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Letter From The Editor: *Keep Your Head Up During the Holidays*



By Trevor Phipps

It is definitely official that the only good thing about the year 2020 is that it is almost over. Between the increase of natural disasters, the coronavirus pandemic, the unprecedented election saga, and other problems associated with the economy shutting down, the year has been a rough one for just about everyone.

And, now that the holidays are here, for some it could get worse. The holiday season is often rough for families who struggle financially or who have relationship problems. And there is a good chance that this year will be even worse as many have lost their jobs since the pandemic struck our country last spring.

But, no matter what problems you personally face, it is wise to remember what the holiday season is all about. This year it is more important than ever to stay happy and try as hard as possible to spread holiday cheer whenever you can.

Even though it may be difficult, the holidays can actually serve as a good distraction from what is going on in the rest of the world. Now may be the time to indulge yourself in everything Christmas related. Spend some quality time with members of your household by decorating your house and yard even more this year.

Watching Christmas movies can prove to be a good way to spread joy within your family. Playing holiday music can also help you force yourself into that happy-go-lucky Christmas spirit.

The holiday season might even be harder for people this year (especially seniors) since the older population has been warned to limit all interactions with others. In some places, it is even against the public health order to hold personal gatherings of any size while in other counties gatherings are limited to 10 people and no more than two households.

Not having those family and loved ones over in-person to cheer you up during the holidays this year can be a tough adjustment. But luckily, technology has been able to assist us in connecting to others even if you can't see them in person.

Now is a good time to teach yourself (or get help from others) on how to properly operate new forms of technology. Zoom meeting software and video calling devices can be a good way to stay connected with family because you can actually see the person instead of just communicating over phone or text.

You can also utilize technology to kill your boredom from having to stay in the house the majority of the time. During this pandemic era we are in, there has been an increase of things to do to entertain you on the World Wide Web.

If you find yourself feeling down due to boredom, then maybe it is a good idea to get an online streaming service and binge watch an entire season of a television series. Another idea is to participate in an online or virtual event. Events streaming online recently have included comedy shows, concerts, and educational seminars.

The famous Christmas rock band the Trans-Siberian Orchestra will be hosting a special virtual Christmas concert on December 18th at 6 p.m. Even if rock and roll is not your thing, this band's rendition of Christmas classics will still impress you.

And last but not least, during the stay at home orders and now that the weather is getting colder it is easy to become sedentary and sit on the couch way too much. It is wise to force yourself to get up every single day and take a walk around your yard, neighborhood, or even just around your house in order to stay healthy and active.

Happy Holidays everyone and be safe out there!



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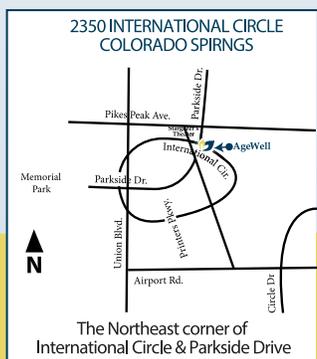
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The Dangers Facing Postmen of the Past and Present

By Trevor Phipps

During the year 2020, the U.S Postal Service was a hot topic when the coronavirus pandemic struck. Due to social distancing measures many states made the decision to open up a mail-in ballot system to keep people from having to go vote in person.

Since then, the issue became a controversy nationwide when people claimed that mailing in ballots opened up the chance for voter fraud. After the election, several claims came out against mail carriers saying that they were throwing away or not delivering ballots or bringing in fake ballots to be counted.

One postal worker in Pennsylvania went public with claims that he witnessed a supervisor backdating ballots. But when he was investigated by the USPS, he retracted his statement.

The tense political climate of the year 2020 brought about a certain threat and controversy to the job of being a mail carrier. Along with the year came about the threat of the coronavirus which is expected to have infected over 9,000 postal workers and over 80 have died from the disease so far.

Another threat to postal workers this year was talks of defunding the organization coming from the President's Office. With the President's threats to pull funding from the USPS many were in fear of losing their jobs.

Other recent threats that have gotten worse for postal workers are challenges due to heat waves in the summer time. With temperatures rising on the average each year, hot summer days have posed a big threat to mail carriers in recent years. According to an analysis done by the Center for Public Integrity last year found that the Postal Service had exposed about 900 workers to heat hazards since 2012, leading to muscle cramps, vomiting and loss of consciousness. And the report further revealed that close to 100 workers had been hospitalized for heat-related illnesses since 2015.

Decades ago one of the biggest threats to mail carriers was being attacked by a dog. In 2017,

the USPS reported that over 6,000 of their employees were attacked by dogs. However, the number of dog attacks on postal workers have been decreasing by about 200 per year due to new measures and technology implemented by postal workers.

Mail carriers now have scanners that they can label where dogs are at the properties they deliver mail. The postal service also has an Informed Delivery services that alerts homeowners when the mail is coming so they can secure their dogs.

Dangers of the Past

Back in the 1800s, thousands of settlers moved from the east to find a new life in a land where there were several opportunities such as gaining homesteading property or hitting the mines to find gold and other precious minerals. When settlers first made their way to Colorado due to the discovery of gold, silver, and other gems they easily figuring out that traversing steep mountain cliffs and winding through the state's deep valleys would be a difficult task.

In the winter time, excessive snow falls and vicious blizzards made the trails through mountainous regions nearly impossible to pass with a horse and wagon. The locals knew that they had to come up with a better way to move mail and supplies in the winter time.

The rumors from the past say that the Scandinavian miners were the first to teach the people how to make Norwegian snowshoes which would become the first form of skies. The snowshoes consisted of two 10 to 14 foot long pieces of wood that were four inches wide and an inch or two thick.

The skiers would then use leather to tie the long, thick skies that looked more like planks than modern day skis to their boots. The setup also included a long wooden pole to help the skiers push themselves uphill.

The most famous of the early skiers were the postmen who risked their lives each winter to deliver

letters and goods to the high mountain mining communities. The early mailmen would strap 25 to 50 pound mailbags on their backs and travel 50 miles or so through the high mountains to get mail and supplies to the mining towns.

According to multiple sources, in 1880 there was expected to be at least 50 skiing postmen across the state of Colorado. But, according to an article in the Fort Morgan Times written in 1891, it was expected that around 50 people a year would die trying to deliver mail through the treacherous mountain terrain.

Although some of these early mailmen saw a tragic fate, many of them became famous and are considered the pioneers of skiing as a sport. Some of them now have races named after them that follow the insane mountainous routes these brave men took.



The Skiing Preacher/Mailman “Father” John Dyer

One of the most famous of the early skiers was John Lewis Dyer who came to the area as a travelling preacher. In the 1830s, Dyer moved his family to Wisconsin to work in the lead mines when a tragedy took place that almost cost Dyer his life. He nearly suffocated inside a mine when “God spoke to him” and told him to become a preacher.

Dyer then worked as a traveling preacher in Wisconsin and Minnesota and was taught by Norwegian immigrants how to ski on their snowshoes before moving to Colorado. Once he got to the state he realized that many of the mountain towns were filled with rough and tumble miners.

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Back in those days many of the miners were into things like drinking, gambling and prostitution which motivated Dyer to get out to all of those towns and spread the word of God. In many cases, Dyer would set up inside a saloon or pitch a tent to preach to the miners.

But since preaching didn't necessary help feed his family he would make extra money by strapping a mailbag to his back and delivering mail on skis during the winter time. Dyer would traverse through the high mountains around the Breckenridge and Leadville areas and deliver mail while preaching the word.

Dyer soon got the nickname of "Father Dyer" not due to his role as a preacher because he was a Methodist but rather because of the fact that he was older than most of the miners and very friendly. Father Dyer was also known by the locals for buying a hotel building in a small mining town and moving it to Fairplay with a horse and wagon to establish his first church.

Dyer also opened up a church in Breckenridge that is still in existence today. Since then a stain glass recognizing him as one of the founding fathers of Colorado was hung inside the state's capitol.

Famous Postman Al Johnson

One of the most famous skiing mail carriers of the late 1800s was a man named Al Johnson who lived in the town of Crystal. Each week he would travel from Crystal to Crested Butte to deliver mail.

His route started at around 9,000 feet in elevation and he traversed 17 miles of some of the most treacherous winter terrain in



the Gunnison Valley area. Many have said that the route he took contained some of the most dangerous avalanche conditions in the state.

During the same time period Johnson was skiing mail through the mountains many of the miners in the area started hosting ski races where the best of the best on skis would compete with each other for cash. Since Johnson was a skilled skier through his work experience, he became a very successful racer.

Due to all of his efforts and his fame as an early skier, many locals named a ski race after him. Every year the Al Johnson Memorial Uphill/Downhill Telemark Ski Race takes place that replicates the route Johnson took to deliver mail. The race course begins near the top of Mt. Crested Butte, climbs 600 vertical feet to the top of a ridge, and then plunges 1,200 feet down through extreme skiing terrain.

The Tragedy of Swan Nilson

Aside from the famous skiing postman that are still recognized for their efforts, several passed away trying to complete their mail carrier duties. One infamous story was featured in the Fort Morgan Times in 1891 that talked about what happened to the Swede mail carrier Swan Nilson.

Nilson was a postman in the San Juan Mountains in the 1880's and his route was across the steep mountains between Silverton and Ophir. On December 23, 1882, Nilson set out on his route despite warnings from several local

miners saying that the storm was bad and that he should not go through with it.

However, seeing as though it was only two days before Christmas, Nilson knew that it was important for him to deliver the mail to the residents of Ophir before the holiday. Nilson refused the warnings of the locals in Silverton and began on his journey to bring the mail anyways.

