



Longing for functioning computers while grieving for a world without them

by Elena Louise Richmond

Talking about the abysmal technical support that's available for anyone over the age of 40 who's trying to cope with computers, my friend Tommie said, "Teachers and tech support people need to understand that they're talking to people who are grieving."

I didn't understand what she meant until I dropped my laptop and cracked the screen. (Insert one day of hysteria here.) I borrowed an old Dell from a friend to access the Internet and email so I could do some of the things that used to require stamps and phone calls.

I took the cracked computer to Seattle Laptop who reported that it would cost as much to fix the laptop as it

would to buy a new one. (Insert another day of hysteria plus hyperventilation.)

I was mad at the world when I marched into Best Buy. I stood sulking at customer service until someone summoned the courage to approach me. I'd written on a piece of paper the name and model number of a Toshiba Satellite laptop. Gwen, my neighbor who knows something about just about everything, had suggested it might be what I wanted. I handed the model number to the agent.

"I want this computer," I said.

"Do you want to know anything about it?" he asked.

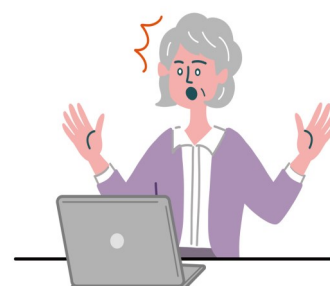
"Nope," I said.

"Do you want to see one? It's set up over here."

I hesitated.

"I'll get you one while you play with the display model," he said.

I pushed a few keys listlessly. I was hard pressed to show how much I didn't care.



He was back with a new computer and a gleam of excitement in his eyes.

"Let me show you the touchscreen," he enthused. "This will be 10 times faster than what

you're used to."

Oh no, I thought, please don't show me anything. It never occurred to me to say I didn't want a touchscreen. I just assumed this was the new technology being foisted upon us all whether we wanted it or not.

"Listen, does this computer have USB ports and a CD drive and can I stream Netflix and do email? Can I use Word? Because that's all I care about."

"But just look—," he began

We've devoted this spring edition of Connections to technology—its glories and its pitfalls. You'll see hints of nostalgia for the computer-free days. But, alas, they're here to stay. So, let's get on with it! Other articles delve into happy hours and the jazz scene in early Seattle. And don't forget to smell the roses. —Cathie Scott, Editor

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“I’ll take it,” I said.

Then came the warranty pitch. This is what I heard: “Blah, blah, blah, blah, six months, blah blah blah, protection, blah blah blah, Geek Squad, blah blah blah.”

“How much?” I asked.

He started circling things on a sheet of paper. “Blah blah blah, two years, blah blah blah, comes with blah blah...”

“I don’t want the warranty,” I said.

I took the computer straight over to Seattle Laptop where My Life on a Hard Drive sat in a Samsung laptop with a cracked screen. I left the new Toshiba with them to transfer everything from one computer to the other. Then I was able to forget about it for 24 hours.

I got the Toshiba back with my files and a third of my email addresses intact. I moved in, deleted everything on the Start Page that didn’t look familiar, began to personalize and set preferences. Soon I realized there was something wrong with the space key. It stuck. Sometimes it stuck and wouldn’t make a space. Sometimes it stuck but ran down four lines before I could get it unstuck by pressing down on the keyboard frame at different points. I shut off the computer and thought seriously about just going off the grid. I was about to go off anyway, in a manner of speaking.

The next day, I called Best Buy to inquire about getting the space bar fixed.

“Just bring it in and swap it out for a different one.”

“But I’ve already moved all my stuff onto this one. Can’t someone fix it?”

“You can bring it to the Geek Squad.”

“Can you transfer me over there?”

“They don’t use the phone. You have to bring it in. They’d have to check it and see if the bar is sticking because of food caught in it or something.”

“This is a computer you sold me and fresh out of the box. The space bar sticks.” I heard the pitch of

my voice creeping up.

“I’ll run over and ask them,” she said. This wasn’t part of her job. She was being helpful and nice.

She reported back: “They say they won’t fix it here. They’ll send it to Toshiba who also won’t fix it but will advise you to swap it out. It’ll take a month.”

I was swamped with panic.

“Are you fricking kidding me? This is what you call customer service? You people...listen....I hate computers. I hate Best Buy!” I hung up.

