

3550



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- Sports courts
and fields



Multnomah
County
Health Department

Maintain a distance of 6 feet

June 2020



Nancy Moss
Deputy Editor



Ed Parker
President

ABOVE ME, WHITE CHERRY BLOSSOMS DANCE AGAINST A blue sky. In the Willamette River, two Canada geese honk, sounding vaguely annoyed.

"Nothing gold can stay," writes Robert Frost. Weeping willow branches, now pale green, will darken, grow large and sturdy, not as striking as they are now with the light coming through them. "Dawn goes down to day," Frost warns.

Enforced social distancing makes these events, little leaps of awareness, more precious. I won't say it's a gift of Covid-19 exactly, but perhaps a new kind of recognition. We live in a beautiful place whose bounty surrounds us. The path along the river is quieter now.

And Mirabella's administration waited to close the library, gave us time. Anne Enright writes in "The Green Road," "The evening was ahead of her, with maybe a book to pull her through it. Any book would do."

Maybe not any book. Many residents like thrillers; Peter Swan's mysteries cycle in and out. As do Lee Child's muscular Jack Reacher and PD James' more introspective Adam Dalgleish. A murder, or multiple murders, neatly wrapped up in the last chapter satisfies a reader in an armchair. I thought so, she thinks smugly to herself when the murderer is identified. Other residents read histories such as Michael Shaara's "Killer Angels," about the battle of Gettysburg.

Confined to our apartments, we think of Anne Frank or enslaved persons on the Underground Railroad, in a space the size of a closet, and realize we are lucky.

"There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so," says Hamlet in Act II.

We don't know how long this present plague will last. We realize we will have to make do with less. Less heroic than Resistance fighters in World War II, like them we face a more limited diet, more restrictive activities.

"The readiness is all," Hamlet tells us in Act V, when he really was ready. ■

WE HUMANS ARE SOCIAL ANIMALS. OUR TENDENCY to come together is enhanced during emergencies. We naturally come together to help and comfort one another.

The Covid-19 pandemic is hard for us. We understand its seriousness for our health and our economy. We understand the need to avoid human contact to slow the spread of the virus. But it goes against our nature to maintain social isolation.

We are advised to practice social distancing to protect ourselves and others. Social distancing may be a poor choice of words. We need to maintain physical distance from other people. However, staying socially connected is more important than ever.

Thank goodness for our electronic social media tools. We are lucky to live in an age when it is easy to stay connected. While watching favorite programs, movies or operas on television may be good entertainment, obsessing alone over TV news we can do nothing about may be risking depression or other mental health problems.

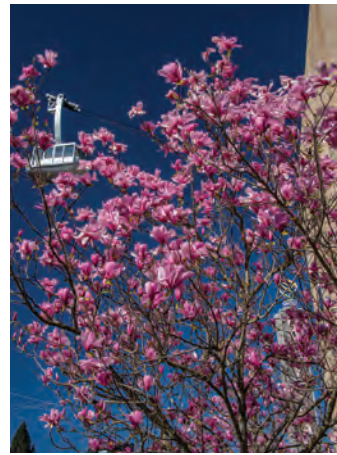
Using our phones (smart or otherwise), our Internet-connected computers and our videoconferencing tools (for example, FaceTime, Skype or Zoom) to stay connected with other people is a great way to maintain our mental health in times of physical distancing.

Instead of worrying about our grandchildren being at risk for excessive screen time, we should instead learn some of their skills with social media to stay socially connected ourselves at this time of physical distancing. Our children and grandchildren should perhaps be concerned about people of our generation harming our mental health by getting too much television "screen time" and not enough social connectivity.

Physical distancing is hardest on people living alone. They lack the mutual support that couples have. It is particularly hard on single folks who lack electronic social media skills. I urge all of you to telephone friends, neighbors and acquaintances who live alone. You will be doing them a great favor, while helping improve your own mental health. ■



ON THE COVER:
Abraham Lincoln stands alone in SW Park Blocks in downtown Portland. Photo by Robert French.



ON THE BACK COVER:
Blossoms on Moody Avenue remind us that spring persists. Photo by Robert French.

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Carol Edelman Wins Award

“IT WAS A TOTAL SURPRISE,” MIRABELLA RESIDENT CAROL Edelman says of the Honored Citizen award which the Architecture Foundation of Oregon will bestow upon her in October.

“Oregon’s godmother of Interior Architecture,” retired Executive Director G. Jane Jarrett wrote in her letter recommending Carol for this prestigious award, adding that Carol was “first to bring artists into the design process of a healthcare facility,” in this case Kaiser Permanente.

Carol started her career designing Uncle Chen’s Chinese restaurant, which is no longer here. She calls the Kaiser clinics she first saw as “unfriendly places” and began a mission to make them appealing to family with things “kids can touch.” Carol also worked on the Oregon Zoo Master Plan, the Mt. Saint Helens Visitor Center and the Salishan Lodge.

Founded in 1981, the Architecture Foundation of Oregon fosters “awareness of our designed environment through education, engagement and inspiration.” ■



Carol Edelman. Photo by Robert French.

3550 Supports Local Businesses

LOCAL BUSINESSES HAVE STRUGGLED DURING THE COVID-19 PAN-
demic, with stay-at-home orders crippling revenue and
decimating their work force.

Your 3550 Magazine wants to do its part to help.

So back in March, ad manager Reese Berman and editor Steve Casey decided to offer advertisers a “You Supported Us; Now We Support You” one-time gift:

All advertisements in this issue are free.

“If they pay as they go, they won’t receive a bill for the June issue,” Steve said. “And if they have paid in advance, we’ll just tack one extra issue on to their term, at no charge.”

The magazine staff hopes this little gesture will help local businesses and encourage readers to support them.

“Thank you for being part of the magazine team,” Reese said. ■

Luhta Fundraises for ‘Race’

MIRABELLA RESIDENT GWEN LUHTA HAS RAISED MORE than \$1,300 for Northwest Pilot Project (NWPP), a charity that provides affordable housing for Portland seniors.

For 35 years NWPP has sponsored an hour-long race, or extended walk, around the Park Blocks, an event featuring music, balloons, Hot Lips pizza and prizes. This year, with the coronavirus raging, NWPP held a virtual, or pretend, race. Having participated in the fundraising event for the last four years, “I couldn’t not do it,” Gwen says of this year’s non-event.

Northwest Pilot Project was one of Mirabella’s Christmas charities for two years. Her fellow residents chipped in to help Gwen reach her goal. ■

3550 Online

Friends, relatives, former neighbors wondering what life was like for you in the Covid-19 pandemic?

Our coverage in this issue is extensive and may be helpful to your friends and loved ones.

The easiest way to get it to them? Send them the link to our website:

WWW.3550Magazine.org

This — and every — issue is available, worldwide, on the magazine website.

Free. No password or postage required. Read and enjoy.

Anti-Aging Pill a Fraud

WARNING CONSUMERS TO DOUBT ADS THAT PROMISE miraculous results, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) settled with Quantum Wellness Botanical Institute, LLC, alleging that its CEO Fred Auzene and former marketer Maria Gutierrez Veloso deceptively advertised ReJuvination as an anti-aging wonder pill.

Ads promised that ReJuvination would not only reverse the aging process but heal heart attack damage, heart disease, blindness, brain damage from stroke, Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, deafness, Crohn's disease and age-related damage to the body's organs, tissues and joints.

According to the FTC, ReJuvination cost between \$39.95 and \$49.95, plus shipping and handling, for a one-month supply.

The proposed federal court orders would require the defendants to have human clinical testing to support future claims related to the treatment of any disease or health conditions.. ■

Symkowiak Wins PRS Scholarship

MIRABELLA'S WELLNESS COORDINATOR BRYANT Symkowiak is "grateful and super honored" to receive one of 12 opportunities given to employees by PRS to develop their leadership skills at greater depth. The program will continue for a year.

The program, now a virtual one, was to involve monthly meetings at Rogue Valley Manor, PRS' Medford facility. Its first meeting, before the coronavirus emergency hit, involved participants talking about their personal history and their reasons for choosing a particular career path. "It's about being a better leader," Bryant said of the session.

Asked a bit anxiously if this meant he would spend less time at Mirabella, aside from the monthly meeting, Bryant said, "I'm not going anywhere." ■



Happy 7th Anniversary to Us, 3550 Magazine and 3550Magazine.org



Photo by Tikkho Maciel on Unsplash

Opposition to Live Nation Amphitheater Grows

by Steve Casey

LIVE NATION FACES SERIOUS OPPOSITION.

Oregon Health & Science University and Ronald McDonald Charities of Oregon and SW Washington told the entertainment giant they “strongly oppose” its controversial plan to plop a 10,000-seat amphitheater on Zidell riverfront land.

With concerts idled pretty much around the world during the Covid-19 pandemic, Live Nation told 3550 the local plan is on temporary hold.

But “on hold” does not mean “dead,” and Live Nation has pledged to respond to concerns that their proposed concert venue would torment cancer patients and make teaching impossible in OHSU’s nearby classrooms on concert nights.

Separately, Mirabella is joining the opposition.

At its April quarterly meeting, the Mirabella board of directors approved in principle a letter from Sharon McCartney, Mirabella’s executive director, requesting Live Nation look elsewhere.

