

Hope!
Special COVID-19 Issue

Healthcare Marketer's

Exchange

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Dear Healthcare Marketer,

The world has changed so much in the past two months. I feel like I am in a dream...a bad dream. My daughter Maddie is graduating from high school. She won't experience all the activities and celebrations that make senior year so much fun. She hasn't enjoyed traditions like senior prom, Memorial Weekend "down the shore," numerous awards and recognition ceremonies, and an internship opportunity offered to all seniors. All the years leading up to this, Maddie has worked so hard – this all breaks my heart!!



My baby graduating! Wow!

Right now, we're still not sure what the official graduation festivities will look like. Maddie's high school in Verona is working so hard to make sure everyone can participate. All of the graduates have a 15-minute slot to go to Verona High's sports field to pick up their diplomas. A videographer has been hired to film each student walk across the stage, pick up their official diploma, toss their hat, turn their tassel, and Maddie and I will each say a few words. They even have the field set up with a poster of each student taped to the chairs, so it looks like everyone is there. The video of all the graduates will then be shown on graduation night on YouTube and Facebook Live. I'm sure it will be moving, even though it's a virtual event.

As a family, we are surprising Maddie with as much Leonard-style fanfare as possible. For graduation night, we're surprising her with signs to decorate the lawn, balloons, streamers, and a graduation car parade. I will have a small gathering – just three or four friends. I invited a few more, but people just aren't comfortable gathering yet, even with social distancing and ensuring no one has to share food or utensils. I totally understand. We are dealing with unprecedented times and there is no clear-cut way to navigate how we go forward. This season will require a lot of grace in relationships. Everyone has to do what makes them feel comfortable.

Meanwhile, NJ Governor Murphy has just announced that starting July 6, with many guidelines in place, there can be larger official graduation ceremonies. So we may have that in-person celebration yet. However, this has caused a great divide in our town. Some people are demanding these more public gatherings happen, while others err on the side of caution. As the daughter of a 93-year-old dad who is at greater risk than most and is living with us, it makes me a little nervous to see people so eager to stop social distancing and toss the face masks. Naturally, though, my kids want to see their friends. With uncertainty about the best way to go forward, it's a delicate balance. I know my issues are nothing compared to some. I just hope all of us stay healthy.

I am honored to be part of an industry where even those who have had COVID-19 are working to help others. That's what our *Wall of Heroes* is about. This month, we're recognizing those who've turned the challenge of their experience with COVID-19 into an opportunity to serve, including Dana Taft-Ptucha and Amy L. Levinson. We're also honoring two members of the medical field – Joanna Siddiqui's Dad Aftab Siddiqui, M.D., and Jessica, Joanne Andre's niece, for their tireless service on behalf of others.

While the difficulties of this time cannot be minimized, I know a lot of people are using some of the time that's opened up by picking up hobbies, doing good, or making connections that might not have happened otherwise. I bought Maddie a sewing machine, so she's now shifted from cutting fabric for masks to actually making them and selling them. With few summer jobs available, this will help Maddie save some spending money for college (we still don't know if she'll be attending University of Maryland in the fall in-person or online). She's also donating a portion of the proceeds to the Verona Rescue Squad, which she's a member of.

On the industry front, Trevor Deal's telling how he's gone virtual with his favorite pastime. Lynn Gale is sharing a binge-worthy option. Gia Mauriello has added a family member. Julie Petroski's using her creative juices to add a spark to her neighborhood. And Elise Daly Parker's family is making music. And, I'm sure you'll be inspired by Elizabeth McLeod's story about how her family is coping with more than COVID-19 and making the best of it.

During these strange times, we have to take each day as it comes and celebrate the good things. We will get through. The early signs of recovery are here.

“Only when normal things are not normal anymore, do we realize how special normal things are.” —Anonymous

Cheering us all on,

Nancy

Win a \$50 OpenTable Gift Card!

WHAT WILL YOU DO WHEN COVID-19 IS OVER?

- What restaurant will you go to?
- Where will you go on a vacation?
- Where will you go for a day trip?
- What favorite activity will you resume – a spa treatment, mani-pedi, workout at the gym?
- What's been the biggest change during this time?
- What have you started doing that you'll keep doing? New hobby, return to an old pastime, cooking more, writing, painting, gardening, more family time?

Go to www.hmexchange.com/contests.html or contact Nan at nmcardle@HMEExchange.com.

All participants will be entered into a drawing for a \$50 OpenTable Gift Card.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ONWARD & UPWARD

promotions • additions

Agile Therapeutics has announced the appointment of **Amy Welsh** to Vice President, Marketing. She can be reached at awelsh@agiletherapeutics.com.

Alcon has announced the promotion of **Aaron Mays** to Senior Global Product Director, ATIOLs. He can be reached at Aaron.Mays@alcon.com.