However, the next day when the townspeople of Ophir were waiting for their mail to come, Nilson never showed up. Christmas came and went and still nobody had seen or heard from the postman.

Some went out and searched for him but to no avail. Then a little while later a rumor surfaced when someone said that they had seen Nilson in a saloon in Leadville. This rumor angered the locals as they figured Nilson took off with their mail and stole their Christmas gifts.

Even during search efforts the very next summer, no remains or sign of Nilson had been found. Another summer came around and a search party was again sent out to find the lost mail carrier.

Then on August 13, 1885 about 20 months after he went missing, the search party dug with shovels and picks at the bottom of a snow bank and found Nilson's body with the mailbag full of Ophir's Christmas mail strapped to his back.

Nilson was buried at the Ophir Cemetery and the mail was then saved and kept at the inspector's office at the Denver post office to remind everyone the struggles postmen of the past went through to get mail to residents.

Problems with Mail in Rico

In the early days of the settlement of Rico, CO getting mail to the town proved to be a tough task. When the town was first settled much of the land was controlled by the Ute Indians and there were only rocky paths to get to it.

During the winter of 1879-1880 the town of Rico had several problems with mail travelling in and out of the town. At one point the Rico News reported that “a damned fraud” had taken mail from Rico to bring it to the town of Silverton.

However, the trip must have got too tough for the mail carrier because he abandoned the run and left all of the mail inside an old, empty cabin. The Rico newspaper then published in bold letters “San Juan will send a delegation to hang or impeach fraudulent mail carriers.”

Then the next month, another tragedy hit the Rico area when it was reported that another mail carrier had died on his route. Postman O.T. Tyler was bringing mail from Parrot City which is now called La Plata to Rico when he froze to death on his route.

Shortly after that time period better roads were built to the town of Rico which eliminated most of their mail carrying problems. Even though today we have technology to where postmen no longer have to carry mail on skis, these early skiing mail carriers are now seen as heroes and pioneers of skiing as a sport and pastime.



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Neil Sedaka Still Singing Through the Pandemic

By Nick Thomas

Many performers have recorded videos of encouragement for fans throughout the COVID-19 pandemic months. But few, if any, have been as prolific as Neil Sedaka.

With more than 150 mini-concerts posted since April on his YouTube channel NeilSedakaMusic, the singer, pianist, and composer of 1960s hits such as “Calendar Girl” and “Happy Birthday Sweet Sixteen” continues to churn out the casual performances from behind his home piano several times a week and plans to continue into the Christmas season and beyond.

“The response from people all over the world has been unbelievable, even those who were never really Neil Sedaka fans before,” said the 81-year-old singer from Los Angeles. “They can’t believe my body of work.”

Sedaka’s repertoire would impress any artist.

“I started writing songs when I was 13 and have composed over 800,” said Sedaka who, in late March, was one of the first entertainers to post a video of hope during the early pandemic days in the US in the form of rewritten lyrics to “Oh! Carol,” his hit from the late 1950s.

A week later, his first mini-concert - filmed by his wife on a cellphone from their New York home with the family parrot in the background - consisted of a medley of a half-dozen Sedaka hits.

“I just thought the music could be therapeutic for people locked

down at home,” he recalled. “Then people began requesting songs on my Facebook page, so I decided to continue the mini-concerts.”

For Sedaka, too, the performances have helped get through the months of isolation after moving to the family’s Los Angeles home earlier in the year.

“I’ve continued to play all the big hits, but I’ve also done a lot of my lesser-known songs that I like to call my forgotten or neglected children,” he said. “Some of them I wrote 60 years ago and haven’t played for years, so it can take a while to relearn the lyrics along with the chords and rhythms. But it’s been very enjoyable for me as well.”

Trained as a classical pianist at New York’s Juilliard School, Sedaka discovered pop music as a teen and teamed up with lyricist Howard Greenfield to co-write the songs mentioned above and many more. In later years, other hits were written with Phil Cody (“Laughter in the Rain,” “Bad Blood”) but Sedaka’s love for classical music never waned.

“There are not many singer-songwriters of my era who can play Chopin, Debussy, and Bach!” he said. “I’ve even

performed a few piano pieces during the mini-concerts.”

Like other artists, Sedaka’s live tours have been postponed until 2021 (see www.neilsedaka.com) and he says the mini-concerts have helped fill the void all entertainers are experiencing this year. He’s also been appearing monthly on the Sirius XM channel ‘50s on 5’ with his program “In the key of Neil.” While he’s looking forward to returning to live concerts next year, don’t expect to hear any new Neil Sedaka songs since he stopped composing several months ago.

“I felt if you can’t top it, you should stop it,” he said. “I think the reason I’ve been around so long is I’ve always been able to raise the bar, reinvent Neil Sedaka, and to develop and grow. It’s still very gratifying to hear my music played on the radio - the songs will outlive me.”

Nick Thomas teaches at Auburn University at Montgomery, Ala., and has written features, columns, and interviews for over 850 newspapers and magazines.



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The Quick Getaway Ranch

By Trevor Phipps

Recently, Teller County resident Marcy Quick fulfilled a dream she has always had when she purchased a sizable chunk of mountain property. As soon as she and her family purchased the two neighboring five acre lots near Florissant, CO she began filling the premises with a large variety of adopted animals.

Her plan is to aid the community in being a place that can rescue different types of pets and then showcase them in their petting zoo ranch. The petting zoo coined the Quick Getaway Ranch is slated to open its doors to the

public by appointment starting some time next summer.

The ranch once opened, will be a place where small groups of people can come pet and experience different animals including dogs, cats, chickens, ducks, goats, rabbits, horses, cows, and even one pig. The ranch will have options where visitors can choose to come have private parties on the ranch while being surrounded by different animals. Quick even said that she has a white pony that she can use to give unicorn rides perhaps to little girls on their birthdays.



The plan is that the animals will be housed on the five acre plot that their home sits on and the empty five acres that is next to them will be used for the petting zoo. "It will be by appointment only, say if a family is having a birthday or if they just wanted a pony ride they could set up an appointment

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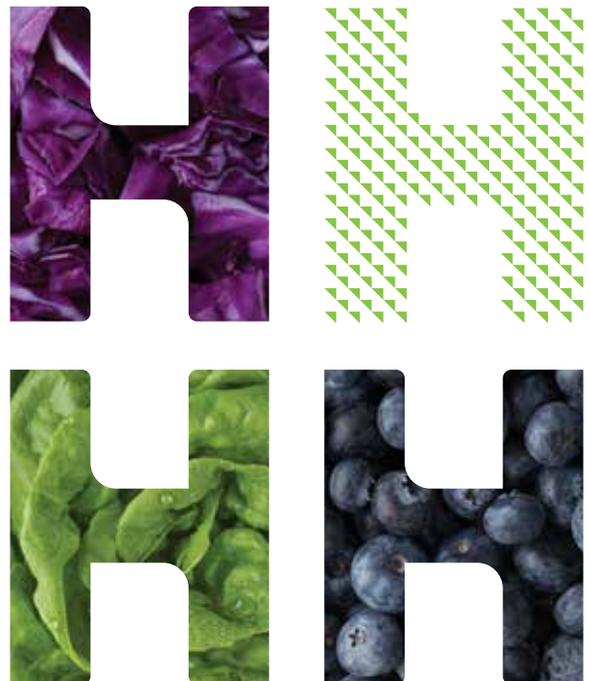
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and come up here," Quick said. "I can offer ATV wagon hayrides. I will probably set up separate petting zoo pins on the property next to mine so the ones that are suitable for petting will be in there. I have a pony cart and one that is good with a saddle so I can offer pony and pony cart rides. And then we have rabbits for petting, I have chickens, I have call ducks, I have the miniature zebu calves. And then if there is a little girl that wants to be with a unicorn I can make a unicorn with one of my miniature ponies. So we will be able to offer all different types of services."



as a ranch and a rescue animal shelter. Quick is currently employed as a nurse's assistant at an assisted living home and her husband works as a nurse and a paramedic in the Cripple Creek area.

When Quick isn't working her job at the assisted living home, she is working hard to take care of her animals. But the chores of the ranch are not new to her as she said that she has been around and working with different types of animals since she was a little girl.

Quick hopes that one day she can work at her ranch and petting zoo full time but in the mean time she still produces items from her animals and offers services. For example, she makes goat milk, soap and other products as well as offers goat services such a trimming their hooves and de-horning them.

Quick also said that she can offer her land and her animals up for photo opportunities and other events. "We can do photo shoots with the buggy we have out front and we have great views and great backdrops," Quick explained. "We could do weddings as well. If a lady wanted to have a wedding with a white Philly we could put her in a unicorn outfit and put garlands around her neck. We could use our animals for high school pictures or wedding pictures. Or, if we just have a family that wants to dress up in old Western clothes and sit by the buggy and do a photo shoot, we can do that too."

Currently, the petting zoo plans are not quite finalized but the Quick family operates the property

Most of the animals (including dozens of cats in their own separate pin and her one pig) are animals that Quick has rescued. However, some like her horses and the zebu calves were purchased as pets and inhabitants of her future petting zoo.



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Small Acts By Individuals Contribute to Big Impacts Community-Wide

By Trevor Phipps

During the month of November, El Paso County saw a new increase in confirmed cases of COVID-19. Some of the surges that have taken place this fall have shown to be bigger than the spikes in the disease the area saw last spring.



As a result of the new spike in cases locally, hospitals, local government, education and business communities launched the #SmallActs education campaign in the fight against COVID. The purpose of the new education campaign is to inform the public that small acts taken by individual residents such as socially distancing, staying home, and wearing masks can cause a big impact to reducing the spread of disease across the community.