I paced the floor and heaved anxiety around the house for a while. The cats disappeared. By the time I had ratcheted myself down to mere hysterical sobbing, I called my neighbor Gwen. She came over and reset the computer back to its original settings.

Meantime, my friend Nina, whose two recent emails I had ignored, finally texted to find out what was going on. “Don’t make me come up there!” she said in her second message.

Nina drove me and the stupid Toshiba to stupid Best Buy the next day.

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GratiTuesday at Reuben's Brews
Tuesday, May 26
5010 14th Ave NW

The PNA is Reuben's featured nonprofit on this day. They'll donate \$1 to PNA for every pint purchased between 5 and 9 pm. Mark your calendars now!

“I may embarrass you,” I said on the way over. “I doubt it,” she said. She’s a good friend.

We got a very calm and reasonable salesperson who listened to my story, helped me pick a computer—an Asus—better suited to me. There was no talk of touchscreens or warranties.

I set up the Asus and took it over to Seattle Laptop. When Alex at Seattle Laptop heard my story, he said, “Oh, I am so sorry!”

“You’re not half as sorry as that woman at Best Buy,” I said.

Alex transferred all my stuff a second time. He also spent an hour and half with me making sure I could get to everything I needed. He didn’t charge me anything. So, there’s one good thing that came out of this. Seattle Laptop is now where I will go for everything computer related, including my next computer should I live so long as to need another.

I think computers are marvelous in some ways, but I am not interested in them as things in themselves. To me the computer is a means to an end, and I just want it to work. I don’t enjoy spending day after day reveling in its latest dazzle. I would rather do almost anything else. When everything is working reasonably well, it’s great.

When Tommie said that tech support people need to understand that they’re talking to people who are grieving, I thought she was putting it a little dramatically. But I’ve changed my mind. Every time I open the computer, I’m grieving for a world that is gone, the world I grew up in and knew how to navigate. The world of landlines and postage stamps, of bookstores and libraries, of shops with full shelves, of pens, pencils, paint, and paper.

Pieces of that world are still available, and I treasure what is left of it while I remain hijacked on a ship of fools plowing through an ocean of technology.



Volunteer In the Spotlight



by Barb Doherty

Rich Werner has been in Seattle since 1979, a transplant from Denver, Colorado. He came to Seattle to play trumpet in the Seattle Brass Ensemble. He played trumpet in the Pacific Northwest Ballet orchestra for almost 40 years and

was a partner in a computer and network management company for 30 years, managing systems for small law offices, accountants, and insurance brokers. Rich became a PNA Village volunteer in 2020 when he delivered lunches during the pandemic.

He was part of the Tech Mentoring Group at the Greenwood Senior Center (GSC) for the three years the group operated. Teresa Tam, who coordinated the group, told me Rich, LeRoy Duvall, and Bryant Bradbury were instrumental in making the group work. The monthly meetings helped many seniors learn how to navigate technology, which is a necessary skill in our technology-driven world.

Now, Rich and other volunteers offer technological help and training to village members on an as-needed basis. Members truly appreciate it! He’s also helped assemble Ikea furniture and done other tasks for members.

Rich says of his village volunteering, “I’m fascinated by technology and enjoy passing on what I’ve learned so other seniors can take advantage of what our new technology offers. I’m inspired by the seniors I meet who are interested in learning new skills and making the best of their lives by being active both physically and mentally.”

Outside of volunteering, he’s part of the GSC

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Volunteer in the spotlight—continued from page 3

Men's Group. Activities include presentations and discussions on a wide variety of senior men's issues and other subjects the group chooses. They've done museum visits, outdoor walks, canoeing, and orienteering, in addition to playing bocce and pickle ball and meeting for a monthly breakfast.

Rich and his wife own an old wooden boat and cruise around the Puget Sound area and the Canadian Gulf Islands. They've owned their boat for over 25 years and still enjoy their time on the water.

A big *thank you* to Rich and all the volunteers who give generously of their time and talent to make the GSC and PNA Village valued organizations!

"I want to give a big thank you to one of our tech volunteers, Rich Werner. He was helping me with my computer, and in our conversation, I happened to mention that I had lost my phone. He said he had a used one at home and would be happy to give it to me. Then he brought it over and showed me how to use it. BIG thank you, Rich." —Roberta Maguire

From farm to phone: How technology connects us to the Ballard Farmers Market

by Maddy Norell

On Sunday mornings in Ballard, the neighborhood wakes up slowly. Vendors unload crates of vegetables still dusty from the field. The smell of fresh bread drifts down the street. Dogs tug their owners toward pastry stands. And somewhere someone is already debating which apple variety is best this week.

