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Seniors Living in Humboldt During Covid 19

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Vicki

1. How have you been since the start of the pandemic last year, do you have any personal stories you wish to share?

As a senior in the time of covid, I learned not to judge others without learning the full picture which is hard to do. I am hoping to give the perspective of a volunteer driver for the assisted rides program because I am in contact with other seniors through that. First what I feel as far as what I have been going through for the most part my career has been through teaching languages and culture for the most part along with restaurant arrangements. Those have been very public but in general, I am not quite a hermit cause I come out especially when my son and his small family are in the area. Through especially last year through vaccinations I like over and over I and other people around feel so blessed we live in Humboldt. Out here in the boonies even though we have been wearing masks outside everywhere, one here on the lanes and the roads walking our dogs we try to keep a reasonable distance. It's been hard because my daughter and granddaughter live in the bay area and so they came up after a couple of months of social distancing. They came up to visit me after going crazy living in their apartment and my granddaughter came up and just hugged me and I said whoops I guess we're touching and they were going to stay in the house. My son and his family have done a distance walk with me but we haven't touched each other outside the housing. So when my daughter's family, all of us, there were five of them, two adults and three children. My grandchildren are eight and nine now. So we touched. My neighbors are all in their eighties and nineties in Millbrook. You know through this I have been close to one woman I used to walk the dogs with. For months she didn't walk the dogs. When she did walk her dogs we would walk together on different sides of the lane. After vaccinations and the quarantine, we were walking together again but her

husband is in hospital now and with her Alzheimer's she started to slow down. When I talk to her now on the phone her mental health is in decline, I am seeing the same thing with my mom who is in an assisted living facility. I stopped doing volunteer driving for a year. I think the program was in was even closed for a few months. There are only a few of us doing it now. Senior lunch programs were also cut out. The senior center in McKinleyville was senior tai-chi and yoga and different exercise classes and they were all stopped. Some of them went outdoors. In some ways, as a senior, we haven't been that affected but in other ways, but if you are dependent on others like caretakers then it's been a lot worse, financially were in a nice place with a roof over our heads.

2. Since Senior Citizens are more vulnerable to the pandemic are there any unique measures you took to ensure your safety?

Yeah like not beginning around other people. You know like wearing a Mask when covid started to spread in Humboldt especially. There is one couple and their baby I hang out with periodically every couple of weeks that are not vaccinated, but they also live here in the woods. The guy world around other people. That's my version of my general policy.

3. Before the pandemic how did you access entertainment? How Has this changed by the pandemic?

I love the outdoor festivals but to a certain extent, they were starting to disappear like reggae at the river for example. Music concerts, I do miss that really a lot. I have a friend in LA who got Covid and was hospitalized for five days. He will not get vaccinated. He thinks he got Covid at one of these festivals. He declares religious exception, which in a way is true, but kind of pushing it. He got sick and I wonder how many other people are doing that. My Niece went to visit one of her brothers in San Diego and was lying about being vaccinated so she could get into certain places and I can't help but wonder how many people are doing that or just ignoring vaccine mandates when convenient.

I actually had a chance to read more but like most of the year, I am weeding outside. It's not quite entertaining but the results are great you know gardening, growing vegetables. When I am not gardening I am trying to learn more about mushrooms and foraging, Humboldt is great for that. Sometimes I would get together with my family and we will play board games. There are a couple of board games I like to play like Qwirkle for example. Also, I like watching movies and playing video games on the computer. I walk a lot with my Dog.

3. So much communication and connection during the pandemic have been through online technology. How have you adjusted to that?

At the beginning of the pandemic I got most of my news online, there I would read about politics and get updates on the wildfires in the area. Another impact was travel. In October of last year, I went to see my Mom in Washington State. My ex's family whom I am still really close to, um we did zoom calls a lot. It was very difficult to get any information on Covid because many people put false information online, like this the way even though it really wasn't the way. People on the internet like arguing want would go on and on and I could only take so much especially with social media and I would concisely get notifications all through the night. There have been a lot of zoom calls that do allow us to keep up with each other for a certain amount. For me, it hasn't been horrible but it has gotten to the point where it was like no more zoom calls because I don't have to do it for work you know. I will check in with my friends around the country through zoom which is fine by me.