Her letter is subject to corporate review of the specific language.

While both letters deal primarily with nighttime concerts, Live Nation has said it will make the venue available to others on non-concert nights and during the day. Presumably, that includes bands playing at night testing the sound of their speakers during the day.

The Ronald McDonald House in OHSU’s Rood Family Pavilion overlooks Live Nation’s proposed venue on the Zidell Yards site, only a clear line-of-sight and line-of-sound city block away.

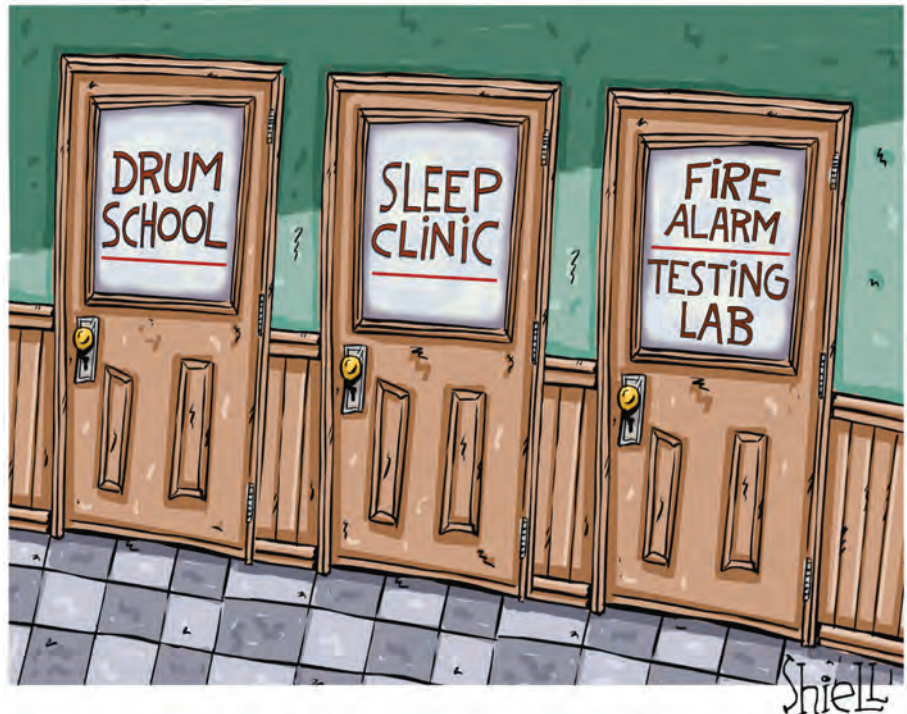
It offers low- or no-cost shelter to pediatric and adult cancer patients and their families during treatment.

In less than a year, Ronald McDonald has hosted more than 200 adult and 2,000 pediatric cancer patient stays. In 2019, some 12,000 free nights were given to families coping with cancer.

The March 11 letter from Renee Edwards, OHSU Health chief medical officer, and Ronald McDonald board chair Jared Ray attached a 15-page report from sound engineering firm Vibrasure, hired to provide an independent evaluation of Live Nation’s simulated sound study.

Vibrasure said the Live Nation study was faulty and understated the impact of hours of bass sounds – the most obnoxious auditory barrage the venue likely would visit on the neighborhood.

Vibrasure found that concerts and other events would reach decibel levels inside Ronald McDonald that would disrupt patient sleep, and that noise from the amphitheater would carry to OHSU’s nearby Robertson Life Sciences Building and “would render these classrooms unusable for



existing uses, such as evening classes and study spaces, during all concert events.”

Dr. Edwards and Ray wrote that Vibrasure was hired “to answer a very important question: ‘would an open-air concert venue in South Waterfront risk impacting the sleep and rest of OHSU patients recuperating in the South Waterfront?’”

“Per the attached report, the answer is ‘yes,’” the letter says.

Matt Prieshoff, chief strategy officer of Live Nation Venues, said a response would be forthcoming after additional testing, and indicated the company disagrees with both the letter and Vibrasure’s report.

In an email to 3550, Prieshoff said “Like so many other things, our Portland project is on hold. I’m happy to provide an update when we are able to start having concerts again.”

Both Live Nation and Zidell have said not disrupting Ronald McDonald patients is critical to the project moving forward.

Sharon's letter addressed concerns of Mirabella residents and other Health Center patients.

Even independent living residents, she noted, some with mental or physical challenges they deal with courageously, often depend upon home care and nursing assistance.

Her letter describes the particular vulnerability of Health Center residents in the skilled nursing and memory care units and the particular harm they would suffer from concert-level noise.

The letter notes that perception and behavioral problems are exacerbated in the evening hours, when patients are disoriented and can become agitated, confused and tormented.

Both letters end with pleas for Live Nation to take their concert venue elsewhere.

"Given all that our residents and patients have to lose, we ask you to consider other locations for your amphitheater, something far from medical uses," Mirabella's letter says.

"If you do not, increased noise from Live Nation performances will have an adverse effect on the care of dementia patients at Mirabella, adverse effect on people seeking to recover from surgery and adverse effect on those in hospice care and their families."

"Mr. Prieshoff," the OHSU-Ronald McDonald letter concludes, "we appreciate your assurance that, as a father of small children you would never build an amphitheater if it would impact the health and well-being of those in our care. There are many possible locations for an amphitheater in the city and region. There is only one Rood Family Pavilion and it is impossible for us to relocate."

Live Nation's largest single shareholder is billionaire investor John Malone's Liberty Media, which owns 33% of the company.

In late April, Saudi Arabia's sovereign wealth fund purchased a 5.7% stake in the company for \$500 million, and became Live Nation's third-largest owner.



"Can I get you any more deafening loudness?"

Live Nation itself owns Ticketmaster, the House of Blues chain of concert venues and restaurants, and assorted other subsidiaries including artist management companies.

Worldwide, it puts on 40,000 shows and more than 100 festivals a year, selling 500 million tickets annually.

It, and other promoters, have not been sympathetic to noise complaints near their venues over the years.

A "Project Pabsi" series of concerts (not done by Live Nation) on the Zidell property more than five years ago brought cascades of complaints from neighbors.

In the South Waterfront, residents of the Meriwether condos and residents on the north side of Mirabella were particularly upset by concert noise, particularly unrelenting bass.

Their complaints echoed those about other music venues around the country, many operated by Live Nation, and whether the company – or any concert promoter – can be trusted to stay within noise limits.

The current issue of Esquire magazine, in a story about building a huge concert rehearsal complex in a rural area of Pennsylvania, reports that the general manager of that facility took a call from a Live Nation representative.

"Just so you know," the Live Nation rep is quoted as saying, "we get noise complaints all over the world, and we tell them to fuck off." ■

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How We All Fought the Invisible Enemy

by Steve Casey

BACK ON FEBRUARY 27, THE DAY PRESIDENT TRUMP tweeted away that “The Coronavirus is very much under control in the USA,” Sharon McCartney saw the virus as very much a threat to Mirabella.

While Trump was calling the virus the Democrats’ “new hoax,” Mirabella’s management squad was girding for battle against a wily enemy.

The effort was intense.

“We have always worked on the assumption it isn’t a matter of ‘if,’ it’s a matter of ‘when’ we potentially get (Covid-19),” Sharon told 3550. “That’s the direction we’ve been working on through this whole thing.”

As executive director, Sharon led Mirabella’s fight to keep the community safe from what later would be termed a pandemic as it lacerated counties, countries and conti-

nents and led to predictions that as many as 240,000 people would die in the United States alone — more than all combat deaths in WWI, Korea, Vietnam, Desert Storm and Desert Shield combined.

While national casualty predictions changed often, the Covid-19 threat to Mirabella became a reality on April 10, as one staff member tested positive for Covid-19, and 11 other employees who had contact with that person were sent home on quarantine.

That was the same day the state Department of Health Services reported the death of 10 residents at a Southeast Portland nursing home called Healthcare at Foster Creek — the single largest Covid-19 death cluster in Oregon.

By mid-April, at least 34 Oregon senior care homes had confirmed Covid-19 cases, and 90 more were under investigation, according to the state.

The efforts by Sharon and her executive team, despite the occasional ragged rollout of increasingly severe restrictions, produced a Mirabella community that seemed better

prepared than most, instituting precautions well ahead of government guidance or regulation.

Where did those restrictions come from? Who had the power to decide whether Aria closed or stayed open, or whether to ban visitors from the building?

Decisions flowed from daily meetings of Mirabella’s executive staff, the leadership of parent company Pacific Retirement Services (PRS), advice from Mirabella’s own infection control nurse and from a consulting immunologist, edicts of the federal Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), requirements of the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), and the experience of other PRS communities and industry association LeadingAge Oregon.

Leaders here had only to look three hours north to the hard-hit Seattle area for evidence of what would come to Portland.

The greater Seattle area in Washington state “was

(then) ground zero for U.S. community-based spread, so Mirabella Seattle implemented severe restrictions earlier than other communities,” Brian McLemore, PRS chief executive officer, told 3550 in March, shortly before confirmed Covid-19 cases afflicting one resident and three home care workers hit Mirabella Seattle.