For many of us, the Ballard Farmers Market is a ritual. Maybe it's where you buy the same bouquet every week, stop for coffee before wandering the stalls, or run into neighbors you didn't know you were going to see. But while the experience of the



market feels timeless, technology has quietly become part of how we connect to it.

Before Sunday even arrives, many shoppers are already planning their visit. A quick look online might reveal which farmers are bringing early strawberries, which bakeries will be there this week, or whether their favorite mushroom vendor is back. Farmers markets now use websites, newsletters, and social media to share updates that once were spread by word of mouth.

Technology also helps the farmers. Many growers now rely on weather apps, irrigation sensors, and crop-planning software to decide when to plant and harvest.

With weather patterns becoming less predictable, these tools help farmers track temperature, rainfall, and soil conditions in real time. The US Department of Agriculture reports that digital agriculture tools are increasingly common across farms, helping growers manage crops more efficiently and reduce waste.

And at the market, you might notice another small change: many vendors now accept cards or tap-to-pay, making it easier for shoppers who don't carry cash.

Still, for all the ways technology has woven itself into the experience, the heart of the Ballard Farmers

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Market remains wonderfully unchanged.

The best part is still the same as it's always been: talking to the farmer who grew your tomatoes, discovering a new vegetable you've never cooked before, or bumping into someone you know while deciding which loaf of bread to take home.

Technology may help us find the market, but it's the people who make us come back every Sunday.

Hear ye, hear ye!

You may be eligible to receive an \$80 Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) card.

You can use the card to buy fresh fruits and vegetables at local farmers markets.

The application period runs April 6 through May 8; eligible seniors must be age 60 and over, meet income guidelines, and live in King County.

Just go to [AgingKingCounty.org/SFMNP](https://www.kingcounty.gov/aging/SFMNP). You can complete the application online or print and mail it. If you need help completing the application, contact [Community Living Connections](https://www.kingcounty.gov/aging/CommunityLivingConnections) at 206.962.8467 or (toll-free) 1.844.348.5464.

Selected participants receive their card in June.

Another move brings much contemplation

by Judith Hansen

Finding a place right now that feels safe from angst, hopelessness, fear, and even anger seems to be chewing away at many of us. How to find that place in our heads and in our hearts seems an ongoing quest. Do we turn off the media and retreat to a place in our lives that seems most safe? Do we putter in a garden, watch the heron nesting, write

and walk, and pull inward? Or do we reach out and try to find people to share ideas with? We're lucky to be in Seattle. We can do it all here.

After moving to Seattle in 2020, I just moved to a different living space. Now, I'm regrouping after almost six weeks into leaving my sheltered and beautiful little lair in North Beach for an "eco" building in the rough and tumble area directly behind the Ballard Library. The buzz and noises of the city are all around me.

I've traded my private garden for a park across the street. My neighborhood has changed from being an economically privileged place to one where the very poorest in our society are evident. It evokes a real consciousness every day of what America is. Our struggles now include neighbors living with life-threatening survival issues of homelessness, drugs, and acute mental illness.

I chose to move. I wanted sidewalks and public transportation and lots of different kinds of people on the street. I wanted a park with kids to watch and the incredible arts, crafts, and creativity visible in the little shops of downtown Ballard. I can easily walk 20 or so minutes to the Ballard Senior Center and still work at the desk one afternoon a week at the Greenwood Senior Center. I'm close to the Ballard Farmers Market. The Phinney Center, on the ridge above me halfway between both senior centers and libraries, also hosts a farmers market. As long as public transportation remains in place, I'm in a great position to enjoy the many available venues for activities.

One of the hardest things in making my perhaps "last move" in life was leaving my two crows, Norman and Gracie. They were finally within a foot away from taking peanuts from my hand. It had been over two years of slowly gaining their trust, especially as my dog Hana and large cat Messi would watch from the ground

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Answer to village trivia question: C. Volunteers have baked 54 dozen cookies so far this year. That's as tall as two giraffes stacked on top of each other!



