

Brewster Chamber postpones Cherries Jubilee

By MIKE MALTAIS
STAFF WRITER

BREWSTER – In an announcement that comes as no surprise under current conditions, the Brewster Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors has voted to postpone the annual 2020 Cherries Jubilee celebration scheduled for June 20-21 until 2021. Also cancelled are the Fourth of July vendors

and softball tournament. “We feel it is in the best interest of the community and its members, during this uncertain time.” A board statement said of the event cancellations. “We will keep everyone updated as the year goes on about the rest of our events this year.”

Regular monthly Chamber meetings have also been cancelled until further notice.

Gov. Inslee issues closure of remaining school year

Meal service continues

By MIKE MALTAIS
STAFF WRITER

OLYMPIA – Washington state Governor Jay Inslee, in a joint news conference with Superintendent of Public Instruction Chris Reykdal, on Monday, April 6, announced that all K-12 public schools in the state will remain closed through the end of the school year in June.

In an earlier order Gov. Inslee ordered a statewide school closure from March 17 through April 24.

“Today I am extending the onsite instruction closure order,” said Inslee. “All public and private K-12 schools in our state will be stopped from providing in person instruction through the end of the school year in June.”

Inslee added that all schools will continue distance learning until the end of the school year.

“We simply cannot take the chance of opening on-site instruction during this school year,” said Inslee. “We cannot risk losing the gains we have made after the peak of this pandemic presumably will have passed.”

In his opening remarks Inslee cited 7,984 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the state and 338 deaths from the virus as of Sunday, April 5, and said he was taking his current actions to help flatten the curve of the virus.

In comments directed to high school seniors Inslee said, “If you are a senior in good standing, we expect that you will receive your diploma this year.”

In a related issue, the Washington State Board of Education met via teleconference on Wednesday, April 8, to determine new graduation guidelines.

Meals served

During the weeks of the school closures Inslee said he has “seen school communities come together in amazing ways.” That includes serving more than 2 million meals since the closure was announced. Local schools did their part.

“Since March 17 we have served 8,577 meals,” said Bridgeport School Superintendent Scott Sattler on Wednesday, April 6. “This is a breakfast and lunch meal count.”

About 97 percent of Bridge-



Gov. Jay Inslee.



Superintendent of Public Instruction Chris Reykdal

port students qualify for free or reduced lunch.

Brewster School Superintendent Eric Driessen said, “We are serving about 360 meals a day, a total of about 5,000 so far. We will continue to serve meals until June 12, which is the last calendar day of school.”

Driessen said that in addition to two pick-up locations, Brewster Middle School and the Brewster Boys and Girls Club meals are being delivered by bus.

“Our food service staff, bus drivers, and volunteers are making this process happen,” said Driessen. “We have great people who will continue the work during this difficult time.”

Seventy percent of Pateros school students qualify for free or reduced lunch and on a typical day about 67 percent of them are served breakfast and a sack lunch for a total of 4,952 meals Pateros School Superintendent Greg Goodnight said on Wednesday, April 8.

We are running three food routes (the old bus routes) and have a pick-up station at the school,” said Goodnight. “There are two staff members on each route because we are also running an in-district mail system to deliver assignments back and forth from teachers to students.”

Goodnight said one staff member works the pick-up station at school and many volunteers have stepped up to help deliver meals.

SEE SCHOOL ON PAGE 3

Small Business relief drowning in the swamp

By BILL FORHAN,
OWNER NCW MEDIA

The big story last week was the small business relief program or Paycheck Protection Program (PPP). It’s a program touted to jump start our collapsed economy by helping small businesses get some immediate funding to keep people employed.

The program started accepting applications April 3. At the rate this is going, the

money won’t be disbursed to the small businesses that really need it before it is too late.

The problem is finding a bank that is processing the applications.

Locally, Cashmere Valley Bank is not accepting applications.

North Cascades Bank has a link on their website for submitting an application although it is not clear if you must be a current bank

customer in order for them

to process the application. Washington Federal Bank is accepting applications and according to their website they do not require the applicant be a current customer of the bank. They do not have an online link for submitting applications but do have a link to get a call back. Washington Federal has branches in Leavenworth, Wenatchee and Chelan.

Wheatland Bank in Chelan is participating, however

you must be a customer to apply and they advise they are nearing capacity at the present time.

Coulee Dam Federal Credit Union is participating but their website does not appear to have a link on how to apply.

Umpqua Bank is participating however they are servicing their own customers before considering applications from other

SEE BUSINESS ON PAGE 2

Legionnaires install ramp, prepare meals

Auxiliary members cutting fabric for masks

By MIKE MALTAIS
STAFF WRITER

BRIDGEPORT – Members of American Legion Columbia Post 97 and its Ladies Auxiliary in Brewster have been busy giving back to the local communities during the COVID-19 pandemic and its attendant restrictions.

Last Wednesday, April 8, Legionnaires, Denny Pittman, Glenn Farrington, Bob Lewis, and Steve Daniell paid a visit to the home of the Legion’s oldest member, Ray Davis, at 222 20th St., to install a ramp for the 87-year-old Korean War veteran’s motorized wheel-



Mike Maltais/QCH

From left, American Legion Columbia Post 97 members Glenn Farrington, Bob Lewis, Steve Daniell, and Denny Pittman watch fellow veteran Ray Davis negotiate his motorized wheelchair on its maiden voyage up a new ramp installed by the Legionnaires last week.

chair. By noon that day the two-piece metal ramp and railing was in place and

ready to roll. Davis, a former Okanogan County Deputy Sheriff

was gifted his new wheel-

SEE RAMP ON PAGE 2

Hospital District No.1 levy goes to voters

Three Rivers prepares for COVID-19

By MIKE MALTAIS
STAFF WRITER

BREWSTER – Voters served by the Public Hospital District No. 1 in Okanogan and Douglas counties should have received ballots by now to vote for a one-year special levy that, if approved on April 28, will provide funds to support the continued operation of Three Rivers Hospital (TRH) through 2021.

They are among some 52,000 registered voters casting special election ballots in 15 districts across 10 counties. Along with Okanogan and Douglas counties, Clark, Cowlitz, Garfield, Grant, Kitsap, Kittitas, Mason, and Pierce counties are also voting.

The measure, Proposition No. 1, would “finance and maintain the availability of essential health care services” and “provide funds to pay for the maintenance, development and expansion of the District’s health care facilities and services,” according to the official ballot description.



Courtesy Three Rivers Hospital

Three Rivers Hospital main entrance doors are posted with notices in English and Spanish advising the public of new visitation restrictions.