4. The past few years have been difficult not only because of the pandemic but also because of so many challenging things going on in the country and in our world. I wonder if you could talk about how the past few years, in general, have affected you? Has your outlook or perspective on the world or our country or community changed at all?"

To me, it kind of feels like time is speeding up if you want to put it like that. I do believe in interconnections through time and space. It's like the speculative science fiction books I used to read in 60' 70' and early '80s and I feel that's where we are now. In the early 70's I used to have

these dreams where people would go crazy in the streets and it kind of seems like where we are now. Also, I know a lot of people who died in the last year, not from covid but I feel like they were taken out of this life to be born as part of the next generation with missions. There is a reason these people died now. I know that's always the case. I am really glad I did tai chi regularly and with a couple of other people. We have been able to work out outside with a mask. I say that because I am glad to have known myself learning all the time studying philosophy to understand what's happening here and now. When I talk with younger people they have the hope we can allow ourselves to understand the time we live in so we can better understand ourselves. I hope none of us are too afraid to look where we are and how we live. Currently, all we can do is try to live right justly living in grace.

6. Has the lack of medical resources in Humboldt country impacted you in any way? If so how did you navigate that?

Like a young mother who can lift a car so that her baby does get crushed I tell my body to be strong and healthy and to stay away from the poisoned. I was lucky because my physical therapy has been available when I needed it but I feel for a lot of other people I seen in waiting rooms because the hospital rooms are full. I don't know what the current situation is like here in Humboldt, but I know it hasn't been good.

7. Do you think you experience the mask policy differently as a Senior Citizen.

Well as I said when I go out there are not that many people around so I don't need to wear a mask as much. I am glad for the policy and the mandates. I feel sorry for those that are on the receiving end of people who are not very happy with the mask policy. It's hard, I mean the whole question on how much good they do.

8. There are a lot of controversial opinions regarding vaccine mandates in the United States. Do you think the retirement community in Humboldt is for or against the vaccine? Is there anything you would like to say on behalf of Seniors regarding the vaccine?

I don't usually get vaccinations except well I did get vaccinated against polio. I still remember people who had polio, back when I was a kid in the early '50s. I have also received my tetanus shot. I know I received some vaccinations when I traveled to other countries but I don't remember now. If necessary or required I get them. I was against vaccinations for measles and mumps that I still got because growing up all the kids that got diseases turned out fine. The only thing I remember hearing is that German measles can be bad for adolescent boys, you know they can lose fertility, but I don't remember hearing people dying of it, but perhaps that was just me, and a lot of people I guess did. But it just seemed to me that more and more vaccinations are being required to hear in California and I didn't like that. Now I find myself being glad there are vaccination mandates just because it seems like not enough people respected the contagions of Covid. We as a society have been asking foolishly a lot. I was one who said I am going to wait and see and when my age bracket got eligible I said ok I will do it. Along with other people in my Tai chi class, we came to a conclusion on how we will be able to have class inside without a mask, and then here we are again. I guess I will be getting a booster shot pretty soon since I am going up to see my mom again. I guess they're about to change the diffusion from vaccination to what fully vaccinated really means.

9. Humboldt county went through a lot during the Pandemic. Do you think Humboldt could have done a better job handling the pandemic? How do you think the Pandemic will shape Humboldt's future?

Well as with the country as a whole I think we have become a lot more polarised in different ways, it's interesting to see who teamed up with whom on terms of the vaccination. When I asked this question at taichi this morning one woman said it mainly trumps supporters and hippies who are the anti-vaxers. That's the opposite on the political spectrum. I think Humboldt did alright. I'd say I'm glad I'm not a legislature or a politician in these times because no matter what dissension you make regarding vaccinations the people will be happy. I think Trump was horrible with his denial of reality and how that affected the country as a whole. I think the county put out pretty good mandates. Out if you don't want to vaccinate then just stay away from everyone, don't pass it on, don't get it, don't go to the hospitable. Saying that I can't help up think about all the kids.

