



Senior Moments

with Emma Edwards

Flags will help us remember

Warrenton Memorial Day festivities, as many have lamented, just won't be the same this year as in years past.

Memorial Day services at Fort Steven's National Cemetery will be accomplished quietly by a few veterans when the small flags are put in place. Meanwhile, the flag-changing service at the post office also will be achieved quietly.

The United States flag will be lowered to half-staff at sunset on Sunday, honoring our fallen heroes who gave their lives fighting for a common cause, America! The flag will be raised and then lowered along with all five of the flags to be replaced about noon on Monday.

When I asked about the flag-changing service, I was told that *every* year the five flags are taken down and replaced with five new flags. Our ocean storms and high winds make that necessary.

An interesting side note veteran Bert Little shared with me recently is that VFW members remove the grommets from all the flags, polish them up and give them to the Cub Scouts. They become a project for the Cub Scouts in which they are turned into key chains, bracelets and the like and eventually given to honored veterans.

In 1968, Congress passed the Uniform Holidays Bill, which moved Memorial Day, Veterans Day and Washington's Birthday so that they conveniently create three-day weekends.

Some good things about our pandemic experiences

include spending more time on social media. And we are making more phone calls. It's fun to hear voices again after a few years of "talking" via text and email. Another bonus of talking on the phone is that we don't have to spell anything!

I meet with a seniors group from my church at 9:45 a.m. Thursdays via Zoom on my iPad while at home. It is kind of like Skype.

We get into Bible precepts and concepts, but it isn't really a Bible study per se. It's more a time when we can gather and catch up. It's fun being able to safely see each other and share with a group that I've been part of on and off for more than 25 years.

We do lots of laughing and sharing and end up with a brief round of prayer, too. Sure helps alleviate the isolation feelings!

Even before the pandemic, many of us had been introduced to a real doctor by video or been in a conference call via phone.

One senior lady told me of her experience with the doctor on her iPhone when she couldn't get into her doctor's office. Upon connecting, she was told to open her mouth and say "Ahhh" and the medical professional on the other end of the line looked at her throat. And right away a prescription was phoned in for her.

It might be good to contact your insurance company and inquire about medical coverage on such a program. And, of course, see what's available through your own doctor's office.



In My Opinion

by Amy Baker, Clatsop Behavioral Healthcare

Practicing wellness in a pandemic

Living through the coronavirus era has forced many of us to confront what we thought we knew about emotions and prolonged stress.

The pandemic has come in like a perfect storm, flooding our lives with uncertainty while robbing us of many of our usual coping mechanisms. In the past couple of weeks, I've seen the strain settle in.

Unchecked emotions have fueled spats on social media, tensions within personal relationships, unease in workplaces around our community, and increased alcohol use.

It can be easy to miss the psychological effects of living in a pandemic when most of our thoughts are focused on basic survival, such as food, income, and physical health.

But with so much of our attention focused on practical needs, how does one know when their mental wellness

is struggling?

Have you found yourself irritable and squabbling with others? Yelling at your kids?

Have life's disappointments turned into catastrophic events? Do you have feelings of dread or hopelessness?

Well, you're not alone in this experience and it may be time to pay attention to what lies underneath.

There are behaviors we can adopt to attend to our emotional well-being. Perhaps the most important first step is to give yourself permission to feel. You won't fall apart.

It's not a permanent state. Give yourself permission to identify and feel your actual feelings.

Unhealthy coping devices like alcohol can change your mental state, but it doesn't

cause the feelings to go away and often makes them worse. If you want to feel the good stuff, you have to feel the bad stuff too.

If this seems impossible to do on your own, call Clatsop Behavioral Healthcare at 503-325-5722. It doesn't mean you're weak and it doesn't mean there's something wrong with you.

We can all use a hand from time to time. We're here for you.

Amy Baker is executive director of Clatsop Behavioral Healthcare in Warrenton. CBH is dedicated to improving life for those affected by mental health issues, addictions, and developmental disabilities.

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