The measure provides for a special one-year property tax levy assessed in 2020 for collection in 2021 in the amount of \$750,000 calculated at 33 cents per \$1,000 of property value.

Public Hospital District No. 1 bridges both counties from Mazama in Okanogan County to Mansfield in Douglas County according to the TRH website three-rivershospital.net.

Three Rivers Hospital prepares

Three Rivers Hospital, like many small community hospitals across the state, is shouldering the financial

burden of preparing for an increase in COVID-19 patients while complying with a state order to suspend all non-essential – and revenue enhancing – medical procedures until the spread of the coronavirus is under control. Those preparations include centralizing all personal protective equipment (PPE) in one location, implementing measures to restrict visitor access, readying and staging a decontamination unit trailer and preparing staff to screen COVID-19 patients.

“Most of the PPE we have

in stock was our existing supply before the pandemic,” said TRH Business Development Director Jennifer Best. “Our team has been working to procure more, but there is still a nationwide shortage of many things, including masks and batteries for PAPRs (powered air-purifying respirators).”

SEE HOSPITAL ON PAGE 2

Best said that some supplies TRH might have received, like test kits, may have been diverted to areas dealing with a higher incidence of COVID-19 patients.

“We happily received a generous donation today from Aero Methow Rescue Service of 60 N95 masks, and some of our providers have accepted donations on our behalf from their colleagues,” said Best. “Community members have been sending us homemade cloth masks and gowns, which we’re also thrilled to have.”

Confirmed COVID-19 cases in the county are still climbing, though slowly, from one case reported on March 25 to 13 cases as of April 9, according to the Okanogan County Emergency Management website (okanogandem.org). As of

During this difficult time support your neighbors

Most local businesses offer curbside service or delivery

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Special elections scheduled for April 28

SUBMITTED BY WASHINGTON SECRETARY OF STATE

OLYMPIA — Roughly 1%, or 52,000, of Washington's registered voters will have an opportunity to participate in special elections across 10 counties on April 28. A total of 15 districts will have measures on the ballot.

The following counties will conduct the elections: Clark, Cowlitz, Douglas, Garfield, Grant, Kitsap, Kittitas, Mason, Okanogan, and Pierce. Previously, 18 counties were slated to conduct elections for more than 30 jurisdictions, but several districts rescinded their elections amid COVID-19 concerns.

Voters who are unsure if they will be eligible to participate in the upcoming election can visit VoteWA.gov to check their voter registration. Individuals who are not registered to vote can do so online at VoteWA.gov through April 20, or in-person at their county election office through 8

p.m. Election Day. Mail-in registrations must be received by April 20.

Due to courthouse closures and with the governor's 'Stay Home, Stay Healthy' order in effect through May 4, the Secretary of State's Office encourages Washingtonians to contact their county election offices before making in-person visits.

Washington's Office of Secretary of State oversees a number of areas within state government, including managing state elections, registering corporations and charities, and governing the use of the state flag and state seal. The office also manages the State Archives and the State Library, documents extraordinary stories in Washington's history through Legacy Washington, oversees the Combined Fund Drive for charitable giving by state employees, and administers the state's Address Confidentiality Program to help protect survivors of crime.

HOSPITAL

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noon, April 9, Three Rivers had tested 35 people for COVID-19.

"Of that, 30 were negative, one was positive, and results are pending on the other four," said Best. "The positive result was announced today, and that person did not need to be hospitalized. Our current inpatient census is 0."

Money is tight
Late last month Three Rivers CEO Scott Graham shared the hospital's financial crisis in a media release to the public and discussed the issue with Governor Jay Inslee while the facility awaits some funding relief from the \$2.2 trillion relief package passed by Congress and signed by President Trump on March 27. "We received \$1.7 million this week in advanced

payments from Medicare, which we will have to pay back," said Best. "As for the \$100 billion that was allocated to health care from the federal stimulus package, we're not sure yet exactly how much we're getting, or when we'll receive it."

On March 26 TRH announced restrictions on all but specified visitors to protect patients from the risk of COVID-19 exposure. Exceptions include:

One parent/guardian for a pediatric patient under the age of 18.

Two visitors at a time for patients on end-of-life care.

The hospital encourages the public to keep scheduled appointments that may be handled by video chat or telephone. TRH has a nurse hotline at 509-689-3749 available between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday for those with COVID-19 who wish to talk to a nurse.

Taking extra precautions for vulnerable customers

BY MIKE MALTAIS STAFF WRITER

BREWSTER — Brewster Marketplace with special store hours from 7-9 a.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays is among several food outlets in Okanogan County that is making an extra effort to protect senior citizens and other high-risk shoppers with compromised immune systems during the COVID-19 pandemic. Other food store locations include:

- Omak Safeway** — 607 Omache Dr. 7-9 a.m. Tuesdays & Thursdays
- Gene's Harvest Foods** — 22 W. Apple St., Omak 7:30-8:30 a.m. daily
- Grocery Outlet** — 918 Engh Rd., Omak Recommends 8-11 a.m. for off-peak shopping.
- Okanogan Market** — 310



Mike Maltais/QCH

Omak Walmart associate Ofelia Magala disinfects shopping carts for early morning senior customers taking advantage of the one-hour window reserved from 6-7 a.m., Tuesdays and Thursdays for seniors and those with compromised immune systems.

- Second Ave. South** 7-8 a.m. daily w/10 percent off.
- Caso's Country Foods** — 2406 Elmway, Okanogan 7-8:30 a.m. Fridays
- Walmart** — 902 Engh Rd., Omak 6-7 a.m. Tuesdays

Recommendations on Cloth Face Coverings, going to the grocery store

BY OKANOGAN COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH

OKANOGAN — All of us involved in the COVID-19 response know that protecting our health workers and first responders is vital for each and every one of us. That is why our limited supplies of commercial Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) have been reserved for them.

Okanogan County Public Health, Washington State Department of Health, and the CDC now recommend wearing cloth face coverings in public places where you cannot reliably stay six feet away from other people. This might include weekly trips to the grocery store, or a necessary trip to the doctor's office or pharmacy. Or it could be more frequent, if you are an essential worker, and your job unavoidably brings you within six feet of people.

The scientific evidence on masking by the general public is not so clear. One downside of public masking is the idea that masks might make us feel too safe, and reduce our attention to handwashing, surface cleaning, social distancing, and other critical measures. We think cloth face coverings may reduce some additional spread, but still, the best way to prevent spread of COVID-19 is washing your hands thoroughly and frequently, not touching

your face, and staying at home as much as possible. Face coverings will not work without clean hands and good social distance. And don't put a cloth face covering on a child under age two.