10. Is there anything else you will like to say on behalf of Seniors living in Humboldt during Covid 19?

Yeah, I wonder about how some social services are going to come back. I know that suicide has been going up with teens through covid. That's one of the times peers are more important and family to us. Seniors, too they don't have anyone and they don't have their social outlets or don't want to impose on other people even when it is urgent. It's got to be really hard and I wonder you know again like whether it's covid you die if covid or die of something else like a lack of medical attention. Or if you started eating horrible because meals on wheels or something like that was cut off. Or if your neighbors didn't feel like they could just come in and clean up the house. All those little things that make a difference when you can't do them anymore.

Gayle

1. How have you been since the start of the pandemic last year, do you have any personal stories you wish to share?

For people like me who are retired the pandemic didn't make much of a difference in our day-to-day lives. I live with my son and his wife, their millennials. There are a lot of millennials in my house all the time. Even though I live with millennials the vast majority of my friends are seniors and are retired like myself. I am retired, there is no place I have to be. I used the time wisely. I got back to my exercise route, I got back to taking care of myself. I got back to having a life after teaching for 50 years. It wasn't that difficult for me. The hard thing was that I didn't want to go out in public. In pre-existing conditions, I didn't want to be exposed. Other than that it was actually not bad at all. I am really interested to see out it was for other seniors. I know for seniors who lived alone it was probably more difficult but I don't live alone.

2. Since Senior Citizens are more vulnerable to the pandemic are there any unique measures you took to ensure your safety?

Yeah particularly sense I lived with millennials that were a hard one. We literally went nowhere, did nothing of eighteen months. I think I was in the grocery store five times in the last eighteen months. My son and my daughter-in-law did all the errands. We didn't go anywhere, we didn't travel anywhere. They were incredibly helpful and considerate of me. They could have joined other pods of young folks because they were afraid of affecting me. I guess the main thing we did was hunker down. One interesting thing that happened to me was that my daughter-in-law decided to become a vegan so we all dramatically changed our diet. My son and I still eat meat maybe a maximum of three times a week, but we all eat vegan four times a week so my daughter-in-law spent her time learning how to cook vegan. Consequently, we are much healthier. We all feel really good. Another thing I did during and before covid was to work really hard for the 2020 elections. I wrote postcards, wrote letters, and contributed money to senatorial

aces. I am doing the same thing now for the upcoming Pennsylvania election and getting readers for the 2022 race so I became more politically active because I had the time.

3. Before the pandemic how did you access entertainment? How Has this changed by the pandemic?

We're huge moviegoers in our family. We used to go to the movies every week or two. Certainly every month. I raised my kids on Star Wars. Every time there's a big sci-fi blockbuster movie we would be there on opening night. We didn't go out to dinner very much because we're good cooks and we enjoy our own cooking. My son and daughter-in-law are huge concertgoers as I was at their age and that ended. They were home more often. Instead of going out to see movies we just got a bunch of streaming services instead. In terms of other entertainment, I am a huge hiker. I would hike with my dog and my friends and their dogs. Covid didn't disrupt my hiking. We just masked up. If I couldn't have gone out and hiked Covid would have been an absolute horror. I need to get out, I need to be active. My gym closed down. I did water aerobics three times a week but I couldn't do that so I had to be physically active.

5. So much communication and connection during the pandemic have been through online technology. How have you adjusted to that?

Well fortunately for me I have already had to teach some online classes so I already had some familiarity, but I wouldn't say I was too crazy about it. As soon as covid hit I was the director of a large federal grant and we were in the fourth year. We just moved seamlessly from in-person teaching to online teaching all day Saturday once a month. It was really simple. We brought in great historians. They would work with the teachers on professional development and on how to teach history better. One of the things about covid that I found to be interesting was that I always hated the telephone with a passion but Zoom works really well for me because I can see people and I feel like its much more personal so I started Zooming and Facetiming with my best

friend in New York. She is a retired professor as well. We talk probably once every two weeks unlike before where we would talk every six weeks prior to covid. I set up weekly meetings in Zoom with my friends across the country that we never did prior to Covid. So I would say my relationships with my colleagues outside of Humboldt country have improved tremendously since Covid because we had taken the time to Zoom with each other and converse. I can't speak for other people up that worked really well.

