

March 24, 2020

Newcomers! Hello out there!

It's only been a week since we first reached out. But what a week!

We've had an earthquake (and a few aftershocks), suddenly the special time to grocery shop is 7am, and other than that we've been told to stay home. Stay home. Stay home.

It all happened so fast! As a friend said, "What a year this week has been!"

We just want to make sure that this finds you in good health, stocked with the provisions you need for your comfort, and amply connected to your own personal "tribe(s)".

We won't tell you to wash your hands or to keep socially distant, since you're already doing that. But while we're forced to be apart with our distancing, we'd like to find a way to stay together at the same time. In fact, if there were a time we'd like to be *in contact* with people, it would be *now!*

One way to connect, of course, is through social media. We did let you know last week that our Newcomers activities are on hold since we can't meet as groups. But one activity, The Writers' Circle, *did* find a way to keep going today. It's small group all signed up with the Internet app Zoom and had a meeting together – each alone in their respective homes at their respective computers, but all together in the conversation. Maybe you've heard of it or, by now, seen examples on TV. As you sign in, everyone's face appears in a little square on the screen so that it looks like the Brady Bunch of yore, all happily talking with each other.

Carol Haselton has done this with two groups so far, quite successfully. I haven't yet but plan to get my Zoom feet wet tomorrow. (Several folks I know have had lovely "happy hours" with their various groups, chatting away at their computers, enjoying the adult beverage of their choice!)

We're saddled with so many unhappy emotions right now, all fueled by the unpredictable, uncontrollable and unremitting anxiety that these days and weeks have produced. My mom used to look down at me in worried times and say, "Activity alleviates anxiety." And I have always found that to be true. Thanks, Mom.

So, another way to connect – *activity* to relieve stress -- is by a simple phone call. Worrying emotions are contagious. Maybe we can help ourselves and others by making *comfort* contagious instead?

You might want to grab your Newcomers Directory and find a few people listed that you haven't chatted with in a while. Maybe someone you always gravitate toward at the Coffees or in your own activity groups. Why not give them a call? It's so easy!

I've been trying to call a few people a day – some I see all the time (or used to!) and a few I haven't in forever. Each time, I was surprised at their delight, found I enjoyed the conversation as much as they did, and ended the call knowing how pleased – and comforted – they were with the chat. And, surprise, I certainly was comforted, too.

Carol and I hope you have good books, challenging jigsaw puzzles, enjoyable TV diversions – even household projects that needed attention – to keep you occupied. If you need a little more, try reaching out to other Newcomers, or to your neighbor, or to that cousin in the Midwest you've been meaning to call. Keep the connections and the comfort in the forefront and we'll all get through this together

This situation has a beginning, a middle, and an end. There will be an end and we'll all be able to hug each other once more – for real!

Araby – and Carol

PS #1 We had a note this week from a longtime Newcomers member, Ken Miller, Activity Chair of the popular Newcomers Shooting Club. He mentioned that he's heard on the news very recently about folks purchasing firearms who have no experience in that area. I, myself, heard

quite a bit on NPR radio this last weekend about the same issue – concerning both long-time “preppers” and survivalist and also those with no experience at all. Ken is concerned about people with no training having firearms in their homes – so are we all!

Ken has graciously offered to provide free instruction to any Newcomer who has recently acquired a firearm. The instruction would cover safety rules, basic operation, safe storage in the home/when children are around, and the fundamentals of firing a weapon.

If this free information and instruction is of interest to you, please do contact Ken at kgmiller1966@gmail.com and let him know our gratitude for sharing his vast experience and for his generous offer. Thank you!

PS #2 Please let us know if you there’s anything you need. Also, please do share some of the things you’re doing to “keep sane” [please see cartoon below]. Feel free to email your ideas to either one of us, and we can compile a list of ideas to send out. I’m watching Breaking Bad and bingeing The Crown—and hiking the Rail Trail. Carol is hiking the Perimeter Trail near Hideout. Just watch out for the mobs of people doing the same—six feet! 😊



*“My desire to be well-informed is currently
at odds with my desire to remain sane.”*