American Association of Nurse Anesthetists has announced the appointment of **Julie Stewart** as Marketing Specialist. She can be reached at stewart.julie13@gmail.com.

Area 23 has announced the promotion of **Meghan Patenaude** as Associate Creative Director. She can be reached at megpatenaudecreative@gmail.com.

BioPharm Communications has announced the appointment of **Mike Reynolds** as Senior Director, Client Solutions. He can be reached at mike.reynolds@biopharmcommunications.com.

CMI has announced the appointments of **Mary Kiefner** and **Tim Montgomery** as Associate Analysts, SEM and Emerging Media; **Ciara Flanagan** as Associate Analyst, Data Analytics; and **Erin Castellano** as Associate Analyst, Social Media. They can be reached in the Philadelphia, PA, office at 215-568-5944. **Michael Peluso** has been appointed Senior Vice President, Media, and **Michael Nicolosi** as Associate Director, SEM and Emerging Media. They can be reached in the New York, NY, office at 646-840-0717.

Evoke KYNE has announced the promotion of **Kate Callan** to Executive Vice President, Head of Social Media. She can be reached at kate.callan@evokegroup.com.

Evolution Health Group, LLC, has announced the promotion of **Jessica Goldstein** to Vice President, Client Engagement. She can be reached at jessica.goldstein@evolutionmedcom.com.

HAS Talent Search has announced the appointment of **Hal Shapiro** as Founder and Talent Leader. He can be reached at hal.ashapiro@gmail.com or 215-416-5003.

MWWPR has announced the appointment of **Brendan Middleton** to Vice President. He can be reached at bmiddleton@mww.com.

Publicis Health Media has announced the appointment of **Ashley Marcello** to Media Director. She can be reached at ashley.marcello@publicishealthmedia.com or 215-399-3304. **Sam DiTomasso** has been appointed Media Director. He can be reached at sam.ditomasso@publicishealthmedia.com.

Red Five Communications has announced the appointment of **Lisa Tomaszewski** as Owner. She can be reached at lisa_tomaszewski@yahoo.com.

Wunderman Thompson Health has announced the appointment of **Michael Cole** as Chief Strategy Officer and Global Client Partner. He can be reached at michael.cole@wundermanthompson.com.

NEW & NOTEWORTHY

awards • mergers • approvals

AstraZeneca and **Merck** have announced the FDA approval of Lynparza (olaparib) in combination with **Roche's** Avastin (bevacizumab) for the maintenance treatment of adults with advanced epithelial ovarian,

fallopian tube, or primary peritoneal cancer who are in complete or partial response to first-line platinum-based chemotherapy and whose cancer has been tested to have either a deleterious or suspected deleterious BRCA mutation and/or genomic instability. For more information, visit www.astrazeneca.com.

Bristol Myers Squibb has announced the FDA approval of the combination of Opdivo and Yervoy, two immunotherapies for a subset of patients with newly diagnosed advanced non-small cell lung cancer. For more information, visit www.bms.com.

Cipla has announced the FDA approval of the first generic version of **Merck & Co.'s** Proventil HFA (albuterol sulfate) metered-dose inhaler. It is indicated to treat and prevent bronchospasm in patients four years of age and older who have reversible obstructive airway disease, as well as to prevent exercise-induced bronchospasm in this age group. For more information, visit www.cipla.com.

Haymarket Medical Network, a part of business media company **Haymarket Media, Inc.**, has announced that it has joined the Ad Council's first Private Marketplace (PMP), along with partner **Cadreon, The Trade Desk**, and **Axiom**. The PMP gives publishers and media companies a chance to donate digital media inventory in order to deliver the Ad Council's COVID-19 digital public service ads at a large scale. For more information, visit www.haymarketmedicalnetwork.com.

Healio has announced the launch of the new publication, *Healio Psoriatic Disease*, intended for dermatologists and focused on informing healthcare professionals about the burden of psoriatic disease and the emerging understanding of psoriasis as a systemic disease. For more information, visit www.healio.com.

Novartis has announced the FDA approval of Tavegyl, the first and only inhibitor for metastatic non-small cell lung cancer with METex14. Also the company has announced a mutual agreement to terminate the sale of **Sandoz US** generic oral solids and dermatology portfolio to **Aurobindo Pharma USA, Inc.** For more information, visit www.novartis.com. (Don't see the Tavegyl announcement).

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HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR VIRTUAL PANEL ON MEDICAL PUBLISHING IN THE MIDST OF COVID-19

WATCH AT AMMONLINE.ORG



Top Row: James Akhbari (Havas Health Media), Jennifer Badua (New England Journal of Medicine), Dean Connolly (SSCG Media Group)

Bottom Row: Frank Cox (Pharmaceutical Media Inc.), Matt Holland (Healio Strategic Solutions), Jason Carris (Moderator)

Managing Operational Challenges Advertising Outlook Future for In-Person Meetings What's Ahead for Media Publishing And More...

