

3550





Ed Parker
Co-editor



Jim McGill
President

Are the new Covid virus variants getting you down?
Have you had the bad weather blues?
Are you waiting for the “new normal” to arrive
before you feel better?

Don't wait any longer. What we are now experiencing may be the new normal.

Rita Effros explains in her science of happiness article in this issue that happiness results not from what happens to us, but from how we respond.

Our new weather normal is higher average temperatures, with more extremes of heat, cold, fire, flood and storms. Whatever happens with global warming, we could accept and be happy with the weather we get.

Our Covid weather is similar. We may be past the peak of the omicron variant, but even on a downslope this pandemic isn't going away any time soon. The virus will continue to evolve; new variants may appear.

We can hope that new variants will be milder and more like the flu. At some point the pandemic will have reached everywhere and become endemic. We are unlikely to ever be rid of this disease.

Perhaps we will get annual Covid vaccines or combined Covid-flu vaccines. The only certainty will be a world of rapid change and more extremes. Even if we are not threatened by new Covid variants, global urban congestion and encroachment on formerly wild places will likely result in different viruses emerging and spreading.

It has been a century since the deadly 1918 influenza pandemic. Just as “100-year” floods and storms are now happening every 10 years or so, this 100-year pandemic may now happen, on average, every decade.

Our best hope for a decent future is to trust science and expect the development of vaccines and treatments to keep pace with virus evolution.

Meanwhile, let's accept what we can't change and be as happy as we can. Waiting is no fun. Let's find ways to enjoy life now while still protecting ourselves from Covid and the weather.

As I pen this column in mid-January, we find ourselves at a new height of daily Covid infections with a variant that is more transmissible, but, thankfully, not as virulent.

We all suffer because of Covid constraints. It is easy to be discouraged, and I will admit to some such short-lived feelings. But, as a reminder for all of us, here are many things for which residents in Mirabella Portland have to be grateful:

Our neighbors. We are a community living together in ways that encourage coming to know, appreciate and mutually support each other. To be sure, Covid has constrained our interactions, but there remain opportunities to enhance friendships.

Safety. We are in a secure environment. In prior homes where we have lived, safety was probably a concern; not here.

Life enrichments. Available to us just down an elevator are: a library, a woodshop, a pool, a gym and an art studio.

Support. We have cars on call, housekeeping, delivery of packages to our doors, information and data links and activities supporting our mental and physical health. And help for maintenance is just a call away.

Food. Yes, not every dish and delivery of service is as we would prefer, but we are fed regularly and well, a huge plus for those who do not cook or eat out regularly.

Mirabella employees. We are graciously served by the staff, part of our “family.” Because of the pandemic and related economic factors, there are not enough employees now to meet our needs as fully and quickly as we would prefer, but they continue to be dedicated to supporting us. New employees are being recruited. As conditions improve, services will be restored.

Management. I note and thank Sharon McCartney and her directors, giving them high marks for their dedication, attentiveness to our needs, and managing services in these difficult and trying times.

I am glad to be at Mirabella!



Front Cover:

Sylvia Mathews scans the Bistro menu before ordering from Maria Reyes. Photo by Robert French.



Back Cover:

Spring is on the way. Stanley Berman captured this image of Portland's spring blossoms to remind you what it is like.

~ The Inside Scoop ~

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One Brief Shining Moment*

By NANCY MOSS

Last year the Bistro was closed for months for renovations. Then it opened for breakfast only. Residents walked up to the counter, ordered their food and picked up coffee. Then they went to a table, drank their coffee and chatted.

Once the food arrived, fresh and hot — eggs and bacon, omelets, pancakes with tiny pitchers of syrup, oatmeal with raisins — chatter ceased; serious eating began.

One of the long tables might hold a family: children and grandchildren.

An assisted-living resident might motor in, driving his wheelchair and parallel parking at a table with friends.

Later in the morning, two or three people could take their coffee to the couch to sip and chat in front of the dancing gas flames.

Jim McGill often held an informal meeting at one of the

tables in the row by the entrance, people at his table talking earnestly, occasionally stopping to look at the trickle of people walking along the sidewalk outside the Bistro windows, heading for their prescribed number of steps or doing errands.

While Aria is white tablecloths and wine, pinpricks of city lights against the night sky, the Bistro is coffee and chat, windows looking out on trees tossing in the wind or pummeled by rain. The weather is close at hand, worth talking about.

Then the Bistro suddenly closed due to Covid, the stylish new counters and graceful circular lights over the serving area hidden behind a curtain, coffee urns at the entrance.

One more small pleasure lost to Covid, so that we have a better chance of staying healthy.

*"Camelot," Lerner and Loewe



Photo: Stanley Berman

Ginny and Wayne Wiswell warm themselves and enjoy a cup of coffee in the Bistro.

Better Quality Coming to Channel 981

Coming soon to a TV screen near you: Mirabella's channel 981 in high definition.

Mirabella now has all the equipment in place to convert Mirabella's in-house TV channel 981 to a high-definition channel, says Michael Hardin, Mirabella's technology coordinator.

However, when testing the new equipment, Michael found that cable TV boxes in some resident apartments do not support channel 981 high-definition signals. Michael is working with Comcast to get those boxes replaced before switching 981 to the higher-quality signal.

The equipment needed to connect to 981 digital signage like that on display in Mirabella common areas is also ready to connect as soon as 981 goes high-definition. That system is from a company called Touchtown and can be controlled remotely from computers with Touchtown software installed.

Michael says the equipment will permit automation of programming throughout the day, including playing DVDs and YouTube videos. However, manual staff intervention will be required to switch the channel 981 input among different sources, including Zoom meetings, Willamette Hall presentations and streaming video from the internet.

Willamette Hall audiovisual equipment has also been upgraded, including lighting, the control panel and switching and recording equipment. Planned later upgrades include the camera, projector and screen, says Michael.

New Art on Walls

Walk along Mirabella's exit hallway to River Parkway and you will pass RAMP's art committee's most recent acquisition, donated by Bill Stevens: prints by the Pacific Northwest College of Art's faculty. These are well-known Oregonian artists, says committee chair Dan Hole.

Heading past the bookcases to the Pennoyer Street side of Mirabella's library, you will see prints of two rather whimsical-looking owls, a gift from Sylvia McGill approved by the art committee.

Dan says the committee is talking to someone about donating "significant works worthy of a collection," and that hanging the acquisitions mentioned above may have motivated other residents to become donors.

A three-member panel on the art committee vets donations, and Executive Director Sharon McCartney has the right of final approval.

Cultural Sensitivity Stalled

The twin crises of Covid and tight staffing have pushed Mirabella's planned cultural sensitivity program to the back burner.

With managers and directors working frontline positions, Executive Director Sharon McCartney has not been able to work with the consultant, Dianne Daniels, to determine a next step in the process of building a greater sense of community.

The percent of employee exit interviews mentioning resident behavior as a reason for leaving has dropped slightly, from 82% to 65%. That means, however, that more than half of departing employees mention resident rudeness as a reason for their leaving.

Daniels' recommendation about "setting expectations early" and communicating any feeling of mistreatment is now included in the orientation of new employees. Sharon says that employees "do feel heard" and that management "cares about their well-being and treatment," which could be a step toward a greater feeling of community.

Residents who complain to a server about their bagged dinners being late, as more than one has, are blaming the messenger, not the cause. Sharon pleads for understanding and "grace, for each other," both staff and residents, as Mirabella weathers a difficult time.

—Nancy Moss



"Pearl" by Jennifer Guske, from the Pacific Northwest College of Arts collection accepted by RAMP's art committee.

Photo: Ron Mendonca

Greenway Extending Southward

By PETE SWAN

Andersen Construction is extending the South Waterfront Greenway southward.

