

VIEWPOINTS

HIGHLANDS NEWS-SUN

YOUR HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER SINCE 1919

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SUN

ANOTHER VIEW

Finding good in a pandemic

At last, some good news regarding the coronavirus emergency. The lockdown and stay-at-home advisories apparently have inspired people to make healthier life choices.

Before the coronavirus, it was an easy task to go to the grocery store on your way home from a busy day and pick up a quick convenience meal. With the fast-paced frantic lifestyle people face in the outside world under usual circumstances, stay-at-home advisories and lockdowns have meant many Americans are able to take a break and put their health first. While there is no doubt about the harsh disruption the pandemic has caused to daily lives, it has certainly granted many the chance to improve unhealthy habits they may have fallen into over the years.

Rehabs.com, a provider of rehabilitation resources and treatment information, conducted a study of 3,000 Americans to find out if they have adopted healthier choices amid the coronavirus.

Broken down across the nation, it appears North Dakotans were the most motivated to change their ways during this time — 77% of residents, compared to the national average of 54%, say the lockdown inspired them to make healthier life choices. By comparison, Alaskans seem to have taken lockdown a little harder with just 33% saying they have made positive lifestyle changes over the last few months.

Most people have a specific lifestyle concern they have always wanted to address. Of those surveyed, 56% say they have started eating healthier since it began. This was followed by 35% of respondents taking up more exercise, and 7% quitting drinking and smoking.

In fact, it seems Americans are either running low on liquor or the thrill of drinking has worn off, as over 1 in 5 people (22%) say their alcohol consumption has decreased the longer coronavirus emergency has continued. Broken down by gender, 36% of men say this is the case, as compared to 10% of women.

Another factor regarding alcohol has to be factored in: limits placed on bars and clubs. Some are closed while those operating can accommodate fewer people, and fewer people are going out as they remain at home. Thus fewer are drinking as regularly.

Also, when visits to the outside world are limited, regular trips to the grocery store or nearest takeout are not as easy. This means fewer processed convenience foods — such as microwave meals and freezer pizzas — and more home-cooked dinners. This is possibly why a significant 43% of respondents admit their diet has improved.

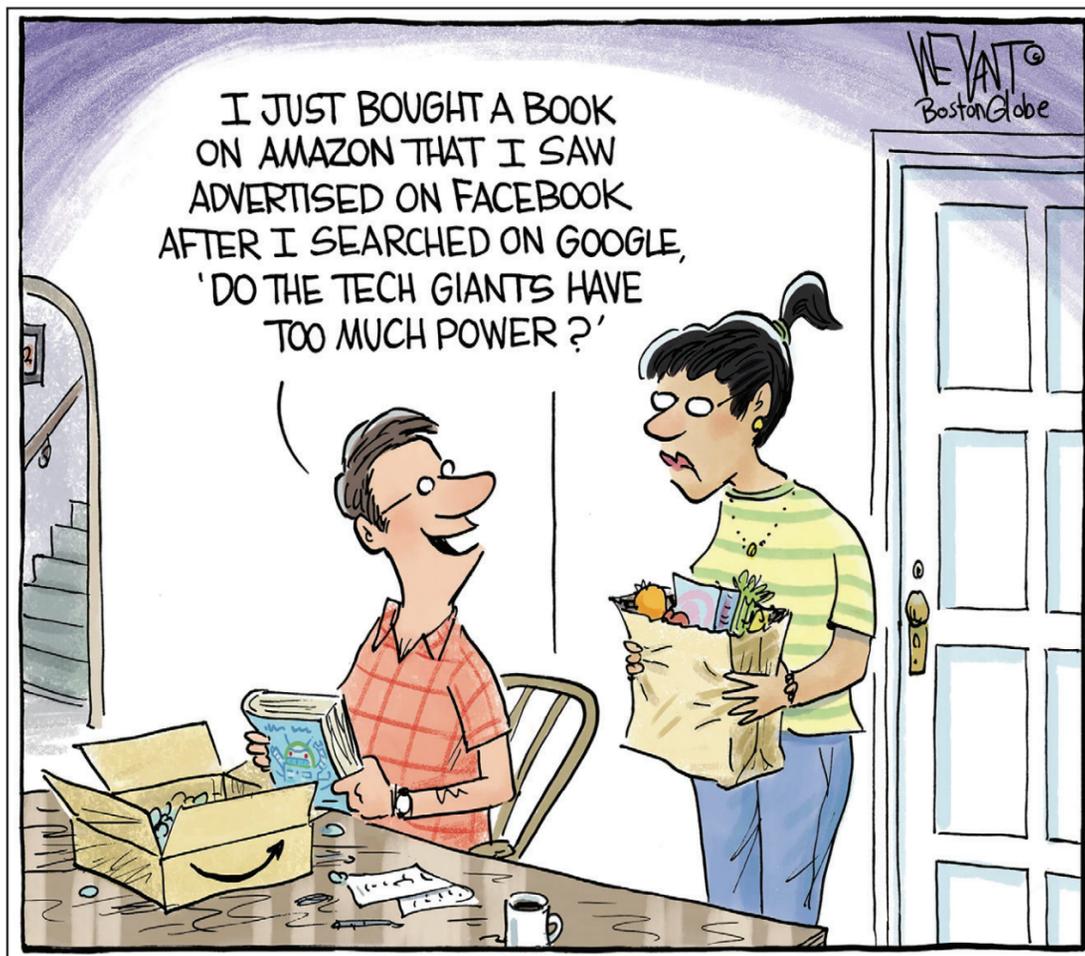
Moreover, because there is no need for commutes when people are working from home, it helps to have some extra time in the evenings to prepare a healthy meal. Cooking for yourself and/or your family can get repetitive if you are doing it every single day, multiple times per day. However, many people appear to have embraced this opportunity to fine-tune their skills in the kitchen — the average American learned to cook four new, innovative recipes since lockdown began, according to the study.

