

3550





Nancy Moss
Co-editor



Jim McGill
President

“Laughter is the best medicine,” an adaptation from Proverbs, turns out to be true. The Mayo Clinic tells us that laughter “increases our intake of oxygen” and, in the long term, improves our immune system and relieves our stress response.

Aristotle said that tragedy involved characters that were greater than usual (Oedipus Rex, King Lear), while comedy meant people that were lower than average (The Three Stooges).

The French philosopher Henri Bergson said laughter involved incongruities, things that did not go together: a tall, fat man and a small, thin one (Laurel and Hardy). He also said laughter was a group phenomenon. Someone sitting alone in a café who hears a person at the next table telling friends a good joke will not laugh, according to Bergson.

Of all the forms of humor, farce — physical humor — is the funniest: Charlie Chaplin, Harpo Marx, Carol Burnett, James Corden. (Anyone who’s seen Corden in “One Man, Two Guvnors” knows what I mean). For The Mirabella Players show planned for this summer, I have written what I think is farce; we’ll see if it induces laughter.

One form of humor, the pun or play on words, is available to everyone. Knock-knock. Who’s there? Isabel. Isabel who? Is a bell necessary on a bicycle? Shakespeare loved puns. “I am too much in the sun,” Hamlet tells Claudius (sun, son).

Humor can be cruel, as anyone who has watched “America’s Funniest Videos” knows. Bergson doesn’t explain why we laugh to see a water surfer, upended, land on his butt. Maybe we’re relieved it’s not us in the water. Maybe it’s a darker motive. Satire and sarcasm, the angriest forms of humor, can rip off scars.

How do we maintain our laughter quotient? Hang out with funny people, watch old Pink Panther movies or the Marx Brothers’ “A Night at the Opera.”

Ignore Bergson. Find a DVD of “Some Like It Hot,” curl up by yourself — and laugh out loud.

Spring is here. We have enjoyed sporadic sunshine mingled with California mist and snow, the engaging colors of blossoming trees and flowers and the energy of kids playing and dogs romping in Caruthers Park.

And so, is anything different? Yes! No or limited masking, allowing us to see old and new faces, to celebrate existing relationships and build new ones. And socialization opportunities — casual conversations in our lobby, library, mailroom and pool; supper club explorations of Portland’s amazing eateries; trips to interesting places, and partial reopening of Mirabella eating venues.

While progress is being made in addressing the latter, we are still not back to pre-pandemic table-waited, casual drop-by opportunities to eat and chat with new and long-time residents.

What is keeping us from the old normal in dining? Clearly, a shortage of kitchen and wait staff. Last year Mirabella experienced a 50% turnover in these positions, anecdotally similar to other facilities like ours. Was it the fault of Covid? No, say some economists writing pre-pandemic (e.g., Charles Goodhart) who argues that parts of the labor force supply in the U.S. have been on a downward track for a long while, indeed accelerated by the pandemic. Jobs that rely heavily on younger people at the lower end of the pay scale face diminished numbers of workers because of lower birth rates, reduced numbers of immigrants and on-shoring of higher-paid jobs once filled globally, as well as changing expectations for flexibility and work-from-home preferences.

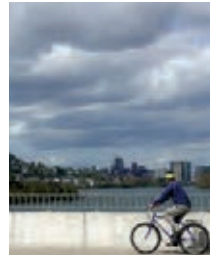
And so, even with the best efforts of our Mirabella administration, we likely will continue to fall short of pre-pandemic dining amenities for a while. However, we now have the Bistro for eat-in breakfast and lunch, once we order at the counter, and we can carry food into Aria and join friends ... with real napkins and silver even if not fully waited service.

Let’s use these out-of-apartment dining opportunities while awaiting restoration of full services.



Front Cover

Yvonne Branchflower was "suffering with a craving for fresh peaches from our tree," which were months away. So she bought a peach from the store, the model for the peaches in her painting. Then she painted them.



Back Cover

Looking north toward the city from the Sellwood Bridge. Photo by Richard Mounts

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Photo: Stanley Berman

Flying trusses in Block 41.

Blocks 41 and 42 Rise Higher

Rain or shine, the Andersen Construction workers building Alamo's Block 41 (reaching the river) and Block 42 (reaching Bond Avenue) are toiling away.

The six-story buildings in 42 will employ the same construction technique as *The Dylan*: concrete in the basement and first floor, then wood framing.

We can already see the yellow outer walls and inside stud walls.

Block 41 will have a four-story podium out of which will rise the 70-foot by 180-foot tower that tops out at 24 stories. The exterior walls (excluding facia) will be all concrete.

Construction in Block 41 will require 28,000 cubic yards of concrete and Block 42 will use 8,000 cubic yards. The framers build the wooden stud walls for the six-story buildings on-site; the Block 41 buildings will use steel/aluminum stud walls.

The storm-water treatment plant and its associated piping have been repositioned to the south boundary of the project.

Parking for Block 42 will be underground. Parking in Block 41 will be interior and above ground, surrounding the portion of the tower (and its elevators) on the first four floors.

The form for pouring the elevator shafts is reusable and will be progressively raised (by the crane) to higher levels. This huge form weighs 8½ tons.

The pale-cream-colored machine that looks like a robot-with-folded-arms is a concrete pump. It will, in addition to the truck-mounted pumps, push newly mixed concrete to higher levels.

Preparation for pouring concrete in Block 41 will be simplified and hastened by use of a clever device. The re-shores (mechanical jacks) used on the lowest floor are labor-intensive to install and remove. So, above the second floor, the project will use flying trusses. These are pre-fabricated steel trusses that support the next-higher layer of concrete during the pouring/curing stage.

The trusses have wheels that can be lowered during placement and removal. Despite the trusses' large area, six workers can pull/push the truss horizontally. There are shackles where the tower-crane crew can attach the required falls (lifting lines) for stability as the truss cantilevers out over the street. Finally, other crane falls can be secured on the inside edge of the truss. Then it becomes airborne (now outside of the building's footprint) and ready to be flown higher to be reused at the next level.

A full-scale mock-up of a one-bedroom unit hides behind the administrative trailers. This mock-up will have plenums and openings for heating/air-conditioning, electric/fiber-optic outlets and plumbing.

Thus, sub-contractors can have their crews study the layout, see what will be expected and discover timing and access problems, if any.

Later, all carpeting, and finishes will be added to the mock-up for installation review. When Alamo's investors make periodic visits, the mock-up will almost certainly interest them.

And yes, there will be a grocery store — in block 45 — with its own underground parking. Details will appear in the next issue of 3550.

— Pete Swan

Zidell's Summer Fun

Summer in what vice president of strategic partnerships Charlene Zidell calls "the happiest place on earth" means activities. For children there's the Circus Project, summer classes set up in the domes by the Emery on Moody Avenue. They include juggling and aerial acts, for children 7 and older. For residents with visiting grandchildren, a link to The Circus Project follows: thecircusproject.org.

For adults the artist Philip Krone will be building a 300-by-20-yard installation made of wood chips titled "AUXART — to the River" on the south end of the property. "There may be music," Charlene says.

Krone's project will be open for viewing in late August and September. •

Mirabella Passes Covid Test

Mirabella still confronts the challenges of Covid — most recently OmicronB2 — but has continued to flourish, according to Sharon McCartney, its executive director.

Pacific Retirement Services (PRS), Mirabella's parent company, has lost many millions of dollars in the past couple of years, according to Eric Sholty, PRS CEO. Sharon credits Mirabella's success in managing Covid, her strong marketing team and keeping expenses low with Mirabella's recent success.

"We are good stewards of finance," she says, adding that Mirabella has a positive net operating margin.

Asked if PRS's recent financial losses have affected Mirabella, Sharon says no, that each PRS entity is independent and can focus on its own agenda.

In the past three years PRS has not given the gift it used to return to Mirabella, a "combination of rebates from providers and grants," which RAMP used in the past to purchase things like shopping carts. Those three years with no PRS gift, Sharon points out, predate Covid's influence; for two years Covid has been the main cause of financial stress in the retirement industry.

Pay raises that went into effect in April, in both Mirabella and Portland's other PRS facility, Holladay Park Plaza, resulted from an independent study done by a CPA firm and from Mirabella's own analysis. One focus was on nursing, which Sharon calls "super-competitive," partly due to people exiting the field because of Covid burnout. Mirabella has seen a decline in revenue because of a shortfall in staffing on the second floor.

Dr. Dianne Daniels has ended her work on cultural/racial sensitivity at Mirabella. Daniels stressed that employees want to feel like individuals. Sharon suggests that residents keep that in mind. "A simple compliment goes a long way," she says.

— Nancy Moss

Mirabella's Newest Pet: Tiny Cat

When prospective residents take a tour of Mirabella, its library is one of their first stops. Resident volunteers who catalogue its 7,000 books recently moved its catalog from a programmer who charged \$500 a year to update it every two months to Tiny Cat, a program which enables independent libraries of up to 20,000 books to access the internet.

After initial help from maintenance staff members in transferring library records to Tiny Cat, a few library committee workers did the painstaking job of proofreading and making the catalogue more accessible. Committee chair Mary Gray says that "Gail Van Gorder worked many hours," with Mary and Sylvia McGill giving her valuable assistance also putting in much time.

Residents can access Tiny Cat on the library computer desktop or through the Miranet on their own computer following the library tab.

— Mary Finneran



Photo: Ron Mendonca

Nancy Moss and Don Marshall are trapped in a malfunctioning elevator in Nancy's play "Elevator Therapy."