The greenway expansion is part of the Alamo Manhattan project to construct rental housing units on the two large blocks (41 and 42) between Bond Avenue and the river and between the Ardea apartments and the eastward extension of Abernethy.

The greenway work is invisible to us. The greenway cannot be allowed to sluff into the river and erosion cannot be allowed to cause the apartment buildings to slump or tilt toward the river.

To stop that from happening, bank stabilization is required. Andersen Construction has built a buttress wall under where the Greenway will run. Giant, three-foot-diameter augers drilled down 50 feet to reach a more solid stratum.

A cement slurry was first mixed in that tall white silo near the center of the project and then pumped into the newly drilled holes. There are no casings (hollow cylinders) in the holes so the soil and cement mix together and harden. This process created a matrix of staggered rows of pilings. Those 117 columns have hardened and now reinforce the bank.

In other construction at the site, two new tower cranes have been erected. The western one will work on what will be the six-story buildings in Block 42 while the taller crane will service construction of the 24-story tower (and its surrounding podium) in Block 41.

The pedestal buildings, the lower ones surrounding the tower, will be constructed in the same fashion as The Dylan at 3883 S. Moody Ave.: reinforced concrete below ground and for the lowest two floors, then wood framing for the higher floors.

The 334 parking stalls in Block 41 (the one nearest the river) will be above ground in the pedestal surrounding the base of the tower.

You may have noticed many strands of red cable running across the newly poured concrete floors. These cables (called tendons) are used to post-tension the freshly poured concrete. This reduces the quantity of rebar needed and strengthens the concrete.

Powerful hydraulic cylinders are used to increase the tension in the cables. This causes the cables to stretch by roughly half a percent (thus a 200-foot run would become 201 feet). The cables are barbed so they cannot shrink (and thereby relax the tension) once tightened. The next layer of concrete is poured over the red lines and the floor becomes stronger.

If you have wondered how the concrete can cure given our recent low temperatures, the answer is: chemicals. Additives allow modern concrete to harden appropriately even in near-freezing temperatures.

The contractor has surveyed and compacted the continuation of River Parkway through the project.

The project is currently about six days behind schedule due to Covid issues but getting a little ahead or falling a little behind is not unusual in mega projects such as Alamo's.



Photo: Richard Mounts

Construction workers pour concrete for a new apartment building at the Alamo Manhattan project site.

Electric Car Sharing

Mirabella residents now have exclusive access to a Chevrolet Bolt electric car located in Mirabella's parking area.

The car-share program, announced earlier, had been delayed while waiting for a factory recall repair. The repair is completed; the car is now available.

Residents may download the free "Envoy Mobility" app to their smartphones. Each resident user will be asked to submit electronically a copy of their driver's license and provide other information, including a credit card.

You will need an access code that is available at the valet office. For security reasons, the code should not be shared.

Then email info@envoythere.com to activate membership in the car-sharing program.

Mirabella valet staff will help with the process of downloading and using the app.

Then you can book the car by the hour or day, provided another resident hasn't already booked the time you want.

Insurance and customer support are included in the car-share fee.

The fee is \$9 per hour or \$72 per day, with possibly higher rates at peak times.

No gas required.

Library Catalog Online

The Mirabella library is entering a new era.

Residents may now search an online catalog to find what they want among the approximately 7,000 books in the collection.

The database software, called TinyCat, was designed for small libraries. The volunteer library staff will continue to add more information about items in the collection to make it easier for users to find what they want.

The transition to an online catalog is well underway and will take many more hours to complete, but searching the library is already much easier.

You may search the Mirabella library catalog from your home computer by clicking on the Library tab on Miranet. It is also accessible through the internet by going directly to: <https://www.librarycat.org/lib/MBPortlandLibrary>.

There is a TinyCat icon on the screen of the desktop computer in the library. Clicking on that will get you directly to the searchable catalog. No need to go through Miranet or have your own computer.

Users may type author names, topic words or words from a title into a search bar and then click on the magnifying glass icon to the right of the search bar. Users may also click on the down arrow to the far right of the search bar for more-advanced search options.

The best way to become comfortable with TinyCat is to play with it. You won't break it.

—Mary Finneran

Local Honey Now Available



Photo: Jacobsen Salt Co. /Lauren Williams

This past spring, local honey producer, the Jacobsen Hive Program, installed 14 beehives along Portland's southwest riverfront at Zidell Yards. Nestled under the Ross Island Bridge along a rewilded section of the

Willamette River, this setting is proving to be an urban refuge for honey bees. Jacobsen Hives announced in late January the availability of raw honey from these local hives. See <https://jacobsensalt.com/pages/hive-program>.

Facebook and Google Are Spying on Us

By ED PARKER

Facebook and Google don't charge us for their services. Both make the list of the six largest companies in the U.S. Both have annual profits greater than \$18 billion. Yes, that's billion with a "b." How come? To answer that question, we need to review some history.

Soviet Surveillance Proposals

In October of 1971, more than 50 years ago, I spent a weekend sequestered with eight other information scientists analyzing intelligence from the Soviet Union.

The meeting was sponsored by the Georgetown University Center for Strategic and International Studies, whose mission is to define the future of national security.

Our work at the Hershey Hotel in Hershey, Pa., was to investigate the possibility of the Soviets using information technology to monitor most economic transactions of their own citizens.

We were told that the Kiev Cybernetic Institute was asking the Soviet Union government for a significant increase in their budget to develop a computerized electronic surveillance system. The proposal placed a heavy emphasis on computer monitoring of economic transactions.

We were asked to analyze the economic and technical feasibility of the proposal, given a 10- to 20-year time frame for implementation.

My recollection is that we were unanimous in our conclusion that the proposal was indeed technically and economically feasible, provided two conditions were met. One was that the Soviet Union would have to commit a substantial fraction of its budget, on the scale of its space program. The other was that they would have to import or copy Western computer technology to do it.

I remember coming away from the meeting not concerned about the strategic implications of that Soviet proposal. I believed that it was an attempt by the Cybernetic Institute to increase their budget and bureaucratic power and to accelerate the development of the Soviet computer industry. But I doubted that the program would get a Soviet commitment comparable to that for their space program.

Rather, I became more concerned that the kinds of social control they proposed could be technically and economically implemented sooner in the United States unless we were vigilant about protecting individual privacy and ensuring public access to U.S. government plans for using computer technology.

U.S. Research and Development

At the time, several of us in that meeting, along with many others, were developing the tools and techniques needed for

what we now call the internet.

In a public lecture at Stanford University in 1968, I described the ambitious vision of the information technology team I was leading: Replace or supplement the sender-controlled media of the day with a receiver-controlled medium that would allow users to search for whatever information they wanted whenever they wanted it.

The software our team developed was used by the Stanford Library and several other research libraries for online access to library information. The physics information database developed in that project became the first North American web page on the World Wide Web.

Most of us developing the technology that became the internet believed that making access to information easier for everyone would make our society both more efficient and more democratic. We were aware of the potential risk of loss of privacy, but not seriously enough concerned.

In my 1968 talk, I said that the right to privacy was a defense against unequal access to information. When other people have more information about us than we have about them, they have power over us. There are two ways to reduce that inequality. One is to have privacy laws that permit us to keep our information secret. The other is to make more accessible to us the information that others keep secret.



"What do we do with all this data we collect on you? Sorry, that's privileged information."

I was hopeful that the technology we were developing would reduce the inequality of access to information by giving everyone more access to information. I also said that we should watch out for trends that could threaten the right to privacy or could increase information inequality.

Dream Turned into Nightmare

Fast forward to the information services we have on the internet today.

We now have free access to a nearly unlimited supply of information (and misinformation) on demand. But part of the democratic dream has become a nightmare.