“We established baseline Covid-19 policies and procedures every community had to follow, but communities had the discretion to be more restrictive than our baseline, based on on-the-ground knowledge,” he said. “Sharon was tracking a few days ahead of (other) communities in terms of restricting visitors and modifying services.”

While solutions had to be fashioned to meet local needs, PRS already had a pandemic playbook as a guide.

“This specific virus may be new to us,” Brian said, “but preventing the spread of infectious disease is something we already have experience with. So a lot of the response



A Mirabella resident in our New Normal. Photo by Robert French.

hasn't been invented, it was just a question of how soon to adopt our already established isolation precautions.

"What has been invented in terms of response is the massive amount of screening, education and communication as the situation has evolved," Brian told 3550. "We've done a lot of information sharing across communities because of the fast-moving communication requirements. Being able to share the types of communication tactics that worked or didn't work is helpful to local teams."

Does PRS have to approve whatever local communities come up with?

"Approve is too strong a word," Brian said, as long as contravention of PRS' "well-documented clinical policies and procedures" is not involved. "We want to be informed about changes to the program and are working hard to stay informed. Here and there we've pushed back on a decision, nothing at Mirabella, but it's always a discussion of 'why was this decision made?' as opposed to 'don't do that.'"

Locally, the decisions began with daily meetings involving Sharon and all department directors, with others involved as needed, according to health care administrator Stephanie Cook, who was one of those participants.

Directors discuss "what happened at work, what happened in the world, how to put it in play for that day and the rest of the week," she said.

Their decisions radically altered Mirabella life.

Some residents balked at the increasing restrictions and decreasing service, but most took the changes in stride and many commended Mirabella management's assertive approach.

That approach changed as evolving news about the virus' spread got more grim:

- The Bistro closed to outside customers. Then it closed to everyone.
- Aria closed; dining staff delivered any breakfasts, lunches and dinners residents purchased. *Then breakfast was canceled and the choice of dinner entrees shrank from three to two.

- All bus trips — to events or grocery stores — were canceled. Town car rides ceased, except for medical trips.
- Visitors, including family and friends, were prohibited above the ground floor. Contractors were admitted only for essential projects.
- Apartment housekeeping stopped.
- The gym, Willamette Hall, the Park View and Sky View rooms and the library closed.
- Visitors, including spouses of patients, were banned from the second floor Health Center.



The mad rush to fill bags for our delivered meals. Photo by Anthony Schroeder

- Employees and contractors were told to sign in each day, answer a health questionnaire and get their temperature taken.
- Residents were discouraged from leaving the building unless absolutely necessary.
- Residents were told — repeatedly — to observe social distancing, not gather in groups, wash their hands, wash their hands some more, and hunker down in their apartments.

New restrictions, released *seriatim* in late-afternoon memos, irked some residents who found the plans not fully thought through and expecting residents to embrace change virtually immediately — as with a 4:29 p.m. March 16 memo

saying Aria was closed and residents had until 5 p.m. (31 minutes) to order that night's dinner for delivery.

Those misfires aside, the precautions management took struck most residents as reasonable.

"I am pleased with the Mirabella Portland and Pacific Retirement Services response to the Covid-19 pandemic," observed resident association president Ed Parker.

"They had plans in place that allowed them to anticipate or respond immediately to each change in federal or state regulations and recommendations," he told 3550 in early April. "The Mirabella administration team is ready to respond quickly with further changes to protect us if a resident gets the virus. We are indeed fortunate to be living in a PRS facility."

(see Covid-19 p. 10)

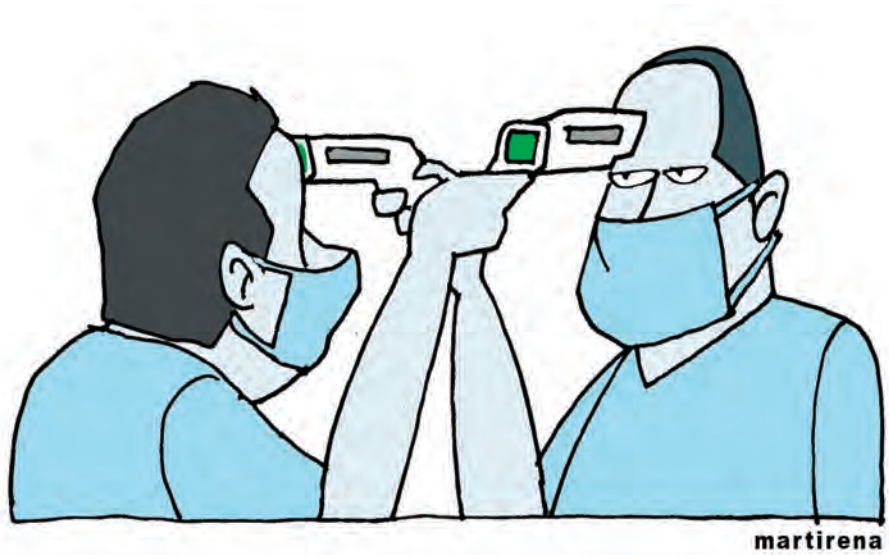
(from Covid-19 p. 9)

Rather than stew about what they could no longer do, many residents went looking for things they *could* do, and turned to helping others.

"Residents have accepted the deprivations and inconveniences of the changes made to protect us from harm with thanks and appreciation rather than complaints or criticism," Ed Parker said. "Many residents have performed acts of kindness to help others and to overcome the negative effects of social isolation."

Linda Karon made 100 masks and shipped them to health care workers at a Providence facility in Washington state, then led a group of women who made masks for workers at Oregon Health & Science University.

Then, when all Mirabella employees were required to mask up, Stephanie Cook sought some home-made masks for second floor staff, to avoid using medical-grade masks for routine tasks.



The group was enlisted once again. The mask-makers were Charlotte Beeman, Theone Ellis, Barbara Gaines, Linda Karon, Linda McCaw, Amy Richman, Jill Seager, Barbara Snow, Toni Tidman, Margaret Toppel, Ginny Wiswell and Mary Zehring. Others chipped in independently, including Carol Hethcock, who made masks for everyone on her floor.

After leading one roundup of N95 masks and exam gloves from Neighborhood Emergency Teams for donation to Portland's bureau of emergency management, Barbara Short got a surprise call from the Meriwether. Condo resident Hugh Donnelly had what Barbara describes as "hundreds and hundreds" of N95 masks and exam gloves his employer, Mercy Corps, would donate to health

workers. Barbara and Linda Wood delivered the gear to OHSU.

Noting that residents fighting cabin fever in a prolonged stay-home order and cut off from social contact can become lonely, or just need advice on how to cope, emergency preparedness chair Paul Knoll asked floor captains to call "their" residents, make a friendly contact and ask if they can help.

With most businesses closed, restaurants and bars shuttered, theaters and other gathering spots shut down, residents seeking entertainment pretty much faced the bleak prospect of American television.

A helpful PRS-provided publication offered ideas for entertainment and education.

And channeling her best Cecil B. DeMille, impresario Rosemary Hole and husband Dan organized a Mirabella film fest, showing a different movie each night, two on Sundays, on the semi-functional in-house channel, 981.

Residents pretty much have to be here; staff does not, but employees have faithfully looked after residents and the building.

To show appreciation for every working staff member, Toni Tidman made paper hearts with a large "Thanks!" and the name of each employee, and hung them in the elevators.

With in-apartment housekeeping on hold, supervisor Tammy Cortes-Flores redeployed her troops.

"We are sanitizing every inch of the building that we can't normally get to when we do apartments," she told 3550. "The highly-touched areas like public restrooms, handrails, furniture in the common areas we do every two hours. Elevators, every hour."

Maintenance supervisor Michael Clayton offers enthusiastic praise of the

housekeepers.

"You couldn't ask for a better staff," he said. "These ladies are working so hard — whenever you walk by them, they have something in their hand, cleaning surfaces. Elevators, floors, furniture, walls. They are amazing."

"Mark (Moss) told me 'My job is to make this place clean and safe for residents so they don't get sick,'" Michael said. "Mark cleaned a stairway. Every time I saw that stairway, I thought it was black. It's black no more."

Housekeeper Sherry Davis was working in a hallway when asked "How are you?" Her answer was instant: "Grateful to have my job." That seems typical of employees in all departments, spared from being part of America's army of unemployed.

Good things happened that residents didn't see.

While the facilities department no longer handled routine work orders, "we have a lot of back-of-the-house work orders that kind of get pushed aside, and now they can handle," Sharon said. "They go into every mechanical room, change lots of air filters, do a lot of spring cleaning type stuff, service fire panels . . ."

Transportation supervisor Rick Thompson said his crew, with few rides to give and few cars going out, "are doing other things. We'll deliver packages, we're going to the store and getting groceries for people, we were helping do maintenance on all vigils. We did room service orders for a couple days. We're stepping up and helping any department that needs it."

Perhaps the most anguishing deprivation has been the order barring visitors, including spouses, from the skilled nursing and memory care units, separating couples when they most need each other.

That affects Larry and Adrienne Braverman, Bill and Karen Early, Don Marshall and Michael Marx, Lyle and Marilyn Janz, and Wayne and Sandy Erickson. Bill and Sandy are in memory care; as was Lyle, who passed away on April 23. Adrienne is in skilled nursing, where Michael is under hospice care.