Until supplies of commercially made masks are available, members of the public who want masks should be using homemade ones. Masks with three layers of cotton material will work. They can have elastic ear loops or ties that go around the back of the head.

If you aren't able to sew a mask, you can use something such as a cotton scarf or bandana folded into three layers that will cover your nose and mouth and tied behind your head.

The Governor is asking Washington State manufacturing businesses to help in this effort, and the prospects are good that thousands of masks can be made available quickly. In the meantime, you will need to make or adapt your own face covering.

But here's a caution. Once you have worn one for a while — certainly after a day's use — be careful when removing it not to touch its outside surface. That's where the virus will be. Wash those used masks in hot water and dry them on high heat — that will kill the virus. And if you have a collection of used masks, treat them as contaminated by carefully dropping them

into a sealable plastic bag until you can carefully dump them into a washing machine. Then throw the bag in a garbage can. In health care, we know that taking off PPE carelessly is as risky as wearing it incorrectly, so use special care when you have finished with the mask.

Sewing patterns for masks can be found online at these locations:

<https://www.confluence-health.org/covid19-donations/> (See video link at right of page.)

<https://www.joann.com/make-to-give-response/>

Going to the Grocery Store

Everyone is safest from COVID-19 when we all stay in our homes, but, eventually, even the best stocked of us need to go to the grocery store. Grocery stores are working hard to keep their employees and customers as safe as possible.

Some grocery stores are helping us stay six feet apart from each other by providing signage or spacing markers on the floor. Others are monitoring traffic flow and focusing on helping us stay six feet apart when lines begin to form. And some are limiting the total number of people in the store at any one time.

Like all of us, grocery store employees should not work when they are sick, wash their hands frequently, use

hand sanitizers, and refrain from touching their faces.

Keep yourself and grocery stores as safe as possible

- Limit the number of times you go to a grocery store to once a week or even less frequently.

- Shop with a list and like you mean business. Save the browsing for later! The less time you are in there, the better!

- Shop by yourself, if possible, to help limit the number of people in the aisles.

- Better yet, can you take a neighbor's list with you and shop for them while you are at it?

- Shop at less popular times when the stores will be less crowded.

- Wearing a cloth face covering to protect others in case you have COVID-19 but haven't developed any symptoms.

- Don't touch your face! Avoid using your phone, putting on chapstick, scratching your beard, or doing anything that would bring your hands into contact with your face.

- Use hand sanitizer when you get in the car.

- Wash your hands thoroughly when you get home.

- You can toss packaging and wipe down bottles when you get home, but do NOT put disinfectants like bleach or cleaning products on your produce or directly onto your food, that is bad for you.

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BUSINESS

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outside firms.

Forbes magazine reports that as of April 5, Wells Fargo is not accepting any more applications. All of the other national banks are only accepting applications from businesses that have a current active account with them.

NCW Media is contacting all local banks to assess their acceptance policy with regard to this program, but as of this writing it appears that finding a lender will put the program out of the reach of most of the small businesses that need the help.

There are some online companies that are taking applications. For example, Kabbage is accepting applications. Although Forbes reports they are forwarding the loan applications for those who qualify to their "partner lenders." Many of these potential lenders are asking for information that is not required by the program. A clear sign that they are simply using this program to identify possible borrowers for their high interest working capital programs.

Here is what the SBA says is required:

The application form — SBA Form 2483 2 pages that require a signature and

several places need initials.

Federal form 940 for 2019 — Shows the total payroll for last year; payroll register for 2019 and 1Q of 2020.

A schedule of any shareholder of the business that hold more than a 20 percent interest.

A schedule of any other payroll related costs that you are claiming as part of your payroll costs. In Washington state there is no state income tax but unemployment and workers compensation premiums could qualify. Any health insurance and retirement plan costs can be included.

Most lenders are asking for a copy of the applicant's driver's license although it's not clear this is required by the government.

Other lenders I have talked to ask for other information that is not required and is a red flag that they are more interested in getting the applications to sell the applicant other loan prod-

ucts that are not part of this program.

This is a highly touted measure to get the economy moving and protect small businesses from financial collapse. The problem is it looks like lenders, who are the most important link to making this work, are not really behind it.

Time is of the essence in this program. It is intended to provide financial relief to small businesses and their employees. Unless the private sector banks can quickly process the applications and get the money into the local economy. Many local small businesses will shut down and unemployment claims will continue to soar.

Many small towns across the country only have one local bank. These communities are primarily served by small businesses that need this help. Without access to a qualified lender these small businesses cannot access the help they vitally need.

RAMP

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

chair by the Sheriff's Office. The chair had been purchased for Christian Johnson, the volunteer assistant chief of Okanogan County Fire District 3. Johnson, 55, was badly burned while battling a brush fire last September and died less than a month later as a result of his injuries. Davis' son, Gene, is a detective with the Okanogan County Sheriff's Office.

"It's a small world," said

Ray Davis' wife of 57 years, Vernice.

The chair allowed Davis greater mobility, but he still needed a ramp to access his home. His Legion friends took care of that chore.

Auxiliary members including Margi Allen, daughter Julie, and Kathy Johnson prepared and delivered meals for 24 Legion members.

"Now we're cutting fabric for masks," Johnson said.

There is always a need to fill if one just goes looking for it.

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NCEF teacher classroom grants through Friends of Lower Grand Coulee

Receiving FLGC awards this spring were:

Name	School	District	Project
Sloane Schubert	Icicle River Middle School	Cascade	Ancient Lakes Geologic Study
Misty Krohn	Lake Roosevelt Elementary	Grand Coulee Dam	Create Science Center in my Classroom
Roxanna Jensen	Paul Rumberg	Entiat	Touch screen for the Classroom
Janet Woodworth	Sterling	Eastmont	Book Study Comes to Life!
Heidi Hartnell	Vale Elementary	Cashmere	Outdoor Education for the Whole Family
Adam Corum	Bridgeport High School	Bridgeport	Hydroponics

WENATCHEE - The Friends of Lower Grand Coulee (FLGC), in partnership with the North Central Education Foundation (NCEF), recently announced an opportunity for teachers from all 29 districts in the North Central ESD region to apply for grants in keeping with their goal of providing opportunities this spring to study the Lower Grand Coulee area.

Teachers were invited to apply for \$300 grants in areas of Social Studies, Literacy, Music and Arts, STEM and STEAM that occur inside or outside of the classroom and are related to the study of the Lower Grand Coulee.

Although the original intention of the FLGC grants was for projects to be completed this spring, school closures made this timeframe impossible. As an example of the remarkable resilience displayed in our regional teachers during this trying time, all of those who were awarded grants plan to complete their projects during the 2020-2021 school year.

