



From the President

We've heard those claims: loneliness is bad for your health; being lonely is worse than smoking a pack of cigarettes a day. In this time of isolating ourselves to stay healthy, might we be doing harm to ourselves through inducing loneliness?



A recent article in *The Economist* looks at current research into the physiological effects of loneliness. Researchers found that the brains of people who score "very lonely" have increased levels of signaling molecules that are associated with both increased inflammation and behaviors such as social withdrawal, feelings of suspicion toward the outside world, and a tendency to act defensively. It seems that while loneliness can start with solitude, it can take on a physiological life of its own. So, even when people who are now isolated are able to socialize again, the activity of these cells may make them defensive, suspicious, and unable to relate to others.

In response, the researchers did experiments to find out what might break this loop and move people away from this pattern of loneliness. They found that people who did at least one act of kindness each week had the opposite blood markers from those who were diagnosed as lonely. Interestingly, these acts of kindness did not even need to be done face-to-face – they could be something like sending an email note, or donating to a good cause through a website. Asking lonely people to perform acts of kindness significantly reduced their feelings of loneliness, and also reduced the myeloid response in their blood that drove inflammation.

I am writing this at a time when our elected officials are squabbling about when and how to "open up" society again. But however that comes out, we represent the demographic that is most at risk from this virus, and so until there are robust mitigation measures (large-scale random testing, contact tracing), we will still need to keep ourselves isolated to stay safe.

As we continue to stay at home, let's take comfort in this research and find acts of kindness we can do that will strengthen us against the physical dangers of loneliness.

-Judy Zimmerman Herr

From the Executive Director

A warm welcome to Bob Bowman, our newest member!

As we continue to stay at home I'm grateful to see the growing creativity in how we connect. I recently heard of the hallway Trivia Nights at the Hagar Building, how residents of a Duke Street condo building meet in an empty unit for stretches, and how one Neighborhood Group is meeting bi-weekly via Zoom instead of monthly in person.

Frequent connection with people geographically close to us allows us to establish meaningful bonds, and take care of one another.

Right after a Neighborhood Group call, one member shared with me, ***"During the call I mentioned the need for a piece of fresh ginger root to make a tea. Someone offered to pick it up for us this afternoon and drop it off so that's the kind of support that is very meaningful during a time like this."***

I have given Children's Benadryl to one neighbor, and received fresh baked bread from another in the last week. Our exchanges don't need to be transactional, we can follow the village model and get some peace of mind by giving when we can and asking when we need.

-Melissa Ressler

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Join Us! Via Zoom

Happy Hour, Thursday May 21, 3 pm

Mixologist Angie Piel will host a Zoom Happy Hour Thursday, May 21 at 3 pm. Join with your Downtowner friends for mocktails, cocktails or a glass of wine. Be ready to share your favorite drink recipe or better yet, demonstrate how you create them. Also, if you have an easy appetizer recipe to share, that would be great. It's always 5 o'clock somewhere. Zoom invitation will be sent via email closer to the date.

Check the [Event Calendar](#) for Book Discussions, Afternoon Tea, and Koffee Klatch gatherings.

Join other Downtowners for a socially distant 3 mile walk. Meet with your mask at UU Church, corner of West Chestnut and Pine Street.

Mondays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays at 8am



From Your Reporter

Foodie Report...Dining at “Chez Le Downtowner.”

Under normal circumstances I would be looking forward to sharing about new dining experiences in town. There were quite a few new places that were in various stages of readiness for opening and I was eager to try them.



However, these are not normal circumstances and we are now all hopefully staying safe and well at home while dining at one of the new places on the block, “Chez Le Downtowner.”

I have no doubt there are many talented home cooks among us, who have previously found the balance of eating at home while taking the time to go out to support Lancaster’s growing restaurant scene.

Now is the time to break out the cookbooks and be creative. Assuming you’re able to put together a shopping list and actually get the desired items is another story. Staple products like flour and eggs are often out of stock and prices have been going up considerably across the board.

When we have an open mind to the possibilities of our culinary skills, however limited, paired with the supplies we have on hand in the fridge and cupboards, we might be surprised by the outcome.

In our house we have been conscious of not wasting anything and I recently found myself with a very lonely and overripe banana. I smashed it with a fork until it was puréed and added a bit of cream. Then I crushed up a lemon Oreo cookie and sprinkled it on the top, followed by some whipped cream.