Mirabella Players to Perform

The Mirabella Players will present four short plays: three comedies and one monologue, on Tuesday, July 26 at 7:30 p.m. in Willamette Hall.

Rich Rubin's comedy, "A New Me," starring Polly Grose and Catherine Rudolf, will open.

Mikki Lipsey will portray the Russian poet, Anna Akhmatova, known for her love poetry and her courage under Stalin, in the monologue that follows.

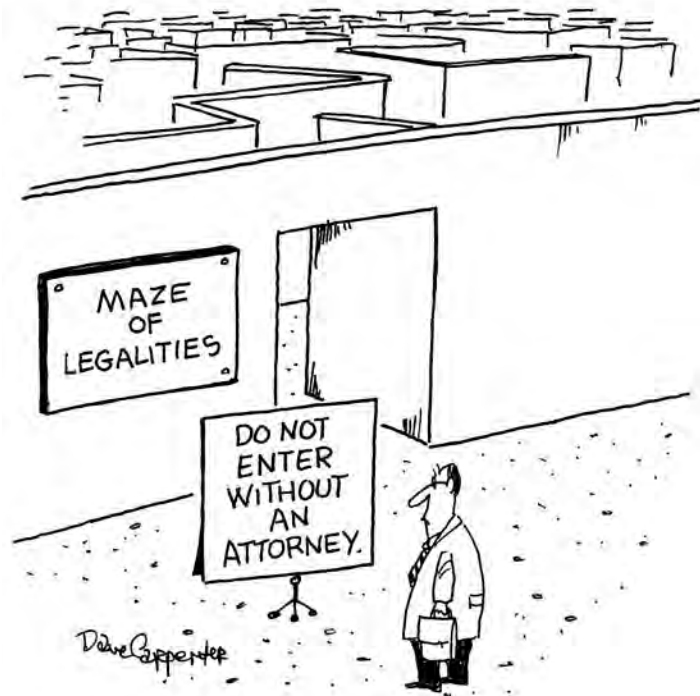
Don Marshall, Ron Mendonca and Nancy Moss star in "Elevator Therapy." Rich Rubin's play, "The Eye of the Beholder," featuring Lynne DeVries, Rosemary Hole and Ron Mendonca, will end the evening.

TAG theatre in Honolulu will produce another of Nancy's plays, "Painting T. J.," in November. •



Bylaws Reform Proposed

By JOHN FOREMAN



Reading bylaws is not just a possible cure for insomnia. Like the constitution of the United States, bylaws provide the basic legal authority for an entity, in this case RAMP, the Residents' Association of Mirabella Portland.

Because bylaws govern the operation of RAMP, its members must approve amendments to the bylaws. That means that the members of RAMP need to lose a little sleep occasionally to review the bylaws to see whether the organization can meet the needs of the Mirabella community.

Each person who is authorized to live in the Mirabella Portland belongs to RAMP. RAMP was created to enrich life at the Mirabella Portland and to be the voice of the residents with the management of the Mirabella Portland and the organizations that control it. For the voices of its residents to be heard and to protect their interests most effectively, RAMP must have the tools to address the concerns of its members.

Think of the bylaws as a toolbox. If you have a problem, you go to your toolbox to see if it contains a tool that will fix your problem. Without the proper tool, you are out of luck.

The passage of time and especially the pandemic have demonstrated that some tools are missing from the RAMP toolbox.

Linda Wood, the chair of an earlier bylaws committee, says the RAMP bylaws are an evolved version of the bylaws

of a retirement community in Wisconsin, also managed by Mirabella Portland's parent company, Pacific Retirement Services, Inc. Originally adopted by RAMP on June 30, 2011, our bylaws have been revised 13 times. All the previous revisions focused on problems that arose. None attempted to consider the whole document.

A few months ago the RAMP council, the governing body of RAMP, appointed an ad hoc bylaws committee of Ed Parker, Judy Seubert and John Foreman. Reese Berman, the RAMP vice president, is liaison to the RAMP council, and Jim McGill, the president of RAMP, is an ex officio member.

The committee was asked to look at all the bylaws, especially after problems caused by the pandemic. The committee also considered the way in which the RAMP bylaws are affected by the bylaws and actions of the related entities: the Mirabella Portland board, the Mirabella Portland Foundation and Pacific Retirement Services Inc.

The council at its April 20, 2022, regular meeting decided to circulate the most recent draft of the revisions proposed by the committee to the members of RAMP for their review and comment. The council asked that comments be sent to the council or the bylaws committee by the end of June so that the council can consider and make any last-minute changes before the proposed revisions are formally submitted to

RAMP members. The council must formally submit any proposed revisions to the bylaws to RAMP members by August 1, before members can vote upon them at the September annual meeting.

The RAMP bylaws presently contain 18 articles. The committee has proposed revisions to all the articles. Some revisions are stylistic. But most of the revisions are substantive and they are extensive.

The draft distributed to RAMP members shows the old text with language crossed out where it is deleted in the proposal, and with language underscored where it is added to the remaining text. This draft has some commentary explaining

The pandemic has shown that the council sometimes needs to adapt quickly to unanticipated changes.

the revisions. A clean draft, also available, shows what the bylaws would look like if the new proposal is passed.

A major theme running through the proposed revisions is the authorization of the council to make rules to address governance issues rather than trying to place all the governance provisions in the bylaws. One of the pandemic’s lessons is that the council sometimes needs to be able to adapt quickly to unanticipated changes. Some tools they needed were not available. Changes can be made much more quickly through rule changes — action taken by the council — than by formally proposing and voting on bylaws changes — action taken by the membership at an association meeting.

Another major theme of the revisions is an attempt to bring openness provisions to RAMP proceedings that are analogous to the openness requirements for government activities in the State of Oregon. Although RAMP is not a governmental body subject to Oregon laws regulating governmental bodies, it acts as a representative body for RAMP members. For the first time RAMP will adopt provisions for its meetings similar to the Oregon open meetings laws. The revisions also authorize the council to make rules that will open and control access to the records of RAMP in ways that are like Oregon’s laws relating to open access to public records.

Another theme in the revisions is expanding the use of electronic and digital media to help increase the number of members who can participate in RAMP activities.

An important function of RAMP is to advocate for the

interests of its members. The revisions expand the purposes of RAMP to include advocacy for the interests of RAMP members before more organizations, including the Pacific Retirement Services, Inc., the parent corporation of the Mirabella Portland board, and the community outside of Mirabella Portland.

The revisions authorize RAMP use funds from sources other than the allocation from the Mirabella Portland that has provided the bulk of RAMP’s operating funds in the past. The revisions also authorize RAMP to retain the services of independent legal counsel should that need arise.

The present bylaws use the terms “resident” and “member” to describe the members of the Residents’ Association of Mirabella Portland. After much discussion the revisions adopted the term “member” to describe members of RAMP rather than “resident”.

The revisions define a member as a person who is legally authorized to live at Mirabella Portland because some who are legally authorized to live at Mirabella Portland may not legally be residents. They have paid their initial fee and pay monthly fees. However, they choose not to reside at Mirabella for part of the year, or for more than a year during the pandemic and, in at least one case, since Mirabella Portland opened.

The electoral process is clarified with written ballots required for all contested elections for officers, council members, representatives and all amendments to the bylaws. Voice votes are retained for uncontested elections for office.

The revisions authorize the president or presiding officer to adapt the provisions of the latest edition of Robert’s Rules of Order to the bylaws, procedural rules and purposes of RAMP where no other parliamentary guidance is provided.

Finally, there continues to be no membership fee.

Looking to the future, the proposed revisions contain new tools for the RAMP toolbox that will enable the elected representatives of the members of RAMP to continue to enhance life within the Mirabella Portland and to advocate for the interests of RAMP members to those who operate Mirabella Portland and to the community at large.

Members of RAMP can do their part by reviewing the proposal and adding their voices to those who want to use RAMP to protect the quality of life in Mirabella Portland. Then they can vote to replenish RAMP’s toolbox. •

3550 seeks a volunteer
experienced with or willing to learn
Adobe InDesign software.
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~ HELP ~ WANTED

Portland at a Turning Point

By NANCY MOSS



Photos: Robert French

Portland contrast: people enjoying a restaurant while others are living rough.

Portland has changed from being a proudly weird city of naked bike rides and paddleboard witches to a place known for toppled statues, windows broken in rage and sprawling encampments of the homeless.

The Oregonian's headline on Jan. 2 warned, "The city feels lawless."

The 2020 protests over George Floyd's murder left a wake of destruction. In the South Park Blocks, for instance, late-night rioters toppled the statues of Abraham Lincoln and Teddy Roosevelt.

Damaging Lincoln under the Black Lives Matter shield is irony indeed. Although at first he maintained that the Civil War was fought to preserve the Union rather than to end slavery, Lincoln became more sympathetic toward enslaved people as the war progressed. He hated slavery.

The Black leader Frederick Douglass, who met with Lincoln three times in the White House, said, "Abraham Lincoln was one of the greatest and best men ever produced by his country."

This is the man rioters tore down.

The plans Portland Parks and Recreation (PP&R) has presented for the South Parks Blocks' renewal, approved by

Portland's city council, do not include the statues destroyed by protestors.

PP&R is allowing a mob to determine the city's landmarks.

The protests have continued. Oregon Public Broadcasting (OPB) reported that last Aug. 22 Proud Boys and anti-fascists clashed in "an hour of unchecked violence," involving fists, rocks and full soda cans. The date marked the anniversary of another riot at Multnomah County Justice Center,

"The police bureau was largely absent during both nights," OPB reported. The Oregonian noted that "police started leaving the police force in droves in 2020," in part because of city leadership.