For more information about the North Central Education Foundation, please review the Foundation webpage <http://www.ncesd.org/about-us/north-central-education-foundation/>. Videos about

Teacher Classroom Grants and more good news from the North Central Education Foundation can be found on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/North-Central-Education-Foundation-193626760669017/>

State, NCRL offer learning resources

By MIKE MALTAIS
STAFF WRITER

QUAD CITIES - Closed schools are presenting a challenge for teachers and students alike as both sides experiment with ways to stay connected and complete work assignments that would resemble a normally functioning school session.

The Secretary of State's office has put together a roster of free resources for students, teachers, and parents that cover a range of subjects like history, elections, culture and more drawn from state archives, library, and other sites.

North Central Regional Library has added new online features to bring the library to more users.

Secretary of State

Legacy Washington (sos.wa.gov/legacy) offers oral histories about extraordinary Washingtonians past and present and provides engaging content for students with accompanying lesson plans and contests. Legacy Washington launched a writing, art, and podcast contest in January for students in grades 6-12. The contest is in conjunction with Legacy Washington's "Ahead of the Curve" exhibit, and asks students to highlight individuals who are 'ahead of

the curve' in their communities. Contest requirements and more information can be found here. Submissions are due by May 31.

Washington State Elections (sos.wa.gov/elections) provides a guide to teaching elections and conducts a student mock election every year for the general election. Most recently, the division also conducted a mock presidential primary.

Washington State Library (sos.wa.gov/library) provides resources for libraries, students, teachers, and parents all in one place. WSL also offers primary source materials and lesson plans with Primarily Washington, a collaboration between WSL, Legacy Washington, and Washington State Archives.

Washington State Archives' Digital Archives (sos.wa.gov/archives) offers a treasure trove of historical information about Washington with more than 200 million records online.

The new edition of the Simply Washington booklet (sos.wa.gov/office/simplywashington2014.aspx) highlights state history, resources, culture and more.

The Secretary of State oversees state elections, registration of corporations and charities, and gov-

erning the use of the state flag and state seal. The office also manages the state archives and the state library, documents extraordinary stories in Washington's history through Legacy Washington, oversees the Combined Fund Drive for charitable giving by state employees, and administers the state's Address Confidentiality Program to help protect survivors of crime.

"Washington has a rich heritage, and all of our students should have an opportunity to learn about our state's history and culture," said Secretary of State Kim Wyman. "At the Office of Secretary of State, we value and prioritize education and civic engagement."

North Central Regional Library

New and expanded services include:

- A new eCard for people who live in North Central Washington but cannot currently access a library to get a physical library card. The eCard grants access to all NCRL online resources, including ebooks, audiobooks, digital magazines, streaming services for TV shows, movies, and music, language learning sites, and digital access to newspapers including the New York Times and Seattle Times.

- Increased numbers of ebooks, audiobooks, music, and movies that can be borrowed or streamed at one time.

- Designated times for users to live-chat online or call library staff for answers to questions and help using online resources. Live-chat is available at ncl.org weekdays from 9-11 a.m. Phone support for online resources is available by calling 509-888-8155 weekdays from 1-3 p.m.

- Sharing story time videos, DIY STEM projects, readers advisory, health and wellness information, homeschool ideas, and other online resources.

"We are absolutely committed to continuing to support our communities, even with our facilities closed to the public," said NCRL Executive Director Barbara Walters. "Our digital resources are always available, and we are continuing to expand these services and make them easier to access for everyone."

Sign up for the eCard and find online resources at ncl.org, and check out videos and other information on the North Central Regional Library Facebook and Instagram sites. New content is being posted daily.

The North Central Education Foundation welcomes two new members to their board

SUBMITTED BY NORTH CENTRAL EDUCATION FOUNDATION



Ray Dobbs



Stacy Luckensmeyer

WENANTCHEE - The North Central Education Foundation (NCEF) is delighted to welcome two new quality NCEF Board members - Stacy Luckensmeyer and Ray Dobbs.

Stacy Luckensmeyer never imagined she'd end up running a business, but life had other plans for her, and she's successfully started and sold, bought and sold, and even started and failed in multiple ventures. She retired at 36 and realized quite rapidly that this was a *very* big mistake, and since then she has involved herself in entrepreneurial development efforts in her region and across the US. She currently oversees the Center for Entrepreneurship at Wenatchee Valley College and represents WVC in a variety of economic development projects, including growing the entrepreneurial ecosystem in central Washington.

Ray Dobbs and his wife, Kathryn (Kelly), moved their family to Chelan in 1976 when he started a 20-year career as broadcaster, sales manager, and station manager at KOZI Radio. When owner Jerry Isenhardt sold KOZI Radio in 1999, Dobbs purchased the Computer and Verizon cell phone businesses from Isenhardt and started his own business, Raycom RadioShack.

After 12 years, Dobbs sold the business in 2011 and took a position at North Cascades Bank where he recently retired. Dobbs and his wife have been married 48 years. They have five adult children who all graduated from Chelan Valley schools. Kathryn, grew up at Kelly's Resort in Chelan and graduated from Chelan High School. Dobbs grew up in the San Francisco Bay area and has an Advertising/Marketing degree from San Jose State University. Ray and Kathryn met in Hawaii while Dobbs was serving in the Navy during the Vietnam War. They have eight grandchildren and one

great-grandchild. Dobbs was a Planning Commissioner for City of Chelan for 10 years and Treasurer for Historic Downtown Chelan Association for five years. He also served on the Wenatchee and Lake Chelan Chamber of Commerce boards. He has been a Rotarian since 1982 and served two terms as president of Lake Chelan Rotary.

The NCEF Teacher Classroom Grant Program, which began 10 years ago to benefit teachers in the North Central ESD region that includes Chelan, Douglas, Grant and Okanogan Counties, has seen a twenty-fold increase in awards of these grants that spur classroom innovation and creativity. Grants have funded activities in the areas of Arts, Humanities, Music, STEM, Robotics, environmental education and technology, to name a few.

This North Central Education Foundation program has proven to be an invaluable tool in making an impact on teachers, students and their classroom projects. The grants go to the most innovative and creative teachers who figure out how to impact student learning with a relatively small amount of money.

Community Foundation of NCW Awards \$89,750 in COVID-19 relief to nonprofits

SUBMITTED BY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF NCW

WENATCHEE - The Community Foundation of NCW has awarded \$89,750 to 24 nonprofits across the region who have been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The funds come from the Helping Hands Grant, the Board of Trustees Fund, and donations from the public.

