

Island Times

Look for Island
Times the LAST
Thursday of
each month
OCT. 2020

MONTHLY NEWSPAPER OF ISLAND SENIOR RESOURCES AND THE CENTER IN OAK HARBOR

Volume 4 • Issue 6

Staying Well Rounded in a Flat Screen World

By Christina Baldwin

Board Member, Island Senior Resources

My 93-year-old mother-in-law, Astrid, lives in a skilled-care nursing facility in Minnesota, a few miles from the home of one of her four attentive daughters. The other daughters are spread from Washington to Arizona to North Carolina. Her lifeline is her connection to her girls: they talk daily by phone, and they Zoom every Friday afternoon. In Astrid's quarantined facility, an aide brings an iPad into her room, sets it on a tray in front of her, and suddenly her four daughters and her own face appear on the little screen. Every week she is amazed at the technology that makes this reunion possible.

Zoom is a California tech company being widely used as a platform for video conferencing, telecommuting, distance education, and social relationships. "Want to Zoom?" "Did you Zoom?" "See you on Zoom." "Don't forget the Zoom meeting." For a whole swath of the population, from youngsters to elders, as we live through these COVID times, zooming has changed our lives. We are a zooming family, zooming education system, zooming workplace, nation, and world.

There are many articles you can read about this company, debate its platform, and examine the impact of technology on children and elders. Let's look at how to stay well rounded in a flat-screen world. Some folks are facile at making this switch, others are still learning, resistant to change, or fearful of electronic intrusion into their routines.

We are all somewhere on a learning spectrum with emerging technologies. If we need help, we need to ask for it. The younger generations have skills to share, and it's a great way to interact with grandchildren. If we need basic equipment, there are likely spare devices to share. For example, when older neighbors needed help getting on Zoom for a community meeting, another neighbor (carefully masked) lent them a laptop and, through a window, coached them into the Zoom meeting.

As we face the winter months and increased isolation, we can help each other stay connected through engaging

"Technology is best when it brings people together."

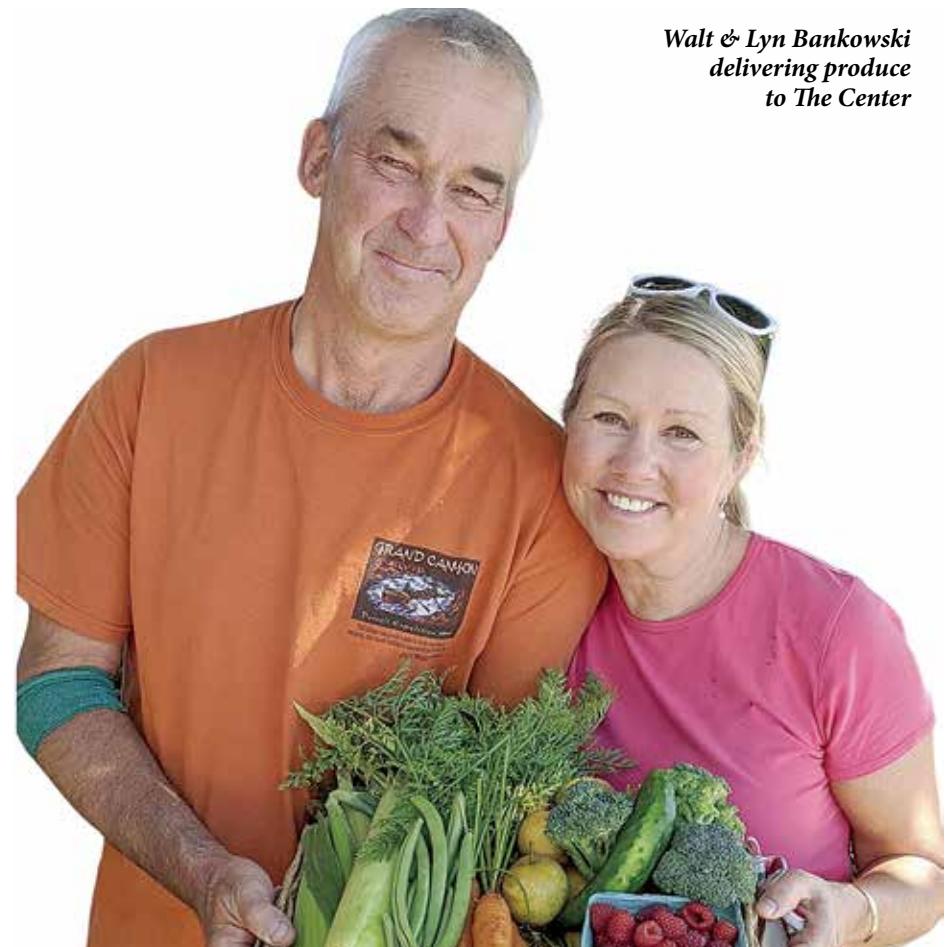
~ Matt Mullenweg,
Social Media Entrepreneur



Photo by
Susan Lynch

STAYING continued on page 12

Walt & Lyn Bankowski
delivering produce
to The Center



A Bounty of Blessings from The Lord's Garden

By Carly Larson

Program Coordinator, City of Oak Harbor Senior Services

The Center in Oak Harbor has been one of many sites blessed with produce from The Lord's Garden. Over the years, they have continually dropped off delicious, fresh produce grown right here in Oak Harbor, which you may have indulged in some yourself. When The Center was

open for in-person programming, the produce could be found on the stage in the multi-purpose room or on the bar in the lounge. This year, not being able to open for in-person programming, we have set the produce out next to the

BLESSINGS continued on page 3

QUESTION OF THE MONTH: **WHAT DID YOU DO AS AN ADOLESCENT THAT YOUR PARENTS DISAPPROVED OF?**

Sandra Smith

Coupeville

"Using my mom's car for cruising around with my girlfriend instead of going to my volunteer position at the hospital."

Beverly Kinkade Pearce, 66

Freeland

"Played rock 'n roll... Rolling Stones sent them right out of the room."

Lilia Escojido

Oak Harbor

"Snuck out of school but got caught by the police and it was a life lesson, I learned to not do anything wrong again."