6. The past few years have been difficult not only because of the pandemic but also because of so many challenging things going on in the country and in our world. I wonder if you could talk about how the past few years, in general, have affected you? Has your outlook or perspective on the world or our country or community changed at all?"

The last five years were among the worse five years of my life. I am just going, to be frank here because I was always frank in my classrooms. Never once did I believe as an American Historian with a Ph.D. who is taught and written and spoken in conferences did I ever believe that someone with the unethical and corrupt nature of Donald Trump is elected president of the United States. I must admit I went into a slump right after he was elected president, but I admit got back to work with members of the community. My major concern right after he got elected was to protect the dreamers on our campus. So many of my students were dreamers and I wanted them protected so I immediately went to work to try to see what I could do politically and locally to help the dreamers out. I always became very politically active but recently I became very politically active. I got involved in the 2018 election righting postcards studying letters texting constantly trying to fight off depression. As someone who had never been depressed or fearful in my life before covid, I was already depressed. I have always been an optimistic person. My actual field is the history of domestic terrorism. That's what I experienced 20-30 years of my life studying. None of this stuff is new to me. All my examinations, writings, research everything, those right-wing, right supremacist love nuts were always in the margins. When I teach about it I would say these people have greatly marginalized the chances of them coming

out of the margins are pretty low. As an American historian, I should have recognized that it was a much greater possibility of someone like Donald Trump came along. You know I always saw Donald Trump open Pandora's box and once it's open you don't put the lid back on. So all those white supremacists that have been around for generations and generations for four hundred years, have now been given permission to be the racist pigs they are. So yeah I would say that these last 5 years have been very difficult. Covid exasperated some of my anxiety to a degree because I spent a lot of time paying attention to the news while constantly being angry at the News. After the second year of Covid during Jan 20, 2021 I would spend my mornings watching the news then spend the rest of the day ignoring the news. I turned all notifications relating to news so I would be alarmed by anything. I would say Covid exasperated my political fears and I would say that the optimism that made me a pretty darn good Profesor is being replaced by pessimism so I am glad I am no longer teaching because I always try to say to my teaches whom I used to train that they must always give their students a life jacket or a lifeboat. If you just hit them with all the depressing history of our country then what gives them the reason to go on. In my class, we would always explore the lifeboats of history. Those lifeboats in history have always been people who say wait this is wrong or wait we should not do this. There have always been people who voted against racist, misogynistic policies. There have always been Americans who have been willing to stand up. For me, I was raised in a very conservative household with republican parents. When I entered college I was conservative I was republican. I was really religious. When I went to college during the 1960's I reexamined my lifestyle. I learned that the history I was taught was not accurate. I remember when I was a kid my teacher told me George Washington never told a lie I thought that had got to be not true, why would I want a president that never told a lie to be president of the United States. Everybody tells lies. I want a human being as president. I don't want a human being that lies about policy and lies to the American people. I mean he never chopped down that stupid cherry tree. There were a lot of things that didn't resonate with me when I was a kid. History I loved but it didn't resonate with

me. Nevertheless, I was optimistic but in the last five years, my optimism left me which is really sad.

7. Has the lack of medical resources in Humboldt country impacted you in any way? If so how did you navigate that?

Yeah, I have a lot of medical issues, and my daughter in laws father moved here when she and my son first moved back up here. He had to move back to Spokane because he couldn't get the medical services he still needs. I do have friends who left the area because of that. I have had to go to Santa Rosa twice for two appointments because the medical problems in Humboldt county are very big. I am lucky because my ex-husband whom I am still very close with, he and his wife, he's a doctor and she's a PA. He's always on top of my medical issues so I always go to him for first advice. I always felt like I have a good source but you know the vast majority of Americans don't have to assess anybody like that. I am tried that Saint Joseph has a residency program, I think that will make big difference because people could train to become physicians here and open their own practice or work with Saint Joseph. I am very excited and caustically optimistic about how things will get better in terms of the basics. We have great surgeons here so surgery isn't an issue. It's the day-to-day medical stuff.