Colorado Springs Mayor John Suthers addressed the public

to emphasize the fact that small acts taken by everyone can help prevent the economy from shutting down and problems from getting worse. "The COVID-19 numbers in El Paso County have skyrocketed over the last month and we are in grave danger of overwhelming our hospitals and further impacting our businesses and economy," Suthers said. "We simply must take action to stop the spread and reverse this trend. This is not something the government, the hospitals, the schools, or the health department can do on their own. If we are going to overcome this virus, we need every resident to take responsibility and start implementing small acts to make a big impact on our community."

Other public officials in the area have also stressed that

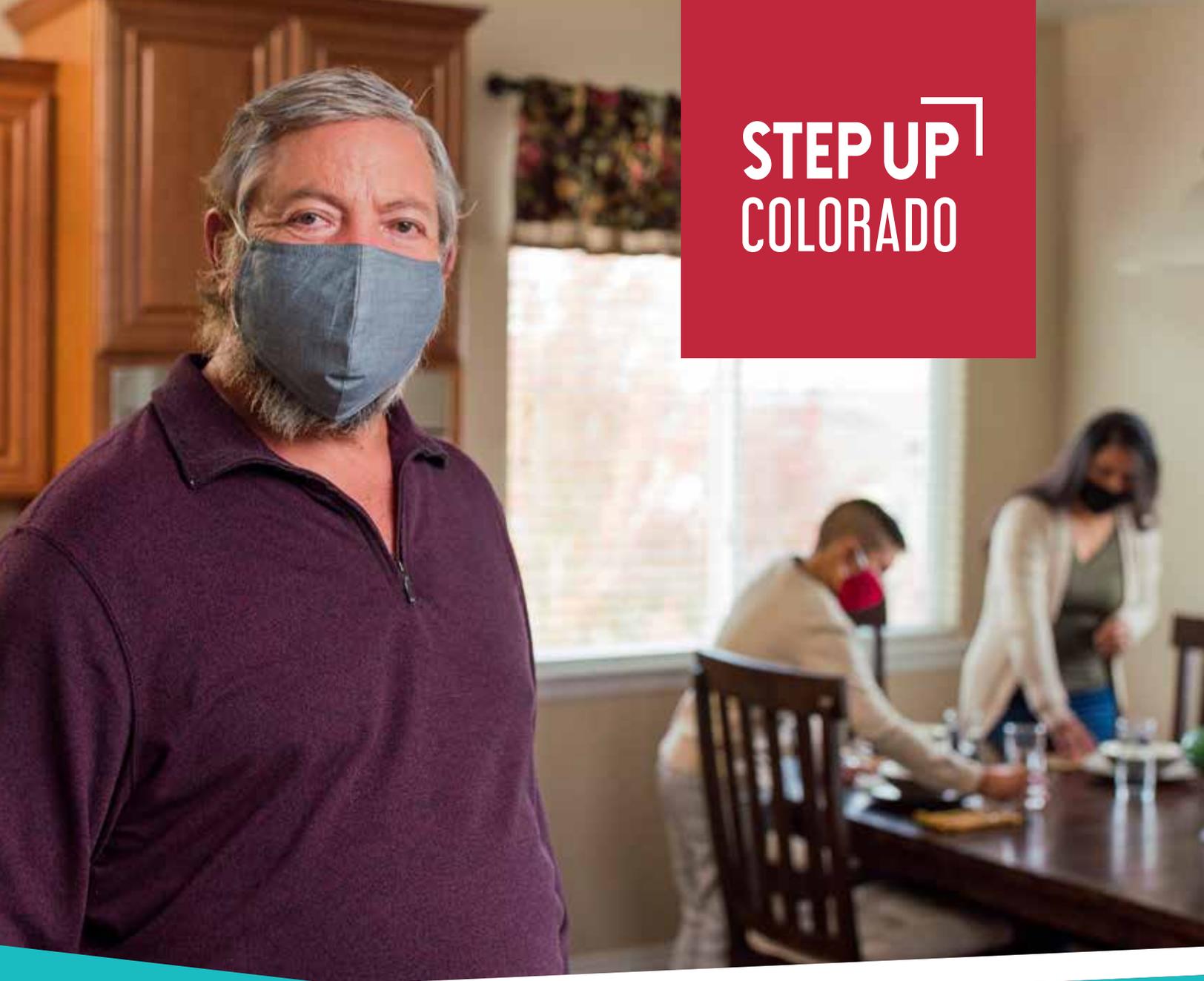


these small acts, if taken by everyone, can help reduce hospitalization levels, keep the economy open, and ensure the safety of the entire community.

According to Dr. David Steinbruner, chief medical officer, UCHHealth Memorial Hospital: University of Colorado Health, health care officials in the area are concerned about the hospitals getting too full if cases continue to spike. "Every step that we take to limit the spread of this virus will help to keep hospitals from being overwhelmed," Steinbruner said. "In recent weeks, we've seen a dramatic and concerning spike in the positivity rate in the community. At our hospitals in



southern Colorado, UCHHealth is now caring for just over 70 patients with either confirmed or suspected COVID-19



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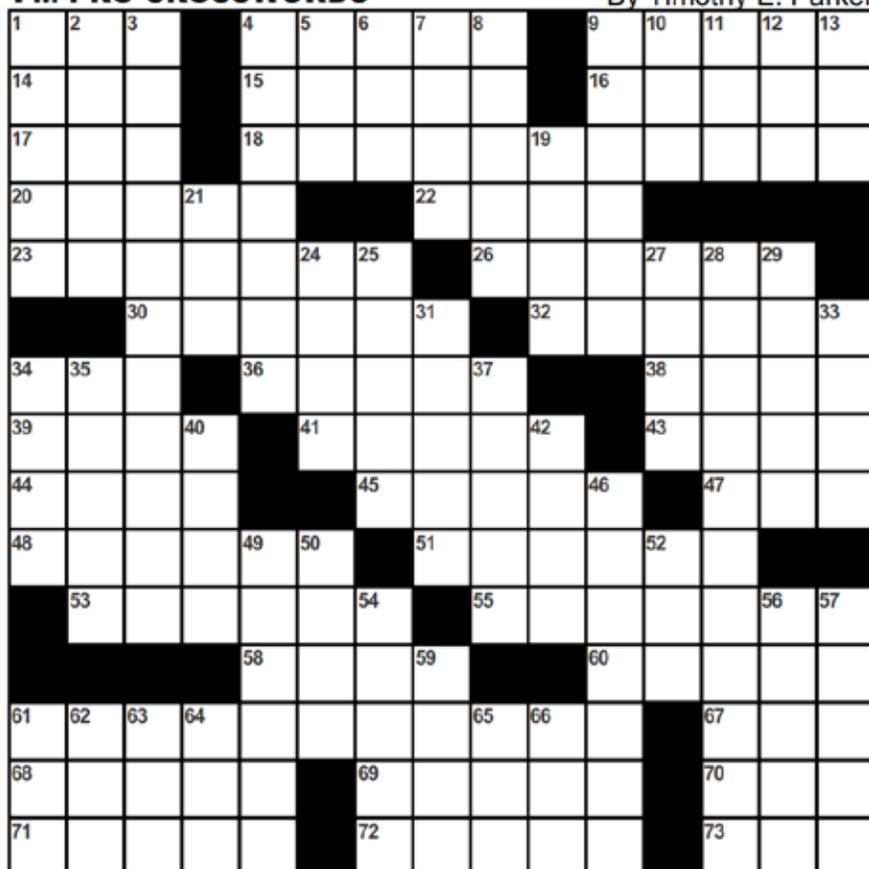
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|---|---------------------------------|
| 1) "Gaping" gullet | 43) "Let it ride," to a proofer |
| 4) Robin of "Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous" | 44) Bumpy gait |
| 9) They measure up | 45) Hindu dignitary |
| 14) Lennon's mate | 47) Govt. cosmetics watchdog |
| 15) Pool problem | 48) Undresses |
| 16) Slip the clutches of | 51) "Holy" Ohio town |
| 17) "Neither" go-with | 53) Cleverly skillful |
| 18) How to announce a boxing match | 55) Italian seaport |
| 20) Confuse | 58) Conspirators' plan |
| 22) Eyelid protuberance | 60) Draw a conclusion |
| 23) Makes impure | 61) One way to keep up |
| 26) Detonate | 67) .com relative |
| 30) Complied with commands | 68) Just plain bad |
| 32) Two out of 100? | 69) Place to sweat |
| 34) Paddle kin | 70) Cells for women only |
| 36) Tied the knot again | 71) Survived somehow |
| 38) Shelter for birds | 72) Fashioned into a sphere |
| 39) Stalag inmates | 73) Top of many rating scales |
| 41) Clear, as a cloudy windshield | |

DOWN

- 1) Single-celled organism
- 2) Battery post
- 3) Verbatim
- 4) Name-affixing tool
- 5) Right-angle pipe
- 6) Long ___ and far away ...
- 7) Bird sounds
- 8) Tests for weight
- 9) Cylindrical and tapering
- 10) Vestment for a priest
- 11) Afghani coin, once
- 12) Tokyo, way back when
- 13) Mend with a needle
- 19) Court call, if tripled
- 21) "Ad" or "women's" follower
- 24) Watched closely
- 25) Setting in "Les Miz"
- 27) Mythical monsters
- 28) "Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand" go-with
- 29) Honored with a bash
- 31) Skim, as milk
- 33) ___ new record
- 34) Makes a choice
- 35) Main blood vessel
- 37) Martial arts schools
- 40) Recipe directive
- 42) Elaborate party
- 46) Whirlybird landing place
- 49) Easy out, often
- 50) Farm storage unit
- 52) Bookcase locale, perhaps
- 54) Human trunk
- 56) Chicken's lack?
- 57) Nose or heart, e.g.
- 59) Old Russian ruler
- 61) Sink in the middle
- 62) Helium's atomic number
- 63) Terrestrial amphibian
- 64) British saloon
- 65) Bathroom fixture
- 66) 67 degrees, 30 minutes

I'M PRO CROSSWORDS

By Timothy E. Parker



Key on page 43.

infection. Please take these warnings seriously, use masks, and avoid unnecessary gatherings. Most importantly, isolate yourself if you have symptoms so you don't expose others."

