem, email him at [henkswords@gmail.com](mailto:henkswords@gmail.com). Submissions may be no longer than 21 lines, including title and author's name, maximum 50 characters per line.

"The trick is growing up without growing old." —Casey Stengel, baseball manager

## First World, Last World

When the first world was made  
the Ikxaréeyavs painted it  
greens and blues, dotted the sky  
with birdsongs and clouds, they  
gave us elements: water wind  
fire earth to cradle our bodies  
we used ceremony and medicine,  
we learned: how to *take care of*  
how to say *yôotva*.

Our elders remembered the first world  
and they watched as we poisoned  
our grieving bodies in this one, twisted  
our tongues around a new language and  
forgot how to send up prayers with the smoke.  
What will become of the people? They asked.  
What will become of this world when we leave it?

—Shaunna Oteka McCovey, McKinleyville

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## You Can Be in Senior News

- **APRIL** is National Humor Month, so it must be time for the Senior News Humor Issue! Our last humor issue featured crazy relatives, funny checkout line encounters, Ole jokes and one-liners, pet stories, puns and more. Send your knee-slappers.
- **MAY** is a Growing Time and gardens are coming up. Let's talk about what gardens and growing and changing mean in your life. May also is Older Americans Month and includes Memorial Day and Be Kind to Animals Week.

Contact SN editor Ted Pease: [tpease@humsenior.org](mailto:tpease@humsenior.org), or call 707-443-9747, x1226.

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