Larry, Karen and Don all report they were upset at not being able to be with their spouses, but came to see the restriction as necessary.

"We do understand it," Don told 3550. "If that virus gets on the floor with those people with compromised conditions, it will be horrible. It's a very sad situation, but they've been wonderful down there. They've done everything they possibly can to make this thing work for us."

Adrienne Braverman took a horrendous fall while on vacation on the East Coast, and barely survived. Larry was with her in her room each day, and frequently brought her to music performances in Willamette Hall.

"I am no longer able to visit Adrienne," he wrote to 3550. "At first, I thought it was an unnecessary restriction, but on further reflection, I had to agree it was the correct policy."

"While it is very tough on me and, I am sure, Adrienne, the less contact she (and the other patients) has with outsiders, the better. A serious bout with the virus could easily be fatal for someone in her fragile condition," he said.

"While I can talk with her by phone, she has to have help and the nurses are already extremely busy. In addition, she has aphasia so it can be difficult to understand her. However, on a positive note, the nurses spend a lot of time with her, and are very attentive to her needs. All in all, while I miss her terribly, I am very thankful to be here. Don't know how I could have possibly dealt with this situation on my own."

Marilyn Janz and Wayne Erickson both said they were comfortable with the visiting prohibition, recognizing the need for that policy.

Karen Early took Bill to dinner each night, did his laundry, brought him to their 30th floor apartment most afternoons, helped him prepare for bed each evening and was his advocate. She has worried about whether anyone is doing that now.

"I know he's getting attention, but it's hard after two solid years" of being his daily caregiver, she told 3550.

When she was told she could no longer come to the second floor, "it was kind of a gut punch, but I think it was the right call."

One day she picked up pebbles outside, figuring she'd toss them at his window and see if he looked out. Karen will never make the big leagues; none of her pebbles struck higher than the windows of the ground floor salon.

She told a friend, and days later Karen received a package from Amazon. It contained a bag of large rocks with a note that read "If these don't work, I give up."

She hasn't resorted to rocks since, but she did ask that Bill be at his window one day at 5 p.m. She took a sign she had lettered, reading "Love you lots." As she looked up, she saw a sign in Bill's window, "I (heart) You."

Love in the Age of Virusiana.

The Health Center is designated as the epicenter of Mirabella's response to confirmed Covid-19 cases here, and has made preparations.

"We've done an inventory of all our PPE — personal protection equipment — and the assistant director of nursing is supervising proper protocols and hygiene," facility boss Stephanie Cook said.

There is a pandemic policy for all PRS facilities, she said. "We just flip to that page and go from there."

"Going from there" often involves direction from PRS, particularly its chief health care officer, Debbie Rayburn.

"We have a lot of support from our corporate office,"

"Many residents have performed acts of kindness to help others and to overcome the negative effects of social isolation."

— Ed Parker

Stephanie said. "We have a weekly call among all the facilities and they are being extremely supportive."

"If we get a confirmed case," Stephanie told 3550 in an April email, "we will immediately dedicate staff just to the positive resident, and other staff to the other residents, to eliminate cross contamination. We would activate our

(see Covid-19 p. 12)

(from Covid-19 p. 11)

emergency staffing plan dedicated to Covid-positive residents. We would cease all admissions and would alert the state and local agencies that we have a positive case. They will contact us right away and guide us from that point. We would also track back all possible staff that may have been exposed and notify them to pursue testing and self-quarantine."

Getting ready for that first Covid-19 case, the Health Center did not allow patients to go to their upstairs apartments but did allow patients to walk outside with a home care worker, as long as they stayed six feet away from others.

"We have canceled all non-essential home care services in independent living in order to provide essential services to other residents, and reduce the need for outside caregivers to come into the building whenever possible," Stephanie said. "Every person we are able to replace with an employee is one less area of risk."

Sharon McCartney's overriding aim is to prevent a spread of the disease, as residents come and go from the community, each trip bringing fresh risks of importing the virus.

Her most difficult problem? "Residents. Getting residents to understand that you have a part in this, too.

"When I go out to the concierge and see two residents hugging, or hear about a happy hour in someone's apartment that had about 10 people present, that's not helping. We need your help. I know it sucks. I know quarantine is difficult," she said. "I don't think residents realize how big a part they have to play in keeping the virus out of the building and, if it's here, to keep it from spreading. That's the biggest frustration."

Some residents have said they "need" to see their grandchildren.

"Nobody needs to do anything," Sharon said.

"This is going to be a small window in the grand scheme of life. I know it seems like forever when you're stuck in your apartment and can't go anywhere. But we will look back on this and it won't seem so bad." ■



No pedestrians, one lonely car. Photo by Robert French.

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C U at the Movies

Editor's Note: A full schedule of films streaming into our homes on the in-house channel has saved many residents from cabin fever during the 2020 season of Covid-19. Rosemary Hole found herself thrust into the role of movie impresario.

by Rosemary Hole

YOU ASK HOW I CAME TO BE IN THE MOVIE BUSINESS. I have Bernice Johnson to thank (or perhaps, blame) for what has temporarily become a full-time job.

Recognizing that Mikki Lipsey, who was suddenly thrust into the position of sole chair of the programs committee, needed help, Bernice suggested in her very persuasive way that I might want to take over responsibility for Mirabella's monthly movie showings.

With the help of Norm Bengel, and using my Netflix account, we were able to put together a list of films for February and March, which included old, new, classics, comedies, foreign, drama, thrillers, musicals and



Photo by Daniel Tafjord via unsplash.com

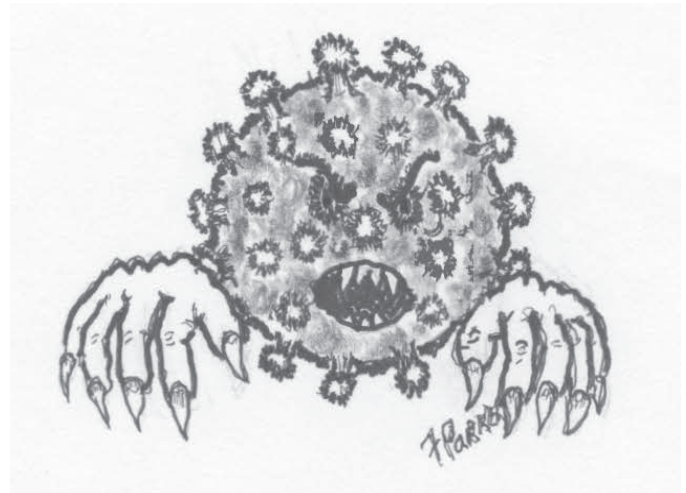
documentaries. Our main goal was to entertain and to avoid, as best we could, films that were too violent, too sad, too antagonistic, or what we thought might be considered inappropriate.

Movie nights were very well attended, partly because Channel 981 was out of commission during that time and if folks wanted to see the film, they had to come downstairs.

On a mission to build an audience, we offered peanuts, snacks and candy, thinking that popcorn would be next.

That was then. This is now.

Beginning with the first changes made at Mirabella due to the coronavirus, and with help from Megan Huston and Facilities, we decided to show a different movie every evening and two on Sunday. Megan set up a corporate account with Netflix, so between the two accounts,



Coronavirus Monster by Frank Parker

Mirabella's DVD inventory and offers to share DVDs from residents, scheduling has become easier.

Now, although there may be changes, you'll find the weekly movie schedule posted on each floor's bulletins board.

During this time, the happiness and appreciation expressed by many movie viewers rewarded me and reminded me of the importance of cooperation, sharing and taking care of each other.

Our present emergency has made nightly movies more vital to residents. Having a better image — eliminating the moving white line, for example — would improve their viewing experience. A top-of-the-line institution deserves top-of-the-line equipment.

Thanks to my fellow audience members for your support. It's been a joy to serve you all.

See you at the movies. ■

Home Alone

Nancy Moss

AFTER AN EMERGENCY the American Red Cross advises people to “Be with others” and to “accept help from others.”

Sequestering ourselves, the best response to the coronavirus, negates all this. Instead we need to keep our distance, at least six feet, and to limit social contacts. Mirabella’s administration has not only closed common areas but has initiated policies that spell out the new limitations.

Over time, which this pandemic will certainly require, these rules and guidelines can result in destructive loneliness.

Believing that single people, who can’t share a dinner table or walk close to someone else, may feel the deprivation more than couples, Mirabella administrators have a list of residents to call weekly.

Following chairman Ed Parker’s lead, RAMP has also activated appropriate committees. Paul Knoll, head of the Emergency Preparedness Committee, has asked floor



Painting by Hebe Greizerstein

leaders to call single residents on their floor once a week. “Social distancing can quickly lead to isolation,” Paul reminds us, “which is the gateway to unhappiness, even despair.”

One resident, during such a call, told me she woke up once at night feeling deeply sad. The Red Cross mini-pamphlet on mental health survival urges people to “Talk about your feelings.” Just putting them into words, as this resident did, may limit negative states of mind.

“Don’t stay by yourself,” the Red Cross brochure advises; “Accept help from others.” Being social while wearing a mask and staying at least six feet away is the challenge of today’s coronavirus emergency.