A Feb. 19 protest in Normandale Park over the Feb. 2 police killing of Amir Locke in Minneapolis left one person dead. It reminds us that the tinder still lies there, waiting for a spark.

How did Portland get to such a place? How did protests spiral out of control?

Longtime Portlander and Mirabella resident Corrie Stevens says, "They should have nipped it in the bud, gotten things under control when it started." Her husband, Bill Stevens, adds, "The mayor didn't step up to the plate, didn't

stop the uproar.”

So Portland became the poster child for urban unrest, a relatively small group of anti-fascists and anarchists creating its image, broadcast almost nightly on television screens across the country.

In addition to violent, sustained protests, Portland has a burgeoning homeless problem.

A friend took me on a tour of homeless encampments. We drove down the Old Town blocks to the train station, along Sixth Avenue past a fenced area of tiny houses to our left and a straggle of tents surrounded by armchairs, a mattress, camp

Portland has many sources of renewal. But its system of government has not been able to cope with modern crises. The 2022 election may give it an opportunity to change.

stools and shopping carts, along with lots of litter and debris.

“No Overnight Parking,” a sign said.

We drove out Northeast 33rd Avenue toward the west end of the airport, past three-quarters of a mile of RVs and junked cars lining both sides of the road. Along with those vehicles were broken-up bikes, tires, bulging garbage bags, a wrecked boat, small piles where someone had tried to clean up — and one porta potty.

The only people in evidence were a man and woman picking through the debris and a couple of hooded men.

Shantytowns of the Depression must have been like this: landscapes of desolation and waste. Driving back to the city on I-84, we saw small huddles of tents by most exits and entrances, surrounded by the usual debris, sometimes straggling down a hillside.

Visitors to Portland, whether driving in from the airport or finding a cab from the train or bus station, will confront these scenes before arriving at glass-fronted high rises, carefully-tended flower beds and welcoming hotels.

Closer to home, just across Tilikum Bridge, on the sidewalk below that runs past the building housing Portland Opera and All-Classical Portland were four tents, a couch, a barbeque and folded bedding on which a white dog sat and

howled while the man sitting next to it petted it.

Elizabethan music filled the air.

Some Portland business owners, frustrated with Portland’s public safety system, have hired Echelon Protective Services, a private security firm, to protect their premises.

People for Portland, a non-profit social welfare group, has aired TV spots with simple, direct messages: “Had Enough?” “Let’s Save the City We Love.”

These ads resulted in heavier emails to Portland’s commissioners. A poll taken by the Portland Business Alliance at the end of January found that the two officials up for reelection, Jo Ann Hardesty and Dan Ryan, had 18% and 10% approval ratings, respectively.

Either People for Portland’s ads worked or residents haven’t liked what they have seen.

Both Mayor Ted Wheeler and City Commissioner Dan Ryan have recently scrambled to address homelessness, a problem that has been brewing for years.

Of the six “safe rest villages” Ryan has proposed, 2300 SW Naito Parkway — described by Willamette Week as “a strip of gravel surrounded by construction fencing” — is the one closest to Mirabella.

Two schools near the Naito Parkway site, Bridges Middle School and International School, have been negotiating with the city over terms of the site. A February article in Willamette Week stated that one of the school’s key demands, that campers already in the area have priority to the site, has “so far been denied by the city.”

Mayor Wheeler has proposed creating sites where 400 to 500 people each could be housed with what The Oregonian describes as “basic services to maintain safely and cleanliness.”

Because Wheeler’s proposal does not include supportive services, a coalition of advocacy groups has opposed his initiative, offering alternatives such as asking owners with empty apartments to commit to at least one for affordable housing or leasing entire apartment buildings.

The problem is funding these suggestions.

Mayor Wheeler has also advocated tiny houses. An early March Willamette Week article pointed out, however, that his six rest villages have not “sheltered a single person.”

Lawyers for Metro rejected as unconstitutional People for Portland’s proposal to fund treatment for homelessness by tapping into a Metro tax.

More than one speaker before Portland’s City Charter Commission, which is preparing potential amendments to the city’s charter, has said that managers rather than politicians should head the city’s bureaus.

A politician, they say, is apt to move on to a different job, where a professional manager will more likely be following a consistent plan.

(Continued on next page)



Photo: Robert French

A couple and their dog on the pavement on a sunny day.

(Continued from previous page)

With a complex issue like homelessness — whether a site provides counseling in substance abuse, for instance — this seems like a no-brainer

Mirabella resident Ginny Wiswell, who worked for the Nevada state legislature, says that she feels, “The charter review could help make city government more functional” than what she called “an archaic system.” “The current government is not working,” she concluded.

If 15 charter commissioners approve a proposal to change Portland’s government by July, it will appear on the November ballot.

Mirabella has encountered Portland’s governance

firsthand. Both its first director of facilities services, John Hart, and present director, Brian Wycoff, asked the city for permission to change Mirabella’s emergency message from “evacuate the building” to “shelter in place” or walk down three flights of stairs. The passage of time had made many residents less mobile, less able to reach the ground floor.

No dice. No change in the original message was allowed.

Finally, this year Brian learned we could hook up with another high-rise building that had gotten permission to use another message. That one wasn’t perfect — it didn’t mention the possible option of sheltering in place — but it was a closer match.

This has taken only six years.

As 3550 goes to press, none of the suggested solutions has removed homeless encampments from Portland’s streets and grassy areas.

As warm weather arrives, Portland’s bars and restaurants will fill with people making animated conversation. Concert goers will mill around in the Schnitz’s halls discussing the new maestro or finishing a hurried glass of wine. Climate change and cost-of-living migrants from California will arrive, bringing new vitality and filling empty apartments.

Portland has many sources of renewal. But its system of government has not been able to cope with modern crises. The 2022 election may give it an opportunity to change.

Let’s hope voters consider taking it. •



Change May Come: Portland City Government

By ED PARKER



Photo: Robert French

While City Hall struggles to address homelessness, tents appear in the city.

Look for an opportunity in the November election this year to make major changes to how the City of Portland is governed.

On March 31 the 20-member once-a-decade Charter Review Commission unanimously approved draft plans for three major changes to the city charter. The commission sent the plans to the City's legal department to draft formal ballot measures.

The first major change would make the city council a legislative body establishing policy instead of a group of commissioners each managing different city bureaus. A single professional city administrator would oversee all bureaus and report to the mayor.

Portland is the last major city in the county to require elected officials to be managers of city departments. Critics say that older form of government results in separate "silos" reporting to different elected managers, making it difficult for bureaus to cooperate to achieve policy objectives.

The second major change would be to enlarge the council to 12 members, three to be elected from each of four districts. In addition to setting policies for the city, council members could become advocates for the voters in their district.

The third change would use ranked-choice voting in a single general election to replace the current two-stage election process in which some candidates may be elected in a low-turnout primary election and others face a top-two run-off in a general election.

Instead of choosing only one candidate, voters would rank their choices in order of preference. The candidate with the lowest number of first-choice votes would be eliminated. Voters for that candidate would have their ballot added to the count of their second-choice candidate. The process would be repeated until the top winners emerge.

A recent Portland City Club study recommended ranked-choice voting to reduce negative campaigning because

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Photos: Robert French

Clockwise from left: A man rides the streetcar with his possessions; graffiti above a makeshift shelter; tent camp on the river opposite Ross Island.

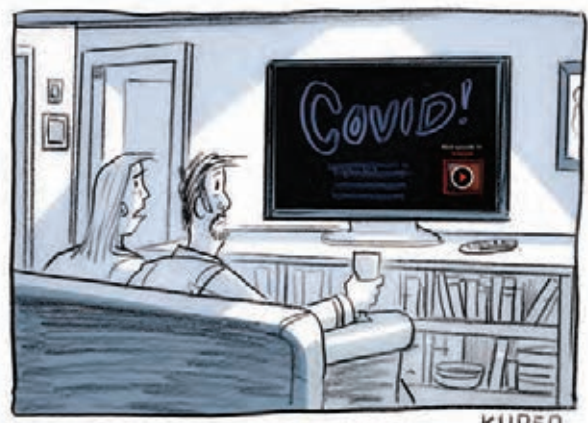
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candidates would not want to offend voters who might give them a second-choice vote if they don't get their first-choice vote. It also permits voters to record their first choice for a candidate unlikely to win without it being a wasted vote because their second-choice candidate will get the vote if their first-choice candidate is eliminated.

The draft ballot measures will be circulated to voters for comment at public hearings. After hearing voter comments, the charter commission will take a final vote in late June. If 15 or more members of the 20-member commission approve, their recommendations will go directly to voters for a decision in the November election. If fewer than 15 members approve, the recommendations will go to the city council for them to decide how to proceed.

Portland voters have turned down prior attempts to reform the city's governance. However, a recent public opinion poll showed that more than half of city voters were frustrated enough with the present system to support a major change. Perhaps the time has finally come to reform a system that has been in effect since 1913.

Every other major city in the country that formerly had Portland's system has changed its governing structure to a form that better meets the needs of its voters. •



KUPER

“Wait--how many seasons is this?”

Do Good Multnomah Does Good

By PAMELA LINDHOLM-LEVY



Photo: Robert French

A tent on NW Northrup Street sits next to a pile of possessions.

“I model the way I treat people after the way you guys have treated me,” a Do Good Multnomah participant says.

Another says, “I sleep indoors. I can sleep wonderful.”