It turned out to be a very good banana and I’d definitely do it again.

-Andy Berfond

Do you have a new quarantine recipe?
Submit it to
director@lancasterdowntowners.org
for the June Newsletter!

Resource Committee Corner

We're all experiencing life differently than we ever could have imagined. If COVID-19 has exacerbated or created new economic challenges, the Lancaster County Office of Aging is a great resource. You can reach their Information and Referral staff at 717-299-7979. A summary of available programs is available in the Lancaster Downtowner's [Resource Directory](#) – just search "office of aging" or browse by category.

THE LANCASTER COUNTY OFFICE OF AGING, UNITED WAY OF LANCASTER, MEALS ON WHEELS LANCASTER AND AGE-FRIENDLY LANCASTER CITY COLLABORATED ON A SURVEY TO ASSESS WHAT NEW NEEDS ARE EMERGING AMONG PEOPLE OVER THE AGE OF 60 AS A RESULT OF COVID-19. PLEASE TAKE A FEW MINUTES TO RESPOND AND SHARE HOW YOU HAVE BEEN IMPACTED. THIS LINK CAN BE SHARED WITH YOUR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS OVER THE AGE OF 60 THROUGHOUT LANCASTER COUNTY.

[Click here to take the digital survey.](#)



You might want to try....

Member Lois Q. had a great experience ordering plants from local company [BloomBox](#). Have annuals and perennials delivered to your door. "Ordering online was so easy and they came the next day!"

From Your Reporter

The Things I've Learned I Can't Live Without

Thanks to the whole world turning upside down and shaken vigorously like a good martini, I've learned there are ordinary everyday household products that will never be taken for granted again.

Let's start with the toilet paper. While I realize "TP" is an absolute necessity for everyone, having it become one of the most coveted items of 2020 amazes me. Early on, seeing it fly off of the shelves in every store only to have them emptied as soon as new supplies were delivered became the norm, and we found the need to put it on every shopping list in order to build personal stockpile. Even writing this makes it seem even more absurd that toilet paper would become a topic of conversation in the first place.

Then there are disinfectant sprays and wipes. For me that's one of those aisles at the store where you grab and go from a choice of over a dozen branded products, without giving it much thought. Now the shelves on that aisle are continuously empty, and I can only imagine the socially distanced crowds converging on an overwhelmed grocery worker as an attempt is made to restock the products.

Hand sanitizer is another one. I recall being in the Bath and Body Works where a common and popular item on display were those little bottles of hand sanitizer in all colors and scents. I'm sure they were hoarded really fast. Our favorite breweries and distilleries have also decided to use their equipment to manufacture a massive amount of hand sanitizer for the growing public need. We added a large bottle to a wine and beer order from the Mt Hope Winery not too long ago.

The masks have become a fashion statement. I've always realized the importance of a mask in the medical profession, construction work or nail care salons, but for everyone now, a mask has become a necessity and requirement to go almost anywhere. Once it was clear of that need to wear one as mandated by government agencies, many companies have retooled their assembly lines to manufacture them. On a local level, anyone with sewing skills and the ability to turn multiple materials into masks are making quick and easy money, while others are making the masks to give away to others.

While we all continue to navigate the uncharted waters of a pandemic, it gives us reason to have gratitude for the little things we once might have taken for granted. To me the real truth lies in the fact we live in a country where under normal circumstances choices and supplies have always been abundant. Sadly this is not the case in some other parts of the world.

We are all still so very lucky.

Be safe & well.

Andy Berfond



GET READY TO VOTE IN 2020



Vote by Mail-in Ballot

If you are a registered voter in Pennsylvania, you have a **new option to vote by mail-in ballot**. This is a great option for voters who prefer the convenience of voting at home. You do not have to provide a reason for requesting a mail-in ballot.

If you decide to vote by mail-in ballot, keep in mind:



You must apply for a ballot by **5:00 p.m. on the Tuesday before the election**.



You can apply using an **online application** at votesPA.com/ApplyMailBallot, by mailing in a paper application, or by submitting a paper application in person at the county election office.



When you apply in person, you can ask for your ballot **immediately**. If the ballot is available, you can complete it in the office and return it to the county election staff.



You can return your completed ballot **by mail or in person** at your county election office.



The county must receive your completed ballot by **8:00 pm on election day** in order to count it.

It's important to know **your vote is final** once your county receives your voted mail-in ballot, and you are not allowed to go to the polling place to change your vote on election day. If you do not return your voted ballot to your county election office by 8:00 p.m. on election day, you can vote by provisional ballot at your polling place.