Wall of Heroes

Nancy Leonard nominates Amy Levinson, who agreed to tell her story so people who've had COVID-19 know how to help others.

Something Good from the Bad of COVID-19

BY AMY L. LEVINSON

I had COVID-19. It basically sucked – I took round-the-clock Tylenol products, a ton of vitamin C, and used my inhaler at times when breathing was a challenge. I was quarantined for 18 days. On April 5, I came out of quarantine, but it still took me a week or two to feel like myself.

I knew I wanted to use my experience to help others. There was no decision to be made – I feel this is the only right thing to do given the circumstances. I followed the protocol so I could donate much-needed convalescent plasma as soon as possible. There is significant evidence that this plasma can help treat (and hopefully one day protect) people infected with this coronavirus.

DONATING YOUR PLASMA IS A SIMPLE PROCESS:

1. To get an appointment, you have to have proof that you had a positive COVID test and have been symptom-free for 14 days. The blood bank makes you go through a screening for every visit.



What gets sucked out, gets pumped back in... and then we get snacks.

2. You can go to any blood bank. I went to the New York Blood Center (<https://nybloodcenter.org>). I had checked with Mt. Sinai as well, but there is a long waiting list there and it took them two weeks to get back to me. <https://www.mountsinai.org/about/covid19/convalescent-plasma-program>
3. The actual process of donating plasma takes about 45 minutes.
4. After 28 days, you can give again.

I am only telling my story because there is currently a serious shortage of plasma. And anyone who has had this virus and recovered should go donate now. Even if it doesn't go to a COVID-19 patient, it will not go to waste.

Amy L. Levinson is Owner, A.L.L. Global Media Solutions, LLC. She can be reached at 917-301-8215 or Amy.levinson@all-gms.com.

In Memory of My Dad...A Hero to Many

BY JOANNA SIDDIQUI

He was known as Dad to us, but to most he was known as "Doc," as he was a family practice, internal medicine, and emergency medicine physician with more than 45 years under his belt. Even after retiring in 2008, he never really retired as he took the oath as a physician to help people stay healthy. He continued his life's journey sharing holistic and anti-aging remedies. He taught anyone who crossed his path how to have a good quality of life through self-care by eating healthy and exercising.

My dad was born in India where he went to medical school and served in the Indian Army. Then he moved to London, England, in the 1960s to complete his residency. In 1970, he moved to the United States to fulfill an American dream to open his own medical practice in both New York and New Jersey. Some of our fondest memories are from his patients telling us stories about how selfless he was. Even if you didn't have insurance



Aftab Siddiqui, M.D.

or money, he would never deny anyone healthcare. He was a man of faith and always served from his heart. My dad lived life to the fullest through the simple pleasures; exercising, traveling with his family, walks in the park with my mom, going out to eat with family and friends, and spending time with his grandkids. He was passionate to support charities for children including Make-A-Wish Foundation.

Sadly, my dad passed away on April 5 from COVID-19. He will be deeply missed by his wife of 42 years, Fatima, his one and only son Joshua and three daughters, four grandkids, countless friends and family, and all who knew him.

Joanna Siddiqui is Industry Events Marketing Manager, AM Medical powered by ASME, 2 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10016. She can be reached at joanna1016@gmail.com or 201-966-8389.



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Coping with COVID-19 Then Giving Back

BY DANA TAFT-PTUCHA

It's been a while since I've been in the industry, after leaving 12-13 years ago to pursue building my yoga studio business. Some of you may remember me as working at Bristol Myers Squibb, CMI, and the last job I had in the pharmaceutical industry – selling for the Little Blue Book.

CONTRACTING AND DIAGNOSING COVID-19

I go to a lot of concerts these days – about 100 per year on average. I'm pretty sure I probably contracted COVID-19 at the Allman Brothers Tribute concert at Madison Square Garden, but who really knows?

I started feeling very tired and lost my appetite (which is highly unusual for me). I'd say the onset of symptoms was about a week after the MSG concert. Shortly thereafter, shortness of breath was added to my symptom list – going up and down the stairs left me gasping for breath. Being in the fitness industry, this was the

first time that ever happened to me. I went to a clinic and they gave me a chest Xray and EKG and sent me home because I didn't have a fever or a cough.

A day later, I found out someone who I am very close to tested positive. I went back to the clinic for the test and they still refused to test me. I found another location that agreed to test me on March 23. I waited three hours in my car and finally got the test. Five days later, I received the phone call, letting me know I was positive. I never had a fever, cough, or headache – just extremely tired, loss of smell and taste, couldn't eat, and labored breathing. I was bed-ridden for a good 12-14 days. I lost about 13 pounds. My ex-husband and boyfriend both had way worse symptoms than I did. I feel like this virus attacks men more harshly than women – just my experience.