A new motel shelter resident and Do Good participant bets “If you asked everybody here the one thing they like the most about being here — the showers.”

One of three charities selected for Mirabella’s 2021 holiday donation drive, Do Good Multnomah works tirelessly to move unhoused veterans of the United States armed services from the streets and into permanent housing. The organization aims to change the way those veterans are served.

Housing First is its motto.

Do Good Multnomah launched on Veterans’ Day 2015 in a church basement in downtown Portland. The organization’s founder and director, Chris Aiosa, a veteran himself, knew that veterans were 2.5 times more likely than any other group to experience what Do Good Multnomah calls houselessness. More than 500 veterans in Multnomah and Clackamas counties lack permanent homes. Do Good Multnomah serves over 70% of them in its shelters and transitional housing.

Anyone who served in the armed forces is eligible to a warm night’s sleep in one of the organization’s emergency shelters and to work toward transitional and eventually permanent housing.

Do Good Multnomah operates on the belief that veterans can face their problems more easily when they have

housing. The organization also has what it calls low-barrier acceptance into any of its five emergency shelters, defining low-barrier as “meeting people where they are.” Veterans may need overnight shelter during a bitterly cold snap, or in any season as a place to get a better and safer night’s sleep than on the street. Some simply need a place to leave their belongings temporarily as well. Some groups offering shelter have many more rules, with impossibly high bars.

When someone begins to think about eventually moving on from the shelter into transitional and then permanent housing, Do Good Multnomah is there to make progress less daunting. The key: The veteran and the organization’s being ready together. As a successfully housed veteran says on Do Good Multnomah’s website, “But you’ve gotta want it.”

At that point the participant — not termed client or patient or visitor — is assigned a one-on-one case manager. The two meet at least once a week with a customized plan. The participant may need encouragement in a drug treatment program or may be missing important paperwork such as a birth certificate or documents from the armed services or more. Mental health counseling can be arranged.

Persistence is crucial here. The case manager and participant together build trust to overcome the participant’s experiences on the streets, exposed to crime, violence and disrespect.

(Continued on next page)



Photo: Robert French

A hooded man sits on a bench.

(Continued from previous page)

The case manager encourages the participant to build on strengths.

Do Good Multnomah's levels of housing allow a veteran to focus on necessary changes and steps forward. This may take a long time. When the participant and staff feel it's time, the participant can move from the shelter to temporary housing.

Each of the two transitional housing pods, one in St. Johns and one in Clackamas, consists of 19 single-person tiny houses. Shared kitchens, showers and social services are onsite. Photos of the facilities show blooming flower pots on porches, hanging baskets, picnic tables and greenery. At the Clackamas site a neighboring business built a putting green. The Junior ROTC members lowered and retired a tattered POW flag and installed a new one.

Experience has shown the case managers that transition to these little dwellings, where the participant is unaccustomed to being alone so much more of the time, has proven difficult if not impossible for some: the quiet, thoughts and feelings that are no longer drowned out; the past struggles with mental health, PTSD, addiction. Sometimes being this far in the program is harder to maintain than getting there in the first place. A participant can stay in transitional housing for up to 24 months.

The case manager's connection and support can ease the participant's doubts about not only going forward but also being where he is right now. If one step back, try two steps forward. Case managers are available 24/7.

Do Good Multnomah has 175-185 staff members, among them social workers and people interested in that career.

Others are on the housing access team.

Some staff are veterans who have been through the organization's program as participants. One case manager, a veteran, says, "A lot of veterans don't want to talk to anybody else but a veteran." Each member of the staff earns a livable wage with subsidized health care and retirement options.

When Covid-19 meant distancing, Do Good Multnomah was able to move some participants into motels. The organization expects to make these places a permanent part of its options.

These facilities have also housed, short term, the man who had nowhere to go while the boat he lived on was being repaired and the woman who arrived one day at Do Good Multnomah's headquarters unannounced, with lots of stuff but no ID and no income. Quickly, she and a case manager worked to get what she needed including a

permanent place to live.

When a participant has built strength upon strength and is ready to move into permanent housing, Do Good Multnomah has affordable apartments in three buildings: Breitung, in northeast Portland, with fruit and vegetable gardens, colorful exterior walls and meeting spaces; Findlay Commons, in southeast Portland, which was finished in December of 2021; and Clayton Mohr in Oregon City. Staff are always on site and available for counseling and problem solving and especially for congratulatory high-fives.

Chris Aiosa says that he won't stop until all houseless veterans are served and on their way off the streets. Even in the face of Covid-19, the organization's 2021 annual report showed impressive numbers on every score. Ninety percent of participants in permanent housing are still in it 12 months later. Emergency shelters opened to anyone who needed them in those extraordinary times of fire, ice storm and heat-wave. Over 100,000 meals were served in 2021.

The Joint Office of Homeless Services, Do Good's partner, provides a housing bond and more than 90% of Do Good Multnomah's funding to operate outreach and direct services in a wider circle of need. Reflecting this, at some point the organization will be rebranded Do Good Northwest.

The following numbers demonstrate Do Good Multnomah's success. A veteran living on the streets costs taxpayers \$35,578 annually in hospital stays, mental health interventions and incarcerations. The cost of getting a veteran into permanent housing is \$12,800.

More important, as a country we repair a life and repay a debt to veterans. •



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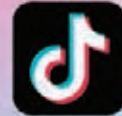
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Photo: Ron Mendonca

Lynne DeVries

“Can you tell me how to get
How to get to Sesame Street?”

Remember that catchy tune? One resident of Mirabella Portland can certainly tell you how to get to Sesame Street. Lynne DeVries worked at the Children’s Television Workshop (CTW), creators of Sesame Street and other shows for children, for more than 15 years.

Resident Profile:

Lynne DeVries From Wall Street to Sesame Street

By PAMELA LINDHOLM-LEVY

But first we need to go with her to another street: Wall Street.

What’s a girl to do after high school and a ho-hum two-year college experience at Mary Washington in the mid-’60s? Go to Katherine Gibbs school in New York and learn to be a secretary, of course. Then sequentially become one at Merrill Lynch; Kidder, Peabody; and Citibank, with an interlude at Salomon Brothers trading floor. “A place of split-second decisions involving high stakes and unrelenting tension,” Lynne recalls, and also says “The atmosphere was rather like a men’s locker room at half time.”

She left.

At Citibank, rather than sitting at a typewriter, she trained as a liaison with the bank’s corporate clients. The men weren’t too sure about this new world where women were more than secretaries.

They adjusted. Lynne’s territory was Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Delaware. One of her assignments was The Hershey Company.

After three years at Citibank she got married.

Lynne thought she would lead a sort of House Beautiful/Martha Stewart life, but it really wasn’t “her.” After three months, she went to work part-time at CTW answering fan mail. The responsibilities soon expanded into taking VIP families to the Sesame Street set. Back to full time, Lynne became manager of station relations, traveling to meet with public

broadcasting counterparts around the country. She created the first premium, an incentive for donating to a station.

One day the founder of CTW, Joan Ganz Cooney, asked Lynne whether she had ever done any public speaking. Lynne, who had never done such a thing, fudged and said yes. Cooney asked Lynne to take her place when Sesame Street received an award at the annual meeting of the National Theater Association in Washington, D.C. Cooney was unable to give the keynote speech.

Lynne was terrified. A stutterer, she was going to challenge herself to speak before hundreds of people, practicing all the tricks she knew to smooth out the words.

She did and received a standing ovation. Building on this success she became a regular stand-in for Cooney.

Other assignments in Lynne’s years at CTW included developing workshops and materials for teachers of reading. She was director of employee relations for 15 months, a job she says she had a love-hate relationship with.

Lynne’s daughter was born during these years. Home was now in New Jersey. Even though Lynne’s mother happily provided child care, the commute cut into Lynne’s day so much that she said a bittersweet goodbye to Big Bird, Oscar the Grouch and the other characters and their human handlers.

Closer to home was St. Barnabas Hospital, for which Lynne did myriad tasks such as creating and producing a weekly medical information series on local TV as well as an in-house entertainment and health information network for patients. She was also deeply involved in fundraising for the hospital.

Always in tune with her home community, Lynne volunteered for groups as diverse as her town planning board to a phlebotomy clinic at New York Hospital in her early years in the city, hoping it would cure her fear of needles. “It didn’t,” she admits.

But there is more, much more. In New Jersey she was a board member of Planned Parenthood and a group supporting a battered women’s shelter. In Portland she was president of Elders in Action for one term. At the Oregon Food Bank she taught cooking and nutrition to women receiving food stamps.

Currently she belongs to the philanthropy 99 Girlfriends, which supports special projects of local non-profits. Annually the 99 Girlfriends, of which there are actually 450, award \$90,000 each to five non-profits from the hundreds that apply. Lynne is passionate about this group and continues to be active in it.

Lynne worked on a unique project in Cathedral City, California. An all-women crew built a house for Habitat for Humanity. In one week. City inspectors came at the end of each day to check the work. Lynne says, “They said they’d never seen a cleaner workplace or been in one

(Continued on next page)



Lynne DeVries, with Antarctica in the background.

Lynne moved to Portland in 1996, became a Palm Springs snowbird in 2011, and lived there full time from 2016 until her move to Mirabella in October 2020. As she saw it being built, she knew it would be the best choice for her. She was right. She loves the collection of talented and high-achieving people here.

Daughter Margot and grandchildren Charlie and Sydney aren't too far away in the Bay Area.