El Paso County Public Health Director Susan Wheelan also reemphasized the "We're all in this together" theme that resonated when the pandemic first struck. "We are urging our community to come together to prevent and slow the spread of COVID-19," Wheelan explained. "Small actions taken at the individual level -- staying home when sick, wearing a mask properly, reducing social activities, and washing hands frequently -- add up to create broader community impacts. The only way we are going to get through these difficult times is by working together, with everyone doing their part."

Even though the holiday season is usually a time when hanging out with friends and family is popular, public officials are urging people to stay home and not participate in large gatherings with members outside of their household. The officials urge everyone to utilize technology to keep in touch with friends and family via virtual meetings and video phone calls.

- **Be the first to mask up. Even with close friends and coworkers.**
- **Stay home when sick or exposed to COVID-19. Getting tested and telling coworkers in the case of a positive test.**
- **Avoid gatherings with members outside your household, for now.**
- **Have students quarantine at home when sick or when part of a quarantining class.**
- **Combine trips and errands for less out-of-home exposure, or use curbside pickup.**

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Safe Travel Tips During the Holiday Season



By Rick Sheridan



Many seniors are planning to travel during Christmas. This holiday season consider how your holiday plans can be modified to reduce the spread of COVID-19, and to keep your friends, families, and communities healthy and safe. Here are some ideas for staying safe during travel and after you reach your destination.

Airline travel during the Christmas season is part of many seniors' holiday ritual. This year there are some additional considerations due to the Covid-19 pandemic. I recently flew from Colorado Springs to Kansas City, via

Denver. Here are a few things that I observed that might make your airline travel safer and more enjoyable:

Consider purchasing an "N95" mask for your trip. These are generally much higher quality than the typical paper or cloth masks. The "95" means that it filters 95% of air coming in and out. N95 masks are often used by medical professionals. The good news is that price has come down. They are available at local pharmacies or online. The prices range from about \$3 to \$9, depending on the vendor. My N95 mask got me there and back, and I felt more secure in the airport than I would have with my cloth "Kansas Jayhawks" mask.

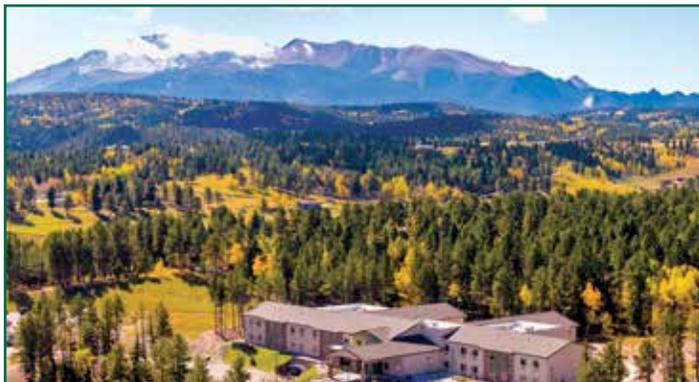
You will have to remove the mask and show your face to the ticket and ID inspector. Let anyone in line behind you not to crowd too close while you are dropping your mask. People are usually considerate, but a nonverbal "stop sign" with your hand works wonders.

According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC) everyone should wear a mask on public transportation. This includes passengers on airplanes, trains, ships, ferries, subways, taxis, and ride shares, and at transportation hubs, such as airport parking shuttles.

Once you get to your destination, there are other safety factors to consider. In-person gatherings that bring together family members or friends from different households, including college students returning home, pose varying levels of risk. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 epidemic is worsening, and small household gatherings are an important contributor to the rise in COVID-19 cases.

As you have probably read, there are several factors that contribute to the risk of getting and spreading COVID-19 at small in-person gatherings. Being within six feet of someone who has COVID-19 for a total of 15 minutes or more greatly increases the risk of becoming sick. Family and friends should also consider the number of COVID-19 cases in their community and in the area where they plan to celebrate when deciding whether to host or attend a gathering. Information on the number of cases in an area can often be found on the local health department websites. If the levels of COVID-19 cases in the gathering location has been increasing rapidly, consider a different destination, or use extra safety precautions.

Organizers and attendees of larger events should consider the risk of virus spread based



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on event size (number of attendees and other factors) and take steps to reduce the possibility of infection. Individuals who did not consistently adhere to social distancing (staying at least six feet apart), mask wearing, hand-washing, and other prevention behaviors pose more risk than those who consistently practiced these safety measures.

Avoid small, enclosed spaces whenever possible. If the weather is mild, perhaps you could have the Christmas dinner on a patio or well-ventilated area. Also remember that the use of alcohol may alter judgment and make it more difficult to practice COVID-19 safety measures.

Gatherings with many people pose more risk than gatherings with fewer people. CDC does not have a limit or recommend a specific number of attendees for gatherings. The size of a holiday gathering should be determined based on the ability of attendees from different households to stay six feet (two arm lengths) apart, wear masks, wash hands, and follow state and local safety laws.

Do not host or participate in any in-person gatherings if you or anyone in your household has been diagnosed with COVID; has symptoms of COVID-19; or is waiting for COVID-19 viral test results.

The CDC points out that any of their recommendations, or other tips that you read in the media are meant to supplement, but not replace any state or local health and safety laws, rules, and regulations with which all gatherings must comply.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been stressful and isolating for many people. Gatherings during the upcoming holidays can be an opportunity to reconnect with family and friends. If you do decide to travel this holiday season, please stay safe and follow the recommended safety guidelines.



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The Sanctuary Church Reaches Out To ‘Misfits’ and Homeless People

By Rick Sheridan

The Sanctuary Church located at 20th and Colorado Avenue in Old Colorado City, is one of the more interesting places of worship in the Pikes Peak region. Besides having a thriving congregation, The Sanctuary Church provides a variety of outreach services for the homeless. Their basement has several rooms filled with food that is added to boxes for families and individuals or put into box lunches. They have an auditorium in the back where meals are prepared and served to needy neighbors. Originally, The Sanctuary Church had a mobile meal serving operation. This began through a gift of one individual who would feed people out of her car. Eventually it expanded to several locations.

“Basically, in 2014 God entrusted a four-month-old church start with a 125-year church legacy. In November of 2013, The Sanctuary Church began as a handful of recovery misfits renting space at The Loft in Old Colorado City. We started with

people recovering from addiction, religion, or just a really tough life. Bethany Baptist Church was an older congregation that was looking to close its doors after 125 years of influence in our community. They felt led to give The Sanctuary Church the entire property, trusting we could “re-start” the life and the influence it once had. Simultaneously we merged with a local house church movement. Basically, three small “churches” merged into one— A charismatic preacher with a handful of tattooed misfits, an aging Baptist congregation, and a sprinkling of anti-corporate church young people. Just the fact it worked is a miracle,” said Eric Sandras (“Dr. E”), pastor of The Sanctuary Church.

Dr. E also provided some specific details about their homeless outreach. “In just seven short years The Sanctuary Church’s mission to the margins has developed into a donation based counseling center, clothing closet for West School, recovery

programs almost seven days per week, a food pantry that distributes nearly 2,000 pounds of food per week, and a Sunday breakfast that feeds between 100-125 homeless neighbors each week. A “mega-pastor” told me last

week, The Sanctuary has one of the smallest footprints with one of the biggest impacts of any church in this city...

“We started off with a heart for the margins of our community, and the homeless/housing insecure are clearly within those parameters. Our homeless outreach started when one of our members, who in an effort to pay forward her own recovery journey, began simply feeding people out of her car at local parks. It has grown to what is now “The Ragamuffin Cafe”, serving over 100 homeless friends on Sundays in our gymnasium. We opted to leave the parks in order to honor our city’s request that we do so. I believe Jesus himself never did ministry TO the poor. He was only known as a friend OF the poor. It’s difficult to be an actual friend when you don’t know someone’s name or story. Our first goal is to love people as they are, not as they should be— whether that be homeless, housing insecure, or homebound. We, as people, always do better when we lead with compassion and not our theology or political opinions. Then we take one person, one story at a time to help them become as whole or hopeful as possible. We have incredible partnerships with Westside Cares, Springs Rescue mission, Springs Recovery Connection (housed at The Sanctuary Church), West School,





Care and Share Food Bank, neighboring churches, COSiLoveYOU, and our local first responders.”

Pikes Peak Senior News took a tour of The Sanctuary Church with Dr. E in late October. One of the first things that was noticed were several art projects on display in the worship room. Dr. E said that artists will often create new works during the worship service. There was also a table set up near the front of the worship hall where people could deposit things that were no longer serving them well. Dr. E said that some of the items have ranged from drug paraphernalia, liquor, and even part of a chocolate cake from someone who was trying to overcome a sugar addiction. There are also blank slips of paper for people to write their prayer requests. Dr. E explained that The Sanctuary Church does not take an offering during the worship services.