READY TO HELP

I am now about 14 days symptom-free and was tested again this morning in hopes of receiving a negative result. Fingers crossed. I will be going to St. Luke's Roosevelt and Stony Brook University Hospitals for

antibody tests, blood donations, and plasma donations next week. Hopefully, I can somehow help. I signed up at about six hospitals to help in any way I can.

I've been mailing out masks to people who can't seem to get them. I am finally able to move my body again. I'm doing yoga Facebook live videos for free (on the YogaFlex Facebook page) to keep my students engaged in the studio. Hopefully, I have a business when this is all said and done.

CONSEQUENCES OF COVID-19

I will continue to wear a mask and take all precautions to protect others, but I pray I get a negative result tomorrow so I can feel comfortable seeing my children. They are quarantined with my ex-husband – who is still very sick – and I am worried about them.

Living in the NY-metro area, we all know this is no joke. It's hitting us pretty hard out here in Long Island. However, I have never experienced a more intense feeling of gratitude than I have in the past

few weeks. Being able to bike and breathe and practice yoga. Being able to give back and do service for others. Being able to see my children. Hopefully, someday soon, I can hug my friends and family again.

Take care all and stay safe. If anyone wants to contact me via Facebook messenger with any questions or comments, please do. I'm happy to help in whatever way I can. I'm Dana Taft-Ptucha on Facebook.

In service and gratitude.

Dana Taft-Ptucha is Owner of YogaFlex (hot yoga studio – 2 locations Commack and Locust Valley, NY). She can be reached at 516-242-7858 or dana526811@aol.com.

The Rest of Dana's Story... A Month Later

I went back to the clinic after I was 14 days symptom-free and got a negative test back for COVID! Yay! I had it and now I don't.

(Continued on page 9)



Successfully donating plasma at Stony Brook Hospital to help patients with COVID-19.

(Continued from page 8)

I was anxious to help, so I signed up to give blood as well as signing up for numerous studies at hospitals – Mt. Sinai, Roosevelt, Stony Brook, etc. It took a while for these places to get back to me, so I went ahead and called the New York Blood Center (NYBC) as I was anxious to give blood. They needed a positive and a negative test for COVID-19 at that time to qualify me for giving a donation. When I arrived at NYBC, they ran me through several questionnaires, had me fill out numerous forms, then told me my iron was a bit too low to give blood – and they sent me home.

I was heartbroken.

A BETTER OUTCOME

This ended up being a blessing because I was soon contacted by Stony Brook University Hospital, who approved me to come in to donate plasma. For plasma they require a high antibody level – the plasma would then be used immediately to help very sick patients in the hospital. If I had given blood at the NYBC, I would've had to wait eight

weeks before I could go in and give plasma. Giving plasma is a bit different because they take the blood, spin it, and it is returned back to your body. Therefore, once approved, you can go back every week to donate plasma – at least three times – maybe even five.

I successfully donated my plasma last week and am excited to go back next Monday to do it again. I spoke with several doctors while I was there. Each time I return to the hospital, they test my antibody level again to make sure it's high enough to continue to donate. They assured me the plasma was being used immediately to save lives.

Being sick with COVID-19 was no fun, though I was lucky my condition was not as severe as many. I am so grateful that I am able to help and give back. My ex-husband is fine. He successfully recovered. My two daughters (ages 22 and 24) never came down with any symptoms and are both doing great. They will probably be tested for antibodies at some point.

Happy ending to a tough situation.

Jessica – Guiding Her Grandfather During COVID-19

BY JOANNE ANDRE

Fresh out of college and now a Physician's Assistant (PA), my niece, Jessica, is a true warrior and has been instrumental in caring for many critically ill patients during this pandemic. A prime example of her devotion to medicine is her care for her grandfather Jose. He was admitted to the hospital in late March with bilateral pneumonia. The next day he was intubated and remained intubated for four weeks in the ICU as his body was trying to fight the virus. There were very dark days when things were touch and go. Fast forward to the four-week mark...Jose was finally extubated and stable with the help of oxygen and a feeding tube. The progress was slow, he remained hospitalized, but was on the road to a very long recovery.

Jessica, who is a PA for a reconstructive surgical group, saw her own patients and then went to the hospital to check in and help her grandfather each and every day. She put her life at risk each time she entered

the COVID ICU unit and then the regular COVID unit of the hospital. But Jessica felt that seeing someone who loved her grandfather would help with his recovery. She was also able to brainstorm with the medical team on the appropriate plan of action for his recovery once he was extubated. She continued to go to the hospital on a regular basis after work as well as weekends. We were even able to Facetime with him to see how he was progressing.