More Time to Register



You now have more time to register to vote. The deadline to register for the primary election is **May 18, 2020**, and the deadline to register for the November general election is **October 19, 2020**. Keep in mind that you must submit a voter registration application to update your address, change your party affiliation, or change your name.

Check your voter registration status at VotesPA.com/Status.
Register or update your information at VotesPA.com/Register.

Annual Mail-in Request List



When you apply for a mail-in ballot, you can ask to have the **ballots for every election** that year **mailed to you**. Simply check the box for "annual mail-in request."

Learn more about mail-in voting at VotesPA.com/MailBallot.

New Voting Systems



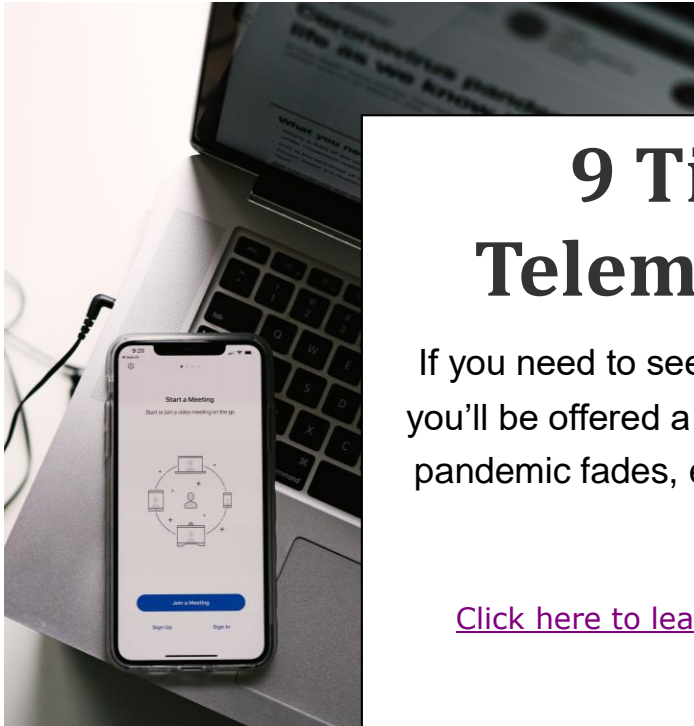
If you vote in person on election day, you may use **new voting equipment for the first time**. These new systems provide a paper record to ensure accuracy, and you will have the opportunity to **confirm your choices on a paper record** before casting your vote. Plus, the new systems are easy to use and have accessible features to make voting easy and convenient for voters with disabilities.

Go to VotesPA.com/ReadyToVote to explore your county's voting system. Do your part by being a prepared voter before you head to your polling place. This will help things run smoothly on election day.

No Straight-Party Voting



You no longer have the option to check just one box to vote for all the candidates of one political party. You can **still select all candidates from one party**, but you must select them individually in each contest.



9 Tips for a Successful Telemedicine Appointment

If you need to see your doctor these days, there's a good chance you'll be offered a telemedicine visit. And even after the COVID-19 pandemic fades, experts predict, telemedicine — especially video visits — will be commonplace.

[Click here to learn what to do before, during and after your visit.](#)

The 'New Normal' for Many Older Adults is on the Internet

This article from CityLab highlights how people are embracing technology.

“These are communities of older adults who are taking charge of the impact of physical distancing. And that is such a different narrative than the narrative around ‘victims of Covid dying.’”-Charlotte Dickson, Village Movement California

Friends Life Care Webinar

[Saturday, May 16, 11am-12pm](#) or [Tuesday, May 19, 2pm-3pm](#)

Topics will include:

- If you want to stay in your home for the rest of your life, what options are available?
- What is the difference between long-term care insurance and membership in a Friends Life Care plan?
- How do Medicare, Medicaid, and your current healthcare insurance fit in?
- What are the affordable alternatives this offers for quality care in your own home?

This informational long-term care workshop is for individuals ages 40-85 who are in good health.

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Carole M. Kirchner
GRI, CRS, SRS, ASP, Green
REALTOR®

Homesale Realty
150 North Pointe Blvd, Lancaster, PA 17601
office 717-560-9100 x3039
cell 717-629-8498 fax 717-569-7943
carole@caroleschoicehomes.com
www.caroleschoicehomes.com



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