

Humor at the Speed of Life

James Kazad — (Remembrances of life before COVID)

we do! What kind of parents would we be if we didn't enjoy the lighthearted banter we share each day, such as when I say:

"You need to wash your plate."

And without skipping a beat, they reply:

"You're ruining my entire LIFE!"

Ha! Ha! That's why they are called "kids!" Not because they are like stubborn baby goats who, given the chance, will run horns-first into your knee caps.

No! It's because they're kidd-ers! So who are we, as parents, to selfishly deny them from spreading that kind of joy to others for five whole days during spring break?



Needless to say, having the house to ourselves for a week is going to take some getting used to.

For example, we'll have to get used to opening the refrigerator and finding more than just an empty carton of orange juice and some spilled ketchup that has dried into something resembling a fruit roll-up.

Plus maybe someone's gym sock.

We'll also have to get used to taking warm showers since, without enough water to hose down the entire Budweiser Clydesdale team, we'll actually have more than 90 seconds before a lack of hot water turns our morning shower into an audition for *So You Think You Can Dance?*

And I'm not sure how we'll get used to turning on the television and not having a minor heart attack because the volume was apparently set for someone who lands fighter planes on an air-

craft carrier.

That's assuming we can get used to finding the TV remote at all since those kidd-ers won't be here to leave it somewhere — such as between the couch cushions, in a different room completely, or in the shower.

Actually, that might explain why the volume was so high.

Yes, not having our teens at home for a week will take some getting used to. In order to prepare ourselves for what we know will be a difficult transition, my wife and I have spent time talking together about our feelings. This has been extremely helpful.

Once the giddiness passes, anyway — which I blame on the wine. Not

to mention that cartwheel I attempted.

But hey, we needed an excuse to get a new coffee table anyway!

I'm sure it will be different when, before long, they leave home to find their own way into the world. Suddenly, all the things we've come to accept and experience on a daily basis as parents will end.

Once again, not having them here will take some getting used to. Especially knowing it's for good.

When that day comes, there will be tears. There will be hugs.

And no, there won't be any cartwheels.

Not with what we just paid for that new coffee table.

I blame on the wine. Not



Five days without cranky teenagers at home (Can I get a Halleluja?)

They say absence makes the heart grow fonder. With that in mind, the thought of our three teenagers being gone for most of spring break makes us love them beyond words.

In fact, the only way we could love them more is if they each found jobs and an apartment while they were gone.

Don't get me wrong. It's not that we don't enjoy spending time with our kids. Of COURSE

LORANE COUNTRY NEWS

CONTRIBUTED BY LIL THOMPSON FOR THE SENTINEL

Well, after waiting so long, school is back in session this week at all Crow-Applegate-Lorane Schools.

For middle/high school students, they are in two different cohorts.

Cohort A students are in class on Mondays and Wednesdays and Cohort B attends Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Students will still have planned lessons and homework for days not on site. There are some students still doing on-line learning and are on a different schedule.

Their teachers are connecting with them.

The Lady Cougars have resumed playing volleyball and games are live on Facebook. Check with the school if you need a schedule.

The middle school art class needs your help. If you have any of the following items, please

send them to the office or send with a student.

Old lonely socks, wiggle eyes, pipe cleaners, yarn, scrapes of fabric, buttons, craft Poms, rickrack and anything else that might go on a sock puppet.

Even with the lowered risk levels, Lorane Grange will not have any fundraisers until after

discussions at its next meeting on Thursday, April 1, beginning at 7 p.m. (No, that is not a joke — we really are meeting on April 1)

Thank you Lorane Christian Church for continuing Sunday service both in church and in car each week. It is really helpful for all not

quite ready to go inside.

Masks and distancing are practiced by all.

If weather cooperates, Lane County plan to resume working on Stoney Point in May.

When it begins, we will be notified.

South Lane Mental Health Grupo FUERTE



La pandemia de Covid-19 impacta nuestros niveles de estrés y ansiedad. Una forma de lidiar con los efectos de la pandemia es buscar y crear conexiones sociales en su comunidad. Grupo FUERTE es un grupo de apoyo para hombres hispanohablantes en el condado Lane. Únete al Grupo FUERTE para aprender de recursos locales, temas de bienestar mental y crea su propia red social. Este es un servicio gratuito patrocinado por South Lane Mental Health. Para más información o para inscribirse, llame a 541-942-3939 y pregunte por el Grupo FUERTE.

