

BEHIND THE SCENES

Working from home

By Trisha Walker
News staff writer

I AM WRITING THIS COLUMN ABOUT OUR NEWSROOM from my front porch.

I've been working at home for the past several days, and yes, that's out of concern regarding COVID-19. Most days, I'm in my home office for all of my working hours, or, if I'm feeling really adventurous, I sit for a while in my living room. The sun is out today, and if I sit on the southern end of the house, it's almost comfortably warm.

Almost. Anyway, I am doing my part to flatten the curve. And I am fortunate that my writing can be done just as easily on the front porch — or my living room, or my tiny home office — as it can at my workplace desk. What makes that possible is both management that allows us to work from home and a laptop app Eagle Tech installed that allows me to see my desktop from said porch.

This whole saga began for me on March 11. Company President Joe Petshow had called us together for a staff meeting and, during his talk, said that those of us who wished to start working from home during the pandemic were welcome to do so and we should begin making the necessary arrangements. He also wanted us to start thinking about department hubs — if the office had to close suddenly, who would be the point people?

Well, I love a Plan B. Actually, I love plans of all sorts. So that afternoon, I began downloading the various programs I knew I would need to work at home: Creative Cloud, InCopy, Blox, Teams. This is how we write and save our stories so our counterparts in Salem can put them on the final pages, how we load stories onto our website, and how we communicate between departments in-house.

By Thursday evening, March 12, I felt ready for a test run. Friday was to be my first day working from home — knowing that if this grand experiment failed, no big deal, I could just run into the office.

Chelsea Marr, our publisher, made my life a whole lot easier on Friday morning, however, even if she did call before 8 a.m. (Eh, it was fine, I was up as usual. Routine, I'm a fan of that too.) She told me that there was a program tech could load on my computer that would allow my desktop to be accessed from my laptop!

What is this, the future?

In less than 20 minutes, I could see my work desktop right there on my laptop screen, thanks to a little program called VNC Viewer. Having access to all of my folders and drives made my Friday working from home experiment a hundred times easier than it would have been otherwise — it went just as well as I could have hoped. So well, in fact, that I've been at home ever since.

Well — I did go in briefly on March 18 to get archive books so I could continue to work on Yesteryears from home. Chelsea watched my daughter, Johanna, and I take them out of the office and load them into the back of my car, which I interpreted as permission. It was nice to be able to talk to my coworkers face to face, with proper distancing, of course.

Deadline days aren't much different at home than at the office, with the exception of the ease in which we can communicate when we're all in the same room together, i.e. just look up and start talking, rather than typing everything in Teams. And it can be a bit lonely.

But aside from that, it's business as usual, despite the fact that the majority of the News' staff is now working from home. All of us are working reduced hours — not surprising as revenue is down, a consequence many of us face regardless of where we work.

Donating Blood



Red Cross volunteer David Hunt takes Joe Schneider's temperature Tuesday at Hood River Armory, a COVID-19-related precaution before anyone could enter the building for the blood donation event. Donors also came to events in The Dalles and Dufur this week as Red Cross issued a new plea for donations due to a critical shortfall in donations as a result of the coronavirus outbreak. Photo by Kirby Neumann-Rea

hoodrivernews.com
thedalleschronicle.com

New 'Comunidades' awarded Group Health Foundation grant

Group Health Foundation awarded a "game-changing" three-year operating grant to Comunidades, a new collaborative project that provides space for more Latinos and people of color to get involved in social justice and environmental issues in the Columbia River Gorge, according to a Columbia Riverkeeper press release.

Comunidades formed in late 2018 and includes Columbia Gorge-based educators, activists, parents, and students. Comunidades provides an inclusive, Latino-led space. Group Health Foundation awarded Comunidades \$225,000 over three years.

"Growing up in Hood River, I saw how vast the information gap was between Latinos and environmental issues," said Lisa Muñoz, a volunteer with Comunidades. "Comunidades is a stepping stone in narrowing that gap. By actively engaging with



Gabriela Garcia, volunteer, at a September 2018 Comunidades meeting. The group was just awarded a grant from Group Health Foundation. Photo courtesy of Columbia Riverkeeper

the Latino community about problems that they face on a daily basis, we can inform and facilitate the kind of environmental stewardship Latino community members have always been capable of."

