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The Nixons went back-packing across Europe, enjoying England, France and Germany, the latter as the Berlin Wall fell. They also visited Scandinavia, Italy and Greece.

All were impromptu trips with no reservations. "Not something many people would enjoy — but we loved it," she said. Stories of their adventures were published in the Chinook Observer.

Years later, Don Nixon began feeling confused and developed dementia, then Alzheimer's. When he was diagnosed, Anne Nixon didn't immediately seek knowledge. "I bought a book from the Mayo Clinic, but I was so devastated with Don's illness I said, 'I don't want to know.' But you can be helped by knowing ahead of time what to expect."

When Anne Nixon tore the meniscus in her knee, it prompted their 2016 move to California to be closer to her son, Dave Jochum. "I couldn't help him any more, so we moved here near my son and family," she said.

Under the name Anne Elizabeth Nixon, she has published books about polio and Alzheimer's, as well as travel and one work of fiction. Her latest experiences led to writing her new book about all three health issues to guide others. Its mention



COURTESY ANNE NIXON

Anne Nixon, a former Surfside, Wash., resident has published another book designed to help others through serious health issues.

of positive attitudes is reinforced with practicality.

"Yes, I am optimistic, but you need a truthful way of looking at a disease. Of course, everyone's different. For some it's very fast. Don's was unusual because he was not able to speak. He couldn't tell me or other people what he wanted. I don't think I ever realized that people could not understand his muttering."

Polio strikes

Nixon's own health issues have been formidable.

In 1954, she contracted polio during an era when medical researchers were still a long way from un-

derstanding the condition. She was 20, with a year-old son. Her right side became considerably weakened.

"I was at a drive-in movie and I dropped a cup of coffee all over me," she recalled. "The muscles in my right hand just let go. My husband was in the service, so the next day I got out all his clothes and ironed them because I knew I wouldn't be able to do that any more."

"I knew that something was wrong with me. I told my husband to take me to the hospital, I just knew something was the matter with me. It was very odd."

Her father had been a mountain climber, so the admonition to all polio sufferers to stay active didn't worry her.

Her first battle with colon cancer happened in 2001; a second bout, with a differ-

THE BOOK

**"How I Survived:
Alzheimer's
Cancer Polio"**

By Anne Elizabeth
Nixon

Amazon.com

eBook \$3.99,
paperback \$14.99

ent kind and a new tumor, happened more recently; she was released from the hospital in July.

Ailments can be hereditary, so she encourages people to research their health histories. "Some things run in families, and you have a propensity for it," she said. "The way it was discovered this time was severe anemia that caused vertigo-type episodes."

Post-polio syndrome has meant further deterioration.

"I didn't even know about that," she said. "I now discover that everything happens on that affected side — my right side is a mess!"

"I had no problems with polio until the early '90s when I noticed some things that I couldn't do."

A hip replacement helped, but she has had to re-learn basic functions.

"With my right hand, I am less able to do things," she said.

"I have learned to do things in the last three to four years, like eating with my left hand."

"When I mastered eating spaghetti with my left hand, I knew I had arrived." CW



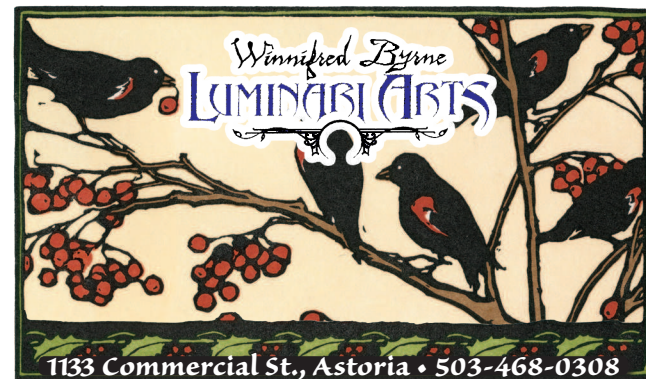
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