8. Do you think you experience the mask policy differently as a Senior Citizen?

My son's friends who are all millennials and former students of mine wanted to protect me, so masking was never an issue for them. I was 30-40 years older than all of them. We tried to meet indoors but when we did meet indoors with a small group of people we always mask. Recently I just came back from the gym and there was a woman standing next to me who was younger than I was, probably forty. We were both putting our masks on in the locker room. I said thank you for masking up and she said that she had elderly parents and I did this for them, I do this for you. I just looked at her and said thank you. That's the other thing with essential workers too. Yesterday I went out for Coffee for the first time in almost two years and I left the barista a big

tip. I went up to them in a mask, I talked to them with a mask, and told them how much I appreciate them and sorry they were being screwed over by an economy that doesn't pay them appropriately. I don't have any problem with the mask policy and I am lucky that the people around me don't have any problem with it because they do want to protect me. My experience in the grocery store and everywhere else is that people are very considerate. I mean no one likes it, I have asthma so I can't be in a mask for more than an hour without needing to rip it off because I can't breathe, but I do it. I do it for me and I do it for others.

8. There are a lot of controversial opinions regarding vaccine mandates in the United States. Do you think the retirement community in Humboldt is for or against the vaccine? Is there anything you would like to say on behalf of Seniors regarding the vaccine?

I can only speak for the seniors I know, and I know quite a few. Every single one of them got vaccinated. The minute we could get vaccinated we did. My ex-inlaws were anti vaxxers. I got people in my family who stopped talking to me ten years ago because they didn't like my politics. They all moved to Florida to be closer to people with similar ideals. I no longer have any relationship with them whatsoever. I did not know a senior that did not want to get vaccinated and I also don't know any young people who didn't want to get vaccinated. All my young friends got their booster shots because they all work in areas they are required. My son works in a hospital and my daughter-in-law is a teacher so they both had to get booster shots. Most of the people I know are teachers and they all had to get vaccinated. I don't know any unvaccinated resisters up here but I am sure they exist.

9. Humboldt county went through a lot during the Pandemic. Do you think Humboldt could have done a better job handling the pandemic? How do you think the Pandemic will shape Humboldt's future?

I am the biggest advocate for the k-12 system, I came up with the k-12 system, I taught every grade from 5th grade through graduate school. I taught the CSU and the UC system, I have

been an educator for 55 years. I loved teaching middle school, I loved teaching high school and I loved teaching elementary school. I believe that the schools in Humboldt county learned nothing from covid with a few exceptions. I think the vast majority of schools just held on the best they could but didn't sit down and analyze what was going on. Like what if something like this happens in the future or what did we learn to form this, they just wanted to go back to the same old same old. I'm hardly disappointed with the schools. I think Humboldt State university from everything I heard from my colleges who are still there says that the University handled it very well. In terms of how Humboldt handled vaccine mandates, I think that public workers like teachers or cops that if they don't get vaccinated should be fired. I hate to be that way but their job is to protect public safety. If they don't want to be vaccinated then they are not doing their job. It's not just about them, it's about everyone. I have no sympathy for anti-vaxxers unless they have a medical reason. The religious reason, I don't buy. I studied white supremacy, I studied religious fanaticism, for a vast majority of my career and I know for a fact that people hold out spiritual beliefs as a joke, that's the way they get what they want it's not something they really believe.

10. Is there anything else you will like to say on behalf of Seniors living in Humboldt during Covid 19?

I think a lot of seniors and a few of them are living alone. I know a lot of seniors like me who are really suppressed that our kids came back home and they loved that. That's one thing about covid that is positive. It brought many multigenerational families together in ways that were not possible in the past. I can't speak for all seniors but that's something I noticed living in Humboldt. I do know that a lot of my senior friends are itching to travel. I have traveled a lot in my younger years with my family and I always thought that if I retired I would travel often. Before covid, I traveled to Italy with a friend and it was then I decided to travel more often, but covid hit. I spent my time during covid getting myself in really good physical condition because I am hoping next year when I am 74 I will be able to walk across the northern part of England for

two weeks. That's my next plan, but that will be the end of my travel because I don't think I will ever feel comfortable getting on planes again. I have friends who want to get one cruise ship and plane and just get away. Tonight I am going out to eat for the first time in Eighteen months so I am finally moving out a bit. Seniors are really getting itchy, they really want to do something.

