

Wanting to adopt a greyhound

Dear Annie: I am about to retire. I don't want to sit around watching TV after retirement, so I'd like to adopt a retired greyhound to keep me company. I had hoped to have him or her certified as my therapy dog.

My husband retired 15 years ago, and he has already developed retirement interests. When he is not pursuing those, he is perfectly happy sitting at home and watching television, which is fine with me, if that's what he wants to do. His interests are exclusive to him: lunch with the guys, hanging out with old friends, that sort of thing.

My husband refuses any type of pet.

I am concerned about getting depressed with nothing to do. I know I can volunteer, but that is not my first choice.

We had originally planned to travel after retirement, but with the virus, and considering our ages, we don't see that happening anytime soon. Did I mention we live in Alaska, and wintertime sports are not of any interest to me?

How do I get him to see my side, or how can I come to terms with his side? — *Lonesome But Not Alone*

Dear Lonesome But Not Alone: Congratulations on wanting to rescue a retired greyhound. They really need loving and good homes, which it sounds like you will provide. Now, how do we get your husband to come around to your side?

First, it takes no longer seeing this conversation as having sides. You are on the same side — creating a happy marriage where you are both fulfilled in your individual lives as well. Talk to him, quietly and calmly, sharing why this is so important to you. Have a clear plan as to how you will be the primary caretaker. Tell him your fears of becoming

ing bored and unhappy and how a dog has been proven to help people feel happier. Voice your opinion that he gets to have activities that are enjoyable to him, and exclusionary of you, so having a dog would be your version of this.

Marriage is about compromise. In this case, getting a dog will bring you much joy and happiness, something that I'm sure your husband would like to see. Happy wife, happy life!

Dear Annie: The letter from "Don't Call Me Dear" reminded me

of an experience I had as a 20-something female engineer working in an oil refinery. During a shutdown, an older gentleman said to me, "Little Woman, can you hand me the diamond bit in that drawer?" I was stunned. Little Woman?! Somehow, I pulled together the best response I could think of: I stood up, offered to shake his hand, and said (in a friendly way): "I'm sorry. I don't think we've met." And proceeded to introduce myself.

The reaction? He apologized, and then he and I were on a first name basis going forward. That experience taught me that, while I'm a feminist with firm boundaries, I'm better off assuming good intent.

You see, while I believe in speaking up for yourself, I also live in a state (Kentucky) where being called "honey" by the grocery clerk is not only often the norm but also kind of sweet — once I decided it was.

And when I'm not comfortable with it? I introduce myself. Sometimes, I even make a friend. — *Boundaries with a Smile*

Dear Boundaries with a Smile: Thank you for this thoughtful example of standing your ground while thinking the best of those around you.

DEAR ANNIE



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Albany Farmers Market

A portion of the Albany Farmers Market online ordering page.

Farmers markets aided by online ordering

By MARGO CRAIG
Capital Press

The Oregon Farmers Market Association is helping its members establish online ordering systems to adapt to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions.

As more farmers markets seek to move transactions online, managers can consult the association for technical assistance and software recommendations.

"We're here to help them understand their choices and support them in implementing the choices they make," said Kelly Crane, the association's executive director.

So far, the association has assisted 27 farmers markets — about a quarter of the state's total.

"Farmers markets are really nimble, creative entities," Crane said. "They'll be the first to tell you, every market is different" with unique needs and challenges.

Some farmers markets can't operate on site because of local regulations. Others don't have space to accommodate social distancing guidelines. Several are waiting on delayed permits.

Many have concerned customers opting out of on-site visits.

To limit interactions, more farmers markets are letting customers order and purchase goods such as berries, fruits and vegetables on the internet before pick-up.

"(Customers) don't have to exchange money, pick things out and have it weighed — it's all ready to go," Crane said.

Some farmers markets offer it as an option, while others have opted to have all customers pre-order online.

For example, in Florence, the farmers market is online-only since many of its customers are retirees who have a higher risk of becoming seriously ill from COVID-19.

"It's like we've totally reinvented our market," said Mary Shaw, the market president. "The customers are very grateful to have access to local food."

Tourist revenue is much lower, but Shaw's priority is to offer high-quality food to

the local community. So far, revenue resembles the market's first season three years ago.

Shaw is still working to reach customers who use Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits with the Oregon Trail card to purchase food. "They are the cornerstone of our market," Shaw said. Many don't use computers or relied on computers at the library, which is still closed.

Online platforms can't process the Oregon Trail card, so SNAP customers pay at the information booth when they pick up their orders.

While Shaw misses community members congregating at the market, there are no plans to open as a walk-in market.

"The market is doing well," she said. "Sales are trending upwards," thanks to the online adjustments, which will be a permanent option beyond the pandemic.

Crane believes the online adjustments will help farm-

ers markets in the long run.

"Industry leaders have been really interested in this topic," she said. "We see the customer trends and we've wanted to get our farmers markets interested for long-term viability."

Before the pandemic, there was little reason to move business online since the state's farmers markets are so popular.

"One silver lining of this crisis is that it's created an incentive to make a behavioral shift," Crane said. "Once those habits are built, it will be normal for farmers markets to have online vendors keeping their product up-to-date."

In 2019, Oregon's farmers markets sold \$63 million worth of products from 6,700 vendors.

"That's 6,700 small businesses" that rely on farmers markets to operate, Crane said. "People think of farmers markets as cute, but collectively, they are also a significant cornerstone in Oregon's agriculture industry."

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