Chantell Petty

Whidbey Island

"Dated a guy who wore a black leather jacket, had a ponytail, and an earring...then I married him some years later."

Mariam Ross

Whidbey Island

"I attended Grateful Dead concerts at the Filmore and Avalon ballrooms – arrived home in the wee hours!"

Liz Lange

Coupeville

"When I would sneak out to midnight movie premiers on a school night."

Kim McLaine Oliver, 50

Freeland

"Wore my skirts way to short and my hair way too big."

Joshua Sanders

Oak Harbor

"Smoked a cigarette with my friends and my dad scared me so bad when he caught me right away that I never smoked again."

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The Center in Oak Harbor

51 SE Jerome St.,
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Front Desk: 360-279-4580

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Passport photos available
by appointment

Normal Business Hours:

Mon-Fri, 8:30 am - 4:30 pm
Additional evening and
weekend classes and events
as scheduled

Yearly Membership Dues: \$40

Available for anyone 50+ years

Liz Lange • 360-279-4581

Senior Services Administrator

Carly Larson • 360-279-4583

Program Coordinator

Send comments and suggestions
to clarson@oakharbor.org

A Friendly Reminder from the Oak Harbor Fire Department

Carbon monoxide alarms expire after 7-10 years - it may be time to check the date printed on your alarm! If you need help replacing your alarm call our OHFD friends at 360-279-4707 to schedule assistance.



Signs your carbon monoxide alarm is close to End-of-Life



- End-of-Life warning will occur every 30 seconds
- If the alarm has a digital display, it displays the ERR or END error code
- Replacing the battery WON'T STOP the beep
- The beep will ONLY STOP when the alarm is out of power

Source: Kidde

**Carbon monoxide alarms do not detect the presence of
carbon monoxide when in end-of-life mode**

Whidbey Island Genealogical Searchers (WIGS)

**Tuesday, October 20
1 p.m. on Zoom**

(sign in 10-15 mins. early)

Heidi Mair: "The Progressive Era and Women's Rights"

All are invited to join us for this free educational program.
Non-WIGS members wishing to attend should send an email
to whidbeysearchers.org no later than October 17.



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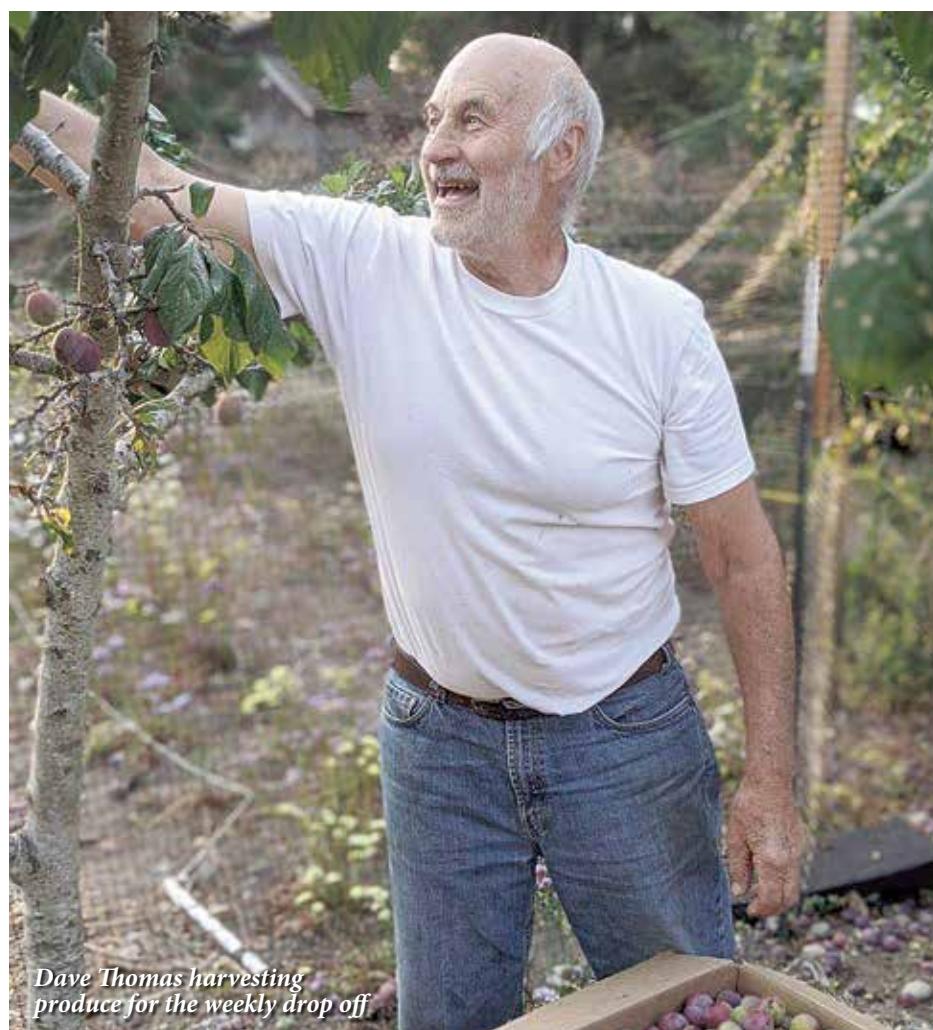
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**BLESSINGS** continued from page 1

lending book table Thursdays and many have enjoyed the delicious fruits and vegetables.

I had a chance to talk with Walt and Lyn Bankowski during a weekly delivery and learned a little more about the history and operation of The Lord's Garden. They explained to me how The Lord's Garden started in 1986 in Coupeville by a gentleman named Randy Duggin. It has always been non-denominational and just a way to give fresh, local produce to seniors, low-income individuals, homeless, and abused women and children. When first starting out, most of their produce went to the food banks and homeless shelters but in the 90s, when master gardener Lyn Bankowski got involved, she saw the need for resources to access fresh produce from the older adults in the community. Since that time, they have focused their efforts on providing older adults with a bounty of fresh produce. They currently make deliveries for The Center, Meals on Wheels, CamBey, Cambridge Cove, and CADA.