She plunged into fund-raising after meeting Polly Grose, who asked her to head the 2021 employee scholarship funding effort. Valentine cookies were the hook. Lynne went on to lead the successful Employee Appreciation Fund committee as well.

Moving on, Lynne puts her energy into the education group of 99 Girlfriends, knowing that there are many causes that would welcome her helping hands. •

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with no swearing."

The inspectors never told them to redo anything. Her take-home from the project was less hammer-and-nails skills than a silent motivator not to be afraid to take on something she knew nothing about. Included in this list would be learning to scuba dive in the ice cold training pool which had been a New Jersey stone quarry.

When Lynne met a personal coach she determined to become one. "I wish I had done this years ago," she says. She attended in-person seminars and had phone sessions with certified coaches for a year. Upon completion and certification in 1998, she opened her own business named High Spirits. Clients came from all over — not literally, but by phone. Lynne still carries this work on, finding the tenets helpful.

Travel has touched 67 countries and all the continents including 10 days in Antarctica and almost a month on the Trans-Siberian Railway. This summer she and one sister will wrap up their visits to all the presidential libraries, and the three sisters will take their annual trip together.



"It's absurd to think it won't get warm enough to colonize. That would require them to work together."

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Covid Costs PRS

By ED PARKER



Photo: Courtesy of PRS

Eric Sholty, CEO Pacific Retirement Services

Pacific Retirement Services (PRS), Mirabella Portland's non-profit parent company, is better positioned than stand-alone retirement communities to strengthen its communities as they recover from the Covid pandemic, Eric Sholty, its chief executive officer, told 3550.

"I am excited, energized and engaged by our current strategic planning process. We are focused on the future and are well-positioned for smart growth," he said.

Despite being hit hard financially by the Covid pandemic, PRS had better financial reserves and a stronger management team than most retirement communities, Eric said. He praised the PRS management team, and particularly singled out Chief Healthcare Officer Debbie Rayburn for her role in keeping most retirement community residents safe from Covid.

The Medford-based Oregon company with operations in six states received close to \$15 million in federal reimbursement of Covid-related costs, but that covered only a portion of the lost revenues and additional expenses caused by the pandemic.

Eric declined to provide a specific dollar figure for Covid-related losses, but said it was "multi-multi-millions of dollars."

Mirabella Portland losses were less than other PRS communities that have more vacant independent living apartments and steeper revenue losses in their skilled nursing facilities, Eric told 3550.

With about \$260 million in annual revenues and strong

financial reserves, the non-profit organization was able to weather the Covid storm better than many other retirement communities. Stand-alone retirement communities without the corporate staff and resources of PRS had worse health and financial outcomes, Eric said.

The top current priority for PRS is staffing, Eric said. Finding healthcare staff for skilled nursing, memory care and assisted living units, a national problem, affects all PRS facilities. Lost revenues in healthcare facilities because of insufficient staff to accept patients are a major component of Covid losses.

Mirabella Portland is not alone in having difficulty recruiting and retaining staff for a variety of healthcare and other positions. Labor costs are certain to increase, but PRS facilities will also focus more attention on adjusting benefits, working conditions and job satisfaction measures.

He said that PRS communities are particularly well-positioned to deal with any future Covid surges or complications.

Eric's longer-term focus is to grow PRS because the larger organizations are more able to manage future risks. The newest PRS facility is Mirabella at ASU (Arizona State University). Before Covid hit, PRS was in discussions with eight other universities about the possibility of adding retirement communities to their campuses, he said. The pandemic put those discussions on indefinite hold.

PRS is engaging its staff and community members in a strategic planning process to develop specific directions and action plans for what Eric calls "smart growth." He says the plan should pay attention to what future retirement residents will want "10 to 50 years from now."

Eric said that some current residents may resist change, but he must introduce changes that will attract future residents. He pointed out that protecting current residents' refundable entrance fees requires making whatever changes will be needed to attract future residents.

He reminded 3550 that PRS is not exclusively focused on meeting the needs of affluent seniors. It also manages 1,100 units in 25 affordable housing communities, one of which includes children.

When asked about the difficulty a non-profit organization has in raising the financial capital needed for growth, Eric commented that PRS has a for-profit subsidiary company that manages retirement communities that were established as for-profit organizations. He reassured 3550 that PRS, the parent organization, has no plans or intentions to ever convert from its non-profit status to a for-profit organization.

"That is not who we are," he said. •



Photo: Robert French

Mary Mace

Making a fresh start in Portland from her hometown of Bend, Mary Mace was looking for a position in her area of expertise, housekeeping.

"I thought I was going to an interview at a residential cleaning business," she remembers. "Instead, here was this beautiful building and the job that met my dream of being a boss who could treat her staff with empathy, reasoning and appreciation."

Staff Profile:

Mary Mace Relationships Builder

By PRISCILLA COWELL

Much to her surprise, at the conclusion of her interview with Rick Thompson, Mirabella's assistant director of facility services, she found herself lead housekeeper at Mirabella.

After only three months in the position, Mary describes her job as "building relationships, scheduling housekeepers and assigning them to apartments, handling complaints and ordering supplies." She expects to assume additional responsibilities as she continues to work with Rick.

She wants residents to call her right away about problems so they can solve them together. Residents are also welcome to call her with compliments about their housekeeper, which she will pass on to administration for the employee's file.

Her aim is that residents feel heard, not left out. Before the start of each month she phones or fires off an email to each apartment with the dates, time and name of the housekeeper for the upcoming month. "I also remind residents by phone the day before housekeeping. It makes the days go more smoothly," Mary adds.

"If you need to change your housekeeper or time slot, please let me know," she urges residents. "All apartments are scheduled for the same amount of time, 60-75 minutes, except for the double apartments, which get double time. Please call me if you have any extra task or deep-cleaning need so I can leave a note for your housekeeper to give it special attention."

Mary no longer asks residents to fill out a survey after housekeeping. She points out that Mirabella provides an assortment of cleaning products for staff to use, but through

their own experience they may find something that works best for them. If residents don't like the way something looks after cleaning, they can call her and she may recommend a different approach for their housekeeper to use.

She offers two bits of advice to improve residents' housekeeping. First, make sure you have signed a permission form for housekeepers to enter your apartment if you are not there. "If a housekeeper comes to an apartment to clean and cannot enter, the resident loses that time. The forms are available from the concierge or from me and remain in effect unless you change them," says Mary." Second, remove clutter on surfaces and shelves to allow for a more detailed cleaning job."

Growing up in Bend with her parents and sister, Mary graduated from Bend High School. "At the time I found Bend boring and thought it lacked options," she remembers, "but later I realized how fortunate I was to live in such a beautiful place, with mountains in every direction."

She attended classes at University of Oregon and Oregon State. Her ambition now is to earn more credits and combine them for a bachelor of arts degree in psychology. She loves people and would like to do research in developmental psychology, with a special interest in the study of anxiety.

Attending live music concerts of all types is one of Mary's favorite pastimes. She loves the energy. But personal growth is her major hobby. She says, "I lean into it on a daily basis."

Mary's parents' 45-year marriage is a model for her. "I am still looking for that kind of marriage," she says with a smile.

She is proud of her 18-year old son Marcus, who has recently entered a welding internship. She describes him as a humble and successful young man.

"I appreciated the gracious flexibility of Mirabella residents during the pandemic."

She has enjoyed traveling in the United States and Mexico; her father once took her along on a work trip to Chile, where he went to repair large machinery.

Mary shares a house in a Portland suburb with four other women. "It has been a good experience for me as we have learned to compromise, help each other and grow." She goes to the gym six days a week to use the treadmill and

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practice yoga. "I feel mental balance and clarity after my workout," she says. "Yoga brings me inner peace."

During the pandemic, Mary says, she learned to appreciate the gracious flexibility of Mirabella residents, who had only one housekeeping time in January and one in February. "I had to be very cautious about the health of my housekeepers, even if short-handed, sometimes requiring them to take long quarantine periods."

Mary is working on learning the names of Mirabella residents. She doesn't know them all yet, but wants residents to know how important they are to her.

The lead housekeeper would like to see the time allotted to clean each apartment expanded to two hours. When fully staffed, 11 housekeepers clean five apartments each day, Monday through Friday, with one hour total for breaks and lunch.

"It is hard work," Mary says, "and I appreciate all that the housekeepers do. They are a great group of women." •

Two Poems

By **TERRI HOPKINS**

She can't take criticism. Well, perhaps the occasional so-called constructive criticism. However, she really can't take criticism, and certainly not the criticism that she can't take criticism.

— • —

First he took the blue marker and drew Mickey Mouse — head, torso, legs and feet; no arms, no ears. Added a blue sun showering electricity, which turned into jagged teeth. Switched to orange for the lightning, which struck Micky on the head, ran down his neck, then filled up the inside of his body from the bottom up, eventually coming out of his mouth. He explained that was Mickey's super power — blowing lightning out of his mouth. The end.

Portland Diary

By **NANCY MOSS**

The Wisdom of Dogs

Out in the dog run, a man is throwing a Frisbee to his golden retriever. Everything about the dog's motion — running out, leaping, sitting and waiting for him with tail wagging, retrieving — is joyous.

Then I remember: dogs don't know about Covid.

II

A man stands at the outer gate of the dog run, a black and white border-collie-looking dog by his side. The dog's body practically vibrates with eagerness: let me inside! The man passes the first gate and moves to the second. Entering that, the dog explodes with energy, racing out and then turning at what he judges to be the right spot for an expected tennis ball toss.

The man throws. The dog catches it in the air and races back, dropping it once or twice for what looks like the joy of catching it again.