Sadly, my father-in-law, Jessica's grandfather, Jose, passed away Thursday, May 22. We will be forever grateful for the dedication and care Jessica so sacrificially gave in his final days.

Jessica, you definitely followed your true calling. Here's to you!



Jessica at work during COVID-19.

Joanne Andre is Chief Operating Officer, PDQ Communications, P.O. Box 191, Carle Place, NY 11514. She can be reached at jandre@pdqcom.com, 516-677-0002 (o), or 516-316-0006 (c).

PASSING THE TIME DURING COVID-19

Our Pandemic Puppy

BY GIA MAURIELLO

We all know how important unconditional love is and there is no better time than now to double it – meet Gradi and Finnegan!

We had our first family dog for 14 years and he passed in 2017. Our hearts were broken. After some time, we found and adopted Gradi from the Atlantic City Humane Society Memorial Day 2019. He was a 10-week-old three-pound love and now he's 25 pounds and LOVES everyone and everything.



ADOPT – www.homelesspawsnj.org and humanesocietyac.org

We heard from so many working families that having two dogs is perfect because they always have each other. With this in mind, we tried to adopt one of Gradi's littermates, but the shelter would not allow it.

I kept saying our second dog would find us. Sure enough, a few weeks into the Pandemic on a Sunday afternoon, I saw a five-month-old, 10-pound puppy who needed a home. I called Homeless Paws and spoke to his Foster Mom. The four of us – me, my husband Dave, son Brock, and dog Gradi – hopped in the car to go meet Finn. He was a little hesitant, but warmed up quickly. The next day, Homeless Paws did a vet check to ensure we would be good pet parents and we drove back to pick up Finn.

The first night was TOUGH! Have you ever seen puppies play? It was like one black tumbleweed rolling around the house. My husband is Gradi's favorite and Gradi is still not sure if he wants to share Dave with Finn but we are working on sharing. Every day gets easier. The dogs fight like brothers, but for the most part they are buddies. We are on a waiting list for training, hoping to get past the COVID-19 restrictions soon.

We're so happy to have both of our dogs. It warms my heart to know we rescued them and it's clear they love us too. Dogs really do provide unconditional love and there was no better time to adopt with us all home to help them adjust. If you're thinking about adding some fur to your family, DO IT!



Gia Mauriello is Managing Director, Publicis Health Media, 100 Penn Square East, 11th Floor, North Philadelphia, PA 19107. She can be reached at 267-896-3078 (c), 215-446-7535 (o), or gia.mauriello@publicishealthmedia.com.

Looking for a Binge-Worthy Series? Try *Outlander*

BY LYNN GALE

A friend recommended this binge-worthy series to me. *Outlander* begins on Netflix (Seasons 1-3) and continues over to Starz (Season 4-5 and 6 is in the making). Loved *Game of Thrones*? Then most likely you'll love this epic story from Scotland and the United States in the late 18th century and the mid-late 20th century. Love the thought of time travel or a walk through history well before our years? Love a love story to match the ages? *Outlander* has it all for guys and girls.

The confident heroine Claire accidentally becomes the time traveler. *Outlander* is about her fight to return to her own time, only to question her actions when she faces the portal (Craig na Dun – a rock formation similar to Stonehenge). Can she leave a love so strong for the Scot on the battlefield in the late 18th century? What of her husband in the mid-20th century who she accidentally left behind with questions and anguish surrounding her disappearance. The amazing hero is Jaime Frazer. He is in love with the heroine and trapped in the late 18th century, dealing with the anguish of letting go of the love of his life to a time which is far less dangerous. The setting, history, dialog, love, and action is so rich, you will find it hard to stop watching. *Outlander* is a 5 out of 5 for me. My husband most loved the history unfolding before him in a conflicted Scotland and British oppression.



Outlander will leave you full waiting for the next episode or season. When *Outlander* is filming and all are awaiting the next season, we fans refer to the break as "Droughtlander." Drop me a line and let me know what you think!

Outlander will leave you full waiting for the next episode or season. When *Outlander* is filming and all are awaiting the next season, we fans refer to the break as "Droughtlander." Drop me a line and let me know what you think!



Lynn Gale, formerly Account Director - Client Services at /alert Marketing, is a full-time online and in-person health and wellness coach. She can be reached at lynnale467@gmail.com or 224-301-5606.



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¹ The Essential Journal Study for Primary Care, The Matalia Group, 2019
² KANTAR, December 2019 Medical/Surgical Readership Study, Primary Care (Office Based)
³ KANTAR, December 2019 Website Usage and Qualitative Evaluations, Primary Care

Coping with COVID-19 and Cancer in Unprecedented Times

BY ELIZABETH McLEOD

My experience with COVID-19 is a bit different than most. But, as with most, it has not been fun.

DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT

On February 24, 2020, my husband, Mark, was diagnosed with acute promyelocytic leukemia (APL). This diagnosis came on very suddenly. And the treatment was almost immediate. With APL, patients must stay in the hospital for about eight weeks to receive their first round of treatments, called induction. After that, they receive their outpatient treatment for another eight months, called consolidation. Treatment consists of daily arsenic infusions along with chemotherapy. Like most cancer treatments, the treatment for APL depletes the immune system. While in the hospital, my husband's immune system was nonexistent. Everyone had to be extremely careful and everything had to be sterilized before it could enter his room. No visitors were allowed if they had any cold symptoms within the last three weeks. I was basically the only one who was able to visit. Mark was not even allowed to see our 18-month-old son, Carson, like most daycare kids, he always had a runny nose.



Mark being a superman while going through treatments alone.

FORCED ISOLATION

Then, in early March, COVID-19 hit New Jersey. The hospital my husband was in had to shut down to all visitors. This took a toll on him. He was in the hospital going through cancer treatment all alone. I was unable to be there with him when he went through treatment, to talk to when he was scared, to be there as he slept, just to have someone nearby. I couldn't hug him. I was unable to be Mark's advocate when the doctors and nurses came in to check to make sure he didn't forget to ask important questions.

At one point, my husband got pneumonia and was no longer allowed to leave his room for small walks around the nurses station or to the snack room. Every person who

entered his room had to have full PPE on to protect him and themselves.

FINALLY HOME

After weeks of being alone, Mark was able to come home from the hospital! He was so excited to see me, our toddler, and the fur kids. However, due to his immune system and COVID-19, he couldn't have any visitors. His parents, siblings, friends, and other family members who could barely visit him in the hospital were now unable to come see him as he was home recovering. We did a few visits through the screen door with people visiting outside (six feet away).

BACK IN THE HOSPITAL

But on Easter, after eight days of being home, my husband developed a very high fever (104) with a dry cough. He was rushed to the ER, tested for COVID-19, had a scope of his lungs, and a few other tests. Every test came back negative and Infectious Disease doctors and oncologists were stumped. They did not know what was wrong and gave him a very intense round of antibiotics, antivirals, and antifungals. Mark's fever took about five days to go away and his cough lingered. Again, he had to go through this

all alone because of COVID-19 restrictions.

HOME AGAIN

After 10 days, Mark was finally able to come home again! Once he was home, he had to continue antibiotics for three weeks. A nurse had to come and help administer them since they were infusions. He has a PICC line, which is like a permanent IV. He had to have five infusions a day for about one hour each.

COVID-19???

All of this pushed my husband's leukemia consolidation treatments back. He had to finish his antibiotics before continuing back on treatment. Once Mark finished, he had to get a precautionary COVID-19 test to start treatment. Well that randomly came back POSITIVE! **At the time he had 0 symptoms. I had 0 symptoms. Our son had 0 symptoms.**



Mark finally home after being in the hospital.

HERE IS WHAT WE THINK HAPPENED

When my husband went to the ER on Easter, he had a very high fever and a horrible dry cough. They tested him for flu and COVID-19 and they both came back negative. However, he said the first COVID-19 test did not go into his sinuses like it is supposed to. But with the precautionary test, Mark said they went very far back and it hurt.

Mark's doctors think that the first test failed due to it being administered incorrectly and my husband actually had COVID-19 back on Easter. Thankfully, he was in the hospital those 10 days being treated for pneumonia and an infection they couldn't pinpoint.

IN TREATMENT, AGAIN

After two full weeks of our family on super quarantine, four negative tests for him and three negative tests for me,

my husband was finally allowed to start his treatments again. He goes five days a week to the cancer center, for about five hours a day.

When Mark goes for his treatment, they have to treat him like some kind of person with the bubonic plague. He has a red flashing thing come up when they bring him up on the computer because of his COVID-19 positive test. They said he will be treated like this until they understand the virus better, which may be months. Even though he has had four negative tests, he has to be all alone, can't be in any waiting rooms, has to stay outside, and everyone around him has to be in full PPE. All of this is understandable. Everyone wants to protect themselves, other patients, and him. But it is hard to feel like a real person when everyone around you has to be in full medical PPE and you can't have any personal support there with you.

Overall, this virus has made our situation very hard. Most cancer patient caregivers and their families grow to know the nurses and doctors caring for their family member. They get to grow with their spouses on this journey. We are robbed of that. My husband is going through life-altering changes. He will have grown into someone new. And, for the most part, I must take this ride in the backseat.