Group Health Foundation funding will provide critical seed funding to hire Comunidades' first paid-staff member to support the all-volunteer group in advancing its goals, including membership recruitment, leadership training, and public outreach on priority environmental and social justice

issues in the Gorge, said the press release. The foundation's mission is to shape and accelerate efforts to improve health equity and advance community aspirations for a vibrant, healthy future in Washington.

"There are many Latinos who want to protect clean water, clean air, and all of our natural resources, but have not engaged in traditional environmental groups — Comunidades aims to change that," said Ubaldo Hernández, senior organizer with Columbia Riverkeeper.

The Group Health Foundation recently announced \$15 million in Community Learning Grants to 75 organizations and projects throughout Washington that are leading community-defined efforts to advance equity. Grantees were selected following review of almost 700 applications.

"The Gorge needs Comunidades and we need it," said Dez Ramirez, community engagement manager with Columbia Land Trust. "The beauty of the Gorge is for everyone, and so is the good work that is being done reclaiming the natural environment we all have a responsibility to take care of. Latinos are here in the Gorge, and they've been here. It's time for a community based group that is for us and by us."

For more information about Comunidades, contact Hernández at ubaldo@columbiariverkeeper.org or 541-490-7722.

Easing the panic: Mental health resources available now

By Emily Fitzgerald
News staff writer

With the amount of panic and uncertainty circulating right now, it's important for us to take care of our mental health, as well as our physical. Here are some tips from the National Alliance on Mental Health (NAMI) on easing some of the anxiety stemming from the pandemic.

Avoid watching, reading or listening to news reports that cause you to feel anxious or distressed: A near-constant stream of news reports can cause anyone to feel anxious or distressed. Instead, seek updates from a couple of trusted sources at specific times during the day.

Maintain familiar routines in daily life as much as possible: Take breaks during the work day (especially if you're working from home), eat healthy food and engage in physical activity.

Stay connected with others and maintain your social networks: Have the emails and phone numbers of close friends and family on-hand and stay connected via email, social media, video conference and telephone.

Take control and incorporate practical preventative measures, such as hand washing and social distancing.

Be supportive to others: Assisting others in their time of need can benefit the person receiving support as well as the helper.

Professional help is still available, even if you're practicing social distancing:

Therapy: Therapy in the Gorge, accessible online at



Walkers enjoy trails in Sorois Park Thursday, March 26. Maintaining your routines and getting outdoors can help reduce stress during a time of crisis. Mark B. Gibson photo

www.therapyinthegorge.com, is a list of professional therapists in private practice in the Columbia River Gorge. The site sorts practices by location or insurance provider; some therapists offer phone or video appointments, so ask about that option when you reach out.

Online support groups: NAMI hosts free online communities and discussion groups at www.nami.org, and www.supportgroupscentral.com offers virtual support groups for a wide variety of topics.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: Call at 1-800-273-8255 or check out the resources on their website, suicidepreventionlifeline.org.

Mid-Columbia Center for Living: Call 1-888-877-9147 for 24/7 crisis support. Visit

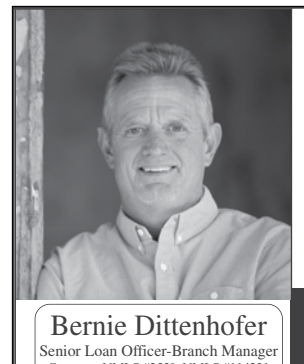
www.mccfl.org/services/mental-health/crisis/ for more info.

Oregon YouthLine: Teens are available to help from 4-10 p.m., adults are available by phone all other times. Visit oregonyouthline.org for more info.

Crisis Text Line: A free, 24/7 text-support line that connects texters in the U.S.

and Canada to trained crisis counselors. Text HOME to 741741 or visit www.crisistextline.org/ to learn more.

Trevor Project: A support network for LGBTQ youth. Call the TrevorLifeline at 1-866-488-7386; resources are available on the website, www.thetrevorproject.org.



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- Sorter Bin Chaser
- Stacker
- Strapper
- Forklift Driver
- Log Yard Operator/Equipment Operator
- Millwright/Mechanic
- Chain Puller

Full job descriptions and required application can be obtained at the main office located at 4865 Hwy 35 Hood River, OR 97031.

Job postings can also be found on Indeed.com