Any readers who want to contribute to this church or its homeless outreach can make donations through their website, <https://www.thesanctuarywestside.org/give-online>. They are also looking for help in the food pantry or as a food server. Their full contact information is available on the website.



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How to Have Enough Money for the Rest of Your Life

By Money Coach Bill

First, understand that you are in charge of your money life. That means you/your family need a plan, a roadmap, for your personal finances. That plan requires research, action, resolve, and should be written down.

The plan starts with a year-to-year chart outlining your expenses and expected expenses for each of the next 20 years. Then determine where the money to pay these expenses will come from. Because of life's uncertainties, it is difficult to precisely plan for the future, especially more than five years out. As a result, your plan must be updated frequently.

Obviously, you must know your current expenses. Many of us don't track our expenses and, therefore, we don't know where our money goes. Track every dollar spent for three months in easily understandable categories. Then decide if your current spending is in line with your income and your goals.

You must have an Emergency Fund to pay for unexpected expenses, and you must have savings and investment accounts both regular and retirement. It is a good idea to record your Net Worth year to year so you can monitor your progress. Net worth is the total value of everything you own minus what you owe.

On paper draw 20 horizontal lines, one each for the next 20 years. Leave a couple of inches between each year. You will need 6-10 vertical lines; the number depends on your headings. Put your age and your partner's age for each year. Estimate your expenses for each year based upon expected developments over the coming years. (This is why you must track every dollar you are spending now.) List your expected sources of income for each year. Know well that every source account should have its purpose written on it. The next important section discusses where the money will come from to pay expenses in the future.

Next, write anticipated life-changing events on the appropriate year line: probable promotion, kids don't need daily supervision meaning one family member can consider part-time work, kids leave household, downsize house or take in renter, move to different area, retire, bucket list, retirement account required minimum distribution (add to income), life insurance needed or not, how spend free time, plans to keep socially and physically active. Remember healthy beats wealthy. Decide what's important and what's not. Things to be careful of: annuities, commission financial salespersons, inflation, timeshares, and things you do not understand.

Your most important investment goal is retirement. Think about it this way - paying for expenses in retirement is like a stool with three legs. Leg one is your pension, or your 401(k), and your IRA. Leg two is your personal savings in regular (non-retirement) accounts. Leg three is Social Security. Your retirement stool (ability to pay retirement expenses) is steadiest with three, evenly-distributed legs. With two legs, the stool is difficult if not impossible to sit on. And with only one leg, you can expect to wind up on the floor.

Let's look at each leg:

Pension and 401(k) and IRA - money which is invested pretax is entirely taxable as "income" so your current total is not the dollar amount available to you for expenses. After tax money such as a Roth IRA or Roth 401(k) is not taxed when taken out. To increase the amount in this leg, you must work longer and/or contribute more. You also should consider "converting" regular retirement savings to Roth accounts, which means pay the tax now so you will owe no tax when withdrawn.

Personal Savings - Some of this money may be subject to capital gains (increase in your investment value) which is taxed at a lower rate (currently 0% or 15%). The original amount of your investment is not taxable. If you want more money in this leg, you must add to the accounts now.

Social Security - The monthly value of the Social Security leg depends on many factors, the most important of which are how much you have contributed to the program and the age at which you begin drawing a monthly check. Google "How do I figure my social security payments." Many people are surprised to discover that often 85% of Social Security payments are taxed. You can increase your Social Security leg by

working longer and/or delaying the start of payments.

Consider life changing events:

Nursing Home or Home Care. Check out costs now and consider them in your plan. If you live alone and own your home, determine how many months/years you can pay these expenses after you sell your home.

Transportation. At some point you will not be able to drive. How much would you receive if you sold your car? How much will you save monthly on transportation costs – gas, insurance, maintenance, taxes? Now, determine how many car trips you might need a month and how much it would cost to use Uber.

Three things to remember when planning for your money future:

- 1 – Be both smart and flexible when putting your plan together. Tailor it to your own money life. If it looks like it will be challenging to pay your expenses in the future, then you must change your money life. Spend less by eliminating nonessentials. Save/invest more. Change is not easy, but it could lead to a better life down the road. Don't wait for a financial disaster, change now!
- 2 – Prior planning prevents poor results. Get your priorities right and focus on the important things.
- 3 - Common Sense is a good thing! Motivation is a good thing! Start planning for your future right now!



Money Coach Bill Stanley is a Registered Investment Adviser, which is a fiduciary who does not sell financial products. He educates and he coaches. Bill's passion is financial literacy for all. His first book, "Money Sense for Young Professionals" by William Stanley, is a perfect gift for that child or grandchild who is interested in having a better money life

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Plants That Add to the Ambiance of Holiday Décor

By Trevor Phipps

Now that December is officially here 'tis the season to decorate houses and celebrate the holiday season. During this time of year, several people invite guests over for various reason including decorating and gift shopping, so making the house look pretty for the season is essential.

Set aside from the usual decorations that consist of Christmas-themed décor items, lighting and of course a Christmas tree, some choose to find plants and flowers to spruce up their homes. However, since the holiday season is one of the worst times to grow and maintain most plants, there are certain types of plants that work best for the season.

Many types of winter plants work well indoors or can withstand colder temperatures. Several of these plants and flowers have short lives that are perfect to have them set up and bloom just for the holidays.



Poinsettia

These plants are almost as popular during Christmas as holiday movies are. Poinsettias are trees or shrubs that can range anywhere from 2 to 13 feet tall.

They are native to Central America including parts of

Guatemala and Mexico but now they are cultivated all over the world. Despite several old wives' tales these plants are not poisonous to children or pets.

Their bright red color makes them famous with decorators for the holidays as well as the fact that the flower will stay in full bloom through the winter. Once the petals fall of the plant, it is possible to save them and get them to re-bloom for the next season.



Christmas Cactus

Many plant lovers enjoy the beauty and easiness of growing succulent plants in the summer time but even though the season has changed, there are some popular succulents that grow well all year round. Christmas cacti usually hit the market just before the holiday season and are admired for their multi-colored flower blooms.

Some species of the Christmas cactus bloom around Thanksgiving time while some will wait until closer to Christmas. These plants are indigenous to the coastal mountains of South Eastern Brazil and like shady areas with high humidity levels.

These cacti are best cared for when put in a window and only watered when the soil gets dry. The cacti can also be saved for the next year as they will continue to bloom each holiday season.



Cyclamen

These flowers are quite popular during Christmas time due to their bright red color that helps add to holiday decorations. These flowers also work well outside and can survive in temperatures in the 40's.

Cyclamen are native to Europe and the Mediterranean Basin east to Iran, with one species in Somalia. The flowers grow from "tubers" and they can stay in bloom for up to eight weeks.

In most species of cyclamen, the leaves come up during fall, grow through the winter, die in the spring, and then they go dormant during the hot Mediterranean summers. Therefore, it is best to throw them away after the season because they are extremely difficult to get to re-bloom.



Amaryllis

These plants bloom about four to six weeks after planting the bulb and they can be a great addition to holiday home décor. Their exotic-looking, white flowers can help brighten up the house and add more color to a holiday plant collection.

Amaryllis are native to the Western Cape region of South African but they are now cultivated everywhere and used frequently as a holiday plant. They grow best when kept near a window for light and when their soil is kept moist but not over-watered.

This plant can also be saved for the next year if the stalk gets cut after the flowers fade and it is put in a garage or somewhere dark so it can go dormant during the summer and early fall. It is suggested to cut the yellow leaves and not give it any water until November when the bloom cycle can be started again.



Holly

This popular Christmas plant is actually a tree that can grow up to 50 feet tall, so it is not best used as an indoor plant. However, it is still popular during the holiday season due to its red and green colors.



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Usually, holly is displayed as a shrub or cut and molded into a wreath. Holly wreaths can often be seen on people's front doors or inside their houses during the holidays.

Holly trees grow all over the world in tropical and temperate climates. In the modern day, many use a fake, synthetic version for their decorative wreaths because fresh holly wreaths will dry out and have to be replaced the next year.



Christmas Rose

These roses or *Helleborus Niger* are evergreen plants with dark, leathery leaves and can stand between 9 and 12 inches tall. The large, flat flowers bloom on small stems from mid-winter to early spring.

Christmas roses are generally found in mountainous areas in Switzerland, southern Germany, Austria, Slovenia, Croatia and northern Italy. The flowers are mainly white with a yellow center but they can have a pink tint and the tips of the petals can be flushed pink or green.

And actually, despite its name these plants are not part of the rose family at all. These perennials got their ties to Christmas through an old European legend.



Mistletoe

Everyone knows the tradition of the mistletoe and how it gets hung in households as a way to spread holiday love. Kissing has been associated with the plant since the 18th century when the Victorians solidified the tradition.

The old legend states that if someone who stands under a mistletoe refuses a kiss, then they will be cursed with bad luck.

The mistletoe is a parasitic plant that grows on some sort of host plant. The most common mistletoe species can be found in the British Isles and most of Europe. Both the legend surrounding the plant and its beautiful red and green colors make the mistletoe popular during Christmas.



Paperwhites

These plants are tall and skinny in structure and they are known to bloom beautiful white, fragrant flowers. They are very easy to grow and maintain during the busy holiday season.

Usually paperwhites get sold in a kit or loose bulbs with a planting medium. Growing them is as easy as putting them in a pot and watering them. Most times, paperwhites will start to bloom in two to three weeks after planting them.

Also known as *Narcissus papyraceus*, paperwhites are perennial bulbous plants native to the Mediterranean region, from Greece to Portugal plus Morocco and Algeria. The species is considered naturalized in the Azores, Corsica, Texas, California and Louisiana. The plant is best kept in a window in cooler temperatures and will not re-bloom so it is best to throw it out and start over next year.