Psychologists warn that we have to show more creativity in maintaining a human connection within physical separation. As Paul Knoll says, “We need to

make sure the human touch of concern bridges the social distance.”

With the administration and RAMP’s help this will be our task as the emergency continues. ■

Covid-19 Humor

Grocery store clerk to customer: “Wanna hear a joke?”

Customer: “Sure.”

Clerk: “Did you find everything you need?”

The Africa Safari That Wasn't

by John Toppel

WE'D BEEN PLANNING A THREE-WEEK SOUTH AFRICA TRIP since last summer — a safari adventure to some pretty exotic locations, including a three-day stay on the elegant Rovos Rail through Zimbabwe and Botswana.

We were scheduled to leave on March 11 to spend a week in Cape Town before the actual safari started. This start time was a little dicey, but there were almost no cases of Covid-19 in South Africa and the travel company said it was a go.



The Toppels' only wildlife sighting.

Margaret and I arrived in Cape Town on the 12th and easily moved around, exploring the city. There wasn't much about the virus in the press and people seemed pretty cavalier, going about their regular routines. We enjoyed Cape Town's great restaurants and good exchange rate.

We stayed away from the main tourist sites, Robben Island and Table Mountain, because they were part of the organized program. We rented a car and checked out the local beaches and even saw the famous penguins. We drove to the Stellenbosch wine country, seeing some beautiful countryside and enjoying the exquisite Lanzerac Wine Estate. The sad part was that we went all that way and saw no animals; no lions, elephants, cheetahs or giraffes.

The night before the official trip was to start, March 17, we got a panic call from the agency and our local guide. They told us the South African government was revoking all the tourist visas and we had 48 hours to leave. The virus was quietly starting to take hold in the country and the government didn't want any sick tourists taking up beds in their hospitals.

United Airlines' local phone number was swamped and there was no way to get through.

The only way to communicate was from the U.S. I was able to reach our son, who did a great job of finding us a way home and booked it from Portland. We essentially just abandoned the original ticket and bought a new one, coming home via Johannesburg, then Ghana, Washington, D.C., and on to Portland. Almost 30 hours of flying and transit. We got home Thursday night, March 19. In a week we covered over 30K miles.

From our short stay, we came away with these impressions:

South Africa is a very rich country, beautiful and sophisticated, and at the same time teems with poverty. The gap between the haves and have-nots is obvious. Race, class, status and language (English, Afrikaans and native languages) are thick in the air, but not stated. There is evidence of a small middle class black community. You can see this in the restaurants, stores and offices. There seems to be a tolerance and a tacit acceptance of the racial status. It almost seems like a sociological experiment taking place all around us.

Next time we hope to see some animals. ■



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Resident Reflections

HOW HAVE WE HANDLED THIS INDETERMINATE SENTENCE we've been handed? Here are a few reflections from "lockdown:"

Probably for me, personally, the biggest downer is that I was really going to have a wingding of a party for my 90th, on April 14. The caterer had been hired by my daughter, the best in Portland. Walter (Greizerstein) and Ron (Weber) had helped me find a jazz band. Flowers on high cocktail tables in Willamette Hall. The best family pictures covering all 90 years waiting to flash before your eyes. All canceled. Maybe I'll wait 'til next year to be 90.

— **Gwen Luhta**

I think they have done us a great disservice with the suspension of bus service to various grocery stores. The cancellation of Mirabella bus service has caused many residents to pay extra for a delivery service for things they formerly got on their own by using Mirabella transport. There certainly is no refund for all the Mirabella suspended services that are part of the fee here. The shrinking food options do not make up for the original services provided.

— **Jane Partridge**

How much risk (is there) of getting the virus from asymptomatic carriers when we go outside to be with our children and grandchildren and bringing the virus back into our community?

I am grateful for the restrictions we are observing to keep our community healthy, but it seems to me that as hard as it is not to visit personally with those we love, we are taking a big risk in doing so.

— **Helen Sewell Johnson (posted online)**

Following are some random comments on how the pandemic is affecting me:

DIET: If my Mirabella dining choices were limited before, they are almost non-existent now. Residents on restricted diets are probably doing a lot more of their own cooking, as I am, and just biting the dust on all the points we are losing.

FEAR: As one of the immune-compromised, I dread the possibility of coming down with this virus.

FINANCIAL: Like everyone else, we are watching our assets drain away, hoping our financial experts are correct in advising the "sit tight" approach.

— **Yvonne Branchflower**

When all of this mess is finally over, I know I will never take Mirabella socialness for granted again. I miss my Saturday Night Hamburger ladies, Ann (Morris) and Charyl (Cathey), and my other water aerobics buddies, Claire (Weber) and Adrienne (Casey) pumping iron in the fitness center, sounds of happy chatter from Friday nights' Happy Hour. . . Bless the river and park being here for walks, but dang, social distancing is not what it is cracked up to be. I miss everyone—I miss HUGS!

— **Marge Carothers**

After vainly searching seven stores in the Palm Springs area for Dial soap, which she had heard best scrubs off the virus, **Helen Stern** was elated when, at her desert house, she found an old, dusty bar of Dial. Thinking it might be the last one in the world, she had a plan: "I know; I'll sell it on Ebay for a hundred dollars."

I live alone. I have met many people but only see them at events or meetings here at Mirabella, or on the shuttle buses and travel outings. I do meet and talk with folks at the dining areas and get to actually know some folks. That has been taken away from me and I miss it.

I do know from my past that getting outside every day helps my spirits. I also have found other Mirabella folks doing the same. Sometimes they have some time to talk.

I have been trying to call someone here who I know somewhat and usually see regularly just to see how they are doing and talk a bit.

— **Helen Braden**

By nature I'm an optimist, but uncertainty makes me uncomfortable and right now there is a lot of uncertainty. My hope is that those in leadership positions, particularly on the national level, will be able to put aside partisan politics and work together to support our medical system and subdue/end this epidemic. I'm furious with the administration and their slow response — but I find myself enjoying this unexpected gift of leisure time.

Over-scheduling myself has been a lifelong habit. Most of my attempts at clearing my calendar have been unsuccessful, but suddenly that has been accomplished for me. I'm working my way through a long list of chores, taking more time to read, I hope to get back to playing the piano regularly, I'm communicating more frequently with our kids and with old friends, baking cookies.

— **Bev Ormseth** ■

Cells That Defend Us

by Rita Brickman Effros

WE ALL HAVE HAD MANY ENCOUNTERS WITH THE VIRUSES that cause the common cold. We felt sick and eventually recovered.

How did we win this battle against a viral infection?

Understanding how we deal with the common cold will help in comprehending what it takes to combat other viruses, including the flu and coronavirus. Appreciating the intricate dance involved in recovering from viral infections requires an understanding of how our immune system works.

The immune system is a complex network of cells and so-called lymphoid organs (such as lymph nodes and spleen) that pervades our entire body. In fact, the immune system is so extensive that its mass is the same as the human brain.

Our immune system actually has two interacting components. The so-called “innate immune system” deals rapidly, in a somewhat crude manner, to provide coverage until the “adaptive immune system” takes over. It is sort of a one-size-fits-all system — often all that is needed to deal with some bacterial infections.

We all know what it feels like to stub our toe, which is often followed by some redness, swelling and pain. This is caused by the innate immune system dealing with bacteria that entered the local area.

Interestingly, our innate immune system has many similarities to immune systems of animals that are lower on the evolutionary tree, indicating that it is quite ancient. In fact, 99% of all animals get along just fine with just an innate immune system

By contrast, the so-called adaptive immune system evolved more recently. It is far more complex and specific and its response to something foreign takes longer to ramp up. Importantly, it is how our bodies deal with infections caused by viruses.

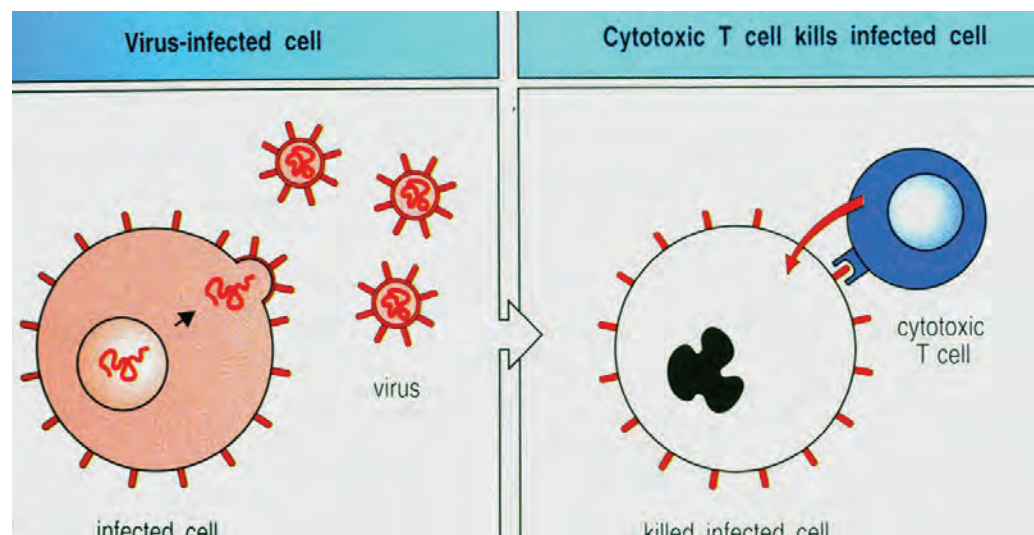
The two main features of the adaptive immune system are its exquisite specificity and its long-term memory. These features are shared by the main cells of our adaptive

immune system, namely, B cells and T cells. These cells are also known as white blood cells—although they are actually about as white as white wine.