Social media companies use behavior modification techniques to drive users to their advertising customers.

Our worries about Big Brother government control of media fictionalized in George Orwell's book, "1984," didn't happen.

Instead, we have what former Harvard Business School Professor Shoshana Zuboff called "Big Other" in her book, "Surveillance Capitalism."

What happened while we were looking the other way was that social media companies applied computer surveillance technology, artificial intelligence analysis of huge databases and behavior modification techniques to us, their users, for the benefit of their paying customers.

So, why do you think Google, Facebook and other social media companies have become so large and profitable while giving us free access to Google search, Google maps, Gmail, Facebook applications and other social media services? How do you think the information providers make their money?

It started with advertising. The old cliché is, if the information is free, then the information user is being sold to the advertisers.

In traditional advertising, an older saying was that at least half of the advertising budget was wasted, but they didn't know which half.

Now, on the internet, advertisers don't have that uncertainty. The rates they pay to Google, Facebook and other social media providers depend on how many viewers click

on ads to make a purchase or get further information.

The social media companies gather and analyze the surveillance data they get from us, their users, to find out everything they can to improve their prediction of which users will respond positively to which ads.

By improving their prediction of who is more likely to respond positively, they maximize their click-through ad revenues. The formula is simple: Surveillance to understand the interests, the personality and the emotions of their users generates more revenue from their paying customers.

But social media company business plans don't stop there. They also use behavior modification techniques to drive users to their customers.

One example is the free on-line game Pokemon Go. It uses smartphone geolocation technology for real world "treasure hunts" that guide players to the locations desired by the business customers paying for the service offered free to users. They also manipulate their content to drive us, their online users, to internet locations that are most profitable for them.

Professor Zuboff reports that surveillance capitalists conduct automated experiments on us, their unwitting subjects, to test which types of manipulation are more effective for different types of users. Tens of thousands of subjects are tested to predict or shape their behavior and thus improve the automated placement of ads and other information.

Federal law requires medical and academic researchers to provide full disclosure to and get informed consent from their research subjects. Unregulated companies don't have

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"Always remember, sweetheart, that when the service is free, YOU'RE the product!"

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that obligation and use us as their experimental subjects without our consent.

Social media companies are unregulated businesses generating huge profits by giving us free information. The information (or misinformation) they give us is designed to serve their business and political customers. If political customers pay them to drive users to false information displayed to arouse emotions for political purposes, the automated programs of social media companies push susceptible users in that direction.

This information system designed to maximize private profit is a long way from the democratic ideal of open sharing of ideas in hope of achieving political consensus. Driving people apart turned out to be more profitable than bringing them together.

Social media companies have widened the information access gap instead of narrowing it. They gather information about us, their users, that is kept secret from us and used to manipulate us for their benefit, not ours.

Information Inequality and Economic Inequality

In our Information Age, the wealth gap between the richest and poorest is larger than it has been since the so-called Gilded Age in the early 20th century at the dawn of the modern Industrial Age. Is that just a coincidence? Or is it a common result of unregulated capitalism?

The owners of the richest and most powerful companies at the start of the Industrial Age were the winners of unregulated competition. Weaker competitors either lost or merged with stronger ones. The resulting monopolies were much more profitable than competing businesses. We now call the super-rich winners of that day “robber barons,” despite their behavior being legal at the time.

Eventually, government regulations of business and provision of social safety nets for workers reduced the economic gap between rich and poor.



Many of today's super-rich are the owners of unregulated information companies. They have avoided most regulation for two reasons. One is because the constitutional protection of free speech makes it harder to regulate information companies. The other is a deliberate government policy to let competition, not government, determine the winners in the new Information Age.

Just as in the Gilded Age, unregulated competition didn't stay competitive. The unregulated “winner take all” informa-

Unregulated companies use us as their experimental subjects without our consent.

tion business competition has produced unregulated monopolies, just like the successful winners of unregulated industrial competitors in an earlier era.

Perhaps it is time to tame the excesses of our era with government regulation, just as the monopolies of the robber barons were eventually split up and regulated.

What Can Be Done?

Three factors constrain industrial capitalism. Until competition results in monopoly, the need to satisfy customers puts some limits on upward wealth redistribution. Labor unions provide another constraint. Government regulation of business and safety nets for citizens provide the most important protections.

Customer power does not protect users of surveillance capital businesses because they manipulate the users for the benefit of other paying customers. Except for an occasional whistleblower, employee power does not apply either. The work is done by computers using artificial intelligence programs developed by a small number of professional employees. That leaves government regulation as the remaining option for constraining the excesses of social media businesses.

When regulating information businesses, protecting free speech and a free press are most important. Other forms of regulation are possible without constraining free speech.

Regulation in three different areas could avoid infringing on those freedoms.

The first area is privacy protection. The second is modernization and enforcement of anti-competitive practices. (Those laws are still called anti-trust laws because the type of business organization used by the Gilded Age winners


was then-legal trusts.) The third area is information disclosure regulation to permit us users to access the information that the surveillance corporations have about us and use to manipulate us.

In my 1968 talk, I said, in the context of privacy and unequal access to information, "I'm not concerned that the credit bureau has a file of information about me to which any merchant can obtain access. I'm more concerned that I cannot get access to it myself to find out about and attempt to correct any erroneous information."

Regulatory changes since then now permit users to access their own credit records. Similar regulations to permit users to access the information the surveillance capitalists have about us would partially reduce information inequality.

Regulating social media probably won't change income inequality much. Nevertheless, regulations to protect our privacy, defend competition and give users more access to information held by the companies manipulating them should improve our economy and our democracy.

The main barrier to such regulation may be our addiction to "free" information services the social media companies provide. Getting something for nothing may be too high a price to pay.



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Dr. Mila Ioussifova is a residency-trained optometrist with a diverse background and widespread training in comprehensive eye care. A graduate with honors from New England College of Optometry, Dr. Mila maintains and practices the highest standards in optometric practice. Her approach to patient care is systemic with an emphasis on ocular nutrition and disease prevention. She is passionate about eye care and health, and she takes the time to educate her patients on how to maintain healthy eyes.

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Photo: Ron Mendonca

Frank Parker

Franks Parker grew up in Seattle on the canal linking Lake Union and Lake Washington and two blocks from the University of Washington's Huskies' stadium.

He remembers loving football and baseball as a boy; his football nickname was "Crusher." In the upper grades, where bigger bodies prevailed, "I had to rely on cunning," Frank admits. Finally, love of football led him to switch to cheerleading.

The drive to excel, to be in the thick of things, marks Frank's life.

Resident Profile: Frank Parker The Artful Doctor

By NANCY MOSS

Frank met his wife, Karen, who died in 2016, in high school and remembers going to dances with her in his junior and senior year.

After high school he attended the University of Washington (UW), first as a business major. Switching majors to medicine during his sophomore year meant "in the next two years, I had to buckle down and take all the courses for medicine."

In addition, he was student body president during his senior year and was dating Karen, who also attended UW. "Somehow I made it through," Frank says.

After an internship and residency at Columbia Presbyterian Hospital in New York city, Frank returned to UW. He was certified in internal medicine specializing in endocrinology, but while he was on the UW staff, his research on electron microscopy and lipid analysis on hardening of the arteries and skin lipid lesions led him to skin conditions and dermatology.

Frank has a thick book of his published articles accompanied by his intricate drawings and diagrams. These illustrations helped medical students understand complexities in the accompanying text.

In 1979, Frank took over as chairperson of the dermatology department at Oregon Health and Science University (OHSU). "We had some really good people there," he says, and is proud of adding

high-quality doctors and researchers during his tenure as department head, including Mohs surgeon Neil Swanson, who became department head when Frank stepped down in 1994.

