

Commentary... Together, we can do this!

By Katy Yoder
Columnist

Sitting at our dining room table with two happy but confused pups looking at us lovingly, I'm feeling grateful for having a home and family to help move through these strange times. Like so many folks, business is waning and opportunities for freelance work is disappearing faster than toilet paper at Costco.

I have my work-music playing: instrumental folk with gentle guitar played by artists like Brooks Williams and Adam Rafferty. The calming cords soothe my nerves as I listen and watch news revealing the escalation of the coronavirus. My husband, Gary, recently joked that I'm becoming a real "Debbie Downer." I can't help going to worst-case scenarios and possibilities of food shortages, roving bands of desperate people and the loss of Internet... now that would really mess with people's ability to cope!

I can't stop running through possible disasters like no more food, fuel or toilet paper. What would that really mean for us? There are no fancy toilets in our house that shoot warm water on your bum to wash away the last porcelain deposit. We didn't stockpile a six-foot-high wall of TP and if this situation goes on for months, we'll be wishing the mulleins were already grown and those soft, green leaves were ready to be harvested and used for all kinds of personal hygiene.

Then there's the fact that we've chosen a plant-based diet. The bunnies that live free around our barnyard and have created dens beneath our barn are safe except for the red-tailed hawks, badgers and coyotes that come in for a quick lunch. I should have bought a 50-lb. bag of beans

and more rice. The beans might make for some entertaining, albeit nose assaulting humor as we digest and settle into this new way of living.

My mom is celebrating her 87th birthday. I'll bake a chocolate cake and order takeout from Open Door's vegan dinner option. Our trip to California to be with her two siblings was canceled so we'll celebrate virtually with family. We're doing all we can to keep her well and safe from the virus. We're taking walks down our wide rural road, chatting with neighbors as we keep our distance. It's all so surreal. It feels like a movie or a show on Netflix that's too far-fetched to be anything more than a fantasy. But here we are. I'm feeling the distance of our daughter 200 miles away and other family members who are hunkered down in their homes.

Everyone's dealing with their own version of the hardships the pandemic is bringing. Loss of income, sleep and security and feelings of anxiety and loneliness are making us all more sensitive. Keeping hopeful isn't always easy with emotions ready to bubble up. During the White House briefing, a Ford commercial letting people know they would be postponing car loans, made me cry. Emotions are heightened and burst easily, causing tension and a wariness about what's going to happen next.

I'm angry, afraid, hopeful, confused, skeptical and concerned about those I love and share this planet with. The world is very small, very fragile and feels even more dangerous. I'm trying to balance allowing myself to voice my fears but not let them pull me into a spiral I can't escape. Talking with family and friends helps. I can feel the love in their voices and know there are people out

there who care about me.

Then there's my spiritual connection. I know there is divine support ready to be tapped and integrated into my thinking. I have faith and know it can bolster me when I'm down. I know that regardless of my personal outcome, I will know peace when my time comes to leave this beautiful, blessed life and planet. Seeing people suffer and struggle is painful to watch. Dark humor is releasing some of the tension, but it also reveals our deepest fears.

My husband is keeping me above water and had a great idea to look forward to... If we have any money left, we're going to invest in companies that manufacture those toilets that spray away any need for toilet paper. Wonder why we didn't think about that sooner!

For now, our keyboards are tapping as we work on projects and deals. There are still a few people willing to buy houses and hire me to write articles about people and places that inspire. When that's finished, I'll tap into my creative side and let my imagination out for a quick exercise run. It's the best way to keep my over-active mind under control as we wait for the next news report from stalwart journalists broadcasting from their living rooms and basements.

It's a weird reality. Stranger than fiction. But we're living it together, and as Jake Shimabukuro passionately plays his ukulele in the background, I know someday this'll be a story we'll tell our grandchildren and great-grandchildren. I want to make sure my story is one I'm proud to share. A story that reveals our nation's resiliency, love for each other and ability to overcome incredible hardship.

We will do this!

Bank will move to new site in Sisters

By Sue Stafford
Correspondent

MidOregon Credit Union is preparing for a move across town to a site between N. Arrowleaf Trail and Highway 20, across from the Ray's Food Place parking lot.

The Planning Commission, with a vote of 5-2, approved a review of MidOregon's site plan and conditional use request for a 3,206-square-foot building with a drive-through and supporting infrastructure, as well as a shared 23-space parking lot.

The property is 0.78 of an acre and is currently vacant. The site and surrounding properties to the west, east, and south are all zoned Highway Commercial and contain a mix of uses

including Ray's, McDonald's restaurant, St. Charles medical office, and Mainline Station. To the northeast across Highway 20 is the Best Western Ponderosa Lodge.

The commissioners' main areas of discussion centered around safety and function of the drive-through and whether the proposed rendering of the building adhered strongly enough to the required 1880's Western theme.

The City staff had recommended approval, with conditions, of the requested site plan and conditional use proposal, saying it satisfies the approval criteria. Five of the commissioners agreed; two thought the proposed exterior design was too contemporary.

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