Over the years, their garden has been in different locations throughout Whidbey Island but currently they grow all the

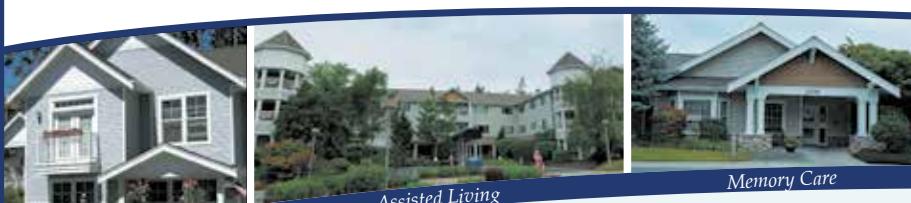
produce at M & M Flowers on Fakkema Road in Oak Harbor. Dave Thomas, the owner of M & M Flowers gladly offers up about an acre of his land solely for the Lord's Garden use. Dave also supplies the tractor and big equipment when needed and starts the vegetables from seeds in his greenhouse. All the produce The Lord's Garden supplies is possible from a handful of dedicated community members who volunteer their time and knowledge; Walt and Lyn Bankowski, Dave Thomas, Judy Nelson, Dennis Nealon, Judy Grimshaw, and Gayle Taylor. The group currently meets once a week on Wednesdays and works together for about an hour to upkeep the garden. They grow just about anything including; onions, sweet corn, cucumbers, broccoli, zucchini, carrots, berries, and even Asian pears.

We are so grateful for amazing and selfless community members like these who see a need in the community and work to fill it. It is amazing how far the reach of a few good people goes.

If you are interested in supporting The Lord's Garden you can send donations to PO Box 1413 Oak Harbor WA, 98277 (please make checks out to The Lords Garden Association or The LGA).

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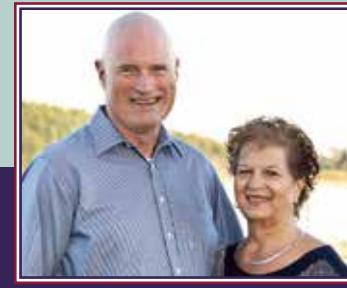
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CLASSES and EVENTS at The Center in Oak Harbor

CARLY WAYMIRE IS NOW CARLY LARSON

This summer, Carly got married and she has taken her husband's name. Her email will now be clarson@oakharbor.org and emails sent to cwaymire@oakharbor.org will be forwarded to the new email address for a period of time.

NEW FRONT DESK AND SOFTWARE

As part of our efforts to return to in-person programming we received CARES grant funding for two projects:

- We are re-configuring the front desk space to allow for appropriate social distancing for front desk volunteers and staff.
- We are also updating our membership software which will allow for online reservations and payments for classes, memberships, trips and space rentals.

We are excited for both these updates which should both be completed by the end of this month.

BRUNCH BOXES

**Thursdays, Oct. 8, Nov. 12, Dec. 10
9-10:30 a.m. at The Center**

\$15 each or \$40 for all 3
Deadline to order is the Thursday prior

The second Thursday of October, November, and December, we will have brunch boxes for purchase for \$15 per box or

\$40 for all three when you pre-pay. Grab your brunch box and head to the park or beach with a friend, or eat with us on our Virtual Brunch with Friends. Please pre-order your brunch box by the Thursday prior. Brunch boxes will contain an assortment of commercially prepared items.

Delivery is available within Oak Harbor city limits for a \$5 delivery fee.

Pick-up time is 9-10:30 a.m. at The Center and Virtual Brunch with Friends will start at 11 a.m. Call 360-279-4580 today to order your brunch boxes!

BRUNCH BOX DAYS	DEADLINE
October 8	October 1
November 12	November 5
December 10	December 3

FREE BOOK AND PRODUCE TABLE CONTINUE THIS FALL

**Tuesdays and Thursdays
10 a.m. - 2 p.m.**

Every Tuesday and Thursday, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m., there is a table outside the front door of The Center with free books, magazines and puzzles. Please feel free to take as many as you would like, and feel free to leave a few when you are finished with them. The book table will continue through the fall, but may not be out on days of inclement weather.

We have been so fortunate to also provide free produce Thursdays, as we receive deliveries from The Lord's Garden. Those

deliveries will continue until the harvest is over. Bring a bag and fill it with fresh produce! If you have a garden with an abundance of produce you would like to share please feel free to add to the table.



The May/June AMP class participating in group discussion with guest speaker Jeffery Pleet

AGING MASTERY PROGRAM

We are proud to partner with the National Council on Aging to offer you the Aging Mastery Program (AMP) starter kit. The Starter kit will inspire you to take steps toward positive across six dimensions and help you build your own playbook for aging well. Each dimension has specific guideposts, or actions, you are encouraged to incorporate in your daily life. Each week will have a RingCentral (Powered by Zoom) meeting with the group and a guest speaker to discuss the chapter and apply what we have learned.

Schedule of Virtual Group Discussions:

- Oct.13 - Welcome & Introduction
- Oct. 20 - Gratitude & Mindfulness
- Oct. 27 - Health & Well-being
- Nov. 3 - Finances & Future Planning
- Nov. 10 - Connections & Community
- Nov. 17 - Creativity & Learning
- Nov. 24 - Legacy & Purpose

If you are interested in joining the free program, please contact Carly Larson at 360-279-4583 or clarson@oakharbor.org to arrange getting your kit and the meeting information.

Please Note: If you would like a starter kit you are not required to attend the group discussions.

VIRTUAL MUSEUM TOUR

Friday, Oct. 23 • 11 a.m.

Although we can't travel down to the Wing Luke Museum together to learn about Asian Pacific American experiences, we can take a tour together virtually! Join Program Coordinator Carly on a

guided virtual tour Oct. 23 at 11 am. The cost is \$12 for members and \$15 for non-members. Please sign up by calling The Center.