Maggie

1. How have you been since the start of the pandemic last year, do you have any personal stories you wish to share?

In January 2020 before anybody knew anything my water heater exploded and flooded my whole house. That was a major thing it took three months to repair. I had a crew of people in my house coming and going for three months. In the middle of February, we had to stay in a hotel because they discovered asbestos on the floor they had to remove it. I got really really sick and my granddaughter who was with me also got really sick. At that point, we knew nothing about covid. When we came back home we were sick for two to three weeks. Eventually, I figured out that's probably what happened. Anyway, it was the end of April when my floor was finally fixed and I could resume living in the house. I couldn't get better, I didn't have the fever or are the symptoms related to Covid. I could almost not move. Eventually, I found out that's what they call Covid but I eventually called my Doctor to tell him that theirs something really wrong with me because I can't even get up and get out of the house without losing my breath so that was a very scary experience and I know now that it was a mild case of Covid.

2. Since Senior Citizens are more vulnerable to the pandemic are there any unique measures you took to ensure your safety?

Yes my friends and I kind of formed a pod and all three of us belonged to Redwood Coast Village where we were able to find people to do our shopping for us or take us to go see the doctor. We were very good at wearing masks. Even inside we wore masks together. Most of my other friends did the same thing, we're all about the same age. We were very careful and as I look back it seems to me that seniors were more careful than most people. We would have company outside. In my front yard, we have a seeing place and we actually build a fire pit so we could sit outside. When the pool opened back up we wore masks even today we still wear masks. I also had my booster shot.

3. Before the pandemic how did you access entertainment? How Has this changed by the pandemic?

Well, we stopped going to the movies and mostly we relied on television, DVDs, Radio, Music. I would have get-togethers in my backyard because we could be six feet apart outside. I did a lot more reading a lot of internets. I became much better at Facebook. I even did some writing. I am basically an introvert to start out with so it wasn't all that hard for me.

4. So much communication and connection during the pandemic have been through online technology. How have you adjusted to that?

Well at first it has been very difficult because I didn't even get into a computer until my late 50's. But I really like it now. I have a son and even though he's in Texas he could do some distance tec support for me now. The Redwood Village has people I could talk with on the phone to. I learned how to do Facebook, I learned how to use zoom and skype.

5. The past few years have been difficult not only because of the pandemic but also because of so many challenging things going on in the country and in our world. I wonder if you could talk about how the past few years, in general, have affected you? Has your outlook or perspective on the world or our country or community changed at all?"

Well, I am a very optimistic person overall. I am very surprised at the number of people in America who resist masks who resist vaccines. I was born before vaccines existed. I saw what

happens like my mom who almost died from the mump when I got them. She really came close to dying. I have another friend whose mother died from measles because my friend brought it home from school. So we all really appreciate vaccines and I just do not understand at all why people don't want to pull together and help each other. I look at other countries and they seem to be doing so much better than we are. They tend to look out for each other more than we do. This individual my rights stuff really bothers me these days. I have a right to be safe just as anybody else has a right to be vaccinated and those two things go together. I was nine or ten years old when the polio thing started I remember the fear everyone felt. Nobody knew where it came from. I remember how awful it was until we found a vaccine. Then everybody lined up, there was nobody not going to get vaccines. That part of it changed my viewpoint and I'm disappointed in the American people in particular the ones who are doing this resistance, I don't understand it at all. " Do you mind if I ask you if you noticed any similarities between the polio vaccine vs the Covid Vaccine?" Well, I was quite young but I don't remember anybody being against the Vaccine at all. I remember people being very grateful that there was something that could be done about polio. People died and thousands of people lived out their lives in those Iron lungs. It was very different from what it is today.