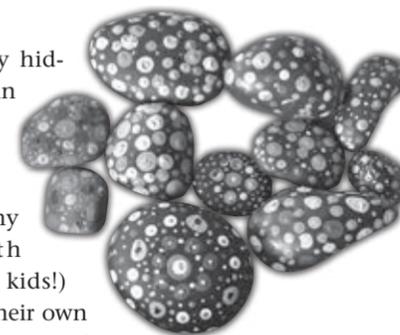
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PASSING THE TIME DURING COVID-19

ROCKIN' WITH JOY

BY JULIE PETROSKI

I'm spreading joy by hiding decorated rocks in my neighborhood. Did these dotty ones Easter weekend and it started a thing in my neighborhood with lots of people (even kids!) decorating stones in their own styles and hiding them in the



parks, by mailboxes, on swings, around planters. Everyone on NextDoor wants to know where the rocks are coming from. But those of us who are decorating and leaving them around aren't telling! It's been fun learning how we rock decorators are brightening neighbors' days.



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Breaking Free from the Quarantine Blues

BY TREVOR DEAL

I have been playing guitar since I was 14 years old. From writing songs to teaching and playing in bands, it has been one of my favorite hobbies/pastimes for over 30 years. So, when COVID-19 came along and the subsequent shelter-in-place/social distancing, I knew I would be playing more guitar. The only problem was that I couldn't play with my band.

For the past few years, I have been playing with a group of guys in my town who are all around the same age with day jobs, wives, kids, etc. We are what you would call a "Dad Band" that plays covers at the local bars a few times a year and we practice one night a week. It's a lot of fun and a great way to blow off steam, while escaping from the day-to-day responsibilities of life as a grown-up! But it was going to be extremely difficult to continue this during quarantine.

VIRTUAL CRANFORD

Then something amazing happened! Some friends created a Facebook page for our town of Cranford, NJ (Virtual Cranford), and started organizing virtual activities and events. Within days there were bingo nights, trivia contests, fundraising efforts for local businesses, and an open mic night called "Couch-Fest," where local musicians were invited to showcase their talents. My phone was blowing up with texts from friends who insisted I jump on and play guitar (and sing) for everyone. I thanked them and answered with a tentative maybe. For anyone that knows me, this is not like me! I'm confident in my guitar playing ability and I love being "on stage." This was about two things: singing and performing solo – in public!

While I had always done a little bit of singing, it was mostly backup vocals. And aside from the occasional late night around the campfire with friends, I had never actually performed live as a solo act. I was very nervous and afraid of falling on my face on the Facebook live stage!



Getting ready for my virtual gig on the basement couch.

READY OR NOT

Thankfully, I had a supportive family (wife and daughters) and great friends who refused to take no for an answer. I had also been taking vocal lessons since the holidays because I wanted to be a better singer. I had to remind myself that I was ready. The truth is that I have always wanted to do something like this on my own and there was no time like the present. As awful as this whole coronavirus pandemic and quarantine was, it was giving me an opportunity to do something hard and scary, while also allowing me to share my gifts with the world during a difficult time. Who was I to deny myself of this chance to enjoy life and spread some cheer to people who needed a reason to laugh, dance, sing, or smile?

So, I did it. Not once but three times! And I'm getting ready to do a fourth performance. It was amazing! I'm having so much fun pushing myself in new ways and learning to sing/play new songs. Lots of mistakes, but I learned to laugh through all of them. I put myself out there and gained a lot of confidence and self-respect along the way.

LET'S DO THIS

I'm grateful for the opportunity to do something fun, productive, and positive. We can't always control our circumstances, but we can control how we react to them. Don't let the quarantine blues get you down! Make this time count. Do something fun, new, or scary today. Go outside your comfort zone. I promise you won't regret it.



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Making Music Even During a Pandemic

BY ELISE DALY PARKER

We are music lovers in my family. Both my husband and I grew up in families that embraced singing. Chris sang in a barbershop quartet, was in a myriad of musicals, and even played Jesus in Seton Hall University's summer stock production of *Godspell*. I was always in a choral group of some kind and, as we got older, my three sisters and I sang in many a wedding or funeral, eventually performing in a few concerts of our own and producing two CDs. In fact, even last May we had a concert at the Presby Memorial Iris Gardens in Montclair, NJ.

MUSIC ALL IN THE FAMILY

We've passed down this love of music to our own children. I tended more to lullabies, while Chris sang our four daughters to sleep well into middle school. Two of my four girls are actually in the business of making music. Farrell is an actress performing in musicals, cabarets, and one-woman shows. Catie is a music therapist. She has her own group and often joins her husband who is a leader of Scythian, a band that tours all over the country playing the music festival circuit. And Amelia was in a chorale group through college – directing and performing in an a capella group The Passing Notes in high school and joining the Boston College Gospel choir Voices of Imani in her junior and senior year. She was also a member of several bands, including a group called Little Hill Trio with her sister Catie and cousin Tess.