Mohs surgery, not practiced everywhere, is the gold standard for removing a skin cancer while sparing healthy tissue and is especially useful for facial cancers.

After leaving his position as department head, Frank stayed on at OHSU both as an instructor and physician. Becoming a true Oregonian, he switched some of his football loyalty from the Huskies to the University of Oregon Ducks.

Back when the Bistro was open for dining in, residents occasionally spotted Frank at a table filled with young doctors, dermatology residents, some of them sporting blonde ponytails. "More and more women were getting into dermatology," he says, adding, "very intelligent and nice-looking ladies."

Another change Frank has seen in his long career is the rise of respect for dermatology. "It was at times looked down on a little by internists and other doctors," he says. "We weren't really trained to appreciate what dermatologists can do."

Anyone who's had a melanoma or squamous cell skin cancer diagnosed and removed, perhaps a result of basking in the sun before its harmful effects were fully known, can attest to dermatology's importance.

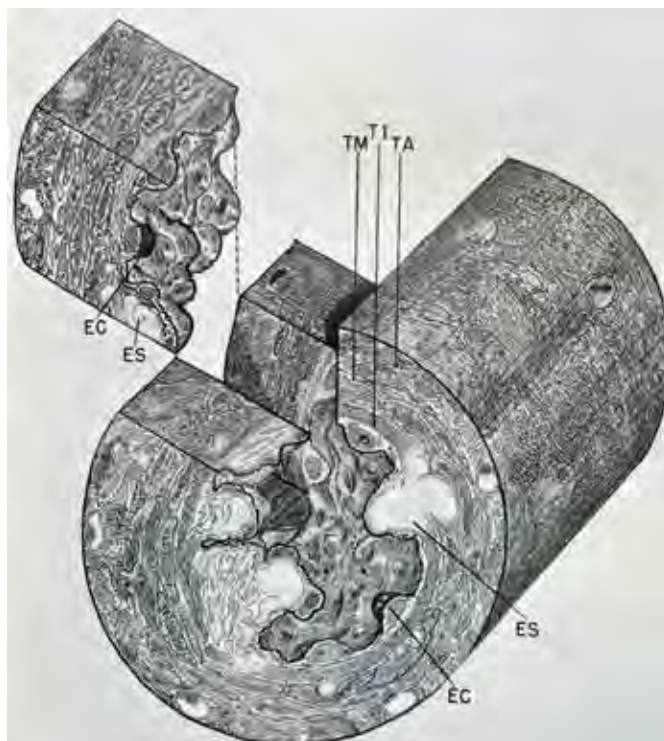
"The skin often reflects things that are going on internally," Frank says. A dermatologist's diagnosis may have wider implications for underlying conditions.

In 2020, at the age of 88, Frank Parker retired. From his OHSU office he had watched Mirabella's construction; it's an "ingenious idea to have a retirement home next to a medical facility," he says.

Karen was instrumental in the Parkers' move to Mirabella in 2011.

Once here, Frank became known for several things. Periodically he would hand out goodie bags, small brown paper bags filled with sample lotions and creams sent to him as a dermatologist, as well as packages of Oreos and M&Ms.

"I did it for fun," he says. "I like Oreos, so I shared them." These paper bags were decorated with Frank Parker cartoons, which have also graced 3550's pages. Artistic skill that featured in his earlier drawings accompanying medical articles flourished in cartoons.



Cross section of an artery, drawn by Frank

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A Creativity on Display featured Frank's cartoons one month.

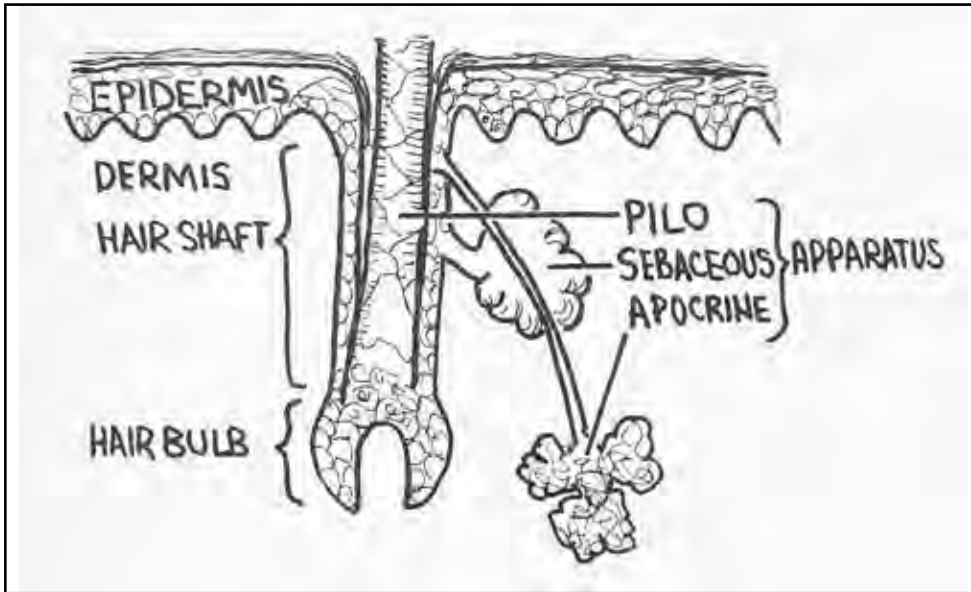
Frank has continued being a dermatologist at Mirabella, he says, treating both residents — who might ask "Hey, would you take a look at this?" — and dogs. He recalls with pride treating Oscar, a golden retriever with a sore on his rear, and curing him.

Frank has also been an active water volleyball player. He hosted a party for the team during which he handed out T-shirts designed by his son Garth, a commercial artist in California.

Frank has two other children who live in the Portland area and a son in Seattle.

Diners in Aria, back when it served dinners, often saw Frank and his good friend Judith Smith entertaining at its largest table, a group sometimes containing assisted-living residents. Sharing time and meals with Judith has made his life "more pleasant," Frank says.

Anyone who works until his late 80s and shares his expertise when asked is a rarity; someone who does all that and is great fun to boot, even rarer.



Frank's neatly labeled drawing enhances his article.

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The Day My Daughter Met Justice O'Connor

By JOHN FOREMAN

Sandra Day O'Connor was a formidable woman, even before I met her. She was raised on the cattle ranch carved by her pioneer family from the mountains and high desert country in southeastern Arizona.

She went away to be formally schooled. She graduated from high school in El Paso, Texas. She enrolled at Stanford when she was 16. After graduating, she went on to Stanford Law School.

When she and her husband returned to Arizona, she had difficulty finding a place to practice her profession in the urbanizing area around Phoenix. After working as an attorney with the state's attorney general from 1965 to 1969, she was appointed to fill an open position in the Arizona Senate.

She worked her way up to be the first woman elected as majority leader of the Arizona Senate. A few years later she was appointed judge of the Superior Court of Arizona in Maricopa County, the greater Phoenix area, and one of the largest trial courts in the country.

I met her in that court, in the trenches of the criminal justice system. She was the trial court judge in a criminal case I was assigned while I was a deputy Maricopa County public defender.

The first trial in the case ended in a hung jury — the jury at the end of the trial could not all agree on whether the defendant was guilty or not guilty — and Judge O'Connor granted a mistrial. Judge O'Connor was a relatively new judge who was known for running a tight ship.

The state pressed ahead with a retrial. No one who works in the criminal justice system likes retrials. A friend at the public defender's office who handled the first trial begged off trying it again. So, I inherited the retrial of a close case.

After the second trial started, I caught the police officer who testified for the state chatting with one of the female jurors during a recess. I called it to the attention of Judge O'Connor and moved for a mistrial. Communication between witnesses and jurors during a trial is explicitly forbidden.