VIRTUAL EXERCISE AND YOGA CLASSES

We are now offering Exercise Class and Yoga through RingCentral (powered by Zoom). The cost is \$25 a month for center members and \$35 for non-members and currently we are unable to offer a drop-in rate or take insurance reimbursements. We can take payment over the phone, by mail, or we can set up a drop off time. To enroll in the class please call the front desk at 360.279.4580. Once you have been enrolled in the class and sign the waiver, we will send you the login information to join.



EXERCISE CLASS

**Monday, Wednesday, & Friday
9:45 a.m.**

Instructor: Bernice Manglona-Charlton

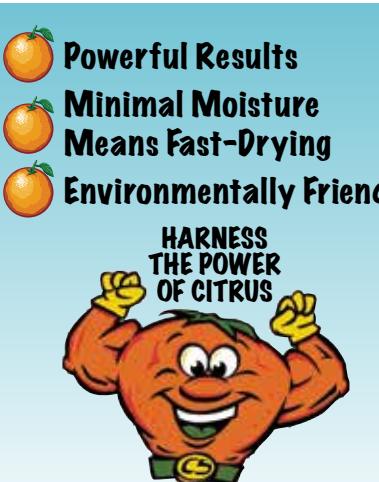


YOGA

Tuesday & Thursday • 8:30 a.m.
Instructor: Maria McGee

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Island Transit and the Americans with Disabilities Act

By Maribeth Crandell
Island Transit Mobility Specialist

The Americans with Disabilities Act was signed into law 30 years ago on July 26, 1990. It's something to celebrate as it allows many people to participate in a full, active, higher quality of life. The ADA addresses disabilities that may affect vision, hearing, cognitive function or mobility. You might be fit and able to meet your own transportation needs today, but in years to come, an accident or impairments could change all that. For those that cannot drive or use the regular bus service, paratransit is here for you.

Island Transit provides free bus service and free paratransit service for the disabled and impaired. The ADA requires public transit systems across the country to provide transportation within $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile of a fixed route bus (as the crow flies) for anyone who qualifies for paratransit. All of Island Transit buses are able to safely transport wheelchairs or other mobility devices, but paratransit is a curb to curb service for eligible individuals.

If you live in Island County you may apply for paratransit service. Island Transit Paratransit Coordinator, Dee Wells, reviews each case individually. She may visit your home to see if it's accessible by bus and talk with you about your disability. It may take two or three weeks to complete the review process.

If you qualify, you can call to schedule a ride. Paratransit buses operate during the same hours as the regular bus service, which is available Monday through Saturday. Paratransit riders must call a day ahead Monday through Friday to schedule transportation, or call on Friday to make an appointment for Monday. You may be sharing the bus with another paratransit rider. A caregiver or service animal may travel with you if needed.

Sometimes paratransit riders are transferred to a regular bus for part of their trip. Or someone who qualifies for paratransit may decide to take a regular bus. All Island Transit buses have lifts or ramps and are able to accommodate one or two wheelchairs or mobility devices.

Since Covid-19 hit us this spring, island Transit has stepped up to clean and disinfect all of our buses nightly. Our bus drivers wear face masks. We provide face masks for our riders on each bus. We limit the number of people on our buses and provide space between seats. Only two passengers are allowed on a paratransit bus.

Paratransit helps people get to work, school, shopping, medical facilities, government offices, museums, libraries, restaurants, parks, recreation, entertainment, family and friends within $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile of the regular bus routes. And it's free, like our bus service, with friendly, helpful drivers to get you there safely. For more information visit: www.islandtransit.org and look under Additional Services or call 360-678-7771.

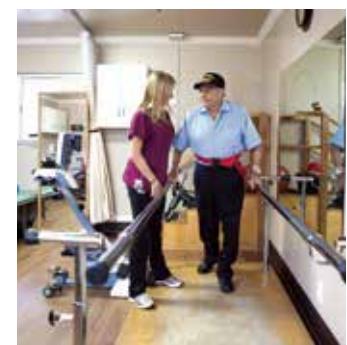
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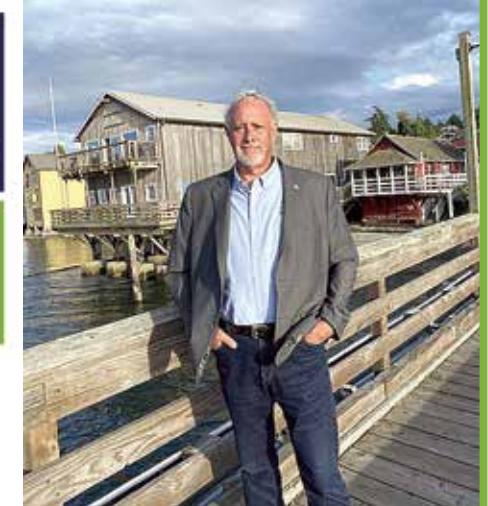
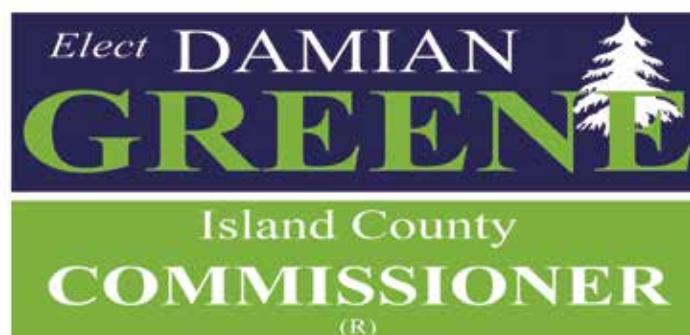
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- Thoughtful planning for affordable housing
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- Repairing Maxwelton Creek's Outdoor Classroom and salmon

As a South Whidbey School Board Director, Damian has managed a \$20M Budget, 200 employees, and mitigated school funding deficits with energy efficiency savings and increasing revenue through the creation of the Community Center.

Visit electdamian.com for his vision, platform, videos, and biography

Paid for by Campaign to Elect Damian Greene, Island County Commissioner, Dist 1 • P.O. Box 161, Clinton, WA 98236



Farmers to Families

By Jessica Karpilo, ISR Outreach Associate

USDA has partnered with farmers, ranchers, specialty crop producers, food processors and distributors, and non-profit organizations to ensure that all Americans have access to the fresh and wholesome food they need during the COVID-19 national emergency. The result of this partnership is the Farmers to Families Food Box.

