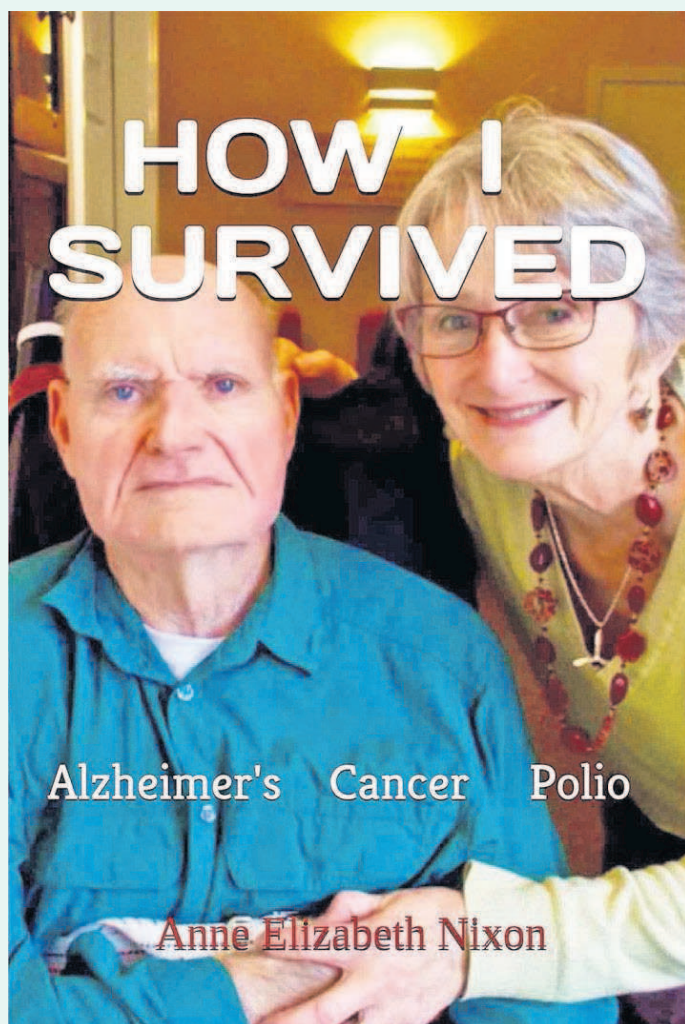


SURVIVOR

Former Surfside, Wash., resident Anne Nixon publishes book about battles with Alzheimer's, cancer, polio



COURTESY ANNE NIXON

Anne Nixon, who used to live on the Long Beach Peninsula, has published an account about navigating some of life's biggest challenges.

By **PATRICK WEBB**
FOR COAST WEEKEND

Writer Anne Nixon believes health challenges can be aided by one important trait.

"I was born with an optimistic attitude and that really does help," she said.

The former Surfside resident has endured the rigors of polio and two types of colon cancer — as well as coping with her late husband's Alzheimer's disease.

Throughout it all, she said a positive approach has been the key.

Her latest book, "How I Survived: Alzheimer's Cancer Polio" was released as an eBook and paperback last month. It's one of a half-dozen works the 84-year-old has published to help others.

"My book is a 'how-to,' telling about attitude — that's very important," she said. "I tell you how to find help that you need to get, the names and addresses of agencies that can help."

Her first husband attended dental school at Oregon Health Sciences University after he left the military in California. During that time and afterward, she picked up considerable awareness of patients' needs, working first as a medical secretary, then learning to take chest X-rays and draw blood.

"I worked in doctor's offices all the time, so I saw people who needed help. There's so much that I can tell people, and that's how I started writing this,

especially about Alzheimer's."

Nixon now lives in Petaluma, Calif., just north of San Francisco. Her second husband, Don Nixon, who was living in a memory care home, died earlier this year.

After a divorce in the mid-1980s, Anne Nixon had remained in San Jose, Calif., and met Don, a private pilot who encouraged her to learn to fly; their longest trip was to visit his family in Illinois. "My second marriage was everything I'd ever hoped for," she said.

"A few years later, we sold everything and bought an RV, and for 10 great years we traveled all over the U.S. We were always looking for the 'perfect spot,'" she said. "We came back to the Northwest."

The couple spent 32 years in Surfside, living in their home on 310th, enjoying golf and clamming a few blocks from the ocean and golf course. They were especially close to the Stamp and Kemmer families.

"Don golfed, rain or shine," she said. "He would even go out to play wearing hip boots."

Deep Peninsula roots

Peninsula roots ran deep. Her mother's family, the Heckes, had operated the Oysterville Inn, having moved there in 1919. Glen Heckes, the son of the oldest of four sisters, had been sent from Portland to buy cranberry land, but instead became enamored with oysters.

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