Nevertheless, they were chatting in the hall on the second floor outside her courtroom in the old courthouse. You can see that courthouse in the background at the beginning of Alfred Hitchcock's thriller, "Psycho," when Janet Leigh drives out of Phoenix. Judge O'Connor was not happy about having to grant my motion. The prosecutor was not happy that I made it. We were all not happy we were going to have to go through the process of picking a jury and beginning the trial again.

We picked the new jury at the start of the third trial. At the breakfast table the morning of the second day of the trial, I was trying to think of a new way to cross-examine the police officer who caused the previous mistrial. My wife, Sandy, grabbed my attention by asking a disarming question. It was summertime in Arizona. She was eight months pregnant

with our second daughter while entertaining our precocious 3-year-old, Dawn.

She heard me say that the judge at my trial was a woman and thought it might be inspiring for our daughter to see that a little girl could grow up to be a judge. She, too, would be interested in seeing a woman judge. Could they come and observe the trial? I had never encouraged Sandy to attend any of my trials. Perhaps this would be more exciting for them than other things they could be doing that day.



Photo: Library of Congress

Sandra Day O'Connor, Circa 1981-83

In criminal trials the testimony can be boring for long stretches. The subject matter of the testimony can be very adult, not what I would want my 3-year-old to see or to hear. In this case, the testimony would be about whether my client, a tall, powerfully built black man who was unarmed and standing in line at a neighborhood grocery "aided and abetted" a small black man with a gun.

The man with the gun walked into the grocery while my client was standing in the checkout line. He told the cashier to put all the money in the cash register into a bag. He then told my client to walk outside with the bag. No sex, no blood, no violence — just an armed robbery.

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After a moment's reflection, I said it was OK. But I made sure she understood that, if Dawn caused any distraction, they would both have to leave. She smiled and that made me feel like I had won my first test of the day.

Later that morning I explained to my client the presence of a very pregnant woman and a very blond 3-year-old who decided to sit behind us in what was otherwise a deserted courtroom.

I do not remember how the first part of the morning went. At some point Judge O'Connor called the morning recess. Long experience has taught generations of trial court judges and lawyers that one to two hours is about all you can reasonably expect a jury, lawyers and a judge to remain focused without a bathroom break and an opportunity to stretch their legs.

I remained at the counsel table in the courtroom working on my notes and planning for the next part of the trial when I heard my name being called by the judge's assistant. She had opened the side door to the courtroom. She asked me: Who are the woman and child sitting behind us at the defense table? At that point the possibility that my daughter had been waving to the jurors or involved in some other indiscretion flashed before my eyes.

Dawn turned to her mother with questioning eyes and Sandy nodded yes. Dawn smiled and walked through the gate into the restricted area of the courtroom.

I stood up and approached her apologetically saying, "It was my wife and daughter who just came to watch, but if they have done something wrong ..." I never finished because Judge O'Connor suddenly appeared from the hall behind her assistant. She walked through the opened door and over to where Dawn was seated. She asked her something I did not hear.

Dawn turned to her mother with questioning eyes and Sandy nodded yes. Dawn smiled and walked through the gate into the restricted area of the courtroom. She hesitantly took the hand that a smiling Judge O'Connor extended her and walked out the door toward the judge's office and her chambers beyond.

You are never supposed to be at a loss for words when you are a trial lawyer. You are always supposed to be prepared for any contingency that might arise. Not only did I not



Dawn Foreman at age 3

see this coming, — I have never seen it happen since — I did not have the slightest idea what to say. For what seemed like a long time I just stood there.

The prosecutor who had witnessed it all stood on one side of me. He seemed to be trying to think of a reason to object. Sandy stood on the other side of me completely puzzled for different reasons. Finally, I heard some giggling and saw a smiling Dawn holding the hand of a smiling Judge O'Connor walking out of her office toward us. Dawn walked over to Sandy and grabbed her hand.

She started to tell her mother all the interesting things she had seen — O'Connor had an excellent collection of Native American art and some of it was on display in her chambers. Sandy put her fingers up to her lips and Dawn stopped. She turned around toward a still smiling Judge O'Connor. I also turned. I am sure my jaw was still hanging open. Judge O'Connor turned to the prosecutor and to me and said, "Gentlemen, it is time to get back to work."

So, we took our seats. The bailiff brought the jury back from their room on the other side of the courtroom. Then, he rapped the gavel and Judge O'Connor entered the courtroom through her ceremonial entrance directly behind her bench and chair. She had her game face on and we returned to the trial.

I wish I could tell you that the jury in the third trial acquitted my client. It found him guilty. The jury never knew anything about Dawn's tour and visit with Judge O'Connor.

A few years later I had entered private practice, but I was still doing a significant amount of pro bono defense of criminal defendants. Much of it involved defendants who were already sentenced to death or who were charged with murder and the state indicated they were seeking the death penalty. This is not

popular work anywhere and it especially was not in Arizona in the 1980s.

In 1981, the newly elected President, Ronald Reagan, carried out a campaign pledge to nominate a woman to the U.S. Supreme Court. He took the advice of a Senator who was also from a pioneer Arizona family, Barry Goldwater, and nominated Judge O'Connor. She, by that time, had been appointed to the Arizona Court of Appeals by Arizona Gov. Bruce Babbitt, who was from yet another Arizona pioneer family.

One day I came back to my office and found a little pink slip with a telephone message on my desk. It said a reporter from The New York Times had called and would like me to call back so they could ask my opinion of the nomination of Judge O'Connor to be an associate justice of the U.S. Supreme Court.

I had gone to national conferences with a small group of attorneys from across the country who were willing to take death penalty cases, including one put on by the NAACP Legal Defense Fund in New York. It was not unusual for me to get phone messages from reporters, including from local media outlets about cases involving defendants I represented. I almost never returned them because publicity for defendants in death penalty cases is almost always bad. However, I had never received a call from The New York Times and this call did not involve a client.

For a few minutes I looked at the message trying to think about how to respond. When I finally picked up the phone, I called Judge O'Connor's office, not The New York Times. The woman who answered her phone was the same assistant who asked me who was sitting behind me during the trial a few years earlier. I said that I had received a phone message from the New York Times. They wanted to ask me questions about Judge O'Connor's nomination, but I wanted to talk to Judge O'Connor before I returned the call.

She said, just a moment. After some delay Judge O'Connor came on the line. I explained again that I had received



"For Father's Day, I'm giving my dad an hour of free tech support."

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a phone call from The New York Times, and they wanted to ask me my opinion of her nomination. I said: "I will support or oppose your nomination, whichever you think will do you the most good." She laughed and said, John — it is the only time she ever called me by my first name — you should do whatever you think is the right thing to do. I congratulated her on her nomination, wished her good luck and said good-bye.

And that is how someone with my professional and political background came to support the nomination of Sandra Day O'Connor to be an associate justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. I will let others decide her place in the historical development of the Supreme Court during the turbulent 25 years she was on the Court.

I am still very comfortable with the decision I made to support her, based upon her fairness as a judge and upon her decency and humanity as a person. I had a unique opportunity to experience those qualities personally.

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Photo: Robert French

Sherry Davis

July 4, 2019. Sherry Davis had a holiday from her job in day care.

Her responsibility was with what she calls the “wobblers.” She especially liked teaching things to this age group, 6-14 months, “so they don’t cry as much.”

She explains that helping these little ones learn to express their needs and wants made it easier for them and for their caretakers. The older ones are a step or two behind toddlers. Wobblers are just beginning to learn to walk and after a few wobbly steps may find themselves on their diaper-padded bottoms.