6. Has the lack of medical resources in Humboldt country impacted you in any way? If so how did you navigate that?

It didn't impact me in any way because I have had the same doctor for 25 years. He is not part of the Saint Joseph system so I don't have to worry about any of their rules. Fortunately, I didn't have any reason to go to the Hospitable. A couple of times I got a really bad cold and I went to the urgent care which I had no problem with at all because of their great service. However some of my friends have had surgeries come up, one of them had Cancer. They had a difficult time navigating that whole thing. They had to wait a long time between care and appointments to get physical therapy.

7. Do you think you experience the mask policy differently as a Senior Citizen?

Probably, because I was born in the middle of World War two and my parents were a part of that generation that helped everybody, so to wear a mask to help everybody including myself was part of my thought process growing up. I have a little boy that I mentor in South Korea. Every Friday I talk to him in South Korea and his Mother is shocked by the resistance to mask because she said way before the Pandemic if somebody had a cold or the flu they were a mask and you do it in consideration of the rest of the world.

8. There are a lot of controversial opinions regarding vaccine mandates in the United States. Do you think the retirement community in Humboldt is for or against the vaccine? Is there anything you would like to say on behalf of Seniors regarding the vaccine?

I think the Vaccine mandates are fine, United Airlines just won a Court case mandating vaccines for their employees. I think Humboldt Country has every right to mandate for public service for country officers or any people who have to deal with the public for their own protection as well as anybody else.

9. Humboldt county went through a lot during the Pandemic. Do you think Humboldt could have done a better job handling the pandemic? How do you think the Pandemic will shape Humboldt's future?

I think everybody who had anything to do with it did the very best they could. I think the medical personnel did a great job and I think they're still working hard to do a great job. If Recs Bones offered to wear a mask then I am impressed.

10, Is there anything else you would like to say on behalf of Seniors living in Humboldt during Covid 19?

Well, I think we pretty good Job. The Senior center had regular meals five days a week which brought Seniors together. Especially those who are disadvantaged. They brought up food once a week where they give you five meals in a bag which was wonderful because it helped a lot of

Seniors get access to food to have their once meal a day and their very good meals. I think Seniors were very well taken care of. I think Humboldt County was pretty outstanding in that area.

Marjorie

I understand you are interested in hearing how covid has affected seniors in our area and I have observations to share about how it affected me. I am a relatively young senior, meaning I am under 70. Prior to covid, I volunteered between 20 - 30 hours a week for the Friends of the Library, managing the small book store and sorting donations among other things. that came to an abrupt end in late March of 2020, and volunteers weren't allowed back in the library until June of this year. Most of our volunteers are older than I, several are in their 80's and 90's and have been volunteering for well over 10 years. Whenever I heard from them during the lock down they made it clear they missed the library, missed being busy, missed the bookstore customers and couldn't wait to come back. We thought we would be able to reopen the store in August but had to cancel when local covid numbers climbed; nearly all of our old team of volunteers were ready to return and are disappointed at the delay. Since I do more than work at the store I am fairly busy again sorting all the donations coming in (everyone in the County cleared their book shelves during lock down) and we are trying to find places to store all the books, toss the items that are damaged and outdated, and preparing for an upcoming sale. One volunteer didn't come back because of the mask requirement but the rest of the donations team just put up with masks even tho we hate wearing them.

During the year I couldn't come to the library I did not make sourdough bread, clean closets, or learn a new language. My husband badly needed surgery but it was deferred for a year because UCSF was saving beds for covid patients. I was disgusted with how difficult it was to sign up for our vax last winter but we finally got in and he was finally able to get his surgery in