I ask myself if I ever want anything so badly, wait so eagerly; I must work on that.

III

Humans

I am in Ovation Coffee Shop waiting for my veggie panini when two women enter. One is white-haired and uses a walker; the other looks slightly younger. They approach the counter, and the woman with the walker hands the server standing behind it a paper bag. They then move off to a table. Two of the young servers huddle at one side and open the paper bag, which contains a card and a net bag of foil-wrapped candies.

At their table the women have opened their laptops and are deep in concentration. There is no food or drink on the table.

I have witnessed a transaction. •

An Adventure in Digital Art During Covid

We begin our journey with a normal portrait and progress to more and more adventurous and abstract renditions. I have used many different blurs, filters, layers, blend modes and lighting to create the various styles of pictures in this series. I have enjoyed the journey through these various techniques and hope that you enjoy the results of my work.

Ron Mendonca



At the Louvre



Demure



Pensive



Above it All



Don't Cross Me



What is Going On



Wondering



Frozen



Shattered



Are you coming in?



Eensy Weensy Spider



Governess



Illumination



What did you say?



Thoughtful Memories



Breaking out of Covid

Dining Services: Staffing Remains Tight

By NANCY MOSS



Photo: Richard Mounts

Director of Dining Services Sean Eveland (SE) has been wearing many hats as, lacking both an executive chef and dining room managers for Aria and the Bistro, Mirabella struggles to fill those positions. I caught Sean in his office for the following interview:

NM: How did you get into the food business?

SE: The summer I was 21, I didn't have a job during summer break. My roommate said, "Hey, we're hiring a dishwasher." I moved up from that to prep cook and line cook. I've done just about everything in the kitchen.

NM: How much leeway do you have in varying Mirabella's pre-set, five-week cycle of menus? I'm remembering the Bistro's pre-Covid weekly specials — like the fried oyster po-boy sandwich — that gave a little extra sparkle to our life.

SE: The cycle menus originated right here at Mirabella. Chef Anthony and I built them around nutrition and around good food. They meet the stringent dietary standards of the health-care floor. I have a huge database of recipes. A dietician looks at it to make sure we're hitting our benchmarks. We have a lot of freedom. We'll get back to Bistro specials once staffing improves. Staffing is a problem, not just in hospitality,

not just in retirement communities. It's hitting every aspect of the work force.

NM: I've been glad to see more vegetarian and vegan specials, including the weekly vegan dish. The stuffed sweet potato was delicious.

SE: Thanks. I started the weekly vegan special.

NM: How should new residents with allergies make sure they are getting food they can eat? My friend with allergies has appreciated your listing the ingredients of marinades.

SE: They should talk to me and to the executive chef about options. They should mention their situation to their servers so it goes on the ticket. We want to work with people.

NM: What quality control do you have? Is there a check on the size of portions in the box? I have gotten a Caesar salad that filled the whole box and a few that took up less than half, with one anchovy.

SE: We have portion control but there is room for improvement. If there's a problem, you should call the dining room for a replacement. Our policy is: if something is wrong, we will fix it.

NM: Will the Terrace roof garden be providing fresh veggies this year? I'm thinking of homegrown tomatoes in caprese salad.

SE: That's not my priority right now; I don't have dining room managers and enough staff. New managers don't know our system and will have to be trained. We can't do everything; it's going to take time. We've all struggled in the last two years; we need to remember that. We're missing one-on-one time we should have. It's a different scenario.

NM: If you could wave a magic wand and make one change in food service here, what would it be?

SE: Staff!

When — if — Mirabella holds another gala, with delicious, bite-sized portions, maybe one of Sean's ice carvings will grace it. Learned at culinary school and carved from a 300-pound block of ice, sculptures would add a grace note hard to achieve in our present time.

Note: As 3550 goes to press, Mirabella has hired an executive chef.

Chronic Pain: It's All in Your Head

By RITA BRICKMAN EFFROS



We can all point to the part of our body that hurts when we are in pain, but it turns out that we are totally wrong. All pain is actually felt in the brain.

The strongest evidence that pain does not live in our body is the so-called phantom limb phenomenon. People who have lost a limb, due to accident or amputation, often continue to feel severe pain in the absent limb for many years.

There are two types of pain. Acute pain is the body's early warning system of danger. There are individuals who lack normal pain receptors in their skin, so that they cannot perceive the acute pain, for example, from extreme heat or cold. This rare genetic condition is, not surprisingly, associated with a shorter lifespan.

Acute pain begins suddenly and is usually sharp in quality. It might have a variety of causes, such as surgery, a broken bone or muscle strain. The pain might be mild and transitory, or severe and lasting for months, but it disappears when the underlying cause has been treated or has healed.

Chronic pain is a totally different situation. It can last for

years and affects more than 100 million Americans — at a cost of \$635 billion a year.

Indeed, we are in the midst of an epidemic of chronic pain. The societal burden of chronic pain and its undertreatment suggest that this condition is a serious public health problem.

More people in the U.S. are affected by chronic pain than by stroke, diabetes, heart disease and cancer combined. Unfortunately, most health professionals receive little or no education on the management of chronic pain.

Pharmacological approaches to treat chronic pain use various medications that target the pain receptors in our brain. And yet, the pain persists because chronic pain results from a constellation of interactions between biology, psychology and sociology.

By only treating the biological aspects of pain, most pain management approaches miss two-thirds of the problem. But very few professionals in the U.S. approach the treatment of pain through the biopsychosocial lens.

We are more familiar with the biological domain of chronic pain, which relates to tissue damage, inflammation, genetics, etc. Yet, our psychological state — thoughts, anxiety, memories of previous bouts of similar pain — has a significant impact on our perception of pain.

In addition to the biological and psychological facets of pain, a host of social/sociological factors play a key role. Lack of support from friends and family, social isolation, access to care, socioeconomic status, culture and lifestyle also play a key role in chronic pain.

Many parts of the brain are involved with the perception of pain. But 100% of the sensory signals of pain filter first through the so-called limbic system, the emotional center of the brain.

Our perception of pain is also affected by previous experience with pain or physical trauma. The hippocampus is the key brain region involved in memory. It turns out that there is a specific region in the hippocampus involved in pain memory.

One can envision a 'pain dial', analogous to the volume control on our car radio. The pain volume can be both increased and decreased, depending on our emotional state. This may explain why kissing an "owie" really helps. But the kissing may also have a positive effect due the fact that touch messages reach the brain faster than pain messages.

Touch and massage therapy can decrease chronic pain in several clinical situations. Individuals with fibromyalgia and cancer patients show significant reduction in pain following such treatments.

Dr. Tiffany Field directs the Touch Research Institute at the University of Miami School of Medicine. Her research has

Chronic pain is one of the most common health conditions of older adults.

shown that massage therapy is effective in various medical and psychological conditions, including pain syndromes.

For the first time in four decades, the International Association for the Study of Pain has updated its definition of chronic pain. It now incorporates the three domains of biology, psychology and sociology.

The biopsychosocial understanding of pain requires addressing pain through all three domains. Professor Rachel Zoffness, at University of California San Francisco, (UCSF) specializes in using the multidisciplinary approach to

treatment of pain.

Zoffness suggests that one way to treat pain is based on techniques already proven successful for anxiety, sleep disorders and family dysfunction. The approach, known as cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), focuses on teaching the patient specific skills.

The first step in this treatment plan is to try to modify the patient's behavior, often the easiest thing to change. Dr. Zoffness describes of her experience treating a teenage patient who had such severe chronic pain that he had been bedridden for several years.

The patient was first given the simple task of standing outside in the sunlight for a few minutes each day. The next step was a daily walk to the mailbox. After three months, he was jogging around the block. And after a series of incrementally small behavioral changes, the young man eventually returned to high school. In this situation, the CBT probably affected both physical and mental issues.

Whereas pain is a universal phenomenon, the response to pain is unique to each individual. Nonetheless, there are categories of people who seems to be more sensitive to pain. Scientists have identified three types of individuals, using floral analogies.

Orchids (31%) are highly sensitive to pain. Dandelions (29%) have the lowest sensitivity, and Tulips (40%) have medium sensitivity.

Redheads are considered Orchids, based on their high pain sensitivity. In fact, they require increased amounts of anesthesia during surgery. Interestingly, redheads also require lower doses of opioid painkillers. Research on mice has identified a specific gene that may explain both phenomena.

Females are generally more sensitive to pain than males. However, the pain experienced during childbirth seems to be unique in that it can be severe but often forgotten. If that were not the case, our species might have disappeared long ago.

The reason that women forget the pain of childbirth relates to a host of hormones secreted at the time of birth. The combination of oxytocin, dopamine, endorphins and serotonin is believed to contribute to the positive memories of childbirth, even when it was accompanied by extreme pain.

Many factors contribute to the current focus on pharmacological approaches to treating pain. First, most people want a quick fix for their suffering. Second, the mere mention of a psychological component is generally met by patients with fear of being stigmatized and not being believed.

Chronic pain is one of the most common health conditions of older adults. Whether back, neck or knees, it can decrease mobility, increase anxiety/depression and disrupt family and social relationships.

The common belief that pain is an integral part of aging is totally incorrect. It is true that certain diseases, such as osteo-

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arthritis and rheumatoid arthritis, may become more severe as one ages. But these diseases do not occur in all old persons, and they are not intrinsic to the process of aging itself.

Whereas chronic pain is not a necessary part of aging, if untreated it can actually have an effect on aging. A study on patients with chronic pain from fibromyalgia showed that the combination of high pain level and depression correlated with shortened telomere length — a measure of biological aging.