The Covid-19 pandemic impacts our stress and anxiety levels. One way to deal with the effects of the pandemic is to seek and build social connections in your community. Grupo FUERTE is a support group for Spanish speaking men in Lane County. Join Grupo FUERTE to learn about local resources, mental health topics and create your own social network. This is a free service sponsored by South Lane Mental Health. For more information or to enroll, call 541-942-3939 and ask about Grupo FUERTE.



ORDER UP!

Two Cottage Grove Businesses Develop Innovative Partnership Despite Challenging Conditions

By JON STINNETT

By mid-morning on a brisk, sunny Saturday, the takeout orders are starting to stack up at Buster's Main Street Café.

Alerted that the next order is ready to go, Steve Lawn loads up both his arms with bags of food. Without hesitation, he's out the café's front door. The restaurant offers curbside pickup, but Lawn doesn't stop at any cars parked nearby. He continues well past Buster's, in fact, waiting patiently to cross first Highway 99 and then Main Street.

Soon, Lawn reaches his destination — the spacious indoor seating area of Covered Bridge Brewing Group, a combined coffee shop/brewpub located several blocks away. There, nearly everyone seated looks up as he announces what he's brought. Two tables recognize their orders and are all smiles as Lawn delivers their food to them.

Behind his mask, Lawn is smiling too, but he doesn't linger to chat. Before long, he's back at Buster's, gathering up another order as he prepares to make the same walk again. The restaurant has only been open for a half-hour or so, but already this isn't his first trip, and it certainly won't be his last.

Such has been a frequent scene between Buster's and the Covered Bridge since last summer. Back then, a conversation between the two businesses' respective owners led to a fruitful partnership, one borne of necessity and cooperation in the face of a global pandemic and the measures taken to try and curb it.

Chrissy Chapman, who opened Covered Bridge Brewing Group last summer along with her partner, Brewer Nate Sampson, and Dave Barclay of Laurel Mountain Coffee Roasting, recalls that a visit from

Buster's owner Paul Tocco back then led to an important conversation.

"He started talking about his limited seating due to the size of his restaurant and the lockdown, and we mulled over the idea of having people come here," she said. "He said that Buster's could deliver to customers here free of charge, so we decided to try it, and it's been very successful."

In fact, both Tocco and Chapman characterized the arrangement as a "win-win" for all parties. Covered Bridge hosts food carts that begin serving around lunchtime, though that means they don't have food to offer (particularly breakfast fare) during the peak morning hours when they're serving coffee.

"What it really came down to was that, during those hours, they had lots of seating and no food to offer," Tocco explained, "while we had lots of food to offer and no seating."

For the first few months — before the November "freeze" that again closed restaurants for indoor dining in an effort to curb the Coronavirus pandemic — the arrangement performed fantastically, with Tocco estimating an average of 30-40 customers enjoying Buster's fare at the Covered Bridge on weekend mornings.

"I tell people when they order from us that they need to buy a beverage from them, and I want Chrissy to tell me if they don't," Tocco said. "We want the arrangement to help them, too."

Now, with restaurants again open for limited indoor seating and weather improving for outdoor dining, it's believed that deliveries will again pick up (in the short time since the limited reopening, in fact, this has already begun to happen.)



Tocco said he looks forward to a full reopening, when the Covered Bridge will be able to accommodate about four times its current capacity. And despite the challenges the last year has brought, he said he's still optimistic about the future of his business, which could certainly have been in jeopardy due to the limited indoor seating in Buster's historic downtown building.

"We've been reinventing what we do according to what's happened," he said. "Before, on the weekends, we never did takeout. The restaurant would be full and there would be 30 people sitting in the hallway. Now, we've had months where takeout was all we could do, and we've built up a pretty good business."

New tools to facilitate online ordering have improved this process, Tocco says.

For Chapman and her partners at the Covered Bridge, who opened their business under extremely challenging circumstances last June, the partnership with Buster's has entailed a bit of coaching for the local restaurant-going public.

"Some people find it an inconvenience until they understand how it works," she says. "Those who have used the system love it."

Chapman says she also sees the partnership as more proof that the group did the right thing in converting all possible space in the former auto body shop to restaurant use.

"As we were building this, I thought for a while that we went too big for Cottage Grove," she said. "But that's not the case. In fact, all this extra space really turned out to be a blessing."

Get a plan—not just a policy.
(541) 942-0555