"When we started to see the effect the pandemic was having on our nonprofit community, we knew we had to use our resources to help" said Beth Stipe, the foundation's executive director. "We expanded the criteria for our Helping Hands grant - which typically funds emergent needs - to include issues our nonprofit partners are facing with COVID-19".

The foundation also utilized its Board of Trustee fund, where board members donate to this "rainy day" type fund. The Board approved using \$55,000 toward supporting nonprofits that provide vital services such as access to food and rental assistance. Agencies receiving a distribution from this fund include:

Chelan-Douglas Community Action Council, Okanogan County Community Action Council, Room One (Methow Valley), Serve Wenatchee, Salvation Army (Wenatchee), Children's Home Society of Wenatchee, Safety, Advocacy, Growth, and Empowerment (SAGE), and Chelan Valley Hope.

"We are looking at all of our resources right now and where they can help the most" said Stipe. "We are being thoughtful about what we can do right now, but also be poised to support the region in the long run. We know from our past experiences from the recession and from wildfire disaster recoveries, the needs of our communities will likely increase."

Over \$100,000 has been donated by Community Foundation donors and the public. "We're so grateful for those in our community who are able to give what they can and help those in need right now" said Stipe.

Helping Hands Grants - \$34,750

- Garden Terrace Senior Living - \$1,600 for individual meal service during dining room closure

- Icicle Creek Center for the Arts - \$3,000 to recoup costs for cancelled event due to public health guidelines

- Life Choices - \$300 to recoup costs for cancelled event due to public health guidelines

- Methow Valley Citizens Council - \$800 to recoup costs for cancelled event due to public health guidelines

- Mobile Meals of Wenatchee - \$1,700 increased meal delivery service for home-bound citizens

- North Valley Hospital District - \$3,000 supplies to 3D-print 200 N95 masks with reusable inserts

- Okanogan County Community Coalition - \$3,000 fabricating PPE including masks and gowns for local healthcare workers and emergency responders

- Omak Food Bank - \$3,000 increased food bank demands

- The Community for the Advancement of Family Education (CAFÉ) - \$3,000 outreach to Spanish-speaking community on COVID-19 and available resources

- Thrive Chelan Valley - \$3,000 weekend food support for Chelan/Manson students

- TwispWorks Foundation - \$3,000 connecting small local businesses impacted to resources

- Wellness Place - \$3,000 gas cards for patients needing to travel to appointments and increased costs for shipping nutritional food

- Wenatchee River Institute - \$750 to recoup costs for cancelled event due to public health guidelines

- Wenatchee Valley Dispute Resolution Center - \$1,000 technology and equipment to support the move to Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) media-

tion services

- Wenatchee Valley Humane Society - \$3,000 for the Pet Food Pantry that provides for low-income pet owners

- Wenatchee Valley Symphony Association - \$1,600 to recoup costs for cancelled event due to public health guidelines

The foundation is accepting donations to the Helping Hands Grant Fund and hopes to continue awarding grants every other week until funds are expended.

For more information on grants, resources, and how to donate, visit www.cfnw.org/covid19 or <http://www.cfnw.org/covid19>.

The Community Foundation of North Central Washington's mission is to grow, protect, and connect charitable gifts in support of strong communities throughout Chelan, Douglas, and Okanogan counties.

Established in 1986, the Community Foundation manages \$85 million in assets through 500+ individual funds and has awarded over \$35 million in grants and scholarships.

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SCHOOL

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"Pateros is thankful for their brave help," Goodnight said.

Safety foremost

Superintendent Reykdal said Washington is currently one of 14 states that have closed schools for the year. While Idaho and Oregon are

debating whether to follow suit, he expects dozens of additional states to close their schools for the remainder of the school year.

Reykdal said a fall school opening remains in question and noted, "While learning is a paramount duty of the state, the health of our people is first and foremost."

"This is a once in a hundred-year pandemic that com-

FAMILY

pels us to do this today more than ever but there will be something else," said Reykdal. "Natural disaster, significant weather events, future disease; this is a big moment for us to transform."

To illustrate his point Reykdal used the example of Josephine Preston, the state's sixth Superintendent of Public Instruction in the early 20th century who he credited with inspiring the concepts of kindergarten and middle school in the wake of the global flu pandemic.

"From the seeds of crisis come the strong, strong roots and blossom of innovation," said Reykdal who called for an innovation in internet connectivity for families in the years ahead.

"Telecom and connectivity are an essential utility much like water and clean air," Reykdal said.

509-422-1913

COMMUNITY BULLETIN BOARD

Okanogan County Transportation & Nutrition meal delivery

BREWSTER - In response to concern for the health of senior citizens regarding COVID-19, OCTN has established emergency measures which offers seniors a designated time in which they may arrive at their local Senior Center and pick up a meal to take home.

a pick-up time. This service modification is in place thru March 26. The health threat related to the virus will be re-evaluated at that time. Call the Brewster Site Coordinator at 509-689-2815 to arrange for a meal pickup.

Thursday

Senior meals

BREWSTER - The Brewster-Pateros-Bridgeport Senior Center hosts the Okanogan County Transportation and Nutrition (OCTN) meals Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Suggested donation for those over age 60 is \$4.

Thursday, April 16

Fish & Chips, Coleslaw, Fruit Tray, Cheesy Garlic Toast, Oatmeal Cookies

Tuesday, April 21

Lentil Veggie Soup, Cottage Cheese, 7 Layer Salad, Citrus Salad, Cornbread, Dessert

Wednesday, April 22

Meatloaf, Potatoes & Gravy, Peas, Spinach Salad, Chilled Peas, WW Roll, Dessert

April 17, May 8

Brewster area monthly bus trips to Omak and Wenatchee

BREWSTER - OCTN takes Brewster area residents to

Wenatchee, second Friday of the month. Next trip is April 10 The bus starts picking folks up at their homes at 7:30 a.m. Riders may request destination(s); medical appointments etc. On the third Friday of each month, March 20, riders will be taken to Omak for the day. Riders request their destination(s). Wenatchee: \$12/boarding for General Public, \$6 suggested donation/day for Seniors (60 plus). Omak: \$5.50/General Public, \$2.75 suggested donation Seniors (60 plus).

(509) 826-4391 to reserve your seat.

Submitting your Bulletin Board item

Who: Any non-profit 501(c)3 group. Person(s) must submit full name and contact phone number. What: Items pertaining to local events, meetings etc., that are free or a minimum charge. Where: email to: ruthk@lakechelanmirror.com, subject line QCH Bulletin. Deadline: Monday at 5 p.m. Be sure and include Date, time, place and cost if any.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Improved care, support for those with Alzheimer's approved

I appreciate that in all its understandable focus on the COVID-19 virus, Congress did not lose sight of the need to improve care and support for people with Alzheimer's and other dementia.

ceive vital Older Americans Act help like nutritional programs, in-home services, transportation, legal services, elder-abuse prevention and caregiver support.

