



... wear your mask, wash your hands, ain't hard, and ain't done here yet ...

AHS63 January **2021** Newsletter

Going Fishing on a Full Moon Edition

Northern Outpost, New Year's Eve, chilly out, mebbe snow. If there was a full moon out there last night we couldn't see it, which is just fine ... being as how it was the thirteenth full moon in a regular twelve month year. Or not so regular. But thirteen of anything is one too many—if not downright unlucky—and full moons can be ... *angsty*. We are so done with *angsty*, and 2020 was just full of it. On the other hand, there were new experiences to be discovered during this masks-on-six-feet-apart year—if you were creative. Especially in the kitchen, turns out. And it was a year of introspection if you got creative inside your own head. Lotsa scary things in there to love, eh? We took ourselves off to the den to watch a flick on Disney+ the other night. We won't spoil it for you, but "Soul" is well worth the watch. In it there's a thirty-second allegory about a little fish that swims up to a big fish and says, "I'm trying to find the ocean. How do you get there?" And the big fish snorts, "What do you mean? You're swimming in it!" And the little fish says, "But this is just *water*—what I *want* is the *OCEAN!*" Smile. Full stop. Maybe when we turned seventy-five we thought we'd feel *different*, maybe even wise—we had all these expectations. Inside, we're still thirty-five, and we're good with that—but, *really, Alfie?* And 2020 might be over, but we've a ways to go in 2021 before we're done with the 'demic. Honestly, don't you wonder some days if we'll ever get any wisdom to show for all these years spent on the planet? Especially *this year?* Well, we did get wiser one day last week for sure—put out some "free" bird seed in the feeder. Squirrels and starlings. Where were all the little nuthatches and downies and bluebirds we've been entertaining the last two months? Hmm. Dumped that free bird stuff right out, filled the tray with the *good* (aka expensive) bird stuff, and here they came. Huh. Small wisdom, we hear you snorting out there. But the birds have become an important part of living small, staying home. More to the point, we've noticed kindnesses that have showed up along the way this year—like neighbors leaving a bowl of soup and a note on the

porch bench—"Ecuadorean experiment #42." Who even knew you could put capers in soup? Amazing. Sometimes it's a loaf of sourdough, still warm. They're cooking up a storm here and can't stop. Our diet is an almighty trainwreck. But, taken altogether, we suddenly don't care. Might could be another angsty full moon, and months more of masks and grief ... but we've found a piece of the ocean, and it makes all the difference. —*Queenie*



Whatever wisdom you've got for the new year, let's hear it ...

We're interested in receiving mail for posting in a special edition to come in the next week or so. It's more work for the royal brain but we'll chance it.

What have you discovered about yourself or your friends or life in general this past year that you would attribute to dealing with life during The Time of ... ?

Perhaps there is some eloquence or inanity or simple observation that may summarize the moments past, or give some guidance to those we still have left of this Time going forward.

Even a 9-year old had some insight on the past year:

"Like looking both ways before crossing the street and then getting hit by a submarine ...

Because it's been the craziest year ever."

—Clarke Smith, 9, Beverly Hills, Mich.

The point is, we're still in this, and so the Queen wishes to push it with you to provide some wit or encouragement or wisdom to mull over.

Out with it!

By Twelve Noon of the Day of Twelve Pipers Piping.

Alrighty then.

Carry on.



FROM SHERRI PATTON-GRUBB

Good afternoon! I hope all is well with you! I wanted to let you know that our groups are up and running for the year as of October, and we are looking to expand with even more, since we have such a wonderful space. We are considering a group for immigrants who have experienced trauma in their country of origin, or as part of their journey to Texas, a group about coping with anxiety, and a group for students in recovery from substance abuse.

One of our groups for young women wanted to express their gratitude for the space, and sent this picture for you:



They couldn't show their faces, for confidentiality, but asked the therapist to take this picture depicting them relaxing and enjoying the space before returning to class after a productive group discussing safe boundaries in relationships, and managing difficult emotions.

It has been an interesting year so far. Up until today (November 2nd), most students had been learning online. For me that has meant zoom meetings with students and families, or phone calls. Many of our families are struggling right now due to COVID19 related job loss, loss of the lives of family members and/or friends, and other complicating factors that we face.

I am working to connect families with resources in the community and working with students and families to find mental health support in a time of increased anxiety. I am working with faculty, staff, and families to spread awareness of the importance of taking care of our mental health during a time of crisis, when more people are at risk of developing symptoms of depression, anxiety, and even suicidal ideation.

Beginning today, students who wished to learn in person were able to return to campus. All of us are excited to see their faces (well, the part that is visible above their masks, anyway), many for the first time this year. It warms my heart to have them back on campus!

Best wishes to you, please stay safe and well!

Sherri Patton-Grubb, M.Ed., LPC

Wellness Counselor Austin High School

NB. We are late getting this in the newsletter. We should be fired. The schools are on Winter Break, so there wasn't any more to be done about a proper update. Went off to read the Maroon Newspaper to see what all has gone on since the school opened back up on a voluntary basis (for students, that is—teachers are required to attend), with an every other day rotating A and B schedule (half of the student body in each block). Found a December 15/2020 commentary by a student writer, Nathaniel Fagelson, titled "Reopening: Expectations and Reality" ... apparently there was a Covid outbreak and the school closed for three days. GO [HERE](#) to read Nathaniel's article.



Happy Birthday to all the January kids, with two special recognitions of some youngsters who are just now turning 75 ...

01 Ginnie Lou Peck Smith (45)

02 Doug Spiller (45)

03 John Bode (46) — Happiest 75th to you Johnny, you fabulous saxman, and special thanks for your mellow "notes" all year to keep us up ... it means a lot!

05 Myron Ralph Boyd (45)

06 Bev Wright Witwer (45)

07 Harold Hashem (45)

09 Mike DeGeurin (45)

10 Dick Williamson (45)

10 Jimmy Collier (45)

10 Gwen Doss Stone (45)

11 John Pendleton (45)

12 Grady McGonagill (45)

15 Lulu Peal Muse (45)

15 Tom Dunlap (45)

18 Vickie Herold Dow (45)

19 Betty Hage Heaton (45)

20 Kenny Roberts (45)

21 Janan Rodgers Moses (45)

22 Gloria Sue Cook Hyatt (45)

22 Bo Rothchild (45)

23 Danny Kohler (46) — And Happiest #75 to you Danny, still handsome after all these years inside and out—and thanks for always being there for every Austin alum gathering!

23 Steve Goodwin (45)

24 Grant Simpson (45)

27 Jann Sorrell Fractor (45)

29 Franklin Mendez (45)

29 Harry Menn, Jr. (45)

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