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Faith Through Older Eyes: *Return the Gift*

By Nancy Parker Brummett



Retailers dread the first few days after Christmas because that's when all the hastily chosen, misfit, off-colored Christmas gifts are returned. But what if we brought joy to the hearts of seniors we love by returning Christmas gifts to them *before* Christmas Day? With a little thought, we can remember the many gifts they've given us through the years and "return" them to the parents or oldsters we love.

Was your mom known for a certain Christmas cookie? The one that filled your childhood home with a wonderful aroma each December as a batch baked in the oven? I bet you have the recipe. In the days of COVID-19, you may not be able to sit with your mom and share the cookies over cups of tea or coffee, but even if she's in a carefully monitored care facility you could drop a box of her famous cookies at the front desk for her. Include photos of you and your kids or grandkids making the cookies this year. Not only will she be thrilled to taste a cookie or two herself, she will have something meaningful to share with her favorite caregivers.

Did your dad drag everyone off to cut down a Christmas tree each year even if as a teenager you rolled your eyes and groaned about being asked to tromp through the snow in frigid temperatures yet again? What else did those annual trips include? A thermos of hot chocolate in the car? A stop at a doughnut shop on the way, or a big pancake breakfast after the tree was tied to the top of the car? Let him know you now think of those trips more fondly—or that you are carrying out the tradition! Send him photos of your family excursion or send a thermos of hot chocolate or a platter of pancakes to his residence just to say, "I remember."

Hopefully these examples will inspire many more memories. Did your mom knit the same Christmas stocking for everyone in the family? She would love a matching one saying "Nana" or "Gram" to hang on the door of her assisted living apartment. You don't knit? Find a friend who does and show her a photo of the family stocking. Or how about sending your dad a note thanking him for sharing his faith as he read The Christmas Story from Luke 2 every

Christmas Eve. Include a video of you reading it to your kids or grandkids as a way of saying the tradition lives on.

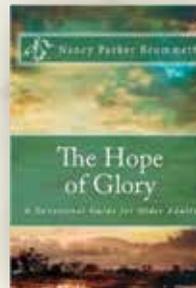
Our seniors don't need more socks or hand sanitizer. If they do, you can provide such items another time. As you think of what Christmas gifts you want to give them this year, think in terms of "returning the gift." Smiles will follow.

Nancy Parker Brummett

is the author of The Hope of Glory, A Devotional Guide for Older Adults, and Take My Hand Again, A Faith-based Guide for Helping Aging Parents. Learn more about her life and work at www.nancyparkerbrummett.com.

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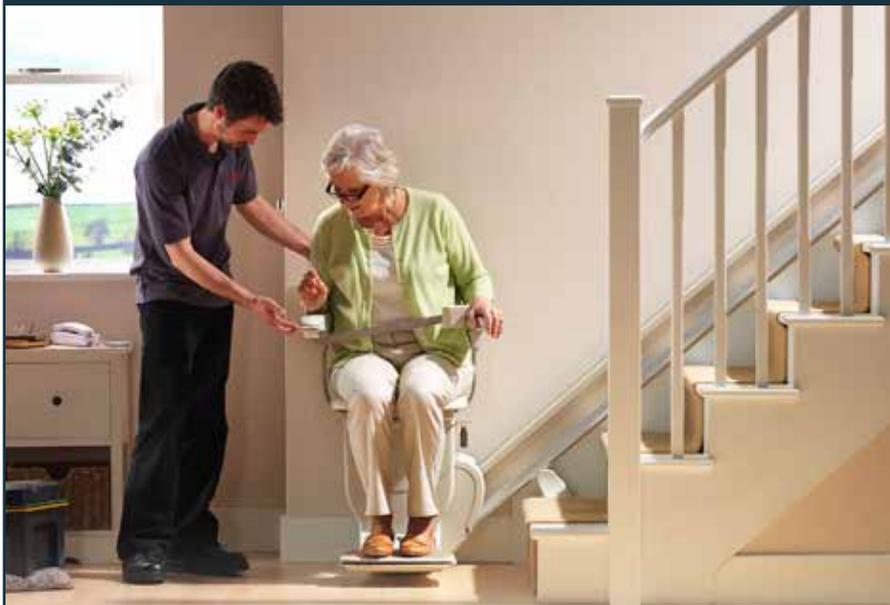
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Local Churches Tasked With Providing Virtual Worship Sessions Amid Pandemic

By Rick Sheridan

The Covid-19 lockdown measures in March included the closure of churches, chapels, mosques and synagogues in Colorado. Some of these restrictions have been lifted, but many churches have switched to virtual worship. For most Christians, church attendance is one of the foundations of spiritual life associated with worship, fellowship, and socializing with friends and family. The virtual services are providing a bridge so that the congregation can stay active until the pandemic is over and everyone can return to traditional in-person worship.

There are several different approaches to virtual worship. These range from simple to complex. The most basic form of virtual worship is where one person holding a smartphone, and the sermon is streamed on Facebook Live. Some congregations already had elaborate video and audio equipment, and were able to produce a polished online worship service easily.

The first approach used by many congregations as the crisis evolved was for prerecorded worship to be streamed interactively at a particular time as if it were live, thereby retaining the improved production

quality from prerecording and the limited sense of continuity developed by continuing to hold worship at the congregation's usual service times.

Instead of streaming the service, another option can be to stream a Bible study from the pastor's desk. The choice of delivery platforms was inevitably dependent upon the technical capabilities of those involved in deciding on delivery modes.

The homes of church ministers became temporary churches, where remote streaming of services occurred, that connected church members and non-members. Offices have become sanctuaries and kitchen tables altars in these new virtual churches.

Instead of trying to get the church choir together for a weekly worship music session, some congregations are creating a religious-oriented playlist on Apple music, Spotify, or YouTube. This has the advantage of not requiring any sort of licensing fees.

For many congregations, the regular food deliveries, providing support for the bereaved, and ensuring that their more vulnerable congregants are supported continued with social distancing being enforced. A key role is the important task of conducting pastoral counseling and support online and over the telephone.

Churches sought to retain as much as possible of



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the individual character and stylistic elements that make them distinctive.

Some congregations are using Zoom to meet virtually each Sunday (see resources at the end). The minister leads the online participants through scripture readings, prayer, and they often encourage some type of practice or reflection that they can try at home.

Not all congregations shared the technical skills to develop online services immediately. It has been challenging to get some congregants to embrace a slightly different way of doing things and looking at it as more than "just a way to get by," as well as making sure everyone is understanding how to install the software or call in by phone. It is also possible that some church activities won't translate as well virtually as they do when people are in the same room. And of course, for Mennonites, the inability to sing hymns together is very sad. Many Churches are currently working on how to incorporate music into their time online. Rehearsing and practicing the service ahead of time — especially the technology — has allowed many churches to make decisions about how people could participate: readings, the sermon, prayers of



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the faithful, etc. Zoom and Skype are great methods of digital face-to-face engagement but are not intuitive to the uninitiated. Church leaders are now tasked with thinking through how to effectively train themselves, their staff and their congregation. YouTube has some simple, but creative options. Short, clear videos communicate emotion and create connection.

Helping people to feel seen and included is important. Letting people know about when and how to participate is crucial. Look for ways to engage dialogue virtually, not just delivery of worship. One option might be to actively encourage an online discussion in response to prompts. During a virtual service's live streaming there is a continual stream of comments made by

congregational members who are co-present during

Thinking about other ways to engage people digitally is important. Some churches embed a live stream video on their website. Sometimes there is a way to host discussions or post comments there.

But to stay connected everyone is going to have to call people. Even if they're on social media, people need more than merely text interaction. For people who hate talking on the phone, now is a time for courage.

See email not as an annoyance but as a way to love neighbors. Take the extra two seconds to communicate love by acknowledging a person's humanity. During the phone calls, body language and tone

are missed, so intentionally compensating for this is necessary.

Communicate often that to let others know that they are being prayed for, loved, thought of, etc. Just come out and say it. Stand. Walk around. Stretch. For those not used to sitting, their lower back and hip flexors can become very painful.

Don't treat digital worship as something wholly different than normal worship. Approach it with the same care and intentionality that would be dedicated when worshipping in person.

Below is a sample of some of the virtual worship services here in the Pikes Peak region (please check the individual websites for specific information).



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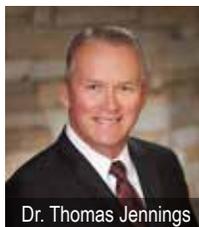


- Ascension Lutheran Church: youtube.com/channel/UCTVeMpoVQ587K0eJb3I3uRg
- Beacon Fellowship Church: facebook.com/beaconfellowshipchurch17/
- Bethel Lutheran Church: bethellutheran.net/video-streaming.
- Broadmoor Community Church, UCC: broadmoorchurch.org.
- The Catholic Diocese of Colorado Springs: diocs.org.
- Center for Spiritual Living: cslcs.org.
- Charis Christian Center: charischristiancenter.com.
- Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: churchofjesuschrist.org.
- First Baptist Church of Colorado Springs: firstbaptist-cs.org.
- First Congregational Church: fcucc.org.
- First Lutheran Church: flccs.net/online-worship.
- First Presbyterian Church: firstprescos.org/media/watch-online.
- First United Methodist Church: umc-cs.org/livestream.
- Heritage Pentecostal Church: heritagepentecostal.com.
- High Plains Unitarian Universalist: hpcuu.org.
- Unity Spiritual Center of the Rockies: unityrockies.org, services at zoom. us/j/7194714556

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Holidays and Home Safety

By Karli Johnson



Especially in the winter season and around the holidays, our loved ones are more aware of our living situation and often question if we are safe in our homes as we age. Sometimes the answer to that question is not what we expect or what we want to hear.