This issue is important to me because I lost my father to Alzheimer's in 2016 and I know the heavy burden that all families carry when dealing with a loved one with this disease.

All our members of Congress should continue to actively support policies that address Alzheimer's disease as the national public health crisis it is.

Valerie Halvorson Omak

A levy, a food bank, and a matter of timing

This is a story about timing - good and not so good.

The latter can be said of the April 28 special election for the one-year special levy for Public Hospital District No. 1 for Okanogan and Douglas counties.

For those shouldering the hardships and uncertainties of the COVID-19 pandemic that has businesses shuttered and employees on financial life support, words offer little relief and no remuneration. That said we are counting on our own Three Rivers Hospital and its dedicated staff to absorb whatever magnitude of shock the coronavirus might deliver to our region.

Three Rivers is already on the ropes financially from the double-tap of pandemic preparations and a state order to suspend all non-essential procedures for the duration of this present crisis. The hospital needs our support more than ever and while it may seem painful right now to approve the measure for



MIKE MAKES WRITE Mike Maltais

2021 funding, please vote for its passage.

I love the place and its people. They have patched me up in the past. When my wife was only 16 years old, her mother took her last breath in the original hospital building in 1963, so to me, it's sacred ground.

I know times are tough and will probably get tougher. I know the timing isn't the best. But we can ill afford the risk of losing such a critical and worthy resource that is the heart of our community.

Vote Yes. Please. Bridgeport Food Bank After a quarter-century run and a two-year closure, the Bridgeport Food Bank is back in business thanks to

the efforts of a pastor couple who breathed new life into the Foursquare building and resuscitated a vital service to residents.

Carlos and Zuni Henriquez relocated to Bridgeport from Moses Lake a little more than a year ago to found the Wellspring of Life Church in the same building that earlier was home to the Bridgeport Community Church at 1300 Foster Avenue. The previous church also ran the food bank that served hundreds in the Bridgeport area. When the Community Church pastor left two years ago the church closed its doors leaving the food bank with nowhere to go. Despite the best efforts of Bridgeport Mayor Janet Conklin and others a suitable space that could house the service, cover its operating costs and provide insurance could not be found.

Conklin has been working with the new pastors for several months to help them connect with the right people

and agencies to fast track the revived venture.

With help from Britany Meiklen, Director of the Food Distribution Center in Chelan and the National Guard out of Wenatchee the Henriquez's kicked off their initial food distribution last Friday, April 3. Conklin helped by printing and distributing flyers announcing the event. Obviously, the word got around to such an extent that scores of vehicles showed up early on the big day and the available food was gone by noon. The new food bank will now distribute its inventory at 7 p.m. every Friday.

"I think it's wonderful," said Conklin. "And the timing could not be better with the current state of affairs."

There's that word "timing" again. But the Bridgeport Food Bank and those who have worked so hard to make this happen when folks need it most deserve our applause and praise for a good job at a good time.

BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENT

Sylvanna Teresita Flores-Orozco

A girl, Sylvanna Teresita Flores-Orozco, was born on March 25, at Mid-Valley Hospital in Omak, to parents Dianna Orozco and Eduardo Flores of Brewster. She weighed 6 pounds 10 ounces and was 19 inches long. She joins siblings Daniel and Shaniece Flores.

DOUGLAS COUNTY SHERIFF REPORT

April 3

Theft at 325 13th St. in Bridgeport.

Suspicious incident at 115 Cross St. on Bridgeport Bar.

911 at 335 Second St. in Bridgeport.

Agency assistance at State Route 173 bridge, milepost 10 in Bridgeport.

Abdominal pain at 1618 Fisk Ave. in Bridgeport.

April 5

Death at 13 Central St. in Bridgeport.

Civil incident at 855 Fairview Ave., No. R in Bridgeport.

Animal problem at the 1709 Raymond Ave. area in Bridgeport.

Noise at 1708 Fisk Ave. in Bridgeport.

April 6

Trespass at the 800 block of

Pearl Hill Road in Bridgeport. Welfare check at 113 Arden Ave. on Bridgeport Bar. 911 at 17th Street and Tacoma Avenue in Bridgeport.

April 7

Non-injury accident at Rd. 18 N.E. and Rd. B N.E. in Mansfield.

April 8

911 at Chief Joseph Dam, 466 Pearl Hill Road in Bridgeport.

Civil incident at 726 State Route 173 on Bridgeport Bar. Suspicious incident at 1827 Tacoma Ave. in Bridgeport. Civil incident at 13 Central St. in Bridgeport.

Alarm at 10 McCormack St. area of Bridgeport Bar.

April 9

Malicious mischief at 700 Fairview Ave., No. 6B in Bridgeport.

qcherald.com

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Attention Brewster Patients! Family Health Centers is moving the Indian Ave clinical care to our Jay Ave location to support reducing exposure.

Due to the COVID19 Virus, churches have suspended Saturday and Sunday Services, Sunday School and meetings. Please call or email your church listed below if you need more information.

QUAD CITY CHURCH GUIDE BREWSTER • BRIDGEPORT • PATEROS New to the area? On Vacation? These churches welcome you!

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WSU Colville Reservation FRTEP Extension Coordinator Due to COVID-19 restrictions, we are extending the application process for this position.

Summary of Duties: Provide outreach education in the areas of agriculture and natural resources on the Colville Reservation, as outlined in the goals, objectives and timeline of the USDA FRTEP grant project that funds this position, in cooperation with the WSU Colville Reservation Extension Team. This programming includes the development, organization, coordination, and implementation of programs and activities within the policies and procedures of WSU Extension. Official workstation is in Nespelem, WA. **Position closes 04/30/20** To apply, visit wsujobs.com/postings/51260 EEO/AA/ADA.

HELP WANTED

ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR LEAVENWORTH COMMUNITY POOL LIFEGUARDS

The City of Leavenworth is now accepting applications for Certified Lifeguards or those willing to become certified. In addition to applicable certifications, job seekers must possess strong public relations and communication skills, along with the ability to understand and implement all rules related to the facility. Job applications are available to download from the City's website at: <https://cityofleavenworth.com/employment-opportunities/> or by contacting City Hall at (509)548-5275. The City of Leavenworth is an equal opportunity employer. **Applications will begin the review process on May 4, 2020.**



The Cascade School District is seeking qualified applicants for the following position:

Icicle River Middle School
Bilingual Secretary starting 2020-2021 school year

Fast Track application process and information can be found on our website at: www.cascadesd.org EOE

HELP WANTED

City of Brewster Employment Opportunity Full-time year-round City Water Utility Operator position.