May. I dread trying to get thru the maze again to find out about getting our boosters but we must get them. In the mean time I worked in the garden - I have a huge garden. Last Spring and Summer many people were out walking for the first time and I was frequently interrupted in my yardwork by passersby. When people got bored with walking in their own neighborhoods, they would try out new areas so I met lots of people I'd never seen before. I'd planted at least 1000 bulbs in my front yard so most of the comments were compliments or questions about the types of flowers. when I harvested rhubarb, there was a good deal more than I could use so I put it out in a bin with a "free" sign for the neighbors, and did the same when I dug up iris, daffodils or other plants and ended up with extras. One neighbor I met for the first time is Wendy Chan, who turned out to live just 4 blocks down from me. She saw me one day and thanked me for the rhubarb she'd taken the week before. We struck up a conversation and she offered to drop off some eggs. It turns out she is a master baker and she also dropped off a bit of cream filled sponge cake she'd made. Wendy is from China and when she found out I like many foods many Westerners aren't familiar with she started coming by with a variety of homemade Chinese dishes for us; dumplings, tapioca with taro, pumpkin curry soup, agar, turnip cakes, and more. She loves to have fresh flowers in her house and I am happy to have her go around my yard and cut whatever she likes. She doesn't have as much sun in her yard as I do so I planted pumpkins this year for her to harvest but unfortunately only a couple were viable. When I needed dogwoods removed her husband Ron brought over one of their sons and dug out the trees for me . Ron says he is trying to stop smoking and helping out with chores I can't do myself keeps him busy.

That brings me to another thing that happened during covid - I discovered facebook gardening groups. I barely used fb before, as I am not really a computer literate person. First I found a northern CA group devoted to gardening, then one local to Humboldt County. Members ask questions about when to plant, how to deal with pests and diseases, where to find plants or seeds, brag, and so forth. There were lots of questions from people who only started gardening

during lockdown and are so new to it they can't recognize an ivy leaf or aphid. I spent a fair amount of time (probably too much) making suggestions to people who wanted to remove their lawn since I've done that, or advising new gardeners to go slow before they spend money. Since one local fb group is a gardener's plant exchange, I posted the dogwoods for free. they were all gone within hours, everyone was happy and grateful, and it was a wonderful experience. One of the women who took advantage of several of my free plant posts brought me eggs to show her thanks and we struck up a friendship even tho she is half my age. We just made a breakfast date.

A silver lining of this terrible period is I've learned about my neighbors, many have made nice comments (in addition to bringing eggs and random plant offerings), and I can't believe the number of people who are grateful for rhubarb. Wendy is a gem; it turns out she is famous for her frequent columns in the NC Journal and her posts on the fb Foodies group - yeah, I also joined that group. I "know" several new people via fb, have learned about several local businesses and it's a pretty good resource if I have questions. The groups I belong to are well administered by volunteers who shut down nastiness. But I missed the sense of being able to contribute at the library and I wish there was a way we could open the store. I feel sorry for our other book store volunteers, many of whom live alone and felt that their weekly shift at the store, visiting with their regular customers and even peeking to see which volunteer was selling the most books was one of the most rewarding parts of the week.

One terrible thing that occurred was the death of my mother in law in Tucson. She didn't have covid but was diagnosed with cancer last September and passed away in late December. As my husband wasn't able to travel because he was waiting on surgery, he hadn't seen her a year when lock down occurred. Just after she was diagnosed, I drove to Tucson alone to move her belongings from her apartment to a Skilled Nursing Facility. at that time it wasn't possible to visit her even for a patio or window visit. We spoke with her Hospice worker several times a week all last Fall but learned that even they were not permitted into the facility. It was incredibly

frustrating to be speaking with workers who had limited access to mom and didn't have first-hand information about her condition. because the nurses were over loaded, we couldn't get a clear idea of how she was doing from staff and we didn't want to be a trouble maker family. When mom complained that she'd called for help and no one came - especially after she fell and broke her hip - we didn't know if it was the truth or if she was hallucinating. After she passed I returned to Tucson to collect her belongings and found that in the previous week they hadn't even taken trash, bloody bandages, or the many canisters of oxygen out of the room. I hoped to take her ashes home with me but was told they wouldn't be ready because of a backlog at the mortuary. Subsequent to that several people at the mortuary contracted covid and the records pertaining to my mother-in-law were misplaced because the person who'd had them had been working from home before becoming severely ill. We eventually received the remains almost two months after my mother in laws death.

So that is my take on covid time so far. it isn't over, and I know I am luckier than most as I haven't lost anyone to covid - yet.

I know this is long but maybe it will give you some ideas on how the year has affected some of us for better and for worse. Good luck on your project.