How do B cells and T cells develop to be specific for one, and only one, foreign substance?

These cells emerge from primitive cells in our bone marrow. During their maturation, through a complicated cut-and-paste process in their DNA, they generate receptors on their surface that help them recognize something foreign.

Importantly, each B cell or T cell recognizes only one foreign substance, such as a particular virus. For example, one cell (and all its progeny) might recognize the influenza virus, another, the measles virus, and yet another, the coronavirus. If that cell encounters the appropriate virus, it will become activated and undergo cell division, with the



identical receptor (i.e., recognition unit) expressed on all its daughter cells.

The random nature of how the receptors are generated on B cells and T cells results in an extremely large repertoire of viruses that can be recognized during our lifetime. In fact, it has been estimated that we are able to recognize more than a trillion different viruses. Clearly, we may never be exposed to all of these viruses, but we are ready, nonetheless.

The two main players in the adaptive immune system — B cells and T cells — have distinct roles in combating viral infections. B cells produce soluble proteins, called antibodies, which can neutralize, or inactivate viruses that are present in our bloodstream.

But viruses cannot remain in our bloodstream for very long — they need to get inside cells in order to make more

viruses. This is where T cells come into the picture, since antibodies, which work fine against “free” viruses, cannot enter cells.

Each virus has a favorite cell type that it enters, and actually hijacks, creating something akin to a virus factory.

Once inside a cell, such as a cell in our lungs in the case of influenza or the coronavirus, the virus quickly makes thousands of copies of itself. These copies exit the cell and go on to infect other lung cells. This is where the second punch of our adaptive immune system comes in; the T cell is programmed to kill other cells that are infected with a virus.

As noted, each T cell can recognize one, and only one, virus.

So, if our lungs are infected with the flu virus, for example, the T cell that can recognize that virus becomes activated and divides many times. This creates a large number of identical T cells, all of which recognize the flu virus. These cells are called killer T cells, since they actually kill any cell that is infected with the flu virus. Thus, they destroy the factory of flu viruses, helping us to recover from the infection.

Once we recover from an infection, the particular B cells and T cells involved in combatting that particular virus remain poised to prevent future infections with the same virus. They are called memory B cells or memory T cells. However, to avoid the infection in the first place, since many viruses can be lethal, vaccines have been developed.

The purpose of a vaccine is to trick the immune system into making memory B cells, which can defend against a future attack. Most vaccines that we are familiar with contain only pieces of a virus, or a virus that has been totally killed by a chemical.

Importantly, one cannot become ill from a vaccine, since it contains no live virus. Nevertheless, the vaccine contents look enough like the virus that they can stimulate appropriate B cells to make antibodies against the virus. In the event that we encounter that particular virus in the future, the antibodies immediately neutralize it, and prevent actual infection.

In the absence of a vaccine, when we are infected with a virus, specific B cells start producing antibodies within the first eight-10 days. Next, killer T cells that recognize the virus multiply to produce large amounts of progeny that go on to kill infected cells. B cells also go on to make a variation on the original antibody, called IgG, which provides long-term protection against a possible future encounter with the same virus.

Along with these functions, immune cells also secrete soluble mediators called cytokines (SIGH-toe-kynes), which help amplify the immune response. However, occasionally, overly large amounts of these cytokines are produced, leading to unwanted damage to healthy cells.

This situation, sometimes called a cytokine storm, is one possible explanation for the wide spectrum of symptoms displayed by different individuals.

Age also plays a role in how we respond to different viruses. Although the actual numbers of B and T cells do not change with age, the overall composition of our immune cell pool is altered. As we age, we have fewer cells that are ready to deal with viruses not previously encountered (so-called “naïve” cells), and more “memory” cells that remain in the circulation from previously encountered viruses.

The effect of age is also seen in the response to vaccines.

Experience with the influenza vaccines has shown that older individuals respond less vigorously than younger persons to the vaccine. This has led to recent development of novel versions of the flu vaccine that are tailor-made for persons over age 65.

It has also underscored the need to test new vaccines in both young and old individuals. Hopefully, this lesson is being applied to the development of a vaccine to prevent coronaviruses.

Today, we need this bit of hope. ■

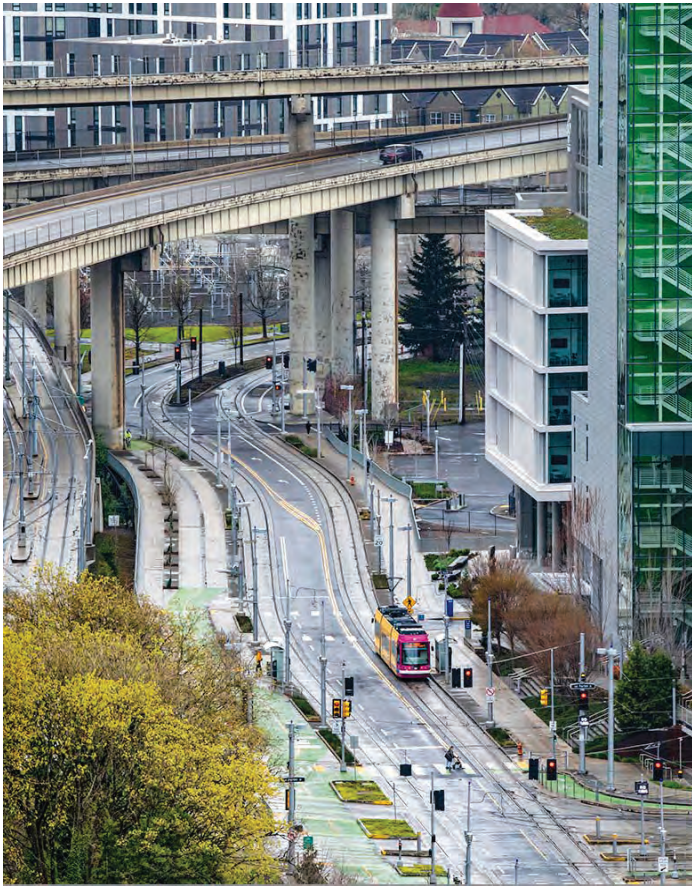
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Images of the Pandemic: deserted city streets; masked pedestrians; solitary man enters empty streetcar. Photos by Robert French.



Edwin Hooper via Unsplash.com



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Portland Diary

by Nancy Moss

I

A WOMAN WITH SHORT, CURLY BLACK HAIR WEARING A blousy pink jacket, skinny jeans and flats stands on the sidewalk next to our stopped streetcar. From my window I watch her stoop down, pick up a cigarette from the sidewalk and put it in her mouth.

II



I HAVE OFTEN SEEN THIS COUPLE, HE, white-haired and frail, wearing a hat, top-coat and slacks; she, elegantly dressed, her legs sparrow-thin, holding his arm to support him as they walk.

Today she is on the streetcar alone, wearing stiletto heels and hose, a red coat and beret to match her red handbag, her blonde pageboy wig falling smoothly to her shoulders.

I feel a sense of loss.

III

On the MAX I hear a heavy-set young man talking to a young woman in a costume of variegated colors. "I was a grandfather when I was 28," he says, then tells her about his stint in prison for drug use and that his granddaughter is afraid of him. "Don't see why," he says.

He gets off at the next stop; the woman in mismatched clothes stares after him.

Under Sequester

I

I am tuned in to channel 981 at 10:00 a.m.: Bryant's Seated Stretch. "We've got a lot to be thankful for," he tells us as we march in place while seated on our chairs. "Good job!" he says, sitting on a chair as muted rock music plays: "Born to be Wild." "I see you!" Bryant says. "Arms out, up, down. Out, up, down."

I follow the television Bryant, doing my best to match left and right, up and down. Our cat stares at me as if I'm crazy.

II

Walking on the Greenway, I hear a bicycle-rider saying to his bike-riding companion: "When they're going up, you don't need a broker. When they're going down, you don't need stocks."

III

Cardio Combo with Ally on Zoom, "String of Pearls" in the background.

I realize that the movement I've been hearing as "Grapevine" is "Straight Line."



Photo by Art Moss

IV

We are walking on the Greenway; at our daughter's behest we are both wearing masks. On the path ahead of us is a male mallard: brilliantly green head. He lets us come remarkably close — up to the requisite six feet. Then he honks softly. Hidden in the shrubbery, his drab mate emerges, answering his call; the two of them fly away to the river. ■



Photo by Robert French

Regina Chan

by Priscilla Cowell

REGINA CHAN'S FATHER RAISED HER TO BE A BOY IN A family of girls. As he trained her to take over his business, he told her aunts and uncles, "She is the black sheep of the family, curious about the outside world, and free-thinking."