According to the USDA, they will "purchase up to \$3 billion in fresh produce, dairy and meat products from American producers of all sizes. The program will supply food boxes of fresh fruits and vegetables, dairy products, meat products and a combination box of fresh produce, dairy or meat products. Distributors will package these products into family-sized boxes, then transport them to food banks, community and faith-based organizations, and other non-profits serving Americans in need. The first round of purchases totaling up to \$1.2 billion occurred from May

15 through June 30, 2020. The second round will aim to purchase up to \$1.47 billion July 1 through August 31, 2020."

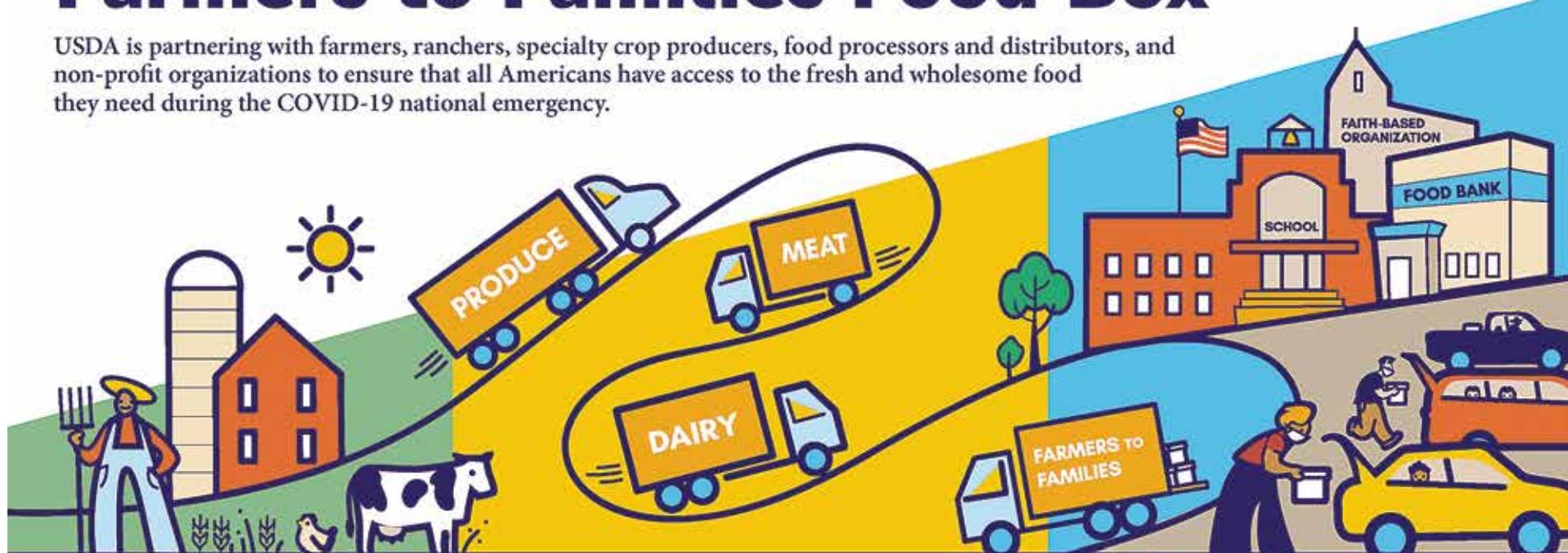
Island Senior Resources, in collaboration with St. Hubert's Catholic Church in Langley, has taken advantage of this USDA program to offer these boxes to all Meals on Wheels clients in Island County. A total of 116 Meals on Wheels recipients accepted the offer and received boxes on Saturday, August 15, delivered by ISR Meals on Wheels staff and volunteers.

Debbie Metz, Nutrition Director, received this heartfelt message from an individual who received one of these boxes: "Just wanted to express my sincere appreciation and heartfelt thanks for that box of food that I recently received from you. It was laden with all the food groups that will help me recover from my three orthopedic surgical procedures. I feel blessed to have this assistance and I want to thank you for allowing it to come to fruition. Warm Regards and God Bless you. Jesus (Jess) Camacho, Ed.D."



Farmers to Families Food Box

USDA is partnering with farmers, ranchers, specialty crop producers, food processors and distributors, and non-profit organizations to ensure that all Americans have access to the fresh and wholesome food they need during the COVID-19 national emergency.



Farmers

sell food previously destined for restaurants and bulk purchasers to distributors, preventing waste

Distributors

partner with USDA to package family-sized boxes with fresh produce, dairy and meat products, then transport them to non-profits across America

Families

pick up food boxes from local schools, food banks, faith-based organizations and other non-profits

Bill Bruch's Top Issues >>>

- Fight new and higher taxes
- Eliminate mandatory sex-ed beginning in kindergarten
- Defend not defund our police
- Get our kids back in the classrooms

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ALL PROGRAMMING AND CLASSES ARE ONLINE UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

Support Group Meetings now available online



Contact Island Senior Resource's Mel Watson at mel@islandseniorservices.org to receive information about joining any of the current Support Group meeting and how to attend them from your home using the Zoom online meeting solution.

Time Together @ Home with Zoom Support Group

Every Monday, 11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Parkinson's support group

Every Tuesday, 10–11:30 a.m.

Alzheimer's and Dementia Caregivers Support Group

Every Wednesday, 10 – 11:30 a.m.

Parkinsonics and friends Singing Group

(for those living with Parkinson's, their caregivers and anyone who loves to have a good old sing-a-long)

Every Thursday, 2:30–3:30 p.m.

Contact Mel at mel@islandseniorservices.org to receive information about joining any one of these groups, or to request additional support group meetings.

We Can Help You with Medicare!

Medicare 2021: Medicare's open enrollment runs Oct. 15 – Dec. 7. This is when you need to update and/or change your Medicare Advantage and/or Medicare drug plans to meet your needs next year. There are changes in Medicare in 2021 for some enrollees. We will help you understand what is best for you! Attend a Zoom class on any of the dates below.