Staff Profile:

Sherry Davis From Wobblers to Seniors

By PAMELA LINDHOLM-LEVY

She loved the children, but Sherry was unhappy with other aspects of her job in a field she had worked in for 20 years. So, on that holiday day off she started looking online for jobs she might like. One of them was at Mirabella. She applied and was hired as a housekeeper.

It has been a good fit. “I always did like to clean,” she says. She finds it satisfying to see a job well done. Sometimes it’s therapeutic. The best part of her job: “I lost 20 pounds.”

At Mirabella she finds the residents and fellow employees nice to be around, and she appreciates that her supervisor, Rick Thompson, cares about the employees. Rick says she’s a very positive and collaborative employee. He goes on, “She is on time every day and always willing to help where needed. Does not complain and always looking for ways to benefit the department. She gets a large number of compliments from residents. She is just the sweetest person. Very lucky to have her as part of our team!”

The worst part of her job: getting up in the morning. But, Sherry admits, all her life she has battled the urge to go back to sleep when the alarm rings.

That alarm has been going off in Portland since, pardon stretching the point, she was a year old. She was born in Phoenix, but her parents left soon after for Portland, where her mother was a pension administrator and her father “built the Fremont Bridge,” as Sherry puts it.

In the summer her grandparents would come up from

Phoenix to the cooler Northwest. Sherry remembers fishing trips with them to Sauvie Island, where they would go out on the catwalk, a boardwalk over wetlands, and catch crappie. In Lake Oswego they caught bluegills. Both fish are small and tasty. The catfish her grandfather caught, though, scared small Sherry. They were big and she refused to be around when her grandfather gutted them and when her mother cooked them.

Sherry treasures childhood memories of Dishman Community Center, where she and her brother taught themselves to swim in what was then an outdoor pool. They could play ping-pong, pool and bumper pool, and do arts and crafts. And it was all free. They created their own summer fun. As Sherry grew older, she worked at Dishman for free because she liked the place and regrets that she didn’t stay there for a paying job, which she knows she would have liked a lot.

As a teen she got a job with Manpower instead, because she wanted money to buy the fashions and shoes she was into in high school. Sherry wore high heels every day to Washington-Monroe high school. And she can still walk in them, but she wears them only to church now.

Sherry began ice-skating at the Lloyd Center as a teen. She loved going to the center, so getting a job there at Bob’s Doughnuts was ideal. Except, she says, the ideal of being surrounded by doughnuts was dimmed by her clothes always smelling like them. Her employer Bob now has the Orange Julius concession at the mall.

This once-active teen still doesn’t like to “sit in the house,” she says. Now she loves outdoor activities, especially hiking. Mount Tabor Park and Multnomah Falls are two of her favorite places to go with friends and family. Going all the way to the top of the falls, though? No, no, not for her.

If there was a special indoor place, though, it was the Multnomah County’s Central Library. She began going there on Saturdays and found interesting things in every section that kept her coming back for years, until first college and later Covid interrupted.

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Three generations of Sherry’s family

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Sherry worked while she got an associate degree from Portland Community College. She began with an eye toward business administration, then changed direction. In retrospect, she says, she should have gone for a degree in early childhood education, because the child development center where she worked was affiliated with that major at Portland State. Instead, she got a generalist degree because she was able to finish school sooner: 2017.

Sherry's elder daughter has degrees in education. As well as being the mother of identical twin girls and two teenage

boys, she is the principal of Portland Public Schools' da Vinci Arts Middle School, which is a magnet school for subjects such as dance, band, drama, visual arts, guitar and other instruments. Leading this school seems only natural for someone who danced ballet, and in school played in the band and sang in a choir that performed in Carnegie Hall.

A labradoodle Sherry met at Mirabella endeared the breed to her.

Sherry's younger daughter earned a B.A. in English from the University of Oregon and had a job tutoring the school's athletes. After law school and a masters in conflict resolution and mediation at the university she worked as a lawyer in Oregon before moving out of state for a new job in late 2021.

In the last few years, Sherry has wanted to travel more. While Covid derailed her for a while, she finally felt it would be safe to take a solo trip to San Diego. She was so careful, abstaining from airline snacks and drinks. She wore latex gloves on the flight.

In San Diego, she enjoyed the zoo and other attractions, but watching the dolphins at Sea World became her favorite experience. She fell in love. Will her next trip be to Florida to swim with these smiley marine mammals? Hmm. Not really. Swimming at Dishman doesn't translate to swimming with Flipper.

A labradoodle Sherry met at Mirabella endeared the breed to her. If she didn't live in an apartment, she would get one. Her housekeeper's perspective: They don't shed.



"It's always 'Sit,' 'Stay,' 'Heel'—never 'Think,' 'Innovate,' 'Be yourself.'"



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The Birds Around Us

By JOHANNA KING

Both birding and photography have been important pastimes for me for most of my life. But putting them together has been a somewhat recent activity, made possible by the acquisition of a relatively long lens and a digital camera. The former allows me to get a shot without disturbing the bird, and the latter allows me to take as many as I wish, hoping for a good one.

Both birding and photography require patience and attention to detail, traits that are generally in short supply for me. But the pandemic changed that. For the first year I was out almost every day with my camera and my binoculars, with plenty of time to focus and nothing better to do. And so I took a lot of bird photos.

All of these birds, and many more, can be seen within a half mile of Mirabella, though not all year-round.



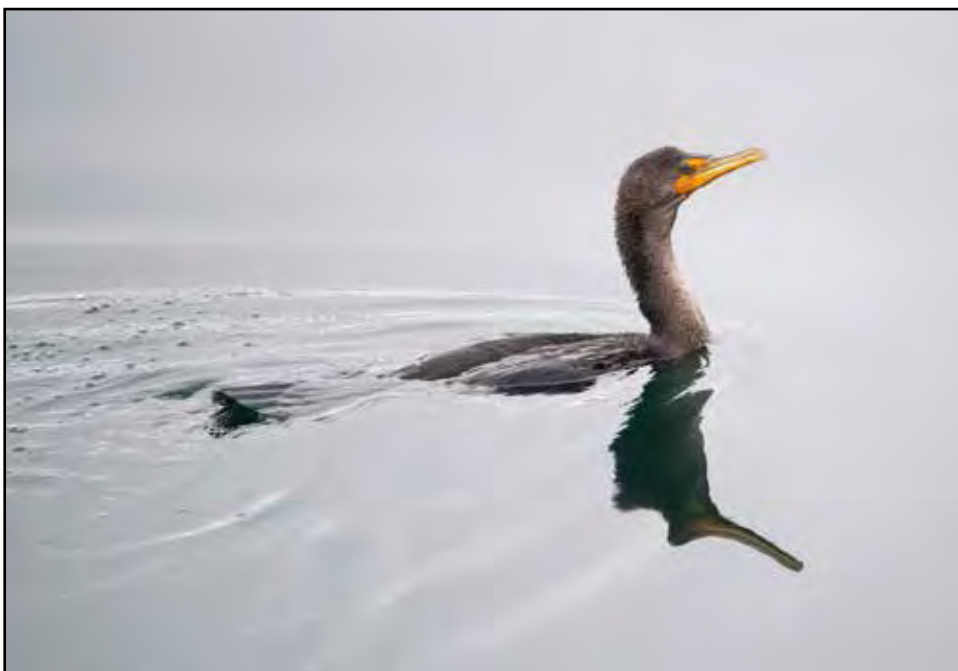
House Sparrow



Crow



Rufous Hummingbird



Double-crested Cormorant



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Bald Eagle



Killdeer



Song Sparrow



House Finch



Spotted Towhee



White-crowned Sparrow



Black-capped Chickadee



Rock Pigeon



Northern Flicker

Eudemonology: The Science of Happiness

By RITA BRICKMAN EFFROS

In 2017, Yale psychology professor Laurie Santos developed a course to introduce students to the science of happiness.