"Before the Great Famine of the 60's, educated people fled China to avoid communism," Regina says, explaining why her newly married parents arrived in Hong Kong as poor refugees. They immediately set up an apparel business in their apartment, starting from scratch, learning as they went and working side by side.

Regina remembers, "As a young child all day long I heard the sound of scissors cutting and treadle sewing machines stitching, making cute pajamas for kids." Her father did the sales, exporting to the United States through a Chinese trading company, and her mother managed the

Resident Profile: Regina Chan - Diligent Rebel

manufacturing. The daughters all helped. Working seven days a week, they dedicated their life to the business. A nanny took care of the children.

Regina's father, whose side of the family was Catholic, sent her to convent school, where she learned English. "The school opened my eyes to the west, and I am so grateful," she says.

Refusing to pursue higher education in China or to learn traditional women's arts, Regina wanted to study business at an English university. "When I was young my father planted in me a seed for business."

Her father agreed to send her if she would make two promises: that she would come home and work for him for two years and that she would not marry a white man. She came to regret the first promise once she learned what promises meant.

With her university degree and UK passport in hand, Regina planned to join her aunt in Toronto. Her father replied to her request by sending her a one-way ticket to Hong Kong. "I was a very rebellious girl, but every time he reined me in," she says.

In Hong Kong, she quietly looked for a job and was offered a position with Cathay Pacific in Singapore, fulfilling her dream of independence and seeing the world.

Again her father refused: "No, you go work for me. Go to the office tomorrow." She did.

Aware that the factory workers thought she was born with a silver spoon, each day she arrived early and stayed until midnight. "Thank God I had those two years of training with my father," she says vehemently. "He taught me so much, not the technical terms but the day-to-day hands-on business."

Regina realized that with her personality and skills as a problem-solver she was now ready to enter the business world on her own. On the dot of two years, having fulfilled her promise to her father, she quit.

She married a Hong Kong man she had met in England who had returned home with an MBA. Her father sent them to open a ramen factory in Wales. When the 1974 stock market crash destroyed the company, Regina's father went to Wales to bring them back to Hong Kong and install his son-in-law in his apparel company's sales.

Regina gave birth to a son there. Again rebelling against Chinese tradition, she hired her own childhood nanny for 30 days to learn to care for a baby, and then took over raising him herself.

With his business expanding, Regina's father dispatched her and her family to New York so they could set up a China import trading company. After five years she obtained a green card, allowing her to remain in the United States.

When Regina and her husband divorced and she was on her own, she moved to California with her son and daughter to start over. Her father set her up with his friend as a partner to open the Szechuan Flower restaurant in San Mateo.

After three years she became the manager and succeeded in her goals of having a beautiful dining room, becoming a destination for diners, and being part of the community. Three generations of loyal diners came regu-

"When I was young my father planted in me a seed for business."

larly.

As a lone woman manager, she had to be tough, including keeping an eye on the cocktail lounge. The frequent presence of San Mateo police detectives helped her make sure that gang criminal activity didn't go on. "I fed them lots of appetizers," she remembers.

(see Chan p. 26)

(from Chan p. 25)

Regina says that unlike many Chinese she believed in paying taxes, in employee loyalty, and in generous wages. “The bottom line of business is always the operation, the human side. My employees called me #2 Sister, because #1 Sister belongs to the family.” After 15 years, with Hong Kong residents again fleeing communism from the turnover to mainland China, she sold the restaurant.

Always up for a new business challenge, she was lured into a seven-year career of managing high-tech businesses in the Bay Area, working with start-ups that did nanotechnology, web design and data storage. This required using all her managerial skills and retooling with classes at local colleges.

Regina’s father moved to Vancouver, B.C., near enough for her to visit frequently. He said of his eldest daughter, “Of all my children, I never worried about Regina.”

Her son is an architect with OHSU and has two children, and her daughter is a lawyer with the California Supreme Court in Sacramento.

Regina didn’t retire completely when she moved to Mirabella to be near her family. She still manages her own real-estate company. She deems the PRS management tip-top and is very happy to be here. Mirabella is fortunate to have this indomitable spirit in its community. ■

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Regina with her father and children Ronald and Janice during the 1986 Vancouver World Expo.



Regina with her father (undated).

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by Pamela Lindholm-Levy

NEVER TELL MARK MOSS “NO.” HE WILL WORK HARD AND surprise anyone who thinks he can’t do something he sets his mind to.

Doctors told Mark and his parents he “wouldn’t ever be anything,” as Mark puts it. School was difficult for a boy who was born with hearing loss, learned differently from the average student, and has mild cerebral palsy. Teased a lot at school, Mark tried to deny his issues, but eventually used them as an incentive, not a curse. He stopped asking “Why do I have them,” and began to overcome them.

Mark set out to prove to everyone that he would be something.

Luckily for Mirabella, Mark proves that every day. His manager in Housekeeping, Tammy Cortes-Flores, recognized in Mark a young man who had not previously thrived and began pushing him to reach his potential. He had started working at Mirabella in August of 2010 as a housekeeper, cleaning apartments and rooms on the second floor.

Tammy felt that was not what Mark should be doing. He became a custodian under her leadership, keeping floors and carpets clean in the public areas. A year ago Tammy promoted Mark to Custodian II, whose duties may change from day to day or hour to hour: laundry, carpet cleaning, patio, window, and balcony cleaning, delivering groceries, and more.

Residents have probably seen Mark, intent on his work, polishing an already-gleaming elevator panel or finishing one of their interior windows.

Tammy feels Mark has the potential to become Lead Custodian in a few years. “Mark leads by example,” she says of him.

Before finding a place at Mirabella, Mark held some other custodian jobs, at Valley River Center, a shopping center in Eugene; and the Nike employees’ store in Beaverton. He worked nights for Nike, and tried always to keep the forklifts, as they delivered goods to the shelves, from sneaking up on him in their quiet way he couldn’t hear.

Neither of these positions allowed the real Mark to shine. At Mirabella he can be himself, which makes him happy and ready to excel, learn, and teach other employees.

On a project, he’s comfortable giving credit to others and being an example, but he admits that he can be competitive. He likes to concentrate on what needs doing, not sitting around. In fact, he admits he can’t sit for long.

Yet Mark likes to read, especially history and science. His history reading takes him all over the place.

One of these places is Scotland. Family lore says they are related to Robert the Bruce and William “Braveheart”

Wallace. Mark has done family history research online. The DNA test he sent in was inconclusive about those Scots.

Mark tells the story of one of his grandfathers, whose given name was Commodore. When Grandfather was piped aboard a Navy ship, and he announced his name was Commodore, everyone came to attention and saluted the young man, who was no doubt only a seaman or petty officer.

Mark’s middle name, Sealy, traces back to a family of Mormon forebears who came on the Oregon (or Mormon) Trail to Utah. While today many young Mormon men travel far from home to do missions, Mark spent his two years in Eugene. After that, and unemployed in 2008, he tried to go to school but dropped out and has decided not to attempt it again. The workplace has proved to be a more rewarding space for Mark.

Staff Profile: Mark Moss, Never Say Never

Mark’s father, a computer repair technician, and his mother, a piano teacher, always stressed to their son that no matter what, he had to work for what he wanted. Mark is a worker. He makes sure that his work helps both residents and other employees stay safe, a crucial goal in these challenging times.

Work isn’t everything, though. Like his reading, Mark casts a wide net of interests. He is a rock-hound, and while he is looking for good specimens enjoys camping and hiking. He has recently come to birding and has a new pair of binoculars he plans to take out this spring. With his wife, Susan, Mark has been adopted by a cat, Asher, who is no doubt an avid birder herself.

Mark appreciates that at Mirabella he can be himself. He would like people to know he has a sense of humor, and especially he and Tammy would like the residents and his co-workers to recognize, as many do already, that when he can be himself he is so much more than his disability.

Mark has proved the long-ago doctors and previous managers wrong. He is not only something now, his determination and diligence suggest he can be even more of something in the future. ■

Photo by Ron Mendonca



Mark Moss

Tone-Up with Channel 981 or Zoom

by Nancy Moss

WHEN COVID-19 FORCED THE CLOSURE OF MIRABELLA'S gym and pool, resident services director Megan Huston, wellness coordinator Bryant Symkowiak and yoga instructor Nicole Johnson met to see what could substitute for these off-limits facilities.

According to Megan, one other PRS facility recommended using Zoom, an app which Nicole had used.

These initial meetings resulted in a virtual fitness program offered on Channel 981 and on Zoom, which offers a range of workouts.

The "most intense classes," according to Bryant is Ally Britton's 10 a.m. cardio combo, offered on Tuesday and Thursday on Zoom. "People get pretty winded," Bryant says of this class. His weekly emails give the links to Zoom, for residents who don't have the app.

To ease participants' scheduling, Bryant kept class times the same as they were before lockdown.

At the other end of the spectrum are Bryant's gentle stretch and strength, offered at 8 a.m. on Monday and Thursday and Nathaniel's exercise the arthritis away, which airs at 9 a.m. on Wednesday and Friday on Zoom. Residents new to exercise classes or those with physical limitations might start out with either of these.

Instructors on Zoom can record their classes and make them available at a later date. More steps are necessary to record Channel 981 classes; at the moment no plans exist to record them for possible future use.