Getting Ready for Medicare: If you are going on Medicare in the next six months and/or are wanting to know more about Medicare, attend a "Getting Ready for Medicare" seminar on Zoom, offered by SHIBA (Statewide Health Insurance Benefits Advisors) volunteers. Counselors will answer brief questions following the seminars. Seminars run 1 -1.5 hours.

Information will be provided about:

- "Basic" Medicare benefits
- Changes for 2021 (covered in the Medicare 2021 classes)
- Options for additional insurance(s)
- Medicare parts A and B
- The differences between "Medigap" (supplemental) insurance and Advantage plans
- Benefits and rates
- Prescription drug plans. (If you want help with your drug plan, we will tell you how to get it).

Individual Consultations: For more in-depth information, advisors are available for individual consultations by phone or zoom; call 360-321-1600 or 360-678-3373 ext 0.

To obtain a Zoom link for any class, call 360-321-1600 or 360-678-3373. No pre-registration required.

MEDICARE 2021:

Tuesday, Oct. 20 • 1 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 10 • 1 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 2 • 10 a.m.

Saturday, Oct. 24 • 10 a.m. Wednesday, Nov. 18 • 6:30 p.m.

Saturday, Nov. 7 • 10 a.m. Monday, Nov. 23 • 1 p.m.

GETTING READY FOR MEDICARE:

Saturday, Oct. 28 • 1 p.m.

The Statewide Health Insurance Benefits Advisors (SHIBA) offer unbiased, confidential advising for Medicare benefits and insurance options.

MEALS ON WHEELS MENU OCTOBER

\$6 Suggested donation for meals

WEEK 1

Fri	2	Chicken Divan w/Broccoli
-----	---	--------------------------

WEEK 2

Mon	5	Stuffed Potato w/Chili & Veggies
-----	---	----------------------------------

Wed	7	Mac & Cheese w/Ham
-----	---	--------------------

Fri	9	Quiche Lorraine & Potatoes O'Brien
-----	---	------------------------------------

WEEK 3

Mon	12	Oven Baked Ranch Chicken
-----	----	--------------------------

Wed	14	Hot Turkey Sandwich
-----	----	---------------------

Fri	16	Taco Bake & Southwest Salad
-----	----	-----------------------------

WEEK 4

Mon	19	Meatloaf & Mashed Potatoes
-----	----	----------------------------

Wed	21	Pork Loin & Roasted Vegetables
-----	----	--------------------------------

Fri	23	Lemon Braised Chicken Tenders
-----	----	-------------------------------

WEEK 4

Mon	26	Spaghetti & Meatballs
-----	----	-----------------------

Wed	28	Beef & Broccoli Stir Fry
-----	----	--------------------------

Fri	30	Ghoulish Goulash
-----	----	------------------

**CLOSED TUESDAY
AND THURSDAYS**

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PSE Can Help You!

By Robin Bush, ISR Outreach Director

I recently visited with Walt Blackford, Outreach Manager for Puget Sound Energy on Whidbey Island, to talk about electric safety and how to prepare for storm-related outages. We also reviewed some of PSE's popular energy efficiency programs. ISR is one of PSE's Powerful Partners for 2020. Together we are helping our communities.

RB: Walt, how does PSE prepare for winter storms?

WB: Our crews and storm support staff participate in training in the fall, and we stock appropriate supplies and equipment at our service center in Oak Harbor. We also prepare during the spring and summer through vegetation management by trimming or removing trees that might produce outages caused by high winds or heavy snowfall.

RB: What can ISR readers do to prepare for unplanned outages?

WB: First, we encourage all customers to create an emergency kit based on their personal needs and size of their household. Don't forget to include food and other items for your pets! Red Cross and Island County Department of Emergency Management have great checklists for what to include in your kit. For major outages, PSE recommends 7-10 days of water and non-perishable food; however, because we live on an island in an earthquake zone, it makes sense to prepare for a disaster that could last

two weeks or more. You can find more information at www.pse.com?page=create-a-kit.

RB: Does it make sense for residents and businesses on Whidbey to install emergency generators?

WB: Outages on Whidbey generally have become shorter and less frequent. Just ask anyone who lived here in the '90s or earlier! The grid system is stronger, and vegetation management is more effective. So, this is very much a personal question for each PSE customer, based on their circumstances. Individuals with medical conditions that require electricity-powered equipment 24/7 will want to give this serious consideration. Obviously, it involves a financial investment, and not everyone has the resources, but for those with financial capacity, there is a wide range of possibilities. The smallest portable generators cost \$2,000+ and provide power for basic appliances like a refrigerator, some lighting, and a space heater, but not an electric furnace. As generators increase in size, they increase in cost. An automatic whole-house generator can cost \$25,000 or more. There's lots of information on the internet about selecting, installing, and safely operating a back-up generator. Go to PSE's website: www.pse.com/pages/generator-safety.

RB: If we come across a downed power line, what should we do?

WB: First, assume any line on the ground is energized and stay at least 35 feet away. At a safe distance, call 911 or PSE

(888-225-5773) to report the downed wire. If possible, remain in the area to warn others to stay away until a PSE crew or first responders arrive. Do not drive over a downed wire because it might become entangled with your vehicle and cause additional damage. If the line is on or near your vehicle, and you are inside, remain in the vehicle until PSE or first responders have assured you it is safe to exit or to move the vehicle.

RB: On Whidbey, some folks insist they always are last to be restored. Can you explain PSE's process for responding to an outage?

WB: Our first priority is the safety of our crews and outage support teams. In the event of a weather-related outage, we will not deploy damage assessors until it is safe to do so. Once they are in the field, they report to storm headquarters on the damage they find. The storm response team then assigns crews with focus on repairing high-voltage transmission lines and substations. When these are completed, crews shift to priorities like water treatment plants, hospitals, schools, and other essential public facilities. The overall guideline is to restore the greatest number of customers in the shortest amount of time. So, individuals living in more remote areas with few neighbors may be among the last to be restored.