An estimated 100 million American adults endure pain day in and day out. In recent years, well-meaning medical efforts to control pain have produced a secondary health crisis: widespread opioid addiction and a quadrupling of overdose deaths from prescription opioids since 1999.

In 2011, the main medication prescribed in the U.S. was the opioid hydrocodone. This class of medication has the effect of reducing both pain and the drive to breathe, explaining the high level of accidental deaths. Indeed, one American dies from accidental overdose every 19 minutes — far greater than the rate of deaths from car accidents.

This unfortunate outcome is due to many complex factors. Anecdotal evidence that may provide some insight emerges from comparison of the U.S. to a country with a totally different chronic pain approach and outcome. Dr. Michael Jones worked for many years as an emergency room physician in the U.S. but then moved to New Zealand.

Americans and New Zealanders have similar levels of disease and injuries. But Dr. Jones found that very few of his patients requested pain medication. He notes that during three years in New Zealand he wrote the same number of opiate prescriptions as he had during three shifts in the U.S.

Clearly, the vast difference in how chronic pain is viewed is not because New Zealanders are a different breed of humans. Jones posits that a culture of toughness and patience may play a role here. In addition, health policies in New

Zealand may make it more cumbersome for doctors to prescribe opioid medication.

Increased understanding of the complex nature of chronic pain is beginning to have a positive outcome here in the U.S. One effective approach involves expansion of health professional education regarding the biopsychosocial approach to pain treatment.

Dr. Zoffness undertook a six-session pain-training course for physicians at UCSF. The result was that 90% of the attendees reported that it changed the way they treated chronic pain in their patients.

Education of health professionals is only part of the solution. Controlling the epidemic of chronic pain will also require major societal changes in treatment approaches. Finally, patients themselves should be motivated to search for treatments that incorporate more than just the biological aspects of their pain. •

Virtual Reality (V.R.) is an emerging non-pharmacological form of therapy for the treatment of chronic pain. This unlikely tool for solving the problem of intractable pain is growing rapidly in use and economic investment. Unlike most drugs, V.R. has rare and mostly minor side effects, such as nausea and motion sickness. Researchers view its potential to help with a vast array of situations, including not only pain, but also anxiety and depression. And, late last year, the Food and Drug Administration authorized the first V.R. product to be marketed for the treatment of chronic pain.

Read more about this topic here:

nytimes.com/2022/04/26/magazine/virtual-reality-chronic-pain

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Looking for Gold in the Yukon

By ED PARKER

Today this story would be called, "How I helped destroy Paradise Hill," a once beautiful spot not far from Dawson City in the Klondike region of Canada's Yukon Territory. From a 1953 perspective, it was my soft life as a Yukon gold miner.

A Yukon Sourdough is someone who has seen the spring ice breakup on the Yukon River. Since the river was the only way to get there, the term implies that person survived a Yukon winter.

My claim to being a Sourdough rests on flying into Dawson City before spring breakup and seeing the last snowstorm of one winter and the first snowstorm of the next. I had a summer job working as a laborer for the Yukon Consolidated Gold Corporation.

That required joining the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers Union, a detail I forgot to mention in my application for immigration to the U.S. because then-Sen. Joseph McCarthy had publicly called members of that union communists.

The job paid \$1.05 (Canadian) per hour, but we worked seven days a week all summer and got overtime pay. Work went on around the clock in the land of the midnight sun. Sometimes we would work two eight-hour shifts in the same day.

In the Klondike, gold is alluvial, meaning spread by water. An original source, a vein of ore, was never found. In the 1898 gold rush, miners found gold in a mine dug on top of Paradise Hill.

In 1953, our job was to wash most of the hill down through wooden sluice boxes with corrugated metal plates in the bottom of the boxes to collect the heavier gold. The rest of the hillside washed over to become ugly piles of dirt and gravel, called tailings, near the creek at the bottom of the hill.

The hard part, both for us and the original miners, was the land was permafrost, dirt and ancient vegetation that had



been frozen solid for eons. Only the top few inches thawed during the Yukon summer. The original gold miners used fires to thaw the ground enough to dig it out. We used industrial hoses with 60 pounds per square inch of water pressure to wash the sun-thawed soil down the sluice boxes, working our way back and forth across the hill as the summer thaw continued.

For a couple of weeks, I did the hardest physical work I have ever done, using a pick and shovel to dig holes needed to put in the anchors for a pipeline to get the water up the hill.

The hard but mindless work made me think of ways to get easier work. I had already won a job driving a three-ton truck to take the crew from the bunkhouse to and from the worksite. That gave me an extra hour of pay each day.

My escape from a potential long summer of hard physical labor took another route. Once the pipeline was built, I got a job as pump-house attendant. I had to keep the pump fueled and oiled, fix any problems that occurred and walk the pipeline once an hour to check for leaks.

It was an indoor job. The warmest and most comfortable place to sit was on top of the pump. I could hear any change in the sound of the pump and feel any change in the vibration that required my attention. I spent the rest of my working summer reading books in the pump house.

It sure beat doing physical labor.

I loved the beautiful scenery and didn't pay much attention to how I was destroying it. At one point the entire sky from horizon to horizon was covered with beautiful, pulsating northern lights.

I am still caught in the "Spell of the Yukon," a Robert Service poem written during the original Gold Rush. I plan to visit again during this year's summer solstice. •

City of Bridges

By PETE SWAN



Photo: Stanley Berman

St. Johns Bridge Gothic arch

Portland, the Rose City, could also be called the City of Bridges. Not counting bridges strictly for railroad traffic, it has 11 bridges crossing the Willamette River. The interstate bridges over the Columbia add two more. A look at the two bridges that bookend our stretch of the Willamette follows.

The most beautiful one is the St. Johns Bridge connecting the Linnton neighborhood on the southwest and St. Johns neighborhood on the northeast. Of the engineering classifications for bridges, St. Johns is a suspension bridge.

This graceful design features two tall towers that support two sets of large — 17-inch-diameter — braided cables running from an anchor point on shore and rising to the nearest tower before swooping down to the mid-point of the center span and then rising again to the further tower and back to the far anchor point. Each cable contains 91 twisted strands inside.

The southwest anchor is a wedge-shaped tunnel dug 80 feet into the basalt rock and filled with concrete. The northeast anchor measures 115 feet by 91 feet, looks like a windowless two-story building and is filled with 12,500 cubic yards of concrete.

Each of the two main towers rests on a massive concrete pier rising out of the riverbed and sunk into it to depths of 25 and 50 feet.

The bridge is called a suspension bridge because hanging down from those two main cables and spaced every 38 ½ feet are smaller, vertical cables that suspend the roadway. There are also 10 approach spans on the northeast end.

The bridge was designed by a famous bridge engineer from New York, David Steinman. He chose Gothic arches as the signature shape of the openings in the towers; the Gothic-arch theme repeats in the other 10 piers for the approach spans. The public park under the northeast approach to the



Photo: Slayden.com

Sellwood roadway ready to be slid over to the bents

bridge is called Cathedral Park for the distinctive pattern of the tower arches. Steinman selected the “verde green” paint color that is still used today.

When completed, the bridge was the longest suspension bridge west of Detroit. The beacons on top of the two towers are 401 feet above the river. The center span is 1,207 feet long, and the overall length is 3,834 feet. The deck (roadway) is underpinned by a structural design featuring equilateral triangles (a Warren truss) and is 50 feet wide including two five-foot-wide sidewalks. It sits 205 feet above the water.

Construction commenced on Sept. 3, 1929, and the bridge opened on June 13, 1931.

The construction was financed with a \$4.25 million bond; during the Great Depression interest rates were relatively manageable. The total cost was calculated at \$7.69 million, reportedly \$1 million under budget. An upgrade made from March 2003 through September 2006 cost \$38 million.

You may have supposed that there was religious significance to the naming of the town of St. Johns. However, some local historians speak of a beloved man, James John, who ran a general store in Linnton, rowed his boat carrying people across the river and gave meals to passing hobos. John’s store and ferry business prospered.

James John died in 1886 and his will included land for a public school in what is now St. Johns. His sister and niece contested the will, and it was not until 1897 that the estate was allowed to sell property, with some of the proceeds to be used to procure land where the town eventually built, in 1911, James John High School. The school closed in 1923.

The southern bookend is the Sellwood Bridge, owned

and maintained by Multnomah County. The original bridge opened for traffic in early 1925 at a cost of \$541,000. The bridge has an arch-and-deck design.

The bridge’s three arches span 1,275 feet, and the approaches add another 700 feet. Steel in the east and west approaches was recycled from an earlier use in a 1894 version of the Burnside Bridge. As built, the Sellwood roadway was only 24 feet wide, with only one sidewalk.

Aside from seismic concerns, the discovery of cracks in the piers led to reducing the allowed vehicle weight from 32 tons to 10 tons; that required the diversion of 1,400 daily bus and truck trips. Despite the diversion, 30,000 other vehicles crossed the bridge each day.

Clearly, it was time to rebuild the bridge. A prominent San Francisco bridge-designing firm, T.Y. Lin International, did the engineering. Safdie Rabines from San Diego was the project architect. In a joint venture, an Oregon company, Slayden Construction of Stayton and Sundt of Tempe, Ariz., became the general contractor.

The new design is wider with sidewalks and bike lanes on both sides. The bridge, compliant with modern seismic standards, can carry vehicles weighing up to 40 tons, including fire trucks and a possible future streetcar.