Duties include: All aspects of Public Works with emphasis on water distribution. This position requires the ability to work outside in adverse weather conditions. Work hours may vary but are anticipated to typically be 40 hours per week, Monday through Friday, from 7:00 AM to 4:00 PM with a one-hour lunch break. Wages: Full-Time positions are per Union Contract. Previous experience preferred, but not required. Criminal background check will be required, as will pre-employment drug testing. Random drug testing throughout the employment period may occur. Applicants must have a valid WA State Driver's License. Applications and job description are available at cityofbrewsterwashington.org, by calling (509) 689-3464, or picking up at Brewster City Hall. Applications accepted until position is filled, preferably by April 17, 2020. EOE



Is looking for a talented writer/ photographer to report on the news of the Lake Chelan Valley. Qualified applicants will cover city council, local school boards, high school sports and community events. Must be a good writer, photographer, and have excellent computer skills and love to attend community events. Must be a team player and willing to work flexible hours. To apply send your resume and writing samples to:

Publisher
NCW Media, Inc
PO Box 39
Leavenworth, WA 98826
or email to Publisher@leavenworthecho.com



leavenworthecho.com

HELP WANTED



Highly Capable Program
Cascade School District is committed to identifying and providing for the unique educational needs of all of our students. At this time, the district is soliciting nominations from parents, school staff, and community members for students that are believed to have a high capacity to learn quickly, deeply, and/or broadly, so that we can better provide an individualized educational service to each of our students. Students nominated through this process will be considered for enrollment in the district's highly capable program based upon screening and assessment with the permission of their parent/ guardian.

Nomination forms can be obtained from the Cascade School District website www.cascadesd.org under Programs and Highly Capable and in school offices. In order to be considered for identification for the coming school year, nomination forms should be returned to Mike Janski, Highly Capable Director, at Icicle River Middle School by April 17, 2020 either by dropping them by the middle school, by email mjanski@cascadesd.org or by mail; 10195 Titus Rd. Leavenworth, WA 98826

El Distrito Escolar de Cascade está comprometido a identificar y proveer para las necesidades educacionales únicas de todos los estudiantes. En este momento, el distrito está solicitando nominaciones de padres, del personal escolar, y de los miembros de comunidad para estudiantes, que se creen tener una alta capacidad de aprendizaje rápido, intensivamente, y/o de manera amplia, para que podamos proveer un mejor servicio de educación individualizada para cada uno de nuestros estudiantes. Los estudiantes nominados para este proceso se van a considerar para la matriculación en el programa, altamente capaz programa (Programa de alta capacidad), será basado en exámenes y evaluaciones con el permiso de los padres/tutores legales.

Las formas para hacer una nominación se pueden obtener por la página de web del Distrito Escolar de Cascade (www.Cascadesd.org se encuentran bajo la pestaña del Programs and Highly Capable) y en las oficinas escolares. Con el fin de ser considerado para la identificación del próximo año escolar, deben devolver las formas de nominación al Sr. Mike Janski, Director del Programa de Alta Capacidad en la Escuela Intermedia Icicle River para el 17 de abril, 2020, por correo electrónico mjanski@cascadesd.org o por correo: 10195 Titus Rd. Leavenworth, WA 98826. (WAC 392-170-035, WAC 392-170-036)

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Fill in the blank squares in the grid, making sure that every row, column and 3-by-3 box includes all digits 1 through 9.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

THEME: FAIRY TALE CREATURES

ACROSS

1. "Like many mythical creatures"
6. Second mo.
9. Spill the beans
13. Convex molding
14. "the President's Men"
15. Ankle support, e.g.
16. Make a logical connection
17. "E.T.'s craft?"
18. Des Moines native
19. "Fire-breather"
21. "Household spirit"
23. Tucker of "Modern Family"
24. Antonym of is
25. "Grimm's Queen"
28. Tailor-made
30. Showing on TV
35. "All's well that ___ well"
37. Golly!
39. Punctuation mark
40. Seaport in Yemen
41. Hitching post?
43. Additionally
44. Poison ivy or Poison oak
46. One more than The Beatles
47. Hold as a conviction
48. "Mrs. Potts or her son Chip"
50. Andrew Sean Greer's 2017 Pulitzer-winner novel
52. Toast choice
53. Jack and Jill's water jug
55. "Now or Never"
57. "Horse's cousin"
61. "One of the seven dwarfs"
64. Ascetic holy Hindu
65. HHS agency
67. Relating to #25 Across
69. Banana treat
70. Go bad
71. Australian canid
72. Lou of "Walk on the Wild Side" fame

DOWN

73. Card in the hole?
74. "The Forsyte ___" pl.
1. Wisecrack
2. Like a zealous fan
3. Regular attendee
4. Hipbone-related
5. Cuban music genre, pl.
6. "Half-man, half-goat"
7. "Santa's helper"
8. Sploches
9. Arch on a face
10. Croquet turf
11. Popular smoothie berry
12. Well, to Sofia Loren
15. Relating to living organisms
20. Opposite of alpha
22. Genetic initials
24. Parents hope to do this with values
25. "Beauty's beau"
26. Empower
27. Dropsy
29. "Big Bad One"
31. Yellow brick one
32. Feeling worse than before
33. "Like Curious George"
34. "Garden dweller"
36. Finger move
38. Moneyed one
42. Pine product
45. Choose not to do something, 2 words
49. Toni Morrison's "___ Baby"
51. 1862 plots, for short
54. Prefix for below
56. Old photo color
57. Stalin's domain
58. Back of the neck
59. Not active
60. Past tense of chide
61. Fill beyond full
62. Sound of passing bullet
63. "Baba"
66. "Who Bugs Bunny talks to?"
68. Numbers, abbr.

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PUZZLE SOLUTION

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ARTS & CRAFTS

For Sale: Ashford 32" Rigid Heddle Loom, loom stand, assembled, with all parts, in Prime Condition! Also included: bench, clip-on light, additional shuttles, selvaige weights, directions, and weaving books. \$400
For further information, see Ad online in NCWMarket.com.

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Wearing hearing aids or earbuds increases the production of earwax, can block inside of your ear

The medical name for earwax is cerumen, which comes from the Latin word "cera," which means wax. Instead of wax, cerumen is a sticky liquid secreted by the cells of the skin lining your ear canal that helps protect your eardrum and has an antimicrobial effect. As it moves through your ear canal, earwax also attracts dust and dirt particles, sweeping them through along with it.