RB: I know PSE offers programs that help reduce energy use and save money. Tell us about a few of the most popular or effective.

WB: If electricity usage can be reduced, PSE probably has a program that will help. Programs include weatherization,

insulation upgrades, installing double-pane windows to replace single-pane, upgrading refrigerators and other appliances, installing energy efficient LED bulbs to replace old incandescent versions, replacing baseboard heaters with ductless heat pumps, and more. We'll even help pay for a programmable "smart" thermostat so customers can manage energy usage remotely through the internet. We also have special programs for customers who live in manufactured homes. Not many customers realize that we will pick-up and properly dispose of your old refrigerator or freezer if it was made in 1992 or earlier, although it must be working. Plus, we'll pay you \$25! Details at: www.pse.com/rebates.

RB: Finally, if customers find themselves unable to pay all or some of their bill, does PSE offer any assistance?

WB: Customers who meet income eligibility guidelines can request bill pay and weatherization assistance through Opportunity Council in Oak Harbor. First-time applicants must schedule an appointment by calling 1-800-317-5427 or on their website: www.oppc.org/basic-needs/home-energy. We also will make payment arrangements, so the balance due does not have to be paid all at once.

RB: What number should people call if they have questions?

WB: For general questions or billing/payment issues, call 888-225-5773. For questions about how to reduce energy usage, call the Energy Advisor team at 800-562-1482.

RB: Thank you Walt!



**KATHLEEN
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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Fall and Winter are coming

By Cheryn Weiser, Executive Director, Island Senior Resources

Cooler days and longer nights mean fall and winter are on the way. I admit to feeling a little resentful about the erosion of light both morning and night. My outdoor duties are contained by the disappearing light.

This year I am aware that I need to put more thought into how to make the fall and winter months into a nurturing and recharging time amid the "all of this" era. What do I need to do to nurture myself? How can I take advantage of this time to do things I didn't think of doing when social distancing and mask-wearing weren't a daily presence? What are new ways of thinking about the holidays that will still feel special yet different? How flexible can I be? What supports my ability to adapt in these times?

I am reminded of stories told by my maternal grandma and my mom about the days of the Great Depression. My grandma ran a boarding house in Port Angeles for men on ships at harbor. As WWII came, my granddad worked to take big spruce trees down to build planes. Then there are my in-laws that fled Germany in 1937 and set down roots in the US, courtesy of a church in Rhode Island. A familiar refrain shared by my mom comes to mind, "This too shall pass."

Contemplating fall and winter, I start from a place of being clear about taking care of myself. To me, that means good food, exercise, plenty of sleep, and making sure I do things that nurture me emotionally, like staying in touch with those I care about. Random acts of kindness feed my soul.

Discover and put in place whatever supports you in settling in for the marathon, not the sprint. Don't forget to ask for help. Notice what you are grateful for. For starters, I am grateful to live on Whidbey Island! How about you?

WE GIVE WHAT WE CAN

By Charles LaFond, author, engager, ISR staff member

As apples and cinnamon begin to fill the air in our kitchens, fall is remarkably beautiful on Whidbey Island. Tourism has slowed, and it feels like we have the island to ourselves again. October is a time of preparation for Thanksgiving with its focus on mindfulness.

This month, Island Senior Resources will be celebrating our mission with you in Zoom meetings. Please contact us for a link to join. Our new Annual Impact Report (available on our website at www.senior-resource.org/impact) celebrates our work to provide resources that enhance the emotional, social, and

physical well-being of seniors, adults with disabilities, and those who care for them.

This is an especially important time to care for our neighbors and families. It is also a time to take a big, deep breath before the busy-ness of Thanksgiving through New Year's; it's the calm before the storm.

October is also a time when I review my budget and my savings to determine what year-end gifts I will be giving to local nonprofits in this season of giving.

I live on a small bit of land next to a neighbor. She is in her 90s and a bit frail. I see her on walks with her kind



caregiver, John, who has become a friend of mine. He works hard to help her with things she can't quite manage these days – lawn-mowing, medications, cleaning, and lifting her in and out of bed when she is too tired to manage it herself. We often forget how much hard, kind work caregivers do,

John came next-door to visit me yesterday and brought apples from her apple tree - big, red, beautiful apples. He also came with an offer. "Charles, Mary will be happy for you to pick apples from her trees this fall as you do your cooking." I responded in kind, "John, how about this...if I pick apples from Mary's tree, I'll pick enough for two pies, not just one. And I'll bring the second pie over for you two to enjoy."

This is what it means to live on an island. This is what it means to be neighbors. We give what we have to each other. John gives his energy and physical strength. I give my pastry and cooking. Mary gives her apples. We are next-door neighbors. And, between us, we have two hot apple pies.

As we consider our blessings in this season of cinnamon and apples, I hope we may consider what we have and what we may be willing to give away to support our neighbors.



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- Oct. 31 Green Tagged CLOTHING, \$1

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Aging & Disability Resources
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Oak Harbor Aging & Disability Resources
360-675-0311

For more information, visit www.senior-resources.org

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Island Senior Resources eNews!

Join our email list and receive our monthly eNews the last Friday of every month. It's full of updates for the month ahead: sales at Senior Thrift, special events, classes, menus, and links to great articles. Sign up online at www.senior-resources.org.

Strategies for Well-being: Part 1

By Betsy Griffith, LMHC, Island County Human Services

Navigating well-being through these times can be challenging. A lack of control or any estimate of how long we will be struggling with COVID-19 is a recipe for increased stress. This, combined with a lack of healthy 'traditional' coping tools, can lead to increases in anxiety, depression, substance use, and even traumatic experiences. Learning to navigate our well-being through this takes ingenuity and a lot of teamwork. Each month, in this column, we will explore how we can best care for ourselves and loved ones as we build practices based on scientifically supported well-being strategies. We will include areas like:

- Physical Well-being:** How we care for our physical well-being has a profound impact on our overall functioning and emotional wellness. There are relatively easy things we can do regularly to meet these physical needs. We'll explore innovative ways to meet our physical activity needs, how we can improve our sleep, and some good (and easy) ways to maintain a healthy diet.