Since it was a new course, she envisioned about 30 students registering. What happened, however, was that 25% of the Yale student body signed up. This course was the most popular class in Yale's history.

At first glance, the study of happiness might be expected to be squishy and lacking in precision. After all, what is true about pornography – you know it when you see it – seems to apply to happiness also. However, it turns out that happiness can be studied scientifically. Current areas of research involve methods to evaluate one's state of happiness, factors that affect this state, and strategies to change one's amount of happiness.

The study of happiness is not new. Indeed, 2,500 years ago the philosophers of ancient Greece were delving into eudemonia, namely, the field of spiritual well-being, or how humans can flourish. Aristotle was truly prescient in his observation that a healthy individual takes pleasure when those around him are also doing well.

Why should research on happiness be important to us? It turns out that longevity is associated with long-term happiness. Studies of nuns, starting during their youth, analyzed their diaries for words indicative of happiness. Those who had the greatest number of positive emotions lived significantly longer than their peers.

Comparison of happy vs. unhappy cohorts showed that happy folks had more close friends, stronger family ties and more romantic ties. People with close social ties were less vulnerable to premature death, more likely to survive a fatal illness and less likely to fall prey to stressful life events.

There are several aspects of happiness that are the major areas of current research. All rely on the ability to measure happiness using validated questionnaires. Examples include

one that allows people to rate how happy they are in their day-to-day lives and with their overall feeling of pride in how life is going. Another, also aiming to allow people to develop insights into themselves, is known as the Authentic Happiness Inventory.

Whereas these surveys are useful for rigorous scientific studies, your own perception of your happiness status is probably more relevant than any test. Nonetheless, there are important lessons to be learned from the research studies.

One of the approaches in happiness research involves studying the behavior of people who are genuinely happy, and then having other folks mimic some of their behavior. Several studies demonstrated that the happiness of the mimics increased. We can control a lot more of our happiness than we think.

Taking control of your own happiness is not easy. Permanent changes require daily hard work. Change is not instantaneous – it may take several weeks to notice a difference in our feelings.

A major finding of happiness research is that, except for extreme cases of poverty or abuse, life circumstances do not affect our happiness. A comparison of lottery winners and paraplegic accident victims one year after each event found that these two groups had the same level of happiness on the measurable scales. This suggests that the way we view our circumstances is more important than the events themselves.

One aspect of viewing our circumstances involves anticipation of future events. Thinking about an upcoming vacation will make us feel happy. But it need not be something as grand as a vacation to have this effect. Looking forward to a good meal, to a walk with a friend or to curling up with a good book can be just as effective in raising our mood.

An essential feature of happy people is their connectedness with others – this is true even for introverts. Interestingly, almost every religious tradition involves community.

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Social interactions can be in person or on the phone – texting does not seem to work as well. True feelings of being connected emerge from social activities. Even the simple act of talking to someone new can increase our positive mood.

Happy people also engage in activities that help others. Acts of kindness are particularly noteworthy, especially when they make someone else happy. Donations to charity are particularly meaningful if one can see an effect of the monetary contribution, be it to a friend or a charity.

Happiness research shows that our objective situation is not nearly as important as to whom we are comparing ourselves. In a study of Olympic medal winners, the silver medal winners were much less happy than those awarded bronze medals. Researchers hypothesized that the silver awardees felt awful, since they often missed the gold by a tiny amount. On the other hand, the bronze winners were delighted that they won an award at all.

We all know people who seem to be natural optimists (glass half-full) folks. But it turns out that our genes play a very small role in our attitude, even less than they do on height. So, modeling the habits of happy people should be our goal. Yes, you can learn to be an optimist.

Since our attitudes are self-fulfilling, why be a pessimist?

Researchers have identified some additional behaviors of people who are happy. First, they are “present.” It has been said that a wandering mind is an unhappy mind. Happy minds can better focus on the present.

Relishing positive moments, anticipating future positive events and reminiscing about pleasant past experiences are strongly related to reports of greater well-being. You can train your brain to pay attention to the good stuff. Investing in experiences rather than in acquisition of material things is a surer path to positive emotions.

Ross Gay, an award-winning poet, decided to write “The Book of Delights,” a daily record of the small joys we often overlook in our busy lives. He viewed with great joy little things, like a friend’s unabashed use of air quotes or the delight he felt as he carried a small tomato seedling on a recent flight.

Most of his comments relate to observations in the natural world, such as flowers peeking out of a sidewalk crack or the movements of a praying mantis. His work reminds us of all the extraordinary, sometimes hidden, moments in our daily lives.

It is not necessary to write things down – try taking one photo each day of something special that made you happy. It can be your pet, a delicious meal, something in nature or a sunset. Then keep looking at the photo and relive the happy feeling.

Scientists have shown that this type of savoring exercise intensifies and can increase overall happiness. The activity involves stepping outside the experience to review and appreciate it. Somehow, focusing on small delights seems easier than

trying to feel gratitude. And you can train your brain to start looking for delights.

Happy people seem to have what is known as “time affluence.” This is the subjective feeling that you can reserve time for what you enjoy doing, not what you are obligated to do. In general, people who value and protect their time seem to be happier.

The goal of engaging in behaviors that are associated with happiness is to have a rich, meaningful life. This involves both positive and negative feelings and events. Happy people have the same share of bad stuff happening to them, but they have learned to deal with negative emotions, such as anxiety. This involves prioritizing such physical activities as sleep, exercise and possibly meditation.

We are all familiar with our physiological immune system, which functions to protect our physical health. Psychologists Timothy Wilson and Daniel Gilbert propose that we also have a psychological immune system. This system can help our behavior so that we reconcile conflicts and restore self-esteem and happiness following negative events.

The common message from most of the researchers on happiness is that it is easy to know intellectually what things will make us feel happy, but changing our behavior is difficult. They recommend small, baby steps in trying to effect change. Altering behavior is hard work, but possible. And don’t be hard on yourself: Give yourself some compassion as you start along this journey.

A 30-year-old singer-songwriter professionally known as Nightbirde who had to drop out of the America’s Got Talent competition due to metastatic cancer said, “You can’t wait until life isn’t hard anymore before you decide to be happy.” If only we could all follow her advice.



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“Have you tried turning it off and on again?”

John Branchflower Retires from 3550

By STEVE CASEY

A trained musician and music teacher, and for just shy of 10 years a laborer in the gritty reaches of social work before embarking on a 34-year career as a certified public accountant, John Branchflower was a major contributor to your 3550 Magazine even before its inception.

Performing music, protecting children and the elderly and straightening out clients' financial lives are all in the past.

So, too, is his career as primary design editor of 3550, owing to the Parkinson's disease he has been dealing with for several years.

3550 was born during an earlier incarnation of the communications committee.

John was there for the vote on naming the publication and time and again his accountant's precision was useful in shaping and developing the magazine.

As 3550 got up and running, with layout done by resident Ronnie Rudolph, John saw a problem: While Ronnie's work was highly professional, the mag was being edited by a doofus.

That doofus was me.

I'd been in the writing trade for well over 40 years by then but writing for a newspaper and laying out a magazine are different animals.

At some point, John made several style-change suggestions, all of them making perfect sense.

When Ronnie was tiring of dealing with the demands of the magazine, to say nothing of its editor, John was ready to step up.

He and Ronnie worked together for several issues, with John taking on the design editor position in 2016.

The skill set he brought was, well, different.



"I started my professional music career while a junior in high school," he recalled in a recent interview.

"I played with a pickup band for a dance, and I was hired to play one note with the Inglewood Philharmonic. But it was a critical note," he said. And a solo at that.

