

The most compelling mystery of all

By **Katy Yoder**
Columnist

I have been acting kind of OCD since I ended cancer treatment. I have to check and recheck if I put my keys in my purse after I turn off the car. I have to lock and relock the car before I walk away from it. I take the keys out of the ignition and put them in my purse then by the time I'm out of the car and ready to lock the car I'm not sure if I have my keys.

I do things without thinking, then forget I did them. It feels like there's a tiny hole in my memory that little things can fall through. Part is from chemo brain, a kind of dull, empty feeling where I can't get a hold of what I'm doing or thinking from one moment to the next.

The impulse that I have to check if I have my keys or if I've locked the car is weakening. When it happens now, I reassure myself I don't have to do that again and that I have my keys. That's becoming more the norm — which feels empowering, like I'm getting my brain back. I feel sharper at work, not so lost and forgetful.

Part of this seems to be getting used to the new me that emerged after treatment. I don't look the same, I don't think the same and I've made a decision to not act the same. That's a lot to adjust to, and it's thrown me off balance — sometimes literally! The weakness I have in my ankles from an Achilles tendon injury caused by post-cancer medication makes it harder to stand on one foot and pull on my pants or put on my socks. Most mornings I almost fall over, but I'm too stubborn to sit down and do it.

Talk about appreciating the simple things! Now the tendon issues have shifted to my shoulder and I have limited mobility to do very basic things — especially anything that involves reaching around my back. I can't do a freestyle stroke when I swim and any sudden movements with that arm can result in pain that takes my breath away.

I know that some of this is just the natural process of aging, but for me it happened in one big rush. I just finished reading a book called "Falling Upward," and it's about second-half-of-life living vs. the first half of our lives. The book came with a workbook that asks questions that have deepened my awareness of where I am in my life. It's been illuminating and has prompted me to think a little harder about how I live my life and how I have incorporated God into it.

I don't want to get stuck in the past, but I realize if there are areas I haven't dealt with yet they may be pulling me back into a mindset I left behind long ago. Facing the possibility of death has inspired me to muster up the courage to face what has haunted me. Those little twinges of fear and uncomfortable memories that crop up in the most surprising ways may be the tip of some icebergs that still need my attention.

I marvel at how my mind

works and how certain memories refuse to stay in the past. It seems that as I've regained my strength, my mind has decided I am ready to tackle some monsters that were too big to deal with before. As my hubby often says, "Kill the monster when it's young." There may be a few monsters that I chose to ignore and now, unbeknownst to me, have grown, finding places in my mind to hide and fade into the background.

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When I was young I thought I needed a strong man or a powerful weapon to be safe. I walked around ready for battle but terrified at the same time. Now I realize you can't fight thoughts with things. Resolution only comes from within. I've chosen to work with a professional who can guide me and give me direction. Right now we're both getting the lay of the land, which includes where I am today and how I got here. It's an interesting process, almost like I'm reading a book about someone else. I know how the story ends — at least for now — but I'm still curious to see what

mysteries need to be solved.

For me to find my way I will continue to deepen my relationship with my Higher Power. The guidance I receive from God, although whispered softly, requires my undivided attention. When I focus on God, I know how to proceed and that I am not alone. For me, the challenge is remembering that that relationship is ever-present, just waiting for me to ask.

Whatever may come out of this exploration, I'm confident that it is what is best for me right now. I have the strength and support to survive what comes, and use it to be stronger and more able to offer myself to others. I think that's what this second half of life is all about. It's no longer about how much money I make or what kind of car I drive. All that is inconsequential when compared to the real gifts we've all been given. The planet we call home, the people who share it with us are all here to teach us and be taught. It's time for me to figure out how I fit in and what I can contribute. I know we all have a reason for being, and that's the most compelling mystery of all.

CITY: Hearing planned for capital improvements

Continued from page 3

Outreach has already been conducted to 28 properties that pay the TRT. A public hearing will be scheduled on this proposal.

- Council approved a supplemental budget of \$16,000 to cover the cost of initial improvements to the Creekside Campground prior to its opening on May 1.

- The Public Works Department is close to finalizing the proposed Wastewater System Capital Facilities Plan. Although not required, Public Works Director Paul Bertagna recommended holding a public hearing on the master plan for capital facilities. Council agreed to schedule a public hearing allowing the public to weigh in on proposed plans.

- Council approved the application for extension of the McKenzie Meadow Village temporary subdivision plat to December 31, 2016. The extension is necessitated by the pending appeals by Pinnacle Alliance Group to the state Land Use Board of Appeals concerning previous Planning Commission and City Council decisions regarding McKenzie Meadow Village.

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