- Emotional Resilience:** Building and maintaining strong social connections is a prerequisite to emotional resilience. This has been particularly problematic in times of physical distancing. What options are available while some of our normal social groups are unable to meet? How can we meet our needs for touch (particularly difficult for those living alone)?

- Building Our Bounce-back Strengths:** Resilience is something we cultivate through regular efforts in important life skills. Working on building relationships, gratitude, humor, creativity, and more are all linked with our ability to rebound. While skills in resilience will be beneficial now, they

will also carry us through our lifetime.

- Mindfulness and Gratitude:** Mindfulness and gratitude routines have been linked to well-being markers, not just emotional wellness, but also physical factors like lower blood pressure and improved cardiovascular health. As little as five minutes a day of these practices can lead to positive impacts. Feel overwhelmed at the thought of sitting quietly while clearing your mind? We'll try some easy guided activities together.
- Prioritizing Good News:** Let's make good news a priority (a.k.a. "let's not get lost in the stress"). Endless news cycles and information at our fingertips can overwhelm our self-care. We will explore setting boundaries for the stress and making an effort to bring in more "positive."
- Mental Health Support:** We will check on our needs to support our mental health. Sometimes, we need more than we can do for ourselves. We will explore how to reach out for mental health support and who can help us navigate these services. Thankfully, there are more and more options via telehealth counseling. Telehealth is proving effective for many behavioral health needs.
- Learning Opens Doors:** Connecting to learning opportunities can make these times a little easier...maybe music lessons or studying history. There are so many options available to us these days, and learning can be helpful to our cognitive abilities and overall functioning.

While we are focusing on building strength in our responses to COVID-19 and physical distancing, all of these practices are shown to be beneficial to well-being at any time. Let's begin some good habits in our care for ourselves.

Medical Equipment Lending Library

Need a walker, wheelchair, or other assistive devices? Maybe you have some to donate? The ISR Medical Equipment Lending Library is open for donations and pickups every Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 1-4 p.m. at Island Senior Resources (Bayview), 14594 SR 525, Langley. Follow the signs and arrows to the Evergreen Room door entrance. Please make sure any donations are fully functioning and clean.

Connecting in Difficult Times

Island County Human Services will be hosting a weekly Support Group for Seniors on Zoom. The group will meet Thursdays from 11-12. The focus will be building social connections in the era of physical distancing. While not a therapy group, this can be a place where you can

feel comfortable sharing any struggles you are experiencing in response to the COVID-19 safety recommendations. If you are interested, please call 360 678 8293 or fill out the form online at www.cognitoforms.com/IslandCounty1/COVID19ReferralForServices.

Volunteer Drivers Needed!

Would you like to help a neighbor? We need drivers willing to drive others to essential medical appointments from Oak Harbor/Coupeville to Seattle or Everett. Drivers are needed to/from other destinations as well. Mileage is reimbursed and client pays ferry costs. If you are interested in helping please contact ISR at 360-321-1600 and ask for Pat Weekly, Medical Transportation.

(Our transportation program follows state mandated health guidelines. All drivers and clients are required to wear masks to protect both drivers and passengers).

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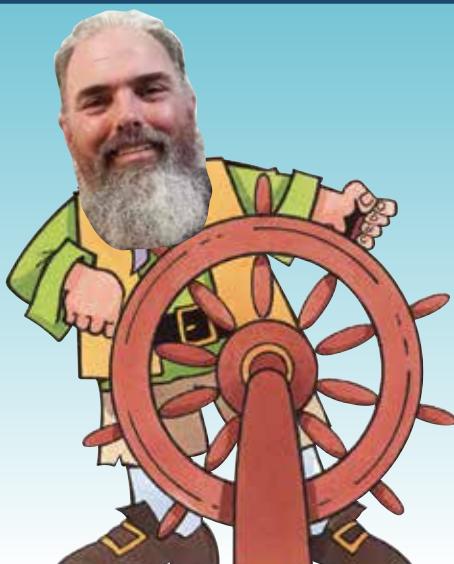


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STAYING continued from page 1

in these electronic spaces. Zooming is not the same as conversation across a dinner table; there is time lag, cross-talk, shaky internet connections. Participants have to use audio/video functions, mute/unmute, and it can be hard to figure out who's talking on a screen in gallery mode.



Hosting is helpful, and the more folks on the screen, the more someone needs to serve as a conversation helper. It's like, dinner for two, easy to prepare; dinner for 12 requires planning and coordination. Even with Astrid and her four daughters, one of them volunteers to be an informal hostess, helping to move the conversation along or slow it down, making sure their mother is tracking the stories and has space to contribute.

Welcoming people to the Zoom space is like welcoming people through the door. In my family, a group of 8-10 households, if the caller of the call opens with the question, "So, how is everybody?" verbal bedlam occurs. So we've learned to ask a question and to call out who is talking. Sample questions might be: Are you still okay? How are you coping with the isolation just now? What good things are still happening in your week? And then the host says, "Carl—you first." And when he is done, he calls on another household, "Okay Ric, your turn." A raucous conversation may follow this brief period of organized listening, but we know how folks are showing up. We know if someone needs extra support. We pipe down and listen as feelings arise.

Simply asking, "Are you okay?" may open a flood-gate of tears, anger, grief at what's been lost, fear at what's coming. We are all practicing how to be emotionally present to each other via the screen. We may feel more awkward having only our voices and screen faces when we would rather offer softer talk, touch, hugs. Being well-rounded in a flat-screen connection means we take risks to relate carefully with what we have. We can be tender. We can have fun bringing our personal worlds to the screen.

Astrid holds the bouquet of flowers her daughters sent. We screen-share with our granddaughter to help with her schoolwork. In a business Zoom, folks introduced their pets. In another Zoom group, whoever volunteers to host wears a funny hat. Online, you can find dozens of suggestions for games, party ideas, creating virtual backgrounds, and glamorizing yourself from the waist up.

Some folks, especially those working virtually, may have "Zoom fatigue." For others, like Astrid, the family call is the highlight of their week. In these COVID times, video-conferencing and phone calls are our lifelines. We can help one another use this technology to stay connected.

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