



Senior Moments

with Emma Edwards

Ways to 'book' an adventure

"Jingle All the Way," the latest book I'm reading, started out so slow that a few times I almost gave up on it.

However, around the third chapter, the key character finds herself on the Amazon Explorer jungle tour being assured that she was in for an exciting two weeks in the Amazon rain forests.

I am a "read in bed person," and last night I read till almost midnight. I especially enjoy reading books about real life experiences.

The author, Debbie McComber, lives in Port Orchard, Wash., with her husband and they'd taken the trip featured in the book.

McComber mentioned they went kayaking in Antarctica. And she reminded readers that we don't have to go to the ends of the earth for adventure, suggesting that an educational cruise up the Columbia River is within our reach. Of course, that may have to wait until we conquer that "annoying pandemic."

Sharing a good book, even if it is a slow starter, calls to my mind a quote by songwriter Zayn Malik, "There comes a day when you realize that turning the page is the best feeling in the world. Because you realize there is so much more to the book than the page you were stuck on."

It seems that most days anymore we are reminded to keep in prayer several of our family and friends who have had life-changing medical challenges. And especially now that we are seniors, we learn quickly that this "annoying pandemic" is no discerner of persons.

Norman Vincent Peale is well known for his meaningful sayings. Here's one of them: "There is nothing in life so difficult that it cannot be overcome. This faith (in God) can move mountains. It can change people. It can change the world. You can survive all the great storms in your life (with faith in God)."

We are a close-knit group and care about one another.

Getting back to reading books, many have asked if I have a Kindle or other method of reading books. I read an entire book on a Kindle one time and had to reread it as I kept falling asleep and then I had to figure where I was when I fell asleep. Same goes for listening to books on tape. I fall asleep. Reading with my own eyes and being somewhat of a speed reader seems to be my reading method of choice.

Almost sounded like "drug of choice." Well, reading a good book can be therapeutic for many of us.

Several years ago, the University of Minnesota published a paper on the benefits of reading. It noted that a 2009 study at the University of Sussex found that reading can reduce stress by up to 68 percent. It works better and faster than other relaxation methods, such as listening to music or drinking a hot cup of tea. This is because the reader's mind is invited into a literary world free from the stressors that plague one's daily life.

With that, I will head for Angela Hunt's book, "The Canopy," which takes me further into the Amazon Jungle. I would positively recommend both books.

Here's to Your Health

by Dr. Regina Mysliwiec



Answers to COVID-19 vaccine questions

How well is the vaccination effort going in Clatsop County?

Our local vaccination effort is going smoothly. According to the Oregon Health Authority, as of Jan. 5, Clatsop County's vaccination rate was higher than any other county in Oregon.

Columbia Memorial Hospital has nearly finished distributing its first 700 doses of the Moderna vaccine for COVID-19. Following state guidelines, the first doses were given to emergency and urgent care staff, hospital caregivers, providers and staff of non-CMH clinics, and first responders.

Providence Seaside Hospital also received doses of the Moderna vaccine in December and began giving vaccinations, too.

Is the vaccine safe for me?

The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines were tested on thousands of people and found to be safe and effective for most adults. There are only two contraindications or reasons not to receive the vaccine: if you have an active COVID-19 infection or have had an allergic reaction to one of the ingredients in the vaccine. If you're concerned, read the Food and Drug Administration's fact sheets online for the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines.

Some groups of people were not included in the initial studies. They should talk with their doctor before getting vaccinated, these include pregnant women and people with suppressed immune systems.

Can my children get vaccinated?

Unfortunately, not yet. Children weren't included in the first vaccine studies, so we can't be sure that the vaccines available are safe for them. Trials of the vaccines in kids are underway now. Hopefully these studies will soon show that the vaccines are as safe and effective for children as they are for adults.

When can I go back to normal life?

We've all been making sacrifices — changing holiday plans, juggling work and kids doing online school, wearing masks in public, and staying in when we want to go out. Getting vaccinated is the next step in ending the pandemic and reclaiming some normalcy.

However, the vaccine is just one tool in our arsenal against the COVID-19 pandemic. We must continue practicing the good habits we've developed to keep ourselves and our community safe from COVID-19 until the number of infections drops dramatically.



Oregon Health Authority
A health care worker receives a vaccination at a clinic in Portland.

The pandemic and the restrictions will end, one way or another. Our actions now will determine how deadly the pandemic is in our community before it ends. We've lost three neighbors to this disease in Clatsop County. Let's do what we can to prevent the spread of COVID-19 so we don't lose more.

Here's to Your Health is sponsored by Columbia Memorial Hospital. Regina Mysliwiec is the medical director of CMH's Emergency Department and a key member of the hospital's COVID-19 response team.

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