A SINGING PARTY ON ZOOM

Is it any wonder, then, that we have found ourselves making music even during the pandemic? Music is powerful. It's one way we celebrate. It brings us together and helps us feel connected. So when it came time to celebrate my mother-in-law Mary's birthday, the family gathered 'round the hearth – well it was actually around Zoom – to wish her well. Children, grandchildren, great grandchildren, nieces, nephews, and grand nieces and nephews showed up to express our love and appreciation for the Ireland-born matriarch of our big family. My brother-in-law, Jack Parker, who is a lifelong musician, led us through several Irish tunes and ballads as we all – at least 30 of us – clapped and moved to the music. It was a beautiful tribute. And we all sang happy birthday together to celebrate Mary.

MEMORIALIZING MOM

Sadly, my own mom, Barbara Daly, passed the day before Easter. This was particularly tough because we hadn't

seen her in almost a month due to COVID-19. She was in a memory loss unit of a long-term care community and they were shut down. One of the nice things that's come out of this time of sequestering is that we have an ongoing cousin text thread and we've been meeting by Zoom every week.



Mom, center, surrounded by our clan, most of whom were on her Zoom memorial on Easter.

We love one another, but we've all been busy at various stages of raising families so we don't really talk regularly. Because of COVID-19, now we do. One of my cousins suggested we gather virtually on Easter Sunday to honor Mom. There were about 30 of us and we had a little service. My husband opened in prayer. Then we went around the Zoom table and shared an intention, prayer, thanks, or

memory having to do with my mom. We ended our service by singing *Amazing Grace*. This brought much-needed peace and closure.

THE BEAT GOES ON

Other members of my family are making music too. My daughter Catie and her husband Alexander have been "Busking for Bills" as a fundraiser because all of the festivals they participate in have been cancelled. Plus Scythian has been doing some live streaming. And my daughter Farrell has set up a studio in our garage and shares a solo each week.

Singing has tons of health benefits. It gives your lungs a good workout, improves blood flow, and reduces stress by releasing feel-good endorphins. Singing improves communication skills and self-confidence. I can't say we've known this all along, but I'm not surprised. And I know for a fact singing has helped me and my family feel better – more connected, happier, and less stressed.

Right now, we all need to do what we can to feel better. Why not try singing?

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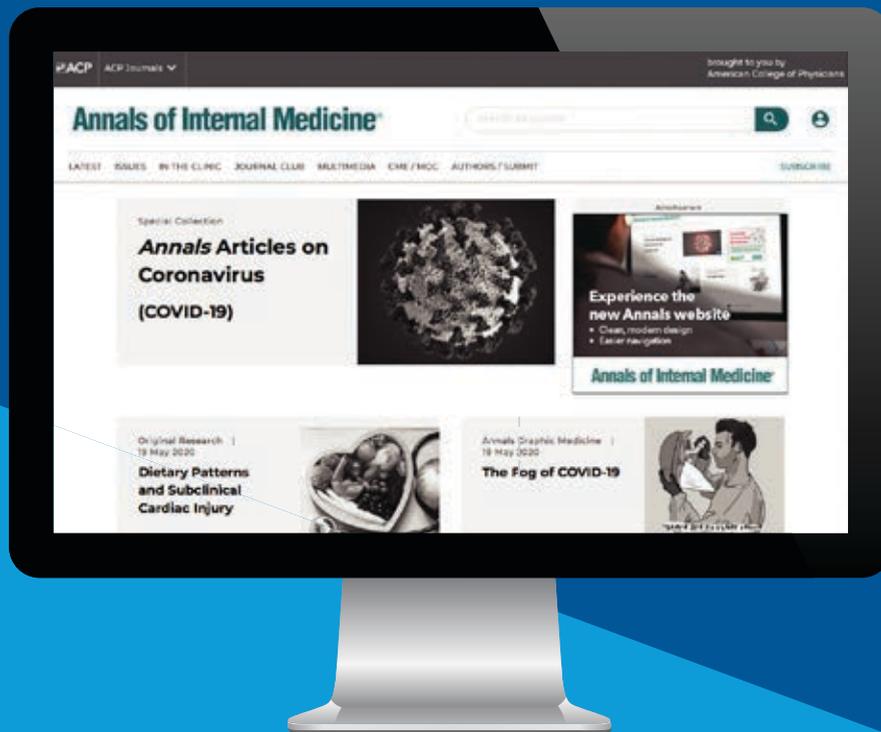
Here's some links to some of the family musicians mentioned.

Catie Parker – <https://bit.ly/CatiePYT>

Farrell Parker – <https://www.instagram.com/localasfarrell/channel/>

Scythian – <https://bit.ly/ScythianYT>

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