Norman and Gracie

level with suspiciously malicious intent in their eyes. The crows would follow me for a few blocks while I was walking the neighborhood. Occasionally, one of their cohorts would gently skim me with its wings, a be-

havior I hoped was like a handshake. Can they find me here in Ballard?

Many folks who keep in the bubble of bird feeding, budding trees, spring flowers, and good novels still ask, “What can I do about the craziness of our world?” This is a big ask. My answer might be very different from yours.

I feel so strongly that NOW is the time to pay attention to the tough things around me: the unhoused people who come from so many backgrounds and situations, the young who are more and more frightened about their future, and the old folks who are feeling a sense of confusion and inability to cope with diminished abilities compounded by confusing technology that confronts us from all sides.

But my greatest fear is that of losing our freedom to hear all voices and our appreciation that we’re a nation of immigrants who landed on our shores because we offered safety and opportunity and who have contributed their work and talent. Now, as fear grows, it seems so important to understand, accept, and protect our neighbors and pull together when the world is confusing us with messages that seek to pull us apart.

I can only hope that our beautiful city, hugged in the arms of two mountain ranges, keeps us brave and looking outward.

A scam-savvy primer to keep you safe

by Era Living

[Era Living is the 2026 Program Champion of the PNA Village and provides premier senior independent

living and assisted living facilities at eight locations in the greater Seattle area. Two of these facilities offer memory care services. Thank you, Era Living, for your ongoing support and partnership.]

Technology is a wonderful way to stay connected with loved ones and the world around you. From sharing photos to shopping online, computers can make life easier and more enjoyable. The key is to enjoy the benefits while avoiding the risks. Unfortunately, older adults are often targeted by online scammers who may assume you have savings or won’t report fraud. Knowing the warning signs can make all the difference.

Common online scams

Scammers may try to connect with you in a variety of ways:



- Popup messages claiming your computer is infected and needs urgent repair
- Emails pretending to be from your bank, Medicare, or another trusted organization
- Lottery or prize offers saying you’ve won something

How scams work

Many scams fall into these categories:

- Phishing: Fake emails or messages that try to trick you into sharing personal or financial information
- Malware: Harmful software installed through suspicious links or attachments that can steal passwords and data
- Ransomware: Malware that locks your device until you pay a fee
- Password theft/account takeovers: Criminals guess or steal passwords to access your accounts

How to protect yourself

- Use strong, unique passwords. Choose at least eight characters with a mix of letters, numbers, and symbols. Avoid reusing passwords and consider using a password manager.
- Watch for red flags such as urgent requests, generic greetings, suspicious attachments, or

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demands for personal information.

- Enable two-factor authentication on email, banking, and social media accounts for added protection.
- Keep security software up to date.
- Shop safely online. Look for “https” and a lock symbol in the address bar and consider using credit rather than debit cards for better fraud protection.
- Monitor financial accounts regularly and report suspicious activity immediately.

Act quickly if you think you’ve been scammed

- Contact your bank, change your passwords, and tell a trusted family member or friend.
- Report the scam to your local police, the National Elder Fraud Hotline (833.372.8311), your state attorney general, or the Federal Trade Commission.

By staying informed and cautious, you can enjoy the many benefits of technology with greater peace of mind. Staying connected—both online and in person—supports overall wellbeing and helps build a safer, stronger community for everyone.

And retirement living communities can offer a way to stay connected and enjoy time with others. If you’re interested in a Seattle retirement community, we invite you to learn more about Era Living.

The Roots of Jazz in Seattle

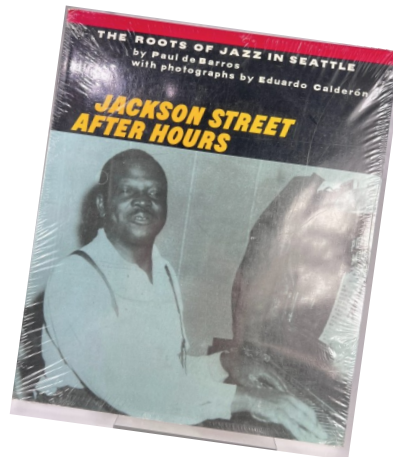
by Roberta Maguire

I performed and taught improvisational theater off and on for several decades all over the US, beginning at Chicago’s mighty Second City in the 1970s and culminating with my improv companies in Seattle in the 1980s, 1990s, and early 2000s, called None of the Above, Seattle Improv, and Tabula Rasa. I also taught for years at Cornish College and UW as well as all over the Northwest.