Still there are legitimate health concerns amid the coronavirus.

Dr. Lawrence Weinstein, chief medical officer for American Addiction Centers, states: "Even though some are afforded the gift of time with commutes and rush-hour traffic no longer being a daily issue, anxiety and depression surrounding the pandemic are still conditions being felt by many. With more time available, unhealthy habits such as increased substance and/or alcohol use can persist. For those who may be dealing with those issues, making better lifestyle choices such as lessening alcohol intake, adapting a better diet and exercise not only improves physical health, but are beneficial for mental health as well."

If there truly is a lasting curb in unhealthy lifestyle habits, Americans will be able to call it a silver lining in an otherwise dangerous and difficult time.

An editorial from *The Times and Democrat, South Carolina*.



Hurricanes and mystery seeds

OK, normally, a potential hurricane this time of year would be something to deal with, but not beyond coping with. Floridians are used to being threatened by these windy entities, and we cope by buying up water, junk food, and batteries.

But this is 2020. The year of craziness. I admit part of me hoped the season would have mercy upon us and skip being really active this year. No such luck. And the storm is making its way towards us, promising a lot of rain and maybe some wind.

Of course, this is midweek when I'm typing this, and by the time you read it we'll know a lot more. Hopefully, one of the things we'll learn is how to pronounce its name.

This morning, the National Weather Service decided to name the new storm. The new storm is named — I am not kidding — "Isaias."

Laura's Look

Laura Ware

The Farmer's Almanac's website helpfully provided a pronunciation key, claiming it's pronounced "ees-ah-EE-ahs." Further research by your humble columnist reveals that the name is Spanish for Isaiah, a name you may remember from the Old Testament. For those not Biblically inclined, Isaiiah was a prophet who has a book of the Bible named after him.

That may be my problem. I see the name and think it should be pronounced "Isaias." Or, for those who don't know how to pronounce it, "i-ZAY-ahs." As it is now, I often stumble over the name, even at one point referring to as "that thing" to Don.

Look, no offense to all the Isaias out there. I'm sure you are very nice. But couldn't those in charge of naming storms

pick something that's a no brainer to pronounce? I want a name that I don't need to have coffee first to say it.