Causing 30,000 daily trips to be diverted would not only have added to the time and cost of travel, it would have severely worsened congestion to the north. The ideal solution was to allow traffic in both directions to continue, and still rebuild the bridge. This is where a nifty piece of modern bridge construction arose. If the roadway could be “translated” or shifted slightly to the north to allow traffic to bypass the construction — what railroaders would call a “shoofly” — the solution could be achieved.

Omega-Morgan (O/M), with offices in Seattle, Hillsboro and Boise, was chosen as the sub-contractor for this delicate process. O/M chose a jack-and-slide technique previously used in shifting large barges built in the Port of Portland.

The section to be translated was 1,100 feet long and weighed 3,400 tons. A key factor was that the truss supporting the roadway was continuous i.e. welded together with no expansion joints or “hinges” — and thus rigid for its entire length. It was believed to be the longest such structure in the United States.

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Omega's technique required raising the roadway and its supporting truss off the bearing points on all five piers, three over the river and one at each end ashore. Since girders for each edge north and south of the roadway rested on steel bearing points, that meant 10 such points.

Another subcontractor had fabricated and installed five temporary steel piers or bents to the north; the bents had the exact same spacing as the existing piers. Then translation beams running north and south were attached to the original concrete piers and to the bents. U-shaped track beams — with Teflon pads affixed to the inside of the "U" — were placed above the translation beams.

Finally, "skid beams" (four at each pier) were seated in the U-shaped tracks. Each skid beam supported two vertically oriented hydraulic jacks, each with 150-ton lifting capacity. Therefore, a total of 40 (4 x 5 piers x 2) jacks was employed for the lifting phase, raising the truss two inches. Then the raised truss was seated in custom-designed cradles aligned north and south on the skid beams.

The then-elevated truss was then slowly pushed northward by 10 horizontally aligned hydraulic rams. Movement ceased when the truss-plus-roadway was over the new bearing points on the temporary bents. The lifting pressure of the vertical jacks was gently released, and the bridge settled firmly onto its new bearing plates atop the bents.

Due to the geometry of the approach roads, the east end only needed to be shifted 33 feet while the west end had to be translated 66 feet. Because the translation had to

move smoothly across the span's entire length, the different speeds of the pushing rams had to be integrated. A software package developed by Sawyer Systems allowed this to be achieved when coupled with "pressure compensated [hydraulic fluid] flow controls".

The entire translation took only 14 hours once the movement began.

When the repair/reconstruction of the original arches and piers was completed, the process was reversed. The roadway and its truss were translated back to the original position in ready-to-use condition. A second sidewalk was then added, and the temporary bents were removed.

Because the translation maneuver risked straining or distorting the truss (and conceivably also buckling the roadway), the county had a team of analysts at work. The team defined limits as to the maximum deformation (vertical, horizontal or twisting) and used three different measurement methods to monitor the situation in real time. Of course, some degree of east-west elongation was allowed for thermal expansion.

Your reporter thanks Ralph DiCaprio, Omega-Morgan vice president for engineering, for offering helpful information. He supervised Omega's work on the Sellwood project.

The Willamette River, bisecting our city, has two stately bridges as the northernmost and southernmost crossings. Each has its own history, design features and engineering accomplishments.

If you picnic in Cathedral Park or bike on the Springwater Trail, you may now have a better appreciation of those two bridges. •



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Gen. McPeak to Feature on PBS

By NANCY MOSS



Photo courtesy Gen. McPeak

The guys in the squadron, with our overhead supervision. I'm standing next to Col. Bill Creech, to whom I reported as squadron commander. (McPeak standing back row, 2nd from left.)

Mirabella resident Merrill McPeak flew for MISTY, a top-secret program of bombing the Ho Chi Minh trail, in 1968-69. Corey Buchanan of the Pamplin Media Group described MISTY as a "secret, highly skilled squadron that would fly close to the ground in enemy territory," Cambodia and Laos.

How close to the ground? That depended, Merrill says. If you flew at 3,000-4,000 feet, "Nobody's going to hit you." Time elapsing between when the bullet was fired and when it reached its target meant that small-arms fire from the ground would probably miss.

But if the pilot had to circle or stay there, possibly to flag the location of a downed pilot, he had to go lower and "look under the trees," Merrill says.

Going low and fast, 600 miles per hour.

MISTY was dangerous; 30% of the pilots flying for MISTY didn't make it home. Asked what it was like when the North Vietnamese fired at him, in response to his hitting a major

target, Merrill says, "Things slow down." You become deliberate. That happens when things get exciting, he explains.

Since the maximum time in MISTY was four months or 100 missions, Merrill rotated out after 98 missions, most of which took approximately five hours and involved two refueling sessions.

Having seen Air Force procedures up close, Merrill felt that some of them needed to change. He says that "a whole generation of officers saw what needed to be done" as the U.S. Air Force transitioned from bomber pilot to fighter pilot leadership. Later, as U. S. Air Force chief of staff Merrill oversaw some of the needed changes.

Precision-guided munitions, stealth and night-vision capability came into being.

Desert Storm, a war fought for 39 days in the air and four days on the ground, was an "overwhelming victory" resulting from these changes, Merrill says.

PBS will air a documentary on MISTY at a future date. •

When Grandma Wore Combat Boots

By CAROL SCHWARTZ

She came out west with her husband in tow
To fondly watch her grandchildren grow.
Back east a most conservative lifestyle she'd had.
Was this move her new chance to be bad?
Quirky — this new city's reputation.
But she really had no true expectation.
Of how life would be on the left coast of the nation.

Food, fresh, fanciful and delicious
at happy hour prices that rock,
And five great restaurants right on her block
As their waists spread and quickly expanded,
Non-caloric pastimes they swiftly demanded.

In this city where drivers are low on the scale
And cyclists ever hot on your tail
It's safer to walk or public transit to chase
As you whisk off those calories with rain in your face.
And every new storefront you greet,
Studio, eatery, exotic boutique.
Be it Yoga, Pilates or unique variation
Strengthening your core is a must avocation.

Galleries filled with unique forms of art
Flood a jumping urban oasis where many get their start
Jeans, tees, vests, boots all sorts of foot gear:
Nike, Reebok, Adidas some of the names
Which have garnered Portland world-wide fame
And on the streets that you cruise,
Folks display creative piercings and elaborate tattoos
With costumes galore to reveal their persuasion,
No shortage of street folks with unique presentation.
Blue blanket man or his friend of a similar hue
Bring a smile to your face as they come into view
Food carts dot the streets, filling the city with flavors
and multiple, magical aromas to savor.

For fifty years I led the conservative life,
Realtor, teacher, volunteer, mother and wife
Moving to P.D.X.
Shook my most comfortable nest
I let my hair grow long and my curls get strong,
Rarely eat meat, lead with my feet.
Toss those old pantsuits; lose most absolutes;
And wear those funky, ever comfortable, outrageous combat boots.

Expanded TV for Residents

By ED PARKER

More sports and entertainment TV channels, better quality television and a new cable TV box with digital video recording capability are coming to Mirabella residents.

Pacific Retirement Services has signed a bulk contract with Comcast to improve the quality of television signals and expand the number of channels available free to Mirabella residents, says Steve Eichen, PRS Chief Information Officer.

In addition to the basic and digital basic channels now available, all the channels in Comcast's high-definition Ultimate TV line (formerly called Preferred+) will be available after the upgrade of Mirabella's TV transmission equipment and the replacement of cable boxes in resident apartments.

Mirabella's in-house analog standard TV channel 981 will be replaced with two high-definition digital local insertion channels. Exercise programs on the in-house channel will no longer have to be canceled to accommodate the broadcast of resident council meetings or other presentations.

Mirabella residents will not need a contract with Comcast, unless they want to purchase on-demand pay TV services from Comcast.

The schedule for installation is yet to be determined. •



My Contested Icon

By JOHANNA KING

During our trip to Greece in 1985, my husband, Mike, and I rented a squeaky Yugo and drove to the Meteora, where we visited picturesque monasteries tucked among and on top of the hills.

At one, we bought a rather handsome icon painted on wood as a gift for my mother. A label on its back certified, in German and English, that it was a handpainted contemporary item, and that "the export of this icon from Greece is allowed."

In Larissa, before boarding a small commuter plane to Athens we were asked if we had anything to declare.

"No," we said, not thinking the touristy icon required declaration. However, the crew member who checked our luggage did not read either German or English and thought the icon was genuine.

After some rather agitated discussion, the pilot, who did speak English, got out of the cockpit to see what the commotion was about. He looked at the icon and assured us that there was no problem.

Upon our arrival at the Athens airport, however, two uniformed personnel identified Mike, and asked him to follow them. I stayed with him.

After a long walk across the tarmac, we were put in a small room and questioned, mostly in Greek, about the icon. No amount of explanation could convince them that it was an ordinary tourist item and not a precious Greek treasure.

After a rather frightening hour or so, there was a phone call from someone who spoke English. I insisted on speaking with that person, and after some reasonable discussion, I began to shout into the phone and at the two men "guarding" us about just what I thought of Greek hospitality and security.

After my display of rather rude behavior, they decided to let us go — with the icon. We raced as fast as we could to the terminal and took a taxi to the hotel.

In hindsight, a couple of things seem clear. First, the whole episode was designed to extract a bribe from us. The other is that in Greece, shouting is often a perfectly normal way of communicating. Our quiet reasonableness seemed suspicious to them.

I gave the icon to my mother, who loved it and had it blessed by her local priest. It hung on her wall for years. I never wanted to see it again. But when she died, it came back to me like a bad penny. •



Photo: Johanna King



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