

OUR Stories

The stories of our community during the pandemic are ones of extraordinary challenges, concerns and triumphs.

As our world changes, we chronicle the tales of our friends and neighbors.

Letting go of life's relics

LORANE — Another quiet celebration combined with sad tones took place one morning, when Jim helped a man load his big Ford tractor onto a trailer and haul it away.



Jim Edwards

Big Blue and his less-powerful mate, Blue, served Jim well for many years in the hay fields around Lorane. I spent a fair amount of time myself over the years on Blue's seat, raking hay while Jim cut new swaths or baled the cured hay into big round bales with Big Blue.

Neither tractor had a cab or umbrella — hence, no air conditioning, or even an umbrella to protect us from the sun. I didn't mind though.

I loved the feel of the gentle early summer breeze blowing through my hair as I watched the hawks sitting on the fence posts and buzzards slowly circling the fields above, waiting for us to pass by so they could swoop down and catch the mice and snakes left in our wake. I'm pretty sure my partial hearing loss was helped along by the loud drone of the engine as I circled those fields, but I wouldn't have missed those years for the world.

Jim had to say goodbye to his cattle herd a few years ago — that was especially



Big Blue, once a workhouse, is now a lawn ornament in Lorane. PHOTO PROVIDED

hard for him — and Blue and Big Blue have been lawn ornaments in our yard since we gave up the lease on the ranch.

He finally agreed to offer both of them for sale recently, and Blue was picked up a few weeks ago ... and now, Big Blue is gone.

I have to admit, it will be a relief to mow the yard without having to avoid them, but that it is just one more thing Jim needs to disconnect from his busy life as a farmer.

It's so hard to let go.

— Pat Edwards

Flower power!

Reagan Dockery, 9, and Reese Dockery, 8, combined entrepreneurial spirit with a desire to do good as they set up a flower stand outside Creswell Food Pantry during last Thursday's 12:30 to 3 p.m. food distribution time, as a fundraiser for the pantry. At the end, the girls had raised and donated about \$280.

But the story doesn't end there. According to mom Jennifer Dockery, the girls were so inspired and motivated after meeting some pantry volunteers and learning about the high demand for the food pantry's services that they worked many more hours picking and making bouquets and restocking their flower stand.

The two sisters also ended up doing their flower stand for May Day, "encouraging people to come get flowers to brighten people's day — and it was a big hit," Dockery said. "We delivered flowers to a couple of care facilities, even."

The May Day total of \$309, plus a few subsequent purchases, brought their grand total to \$614.25.

"To give some perspective, our annual operating budget is approximately \$7,000," said pantry manager Susan Blachnik. "They raised funds to pay our expenses for one full month. Amazing!"

"Their hearts are so full right now," Dockery said.

— Gini Davis

'Amazing and inspirational'



Patrick Decelles, with mask, and Philip Jones help clear a tree.

Editor's note: There were reports of dramatic weather in the area this past Saturday. Linda LaZar, an executive with Magnolia Gardens and author of The Chronicle's Chinese astrology column, describes what happened in her neighborhood — and how neighbors responded.



The craziest thing happened Saturday morning 11:10 a.m. — I think a small twister blew past. The wind suddenly picked up through an open window with such force I moved to close it. Just then my daughter came into my office and said a tree in our back yard had blown down. It was a large tree! A beautiful tree!

No one was hurt, and there was no property damage. If the tree had fallen in the other direction, it would have destroyed my house. Before we knew it, maintenance staff and two neighbors were clearing the road.

What struck me (aside from the amazing kindness and quick action of our neighbors) was that one of the neighbors, Patrick Decelles, was diligent about observing physical distancing, keeping everyone safe, and obeying guidelines by wearing a face mask. I had never met him before. He never removed the mask while working so hard, even though it had to inhibit his breathing.

And aside from the tree, no damage resulted. The wind lasted for a few moments, just long enough to destroy the tree, and it stopped immediately after. We

are all so very lucky. It felt as if we were spared a tragic outcome. A tree expert could not have planned a more perfect removal.

Philip Jones, the other neighbor, is retired and he was the first man on the job. He used to work in the lumber industry, and he jumped right in. I thanked him for all his work on behalf of the townhouse complex, and he said, "That's what I'm here for." He has lived in the townhouse complex for 20 years — exactly to the date of this freak storm. I had never met him before, either.

As soon as the driveway was cleared the two humbly and quietly returned to their apartments. It looks like we have great people in our community. They come out when someone needs help.

It was quite amazing and inspirational.



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