I acknowledge that there are bigger problems at the moment than figuring out how to pronounce a storm's name, but it's bugging me. It does take my mind off some of the other stuff going on, so that's a good thing, I guess.

If you wanted something else to worry about besides Covid-19, the economy, and hurricanes, it looks like China has helpfully provided one. According to an article I read on www.cbsnews.com, people all over the USA have gotten mysterious packages of seeds that appear to be from China.

This has alarmed the USDA. The agency has strongly suggested that people not plant these seeds, because they might be invasive plants that

could wreak havoc on native species.

For some reason, when I think about this story, I get visions of the plant Audrey from Little Shop of Horrors. I don't THINK China is sending us man-eating plants, but this is 2020. You have to wonder.

And I hope that people aren't crazy enough to plant unsolicited seeds they get in the mail. I mean, who gets seeds they didn't order and think, "Gee, I should plant these?" No one would do that, right? Right?

So, the take-away from today's column is don't plant seeds you get out of the blue and if you live in Isaias's path, get ready. Make sure you have sufficient essentials, like water and chocolate. Do the best you can on what to call the thing. Hopefully, after this week-end, we can call it gone. That would be the best name of all.

America is in great danger

The Pledge of Allegiance to the flag states we are, "One nation under God." President Ronald Reagan said that if we ever forget that we are one nation under God we will be a nation gone under.

Our 1776 Declaration acknowledges that our rights come from God. The first right listed is "life." Without "life" it is impossible to experience "liberty" and "pursuit of happiness." Freedom of religion is at the top of the list of our freedoms in the Constitution. Recognizing God and protecting life are intrinsically connected.

Socialism denies God and does not value life. Socialism is the front door to Communism. Russia uses the title, United Soviet Socialist Republic. Socialists murdered over one hundred million of their

Guest Column

Virgil Ullom

own citizens in the last century.

To understand socialism, consider the history of Cuba, Venezuela, Russia, China, etc. They deny God, do not respect life, and have no problem telling a lie.

Stalin's daughter was with her father when he died. He sat up in bed, shook his fist towards Heaven, and then fell back in bed. Stalin as a young man went to seminary and then turned away from God. How tragic! Recognizing God and protecting life are intrinsically connected.

When we forget God we forget that all of life, and every life is special from the moment of conception. When a sperm and egg come together and form a new cell, it is the largest cell in the human

body. You can almost see it. This cell contains all the information for a unique human adult.

I am amazed at what God does when I consider that all the information for an adult human is stored in one cell so small you need a microscope to see it. None of us would be here if that one cell would have been destroyed when we were in the womb. In the womb, you were in your mother's body and I was in my mother's body — but we were not part of her body. The preborn is another person — even the blood can be a different type.

When we honor and respect God, life has meaning, purpose, and a future.

The God of love gives us the opportunity to choose to be with Jesus in Heaven or to be separated from Him in hell. Christ frequently warned about

hell as a place of weeping, wailing, gnashing of teeth, darkness, and a lake of fire.

The God of Love paid the price for us to be able to go to Heaven; if anyone chooses hell, that is each person's option. What we believe determines what we do.

America is in great danger. The violence we see in America reveals that many are working to destroy our country. Basically this is a spiritual battle.

God's message of love to everyone is to repent and follow Jesus, then love Him and love others. If you have not made this decision, the best time to say "yes" to God is now.

Virgil Ullom, D.D.S. is a resident of Babson Park. Guest columns are the opinion of the writer, not necessarily that of the Highlands News-Sun.

JOIN THE CONVERSATION

Letters are welcome on virtually any subject, but we do have some rules. We will not accept any Letters to the Editor that mention a business in a negative tone, as they have no means to defend themselves. Please keep Letters to the Editor to less than 250 words. Letters will be edited to length as well as for grammar and spelling. All letters must be signed with full name — not initials. An address and telephone number must be included. The phone number and address are not for publication, but must be provided. In the case of letters that are emailed, the same rules apply.

Due to the number of letters received, we are able to run only four letters per person per month.

The Letters to the Editor section is designed as a public forum for community discourse, and the opinions and statements made in letters are solely those of the individual writers. The newspaper takes no responsibility for the content of these letters.

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