I was a fan of musical improv, too, and had the good fortune to teach at The Northwest School with

local jazz luminary Floyd Standifer. We were interested in each other’s take on improvisation and had great fun performing with the music in the scenes we’d create, playing off each other and building a place with atmosphere and depth.

I recently came upon a book called *Jackson Street After Hours* by Paul de Barros, *The Seattle Times* jazz critic (1993). The book presented the surprising history of jazz in this relatively obscure place on the northwest corner of the country.



Did you know that Seattle’s Jackson Street was once home to a thriving after-hours jazz scene, which included legends like Quincy Jones, Ernestine Anderson, and Ray Charles? According to Seattle’s Black newspaper, *The Northwest Enterprise*, the scene from 1933

to 1951 also included the Central District and the Chinatown International District and was a place where “all races meet on common ground and rub elbows as equals.”

Says de Barros, “In choosing interview subjects for the book, I leaned heavily toward the Black community, since it was Black musicians who had most often received the least recognition.” In a fantasy prologue, de Barros introduces a lone Black drummer in 1864 walking along a street that will become First Avenue and playing his drum. He will play in Plummer’s Hall, Seattle’s first saloon.

Seattle was an unlikely hub for jazz, but it started with minstrel shows and Black military bands. De Barros describes how the scene peaked in 1937 and 1951 when Seattle came of age as a center of the defense industry that supplied plenty of soldiers and civilians looking for a good time. And while New York and Chicago seemed to be the center of jazz, musicians trav-

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elling across the country mixed this music with inputs from everywhere.

We start in 1920s when the great Ferdinand “Jelly Roll” Morton sat down at the piano at Seattle’s Entertainers Club at 12th Avenue South and Main Street and shook the house. It was at the heart of a thriving nightclub district. The legalized corruption at the time in Maynard Town (today’s Pioneer Square) allowed a logger or a sailor to liven up his weekend. In the teens and twenties, this was Seattle’s version of New Orleans’ fabled Storyville, with entrepreneurs with names like “Noodles.”

The first hundred pages of the book include Seattle Hunch (1864-1920), followed by The Jazz Age

(1920-1933), Combos and Dives (the depression years), and Swingmania (The Big Bands Roll In), and ending with Ernestine Anderson (and the First Beboppers).

The second half of the book, A Portfolio of Jazz, is a cornucopia of photographs, including the Edythe Turnham family minstrel show in 1910, the Black Infantry Band in 1926, Billie Holiday in 1949, all the way to 1960 and the

Rocking Kings with Jimi Hendrix. It includes a few photographs of my dear friend and colleague Floyd Standifer in 1948, 1952, and 1988.

Although some of these places have been demolished, many remain. In 2005, Seattle erected a sign on the corner of South Jackson Street and 12th Avenue South. The sign deteriorated over time. It was replaced and soon became covered with tags. A committee was formed, including de Barros. The sign was covered with protective vinyl, and the idea grew to

create a self-guided jazz trail (<http://jacksonstreetjazztrail.org>). And, in 2025, the Washington State Black Legacy Institute held its grand opening and will house the Jackson Street Jazz exhibit.

In January 2025, a group of Seattle Department of Neighborhoods staff gathered with author Paul de Barros and visited the New Chinatown, the Ebony Cafe, the Green Dot, and Rizal Hall to hear stories of their origins.

The book is now out of print. A few copies are available for a price, or you can access it at the Seattle Public Library for in-library use only.

Don’t worry, be happy

by Natalie Wainwright

Here are my two favorite happy hours in Phinney Wood:

Ridge Pizza, at 7217 Greenwood Ave N next to Ken’s Market, offers a small but pleasing menu for quite an extended happy hour: 3 to 6 pm, Monday through Friday, and 9 pm until closing every day.

Their hand-tossed pizzas are great comfort food, and for \$10 (add \$1 per extra topping), the happy hour 8-inch personal pizza is the perfect size.

The smallest pizza you can get on the regular menu is 12 inches (medium), starting at \$20 with each extra topping at \$3. It’s not a bad deal either.

The Caesar salad isn’t snazzy, but it’s very fresh and the dressing is tasty.