For some people, their earwax or cerumen will flake away as it reaches the outer part of their ear, never causing any trouble.

Wearing hearing aids or earbuds increases the production of earwax and can block inside your ear. Sticking cotton-tipped swabs or bobby pins into your ear canal doesn't remove earwax effectively and instead can create a waxy plug and pressure, discomfort, and hearing loss.

The best way to remove ear wax is first to soften it so that it can either come out on its own or be flushed out.

There are two main types of products designed to remove cerumen: oil-



based ear drops and water-based ear drops. Oil-based ear drops may contain olive oil, coconut oil, or almond oil, while water-based products can contain saline, hydrogen peroxide, glycerin, or docusate.

There isn't any single best ear drop for ear wax removal. A recent systematic review of earwax removal products showed no significant differences between any of them.

According to a 2018 survey from US News and World Report and Pharmacy Times, 96% of American pharmacists surveyed recommend carbamide peroxide drops to soften ear wax, available as Debrox® or Murine®, while the other 4% recommended glycerin drops.

Carbamide peroxide releases oxygen when it contacts earwax, creating a foam that liquefies the cerumen. I have tried carbamyl peroxide products but stopped using them because they caused loud crackling and popping

sounds and an unbearable tickling sensation inside my ear canal from the bubbling foam.

Ear drops containing docusate sodium (Waxsol®) are available in the United Kingdom (UK). Docusate is a non-prescription stool softener or lubricant laxative which pulls liquid into hard stools to make them softer and less painful to eliminate. It's believed that docusate does the same thing to dried, impacted cerumen.

In our clinic, we first fill the affected ear canal with liquid docusate sodium, leave it in there for 1 to 3 days to soften the cerumen, then flush out the ear canal with warm water.

I prefer a 2-step process using a 250mg capsule of docusate sodium to soften earwax because it's easy and effective. In Step 1, I snip a hole at the end of a capsule, squeeze its contents into my ear canal, then place a small piece of a cotton ball into it to keep the liquid in place before starting on the other ear. I usually repeat this routine 2-3 three times daily for a day or two before going to Step 2, flushing

out my ears.

Once the cerumen has had time to soften, I gently flush it out into a sink filled with warm water. One of my colleagues flushes her ears out during a warm shower.

I prefer positioning the nose of the bulb syringe along the top of my ear canal instead of in the middle because it helps more chunks of earwax to escape. Avoid "power washing" your ear canal; too much pressure can damage your eardrum.

Remove excess water in your ears by tipping your head and blotting with a towel, running a hairdryer on a low setting, or applying ear drops designed to remove water in your ear. I recommend Swim-Ear® with isopropyl alcohol and anhydrous glycerin to remove excess water.

Here Are 5 Tips To Remove Earwax:

1. Don't push cotton-tipped swabs, bobby pins, or rolled napkins into your ear.
2. They force ear wax further inside your ear canal, leading to pressure, pain, and muffled hearing.
3. Ear drops or docusate sodium capsules can help soften cerumen.
4. It's often a trial and error process to find something that works for you.
5. Avoid using eardrops if you have ear pain, bleeding, or any discharge from your ear.

Call your doctor instead. You could have an external ear infection, which requires a very different approach.

4. Don't use a Water Pik® or use high pressure with a bulb syringe. Too much pressure can damage your eardrum or force fluid past it, triggering an inner ear infection.

5. Use warm water when flushing earwax. Cold water is uncomfortable and can trigger problems with your balance.

Dr. Louise Achey, Doctor of Pharmacy is a 40-year veteran of pharmacology and author of Why Dogs Can't Eat Chocolate: How Medicines Work and How you Can Take Them Safely. Check out her new website TheMedication-Insider.com for daily tips on how to take your medicine safely. © 2020 Louise Achey

How to stay healthy while social distancing

STATEPOINT - COVID-19 has the public rethinking how they stay healthy -- both physically and mentally. Even those in good health can start to feel anxious and fearful when the words 'pandemic' and 'social distancing' are mentioned.

But can you stay active and mentally healthy while social distancing? The answer is a resounding yes.

While routines have changed, it's critical that people keep exercising and eating nutritious meals, since the body is often able to better fight

off illnesses when it's healthy and strong. Taking these steps helps fight off stress, which most people are experiencing right now in one way or another.

Here is some advice from Cigna chief nursing officer, Mary Picerno to help stay healthy, both physically and mentally, during this time.

- Get Outside: While it's important to limit physical interactions, getting outside for a run, walk or bicycle ride is a great way to boost endorphins and enjoy fresh air. Just make sure to maintain six



(c) Kerkez / iStock via Getty Images Plus

Drinking plenty of water can help prevent dehydration. Not sure how much to drink? Many medical professionals suggest following the 8x8 rule, eight ounces of water eight times a day.

feet between yourself and others. If weather or other reasons limit your ability to go outside, many companies and gyms are offering free online exercises right now. Endorphins have been found to reduce stress, increase feelings of happiness and help fight against depression.

• Get Proper Nutrition: Add fruits and vegetables to your plate for colorful, nutrient-rich meals. Vegetables also are a good source of fiber. Eating well will help you feel better and give you energy to keep moving. Now is a great time to try that new recipe or food subscription box!

• Stay Hydrated: Drinking plenty of water can help prevent dehydration. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, dehydration can cause unclear thinking and mood swings. Not sure how much to drink? Many medical professionals suggest following the 8x8 rule, eight ounces of water eight times a day.

• Stay Connected: Just

because you can't be with friends and family in person doesn't mean you can't stay in touch. Set up time to connect with video chats, phone calls and emails. Staying connected doesn't have to be high-tech. Have kids or just a kid at heart? Write encouraging messages on your driveway or in your windows for your neighbors, and postal and delivery workers.

• Know Your Options: One of the best ways to prepare is knowing what to do if you start to show symptoms. Cigna and many other health insurers are now waiving the costs of doctor visits related to a COVID-19 diagnosis as well as the cost of COVID-19 FDA-approved testing. To minimize your exposure, call or email your doctor or a local health system about a telehealth visit to be screened for COVID-19. The provider will then identify what steps you should take next.

• Get Support: Talking through concerns

and fears can help put them in perspective and make you feel calmer. You may want to reach out for professional support if you're struggling. Cigna offers many resources and tools, including a 24-hour toll-free help line (1-855-287-8400) to speak with qualified behavior health clinicians, a webinar focused on managing anxiety, fears and concerns, and mindfulness podcasts (available in English and Spanish) focused on improving resiliency and stress management.

During this challenging time, taking care of your health should be a priority.

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