He was playing for free, but suddenly Johnny One Note had a lot more notes to play, as the percussionist he had stood next to during rehearsals decided he would rather drink than perform.

John was drafted to take his place — and his paycheck.

After graduating college with a music degree, John became a social worker tackling child protection and home services and found when he sought a promotion that he would need a degree in administration — music wasn't going to cut it.

But he also discovered that getting a master's degree would be faster than getting a second bachelor's, and he started off by taking a management accounting course.

"I jumped into that real fast and I loved it," he said, and wished his county job a fond farewell as he became a CPA.

John and wife Yvonne, a highly-regarded plein-air painter and painting instructor, are part of the "Septemberistas" — the original gangsters who moved into Mirabella when it opened in September 2010.

While he is retiring from 3550 as primary design editor, the 3550 team hopes he will continue to advise.

Bert Van Gorder has taken over some of John's former responsibilities. 3550 is looking for a volunteer to provide additional design assistance.

A rumor persists that John will be doing layout for a scurrilous, unofficial publication called 34.95.

But we wouldn't know anything about that.



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Getting New Cars from Asia to Portland

By PETE SWAN

Did you ever think about how new cars built in Korea or Japan get to Portland?

Did you imagine a huge cargo ship with huge cranes at the ports for loading and unloading? Or did you imagine an ocean-going car ferry, with cars being driven on and off?

The latter is now the preferred way, but the “ferries” are not like anything you or I have driven on. Typical trans-Pacific car-carrying ships can hold 6,400 cars. The largest carries about 8,500.

An ocean-going transport ship with a ramp for driving cars on and off is called a ro-ro, which is short for roll on/roll off. Loading and unloading such cargo by cranes on conventional cargo ships would be far slower and more expensive.

One of the larger companies in this business is Glovis (Global + Vision), a subsidiary of Hyundai Motor Company.

Glovis owns 97 specialized ships, all with their signature sky-blue hulls and white topsides. The company projects delivering 3.4 million vehicles to ports around the world each year.

The Port of Portland is a major destination for off-loading these massive car carriers and transferring the vehicles to rail-cars or highway truck transports for delivery to their automobile-dealer customers.

An average of five Glovis ships a month discharge at the Port of Portland’s Terminal 6, where they deliver 73,000 Hyundai vehicles a year. Terminal 6 has 419 acres of land, five berths and more than 20,000 feet of railroad track.

NYK and K Lines deliver about 150,000 Toyotas each year to Portland’s Terminal 4 (262 acres, four berths). In 2020, other carriers landed almost 90,000 Subarus in Vancouver across the Columbia River.

The ocean-going car carriers have a very boxy structure. The bridge, crew quarters and galleys are all on the highest deck. The ships are typically 650 feet long with a beam (width) of 107 feet. Most have 12 decks (interconnected by ramps) where the cars are stowed and anchored in tight formation.



Photo: Glovis

A car carrier with loading ramp extended.

Glovis’s ships have an average sea speed of 17 knots. Crossing the Pacific takes 17 days. To increase the number of decks (and thus, the number of cars they can carry), the overheads (ceilings) on each deck are no more than 6 foot, 7 inches high. All ro-ros have a fore-and-aft-bulkhead down the center. There are no crosswise bulkheads, so each deck resembles a huge parking lot.

Ro-ro ships coming from Asia typically unload at several ports as they proceed around the world. The Glovis Sunrise stopped in Durban, South Africa; Buena Ventura, Venezuela; and Callao, Peru, before moving north along the Pacific coast. A typical south-bound coastal itinerary might be Vancouver, B.C., to Tacoma to Portland to Oakland to Port Hueneme (Oxnard, Calif.)

American-made vehicles — notably Fords, Lincolns, Jeeps, Fiat-Chryslers and domestic Hondas — can be loaded into the newly vacated spaces for the return trip to Asia. Portland exports more cars than any other port on the Pacific coast; in 2018, the count was 58,105 cars.

Since there must be some fuel in the cars’ tanks, the ships have extensive fire-suppression systems. Because the cars’ engines are running during loading and unloading, the ro-ros have powerful exhaust-ventilation systems.

The ships have modern flume-stabilizer systems with powerful pumps that shoot ballast water from tanks on one side to tanks on the opposite side. This reduces the roll caused by wind and wave action. The huge “sail area” of the ships’ vertical sides, with approximately 50 feet of hull height above the waterline, can cause a lot of rolling when there is a crosswind.

Obviously, the cars must be well-secured. This is accomplished by lashing each car with four strong polyester straps. The 2-inch-wide straps have hooks at each end plus a tensioner. The straps hook to the car’s undercarriage and to rings recessed in the deck. Keeping the cars held in place is so important that the crew must inspect every lashing every three days during the voyage.

Very, very few ro-ros have capsized over the years, but some cynics nevertheless refer to them as “roll-on/roll-overs.” Over the last 33 years, there were only a few capsizes or severe lists that were not the result of collisions or that did not involve conventional car ferries. One of those few events led to the ship Cougar Ace being towed to Portland for repairs.

U.S. law required that ships on international voyages purge their ballast tanks of foreign water before entering U.S. waters. The Cougar Ace was carrying 4,703 Mazdas and somehow botched the ballast-water replacement process. It pumped out the ballast but failed to simultaneously replenish it with U.S. seawater.

The result was that the ship heeled over 90 degrees. The Cougar was eventually righted and towed 3,000 miles to Portland for repairs. Enough water entered the hold that every Mazda was badly water-damaged. All had to be crushed — by Schnitzer Steel here in Portland.

Soon after a ro-ro is made fast to the pier, an elegant piece of engineering comes into play. A massive portion of the vertical stern is lowered — by internal cabling and hydraulics — so that it rotates over a bottom hinge at least 90 degrees to become a 35-foot-wide ramp. The ramp angles shoreward enough to reach the dock, permitting the cars to be driven off the ship.

Like any ocean-shipping enterprise, speed of turnaround in port is important. One might think of stowage on a ro-ro as solving a giant Rubik's Cube. Yes, the cars are mobile, but it would be time-consuming, even dangerous, to have to relocate them once they are loaded.

Sophisticated software is used for in-voyage stability and optimizing loading and unloading.

At the discharge terminal, vans ferry the longshore workers from the dock to the appropriate deck on the ship. Diagrams of the ship's interior help the stevedores' foreman tell the individual longshore workers where to find the cars they will drive off the ship (the ignition fobs are left in the cars). Before anyone starts a car's motor, all the cars must be unlash and the lashings stowed on a nearby bulkhead.

Labels affixed to the windshield indicate where the car must be left once it is driven off the ship.

Some of the cars will be trans-shipped by train on special railcars, called AutoRacks. Moving those cars presents a union jurisdictional issue: On the dock, Teamsters take over and drive the cars to a railroad siding inside the terminal where AutoRacks await. These railcars can accept autos on two, sometimes three, levels, and have retractable bridges so the Teamsters can drive to the furthest car, bypassing closer AutoRacks.

Not all cars will be trans-shipped by train. Some are left in specified aisles in the dock area. From there, the cars may be processed by Auto Warehouse Company (AWC), a nationwide agent for imported-car consignees, taken to warehouses or hauled away by auto-carrying trucks.

The ro-ro's marine-insurance carrier covers damage to cargo while on board the ship, but once the cars are on the dock, the risk is shifted to the port, the stevedore, the railroad, AWC or the highway auto-carrier.

Importing new cars has been transformed by the operation of behemoth ro-ro ships and the software and talented people who sail them and handle their cargo. They are not the car ferries any of us are familiar with.

For an interesting video on ro-ros, go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RzrHJp7csxA&t>



Photo: Glovis

The Glovis Challenge at sea.