Many of the drinks are a dollar off during happy hour, which is also very nice.

FlintCreek Cattle Company, at 8421 Greenwood Ave N, proclaims a “mission...to serve premium meats sourced from well-managed, small-scale farms and ranches that produce responsibly raised, pastured, grass-fed animals without added hormones and antibiotics.” Happy hour extends from 4 to 6 pm every day and all day Monday. Happy hour seating is in the bar area only, and seating is first-come, first-served.

The happy hour menu differs significantly from



Don't worry—continued from page 8

the full menu; only a couple of items appear on both. Happy hour items are made and presented with the same care as regular menu items, and the prices are very good indeed.

You can get a nice “butcher burger, blue cheese,

Worcestershire aioli, caramelized onion on a potato bun” for \$12, the tasty “house pickled vegetables with blue cheese tahini” for \$8, “Taylor Shellfish Mediterranean Mussels, charred jalapeno-lime butter, coriander, grilled baguette” for \$11, and several other items. Of course, you can order wines, beers, and cocktails at reduced prices.

Ridge Pizza Happy Hour menu

Served 3 pm to 6 pm Monday - Friday, and 9 pm 'til the kitchen closes every day!

\$1 off all house wines, well drinks & draft beers

\$8—Garlic Cheese bread: Italian Milano roll with garlic butter & melted mozzarella, served with a cup of marinara

\$10—Bruschetta: fresh mozzarella, sliced Roma tomato & basil on a toasted baguette with garlic butter & drizzled with balsamic glaze

\$10—Caesar salad

\$10—8" Happy hour Pizza: your own personal cheese pizza; *add any toppings you'd like for \$1 each*

\$11—Chris's Favorite : French bread pizza with spicy pepperoni, Italian sausage, red onion & mozzarella, with a cup of marinara

\$10—Turkey meatballs: two of our house-made turkey meatballs, smothered in marinara & topped with melted mozzarella

\$12—Half sandwich & chips

FlintCreek Happy Hour menu

PLATES

Butcher Burger, blue cheese, worcestershire aioli, caramelized onion, Seawolf bun 12
- limited quantity, one per guest

Fijian Yellowfin Tuna Tartare, lime-ponzu, aji verde, radish, shiso, cilantro, fried shallots, sesame cracker* 14

Venison Pate, hazelnuts, english pickle relish, pickled shallot, parsley, sourdough 9

Pure Country Pork Short Ribs, gochujang vinaigrette, sesame, scallion, cilantro 15

House Pickled Vegetables, blue cheese tahini 8

Prime Beef Medallion 4oz blue cheese, walnuts, onion marmalade, sherry gastrique 21

Taylor Shellfish Mussels, charred jalapeno-lime butter, coriander, baguette 11

Grilled Baby Eggplant, fermented black bean vinaigrette, tomatoes, nuoc cham, toasted sesame, herbs 12

A 4% operational fee will be added to every guest check. 100% of this fee is retained by the house to help cover increasing operational costs.

WINE

12/48

Red, Farmhouse Red Blend

White, Grechetto Blend

Rosé, Smak “Autumn” Rosé

Sparkling, Flama d'Or Cava Brut

Sparkling Rosé, Flama d'Or Cava Brut

COCKTAILS

Fistful of Dollars, gin, basil, Chateau aloe, lime 12

Negroni, gin, red vermouth, Campari 12

Spicy Margarita, tequila, amargo de chile, curacao, lime 12

Old Fashioned, bourbon, demerara, angostura 10

Lavender Cosmo, vodka, orange curacao, cranberry, lime, lavender syrup 12

BEER

Coors Stubby 5

Montucky “Cold Snack” 5



BETSY'S TIPS ON WELLNESS

Impact of social media and technology on our lives

by Betsy Kruse

How our world has changed! Most younger people don't know that we wrote letters or other documents in longhand or typed them on a manual typewriter and then had to try to correct errors with whiteout or a tape. In most cases, this didn't work and the document had to be retyped.



I just completed a three-day weaving class on Vashon Island. Everything was done with time-honored techniques and equipment.

What a joy to be too busy to look at my phone while I focused on weaving towels

and napkins with my classmates. I talked with my fellow students. I got help and tips about my weaving. I listened to the rhythm of the 10 looms in the room as we pushed down the treadles, changed the shed, threw our shuttles of yarn, and pulled the reed towards our chest to make cloth. Some of us did our work silently, others talked to themselves and their looms as they wove, still others cursed in frustration.