Our families are often concerned about our safety, especially when they come to visit and see that our physical ability is not what it used to be. What many people fail to realize is that we don't have to give up the dream of aging in the home we love or with the family we love just because our health or needs have changed.

With decreased mobility, vision or even just increased fatigue many of us are at a higher risk for a fall in our homes. It's no

surprise that the stairs that we once ran up with a handful of Christmas gifts are now a significant challenge. Some of us simply avoid going upstairs to the bedroom and choose to sleep on the main floor in recliner chairs because of the fear of falling. Some of us crawl or scoot up and down the stairs in order to limit the chance of losing footing. There are options available to keep us safe and independent in the home we love while giving our families peace of mind.

Creating a Solution to Common Challenges

Instead of avoiding the stairs inside or outside the home or navigating them in a non-traditional way, consider having a stairlift installed. With curved and straight stairlift options, there is not a home that will not take a stairlift. Many homeowners don't consider adding a stairlift to their home because their staircase turns or bends. Most stairlift manufacturers offer both straight and curved stair chair configurations. The track is custom made to fit your staircase and takes up much less room on the stairs than you may think! You and your family may also be surprised at how affordable they can be compared to moving to a one level home or having to go to independent or assisted living communities. Maybe

it's time to ask for a stairlift from Santa...or a local home accessibility contractor.

Another area of the home that a lot of us struggle with are the entrances and exits of the house. With decreasing mobility or a diagnosis of a health condition that challenges your mobility, getting in and out of the home can become a problem. One of the most common problems is getting through the front door or the garage door safely while still using our recommended mobility equipment like scooters, wheelchairs or walkers.

Steep steps, high/narrow steps, lack of railing and poor lighting can make these areas dangerous or impossible for those using mobility equipment. A Simple ramp, railing, or lift can mean the difference between a fall and going to rehab or getting inside safely to wrap our holiday gifts and moving on with the endless holiday to do list.

The addition of a ramp to the front of the home or concealed discreetly in the garage can make getting out and going during the busy holiday season easier. Wouldn't we all appreciate if holiday shopping were a little easier?! With a variety of material choices available, selecting the right ramp for your needs and budget can make this solution affordable. Wood and concrete



ramps can add beauty and function to your home, while metal ramps offer quick installation, no maintenance and are a non-permanent option.

Portable, removable and threshold ramps can help you enjoy visiting with friends and family throughout the holiday season without worrying about your safety while accessing their home.

Maybe you are not at the point of needing a wheelchair ramp and some railing is the answer for safe entry to your home during the slippery, icy season. Custom steel railing is another beautiful and functional addition to any home. Railing can come in many different colors and can vary in style from ornate to simple.

Simple modifications can allow us to age how we want to and give our families the best gift of all... peace of mind. Don't wait until you have slipped on the ice or fallen down the stairs carrying all of your holiday decorations, consider these options now. Aging can be difficult to cope with but it does not have to be difficult to stay in your home.

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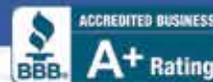
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Water, Exercise Proves to be the Best Defense Against Gout

By William J Dagendesh

While out shopping for groceries recently I encountered a middle-aged gentleman grimacing from a painful bout with gout.

“Do you have any idea how painful this (CENSORED) is?” he asked as he struggled to his feet and rested on his crutches. Indeed, I do, having experienced my first gout attack more than 20 years ago. What I learned is that gout is a painful inflammation of the joints caused by excess uric acid in the blood.

Gout earned its bad boy reputation centuries ago when the disease attacked persons who gorged on rich gourmet food and drink. Folks called it, “The King’s Disease,” because it delivered a royal pain to the victims’ elbow, feet and knee joints. Medical experts today know not all gout patients eat and drink excessively.

An equal opportunity employer, gout can affect anyone although it is more common among people over 35. I experienced my first bout with gout in 1997 while serving as the public affairs officer for the U.S. Naval Air Facility in El Centro, Calif. One morning I awoke to searing pain in my left big toe I attributed to excessive jogging. By day’s end I struggled to stand. Sigh!

A visit to the doctor revealed the truth. “There’s no doubt, you got gout,” the doctor said, laughing

as he caressed my swollen digit while reciting the popular children’s nursery rhyme, “This little piggy went to market...”

According to the doctor, a person is a candidate for gout when their kidneys lose some of their ability to flush away excess uric acid. In fact, most uric acid originates not so much from the food you eat, but from your body’s ability to over-produce the nasty stuff.

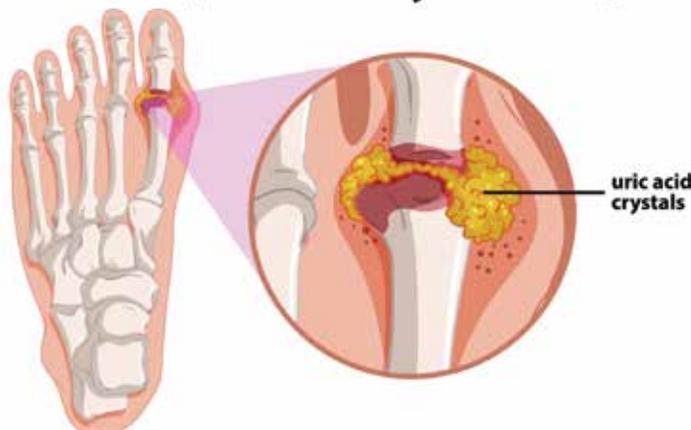
He compared the uric acid crystals to stirring sugar in a glass of water. Some of the sugar dissolves while remaining crystals pile up at the bottom of the glass. When this happens the joint swells, becomes red hot and tender to the touch.

Gout can produce a pressure so intense that the weight of a bed sheet resting on the swollen joint can cause pain and render the sufferer bedridden for days. Been there, done that.

My experience didn’t prevent colleagues from having fun at my expense, though. “Congrats, you’re a fraternity brother now,” the personnel officer said, laughing. The administration officer gave me a desk plaque sporting the inscription, “Got Gout?”

Also, obesity can hamper your body’s ability to handle gout. Doctors recommend losing weight and gradually since crash diets can raise your uric acid level. The good news is that physical activity, particularly exercise, helps reduce weight, improves circulation, helps the heart pump excess uric acid out of your system and greatly reduces your chance of contracting this gunk.

Gout (Inflammatory Arthritis)



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Prescription drugs, such as Indomethacin, provide fast relief for some patients such as yours truly. The acidity in apple cider vinegar helps alleviate pain and reduce inflammation. Add a teaspoon of apple cider vinegar to a glass of water and drink it two to three times a day. It has been more than five years since my last attack so I must be doing something right.

I have no doubt that drinking lots of H2O, staying active and maintaining a healthy diet will help prevent a bout with gout.

William J. Dagendesh is an author, writer and retired U.S. Navy photojournalist and editor. He has lived in southern Colorado 20 years.

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Brain Teasers

Answers on page 50

Q1: How can you throw a ball as hard as you can and have it come back to you, even if it doesn't bounce off anything? There is nothing attached to it, and no one else catches or throws it back to you.

Q2: A man was outside taking a walk when it started to rain. The man didn't have an umbrella and he wasn't wearing a hat. His clothes got soaked, yet not a single hair on his head got wet. How could this happen?

Q3: One family wants to get through a tunnel. Dad can make it in 1 minute, mom in 2 minutes, son in 4 and daughter in 5 minutes. No more than 2 persons can go through the tunnel at one time, moving at the speed of the slower one. Can they all make it to the other side if they have a torch that lasts only 12 minutes and they are afraid of the dark?

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Fudge-Dipped Almond Cookies (gluten free & vegan)

Yield: 1 Dozen



Ingredients

- 1 cup almond flour
- 2 Tbsp. coconut flour
- ½ tsp. baking soda
- pinch salt
- 2 Tbsp. coconut oil, divided
- 2 Tbsp. almond butter
- ¼ cup + ½ Tbsp. pure maple syrup, divided
- 1 small handful almonds, chopped
- 2 Tbsp. cocoa powder

Directions

1. Make the cookies: Set the oven to 350 degrees F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. Combine almond flour, coconut flour, baking soda, and salt in a small bowl. Whisk to combine, making sure to remove all clumps.
3. In another small bowl, melt 1 Tbsp. coconut oil. Add almond butter and ¼ cup maple syrup, and stir well to combine.
4. Add wet ingredients into the dry, and mix until combined. The dough will be sticky. Add chopped almonds and mix.
5. Measure out tablespoon-sized mounds of cookie dough and roll into balls. Stick cookies on the prepared baking sheet, and place in the freezer for 10 minutes.
6. Bake for 8 minutes. Remove cookies from oven and flatten them slightly with a measuring cup. Bake 1-2 additional minutes. Cool on the baking sheet for 10 minutes, then move to a cooling rack. Cookies will harden slightly as they cool.
7. While the cookies are cooling, make the fudge: Melt 1 Tbsp. coconut oil. Add cocoa powder and ½ Tbsp. maple syrup. Mix until smooth.
8. Assemble your Fudge-Dipped Almond Cookies: Dip cooled cookies in fudge. Place on cooling rack to set.



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Key on page 50.