Residents starting out may have trouble at first, as I did, matching Ally's quick moves in cardio combo. There were brief moments of flow, however, when I felt in sync both with her and the music she was playing ("Big girls, they don't cry"), when my briskly moving feet and arms matched hers effortlessly, when I was, as athletes say, in the zone. ■



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Faces of France

A photo essay by Ron Mendonca

Choosing faces to photograph, I look for those that are striking and different or that tell a story, like my musicians. I generally take only one shot; if I don't get it, I'll try two or three. Our tour guide seemed especially French to me, as does the clerk, who I picture saying, "Oui, Madame." They both have an alertness, a responsiveness, as if they are reacting to a joke. But he's a bit skeptical; maybe he's heard it before. A photographer learns to read faces.





Street musicians in Avignon



The Whistler from Lyon



Parisian Quartet in the park



Paris musician on a bridge



Playing accordion in Avignon



In the Jewish Quarter



A young lady in Avignon



Our local guide



Serious Artist at Montmartre



Student drawing at the Louvre



Artist at work in Beaune



Clerk in Lyon



Having fun in Avignon



Reading in Lyon



Taking a break in Viviers



Artist Sketching in Paris



Shopping in Nice



Curious in Nice

Dead Soldiers and Doornails

by Rolf Glerum

THE NEXT TIME YOU FINISH A BOTTLE OF WINE AT your table, ask your server “What’s this called?”
A blank stare.

“Ever hear of a **dead soldier**?” you ask.

Another stare or maybe “A war hero from World War II?”

Wrong answer! Anyone over the age of 65 knows it means an empty bottle.

Our grandkids speak an entirely different language than we do, and conversely haven’t a clue to our meaning when we say, **that’s Jake with me**, or **you’re the cat’s pajamas!** I’m not suggesting that we talk like that today, but we sure did when we were teenagers (oh, so long ago)!

Google.com helps us take a stroll down Memory Lane and find other phrases often used by us old-timers but pure gibberish to the teenagers of today.



Kilroy was here is a mild form of graffiti that adorned walls from Bastogne to Boston during World War II. It took the form of a funny little guy with a long nose peeking over a wall. No one knows its origin, but legend has it that whenever troops retook a town or village, a Kilroy Was Here drawing inevitably appeared to greet them.

Let’s take a powder (from where to where? Face powder? Gunpowder? Powder snow?) means simply to leave in a hurry. Often used by the crooks in old-time gangster movies. Origin unknown.

You ain’t just whistlin’ Dixie means you’re absolutely right or you’re not kidding around. First used in minstrel shows to refer to the South’s nickname and signature song.

Church key/jar bar. A flat piece of metal with a sharp point on the end, this handy tool had to be used to open beer cans before the invention of pull tabs. Today, it refers to any bottle or can opener. No info on jar bar, but it means the same thing.

Dead as a doornail. Certainly not a modern term, the phrase was used in Dickens’ Christmas Carol. Its meaning can’t be more obvious: dead, dead, really dead. It was heard in the 1500s in reference to the nails that were hammered into a door and clenched on the other side, a term called deadnailing.

Holy Mackerel! Still used by seniors today, but never by anyone under 30. Many think it’s a euphemism for Holy Mary, and don’t want to take the Madonna’s name in vain. The mackerel part refers to the Catholic tradition of eating fish, instead of meat, on Fridays.

Dressed to the Nines. Somewhat self-descriptive, this coined phrase means a woman wearing high fashion clothes and jewelry to a fancy ball or concert. (Men never ‘dress to the nines’ — to the fours or fives, maybe, but never higher.) The term Nines comes from the Nine Muses, of ancient Scottish literature.

Speaking of Nines, how about **the whole nine yards**? There are about 10 different theories of its origin. A popular one is that an average concrete truck’s volume is nine cubic yards. Two other versions of the phrase are **the whole shebang** and **the whole Mary Ann**.

Geezer. Mirabella is full of ‘em! It commonly refers to any older person, but is usually applied only to men. The term goes all the way back to 17th Century England, when it originally meant an eccentric, unpleasant man. None of those around here, however.

There are dozens more of these no-longer-used phrases and idioms, so we’ll end this story with a few more.

Jumping Jehosephat, that’s a lot of **moolah!** Are you sure everything is **copacetic**? Well, the **Good Lord willing and the creek don’t rise, we’ll 23 skiddoo** outa here and say, “**See ya later, alligator.**” ■

Cultivating Flavor

by Yvonne Branchflower

WHO DOESN'T LIKE THE LITTLE JOLT OF FLAVOR THAT FRESH herbs give? This is the perfect time to grow a salad and herb garden on your balcony. What you grow is handled only by you, is tastier than store-bought and is so fresh it has lost none of its nutrition.

All you need is a pot, potting soil and seeds or starter plants. You can mingle them with your flowers or dedicate a pot to them. If you don't want to venture out during this time of coronavirus, look online for mail-order nurseries. Share an order with your neighbors to reduce shipping costs.

Decide first which herbs or veggies you want to plant and determine if your balcony gets the right amount of sun to make your little garden thrive.

A tour late last summer of several of our residents' balconies revealed that many enterprising residents grow their own herbs and tomatoes.

Sue and Paul Knoll's two-tier plant stand holds a revolving garden of bulbs in spring and herbs in summer. In summer they grow basil, mint, sage, parsley, thyme, lemon thyme, chives and lemon marigold with plenty of sunshine on their east balcony.

Amy Richman grows cherry tomatoes and basil. While tomatoes like sun, some residents manage to grow them successfully on the small inset south balconies.

Anne Clark and Ed Parker tucked some mint in with a big pot of jasmine, proof that you can squeeze in an herb or two without giving up any posies. Dwarf rosemary, which can spread over everything, has its own pot.



Dot and Dick Lukins grow most of their herbs in one large pot that includes marjoram, thyme and mint, guarded by two charming frogs.

Those frogs are a reminder to have fun with your balcony garden, in a time that's lacking in amusement. ■



A turkey, white cheddar sandwich at newly opened SWF Ovation Coffee and Tea. Photo by Stan Berman.

OVATION COFFEE AND TEA OFFERS A RANGE OF COFFEE options, including Moroccan Espresso, and sandwiches such as Santa Fe panini and chicken pesto. Take-out only during shutdown. ■



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Mindfully Stoned

by Nancy Moss

FEELING A BIT HAZY BUT CHEERFUL, THE ELDERLY MOUSE PONDERES the two levers before him. If he does something to one of them, he muses, something good will happen. But which one? He looks from one to another; then a sudden insight strikes him. The left one! He pushes the lever; a nugget of food emerges. The mouse munches happily.

The March/April issue of Discover magazine contains an article on studies showing that small, steady doses of marijuana can help elderly mice, who are “roughly equivalent to a 70-year-old human,” improve their memory.



Illustration by Owen Swifter

“You can’t tell the difference between them and two-month-old mice,” Andreas Zimmer says of these senior citizen mice, who usually would have started to show mental decline by that age.

Working at the University of Bonn and a longtime U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH) researcher, Zimmer hopes to uncover “the secret to sharpening the aging brain.”

Studying brain cell receptors, he found that a “key receptor in this lab is known as CB1 or cannabinoid”, a class of chemicals that includes tetrahydrocannabinol or THC.

Zimmer’s aging mice receive their mild doses through an osmotic pump, an implanted capsule that leaks synthetic THC at a steady rate. He uses elderly mice only; younger mice do not show the same brain-sharpening effect. Heavy doses do not produce the same positive results on the mice.

Mice whose “aging brain couldn’t distinguish an empty can from a fellow mouse suddenly relearned the ability” notes Zimmer, calling the results “extremely robust and easy to see.”

One difficulty facing research like Zimmer’s is translating results from studies using mice to humans. On the other hand, the Discover article notes, “many studies over the years have shown that marijuana appears to work in similar ways in mice and humans.”

Johns Hopkins University, Harvard Medical School-affiliated McLean Hospital and the University of Colorado have all conducted research suggesting that THC can benefit humans’ aging brains. A recent *Wall Street Journal*

article concludes that “most researchers are optimistic about THC and cannabis’ health benefits.”

Mouse research at the Salk Institute for Biological Studies in San Diego and the University of Barcelona have both shown that “THC clears up some of the tangled brain proteins and clogging plaques that are the biological hallmarks of Alzheimer’s.”

Because marijuana, presently legal in nine states, is illegal at the national level, institutions receiving federal grants may not choose to pursue this research. But Brent

Forester, chief of geriatric psychiatry at McLean Hospital, points out that THC is presently used to relieve “agitation, aggression and violence,” the symptoms that so often lead families to place relatives in care facilities.

People with backyards may be making their own personal experiments. A recent CNN report states that seniors over age 65 who “smoke marijuana or use edibles,” brownies or gummies, doubled between 2015 and 2018. The report quotes an associate professor at NYU school of medicine as saying “Marijuana use among seniors . . . is a straight line up.”

Our happily blurred mouse gazes at the object before him, baffled. Is this one of those cold, hard, rounded things, the elderly creature muses as he appraises it. Understanding strikes. No, it’s a fellow mouse! Let me offer her a gummy. ■