But I've learned how technology can help me improve my weaving. I can go online and take a variety of classes without leaving the comfort of my home. I can order all my supplies and even my loom. I can attend weavers guild meetings online and ask questions and vote for important issues like bylaws. Overall, I prefer in-person classes and

meetings but the online options are nice to have.

I use technology every single day. It can be so helpful. My mother was ahead of her time. She could email her friends and search the Web to access information. Email typing was easier on her arthritic fingers than writing with a pen. And email helped her communicate when diminished hearing made using the phone tough.

She was frustrated by her friends who didn't use email. With time, though, my mother found that she, too, was having difficulty navigating and using her computer. When I made my weekly visits, I would sign on to her computer and review her emails. I would delete suspicious ones to make sure she didn't succumb to fraud.

Then came Covid! It changed how we seniors interacted with our world and others. We learned how to use technology to our advantage. We learned how to order our groceries and almost anything online and have it delivered to our house. We learned how to

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VILLAGE VOLUNTEER VIEW: IT'S OKAY TO SAY NO

One of the things that keeps our Village strong is making sure volunteering feels good for everyone. This means remembering that it's okay to say no. If you realize a request doesn't fit your schedule, comfort level, or availability, you can always decline.

When volunteers feel comfortable setting limits, it helps keep the experience positive and sustainable for the long run. And don't worry—the Village office is always here to help find another volunteer or solution.

Thanks for showing up for one another, in ways big and small. That's what makes this community so special.

communicate with others via text and Zoom meetings, as well as via Facebook and Instagram. We started accessing our medical records online and meeting with our doctors on Zoom. The rest of the world was already savvy about most of these online amenities. Now it was our turn.

But what are the downsides? We may have intentionally or unintentionally become more socially isolated. Another downside is the risk of fraud, which can start online with an email. I was listening to a radio program about fraud and seniors while I was going home from my weaving class. We know that fraud is hard to prosecute, but technology has made it even harder because many of these emails are coming from overseas, out of reach for legal intervention. The Internet is rife with these clever and confusing emails meant to lure us in.

Fraudulent invitations come in many forms. My husband got a letter the other day. I'm 100-percent sure it's fraud. It's from a supposed lawyer in Canada. The writer says he's a partner in a law firm trying to find heirs to an estate of a deceased person with my husband's name. It's a life insurance policy for which they've been unable to find any living claimants. The policy is for \$10 million. It says they don't want to turn it over to the state's abandoned property division. It reads FRAUD to me many times over. Timely for this article.

I try to maintain social connections with others every day, preferably in person. Just getting out of your pajamas and dressing for the day is very therapeutic. The Phinney Neighborhood is full of opportunities for you to get out and interact with others formally or informally. I have two Labrador Retrievers I walk every day. People ask me if they can greet and pet my dogs. We stop at the florist and Greenwood Hardware for dog treats. I also sign up for classes through PNA and Greenwood Senior Center.

PNA Village volunteers—friendly visitors, handy helpers, gardeners—can come to your home and provide some social interaction as they help you.

The Village also offers social opportunities, like the Wednesday Happy Hour at Barking Dog Alehouse and dinner groups you can join. It can be hard to reach out to others, so I recommend trying these structured and scheduled activities to help you ease into socializing with others.

Not having in person contact can be detrimental to our mental health. We can become too comfortable with aloneness, which leads to depression, anxiety, and ultimately fear of leaving our home. It takes work on our part to stay physically and emotionally healthy. The Village is here to help members stay at home and age in place. While technology and social media offer many benefits, we also need to be with and enjoy others. I hope this article will nudge you to consider balance in your life for years of happiness.



PNA Village tour of Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park on March 11.

Phinney Neighborhood Association
PNA Village
525 N. 85th Street
Seattle, WA 98103
Phone: 206-789-1217

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PNA VILLAGE SERVICE AREA

Village Trivia

We'll pose a question in each issue with the answer inside.

Trivia question:

PNA Village volunteers baked enough cookies this year that, if stacked, would be about as tall as...

- A. A basketball hoop
- B. One giraffe
- C. Two giraffes stacked on top of each other
- D. The Space Needle



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Editor: Cathie Scott Layout: Laurie Radin

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