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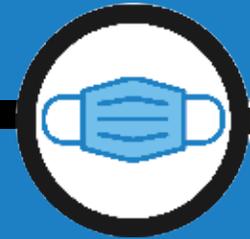
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Where: Memorial Park - 200 N Park Street, Woodland Park, CO

When: 12/5/2020 - 12/18/2020

Time: 3:30 pm winter day in the park, petting zoo, candy cane lane pictures with Santa and Mrs. Clause. . . And more hot cocoa and candy 5:00 pm sing along with Santa, social hour, beer and wine 6:00 pm City of WP tree lighting after 6:15 pm, fireworks display, blastoff location - behind wp high school

Where: Woodland Park Public Library 218 E. Midland Ave. Woodland Park, CO 80863

Christmas Stroll

When: Saturday, December 5th

Time: 5pm – 8pm

Where: Old Colorado City

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When: Saturday, December 5, 2020

Time: 5:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Where: Broadmoor World Arena

What: This year's parade will be held in a safe and socially-distanced event at The Broadmoor World Arena! This stationary parade will allow you the opportunity to drive through the amazing lighted floats from the safety (and warmth!) of your own car. Free tickets will be available for reservation soon to allow for vehicles to enter the parade route at staggered times throughout the evening and avoid long lines. Plus, hot chocolate, cider and other fun holiday snacks will be available for purchase!

Cost: Free

Web: https://worldarenaandpikespeakcenter.formstack.com/forms/festival_of_lights_parade

Tweeds Holiday Home Tour: 'Sounds of the Season'

When: December 5 and 6

Where: Woodland Park & Teller County

What: Join us for the 22nd Annual Tweeds Holiday Home Tour. The 2020 Tour features a unique array of beautifully decorated homes and venues. The home Tour Committee is committed to providing a healthy, COVID-aware environment for our guests as we raise funds for five local non-profit organizations: Through careful planning and advice from the Teller County Public Health Department, we will be requiring face coverings be worn in all locations, limiting home occupancies, creating a touchless experience and implementing sanitation procedures. For the first time ever, a "virtual" experience will be offered. A donation is requested, and the link will be distributed on December 8th after the tour is completed.

Cost: Adults: \$20, 2 Adults: \$30, Family Pass: \$35, Students (K-12): \$5 Tickets are available at Tweeds Fine Furnishings, starting in early November, or online Tickets purchased online can be picked up at the Hospitality House the week of the Tour from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., or on the day of the event.

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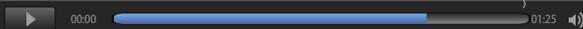


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December Events (cont.)

The Lighter Side of Christmas Season Gingerbread House Contest 2020:

When: 12/5/2020 - 12/18/2020

Where: Woodland Park Public Library - 218 E. Midland Ave. Woodland Park, CO 80863

What: If you are looking for a fun activity to kick off your holiday season consider entering the Gingerbread House Contest. For more information and entry forms go to lightersideofchristmas.com or the Woodland Park or Florissant Public Libraries.

Web: <https://lightersideofchristmas.com/>

Cheyenne Mountain Zoo's Electric Safari

When: Dec. 4-6, 11-23, 25-Jan. 1, 2021

What: 'Tis the season for lights, animals and holiday spirit at America's mountain zoo. Take in nearly one million sparkling lights illuminating the crisp winter night, warm up at one of the firepits throughout the zoo and stop in to see Santa (through Dec. 23).

Where: Cheyenne Mountain Zoo

Time: 5:30-8:30 p.m.

Cost: Adults - \$14.75 | Seniors (65+) - \$12.75 | Children (3 - 11) - \$10.75 Children under 2 - \$0.75 | Military Discounts Available

Holiday Book Signing at Covered Treasures Bookstore

What: So many talented authors in our community and the surrounding area. This Saturday, we are hosting two authors at Covered Treasures Bookstore, 105 Second Street, Monument, CO. From 11-1 M.J. Evans will be signing her horse guide books (trails in the state), her children's fiction titles about horses and unicorns and she will have her newest title, Mr. Figgletoes' Toy Emporium. From 1-3, we host John Rabins signing his memoir of the Black Forest fire's influence on his life, Defined by Fire. We ask that masks are worn to this event.

When: 12/12/2020

Time: 11:00 AM - 3:00 PM Mountain

Where: Covered Treasures Bookstore - 105 Second Street Monument, CO 80132

Gold Camp Christmas Holiday Headframe Lighting in Victor Gold Camp Christmas

When: December 11 - December 12

Where: Victor & Cripple Creek

What: Escape from the modern distractions, and celebrate an old-fashioned Christmas in Cripple Creek and Victor. Holiday activities will kick off with the nightly Gold Camp Christmas Holiday Headframe Lighting throughout Cripple Creek and Victor and a Winter Wonderland every weekend at the Cripple Creek District Museum. Experience the lights in the Gold Camp by taking a drive (with your favorite Christmas tunes playing) on a self-guided tour through our area as our mine headframes are decorated with large Christmas light displays. Would you prefer a guided tour? Then be sure to check out the detailed schedule of events for the time and date for the guided tour over the main event weekend. Holiday Headframe Lighting – self-guided tour – Nov 26th-Jan 2nd

Pikes Peak New Year's Fireworks

When: December 31, 2020 – On New Year's Eve

Time: 9:00pm

Where: Pikes Peak Summit

What: The AdAmAn Club fires off a spectacular fireworks display, which on a clear night, can be seen for hundreds of miles along the Front Range of the Colorado Rockies and eastern plains. This New Year's Eve we will kick off the 150th Anniversary of Colorado Springs with 150 fireworks at 9 PM!

Cost: Free



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December Events (cont.)

Royal Gorge Route Santa Express

- When:** November 19 – December 24 & December 26-30, 2020
Where: Royal Gorge Route Railroad, Cañon City, CO
What: The Santa Express is a winter wonderland where passengers are encouraged to wear cozy pajamas and relax with family and friends. Sip complimentary hot cocoa and a cookie on the way to The North Pole. Santa sees lots of visitors, so reservations are highly recommended.
Cost: Varies depending on options chosen



Glen Eyrie's Christmas Tea

- When:** through January 1, 2020
Time: 1 am or 2:30 pm (time available depending on day)
Where: Glen Eyrie
What: Yule Tea is Glen Eyrie's most highly anticipated Tea of the year. Celebrate this merry season while drawing closer to those who matter most as you delight in stirring conversations and revel in their new, hand-crafted holiday menu and heartwarming teas.
Cost: \$29 per person (plus tax)

Michael Garman's Christmas in Magic Town

- When:** All December Long
Where: Michael Garman Gallery
What: View this 3,000-square-foot miniature town decked out in its holiday best. Special holiday exhibits will be on display throughout the entire month.
Cost: 6 and under Free | 7-12 \$3 | 55+ \$4 | Adults \$5



CASTLE ROCK

Castle Rock Festival Park Starlight Market

- When:** Friday, Dec. 4, 3-8 p.m. and Saturday Dec. 5, 11 a.m.-7 p.m.
Where: Festival Park
What: Kick off your holiday shopping with Castle Rock's premier craft and food market. Shop from more than 30 vendors including unique crafts, specialty items, roasted chestnuts, mulled wine and more. Get that impossible to shop for person a gift while enjoying the 30-foot Christmas tree, hot cocoa and holiday music.



December Events (cont.)

Holiday Light Show

When: Dec. 3 through 19, every Thursday, Friday and Saturday

Where: Philip S. Miller Park

What: Drive through or take a walk through Philip S. Miller Park and enjoy some added holiday decorations to the already beautifully lit park. A food truck serving goodies and hot chocolate will be available to complete a night of family photo ops and a celebration of socially distanced community spirit and good cheer.

PUEBLO

ElectriCrittters at Pueblo Zoo

When: General Admission Nights:

Friday, November 27

Saturday, November 28

Friday, December 4, 11, 18

Saturday, December 5, 12, 19, 26

Time: 5:00 PM-9:00 PM

Where: 3455 Nuckolls Ave, Pueblo, CO 81005

What: The holiday season wouldn't be complete without a visit to ElectriCrittters! See thousands of lights and over a hundred imaginative designs as you walk through the winter wonderland at the Pueblo Zoo. Warm up with a cup of cocoa (and a cookie) at our Candy Cane Cafe and enjoy a memorable experience with the whole family! Event Features: 150 magical creations with 250,000 dancing lights Hot Chocolate and treats at the Candy Cane Cafe Holiday shopping at Pueblo Zoo's Gift Shop Warming Hut event rentals available!

Phone: 719-561-1452



HERPS Colorado Exotic Reptile and Pet Show

When: December 12, 2020 - December 13, 2020

Time: 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM Thousands of reptiles, amphibians, inverts, feeders, supplies, and small mammals will be available for PURCHASE to the public directly from the best breeders in the US. We will also have hands on educational displays and talks both days. Bring the family and plan your entire weekend around this amazing 2 day event! Get there early both days to draw for cash, prizes, free tickets, and more!

Where: Pueblo Convention Center - 320 Central Main St, Pueblo, CO 81003

Phone: 214-708-8305

Cost: Children are \$5, Adults are \$10



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8	6	4	3	2	5	1	9	7
9	2	3	6	7	1	4	8	5
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2	3	6	8	4	9	7	5	1
4	8	7	5	1	6	2	3	9
1	4	8	2	5	3	9	7	6
6	5	2	4	9	7	3	1	8
3	7	9	1	6	8	5	4	2

Page 39 Brain Teaser Answers:

A1: Throw the ball up in the air.

A2: The man was bald.

A3: First mom and dad - 2 minutes. Dad comes back - 3 minutes, both children go to mom - 8 minutes. Mom comes to dad - 10 minutes and they both get to their children - 12 minutes.



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