



MEMORIES MUSINGS

By Cheri Sims

Cheri lives, writes and gardens in Charleston.

Early newspaper deadlines, moving, the Holidays and eating way too many sugar infused goodies have wreaked havoc with my normal routine but I really have enjoyed getting out of the daily rut. I will admit to liking all the Christmas lights in the house too. They seem to make everything look so much warmer and inviting when it is cold outside.

I have even thought that I might like to join the Hallmark TV channel and have a bit of Christmas all year around. None of my friends would be surprised if I left up one lighting display since I have holiday lights from October to the second week of January anyway. This past year has been pretty depressing and a nice warm glow of Christmas lights just might make all the difference.

I have been asked if the kitty cats like their new home and I am pleased to report that they love it, especially the attic and the stairs to the attic. There is a heat duct in the attic but I have not used it so it is pretty chilly up there but that does not seem to bother Pitou and Mitten Kitten. They have developed their own routine of sorts; at first I was not allowing them to go upstairs but Pitou kept scratching at the door and driving me to distraction so I decided to let them explore.

They run up and down the stairs with great enthusiasm and love chasing each other on the stairs. I have found that I need to be careful when I am traversing the steps because Mittens likes to chase me up and down the stairs too and she gets between my feet trying to get ahead of me. After the first day of their rat racing around they have developed favorite spots; one of which is looking out one of the windows at tree top height. Mitten discovered the birds in the tree and sits at the window and chatters at them. Pitou loves to snoop, in places where I wish she would not go, and they both emerge from their explorations with the white of their fur a dirty gray. I have vacuumed all the walking space but getting back into the nooks and crannies of the attic eaves is a bit difficult so I call them my living dust mops.

I used to play a ball game on the stairs with one of my other cats, Molly, when we lived in the two story Victorian house and I decided to try it with Pitou and Mittens. Oh my, you would think this was the greatest invention ever. They sit on a step higher than I am standing on and I toss a small fuzzy ball to them and they bat it around. Mittens jumps and swats at the ball with such energy



that it sends me scrambling. Pitou is a bit less agile since she had previous problems with her neck and legs but she too gets into the game and we really have fun. Can you guess who gets tired first? Yep, it is me!

A postscript to 2020, New Years day had pretty lousy weather so I elected to stay in all day. I started taking down the Christmas tree, the Charleston tree pick up was on January 6 so I cheated a bit and left the tree up longer than usual. When the cats and I got bored I decided to find something exciting on the computer so I binged out on the six Chicago Bulls championship rallies on YouTube. The night before I had watched the new sea-

son Chicago Bulls and the Wizards, both former teams of Michael Jordan's, trying to get into the new season of basketball. To the guys who read my articles, am I the only person who thinks basketball was more fun to watch in the 1990's? if it is just me then I had better stop watching past Bulls games!

I postponed all work on the house during the Holidays but this week we will start again by installing the wall tile in the kitchen and finish the trip work on the new cabinets. I must admit I was glad for the Holiday interruption; I discovered that sometimes there is just too much mess and confusion and one needs to take a break from remodeling and

restoration.

All the leftover Christmas goodies have been relegated to the freezer and I have purchased a soppily of chicken and fish to dine on in the coming weeks. Yes, I gained a couple pounds over the Holidays; not proud of it but it was sure fun. My favorite food over Christmas is the crab meat and cream cheese dip that I have made every year since 1970 when one of my employees served it to us at a party. I have developed a diet recipe, which is not quite as good but satisfies the taste buds when one is watching what they eat. So for the first recipe offering for 2021 I give you a yummy crabmeat and light sour cream recipe.

Crab Sandwich or low cal dip

- * 1 can crab meat drained
 - * 1 small container light sour cream
 - * 1 tablespoon pickle juice or lemon juice
 - * 1 teaspoon onion powder
 - * Two tablespoons chopped pimento, optional
 - * Salt and pepper to taste.
 - * 1 avocado halved
 - * 2 slices of your favorite low calorie bread, optional.
- Mix all ingredients together and chill before serving. Either serve in halved avocado or spread on your favorite bread. Recipe can be used as a dip by not draining the canned crab meat. Enjoy!



REAL LIFE WELLNESS

By Dr. Bill Hemmer

How are the COVID-19 Vaccinations Different?

A new year brings new hope for all of us. Herd Immunity has been the goal since the beginning of the pandemic. There are only two ways to reach this goal. First, you become infected with the COVID-19 virus. The second is becoming vaccinated for COVID-19.

The COVID-19 vaccina-

tion is a new type of vaccine that doesn't use viral particles to help the body create more antibodies. Traditional vaccines use "dead" viruses or other materials to create the antibodies. The new COVID-19 vaccines are using new technology. In this article, I would like to simplify how the new vaccines work,

so you can make a knowledgeable decision about the choices available to you.

These new vaccines use specific laboratory-created pieces of genetic material called mRNA (messenger RNA). This mRNA is designed to stimulate the immune response that produces antibodies to COVID-19.

RNA stands for Ribonucleic Acid. RNA is essential coding, decoding, regulation and expression of genes inside the cells of your body. Your genes are what makes you different than me. Some genes get turned on in you; others get turned off in me. That's true for every person. Everyone in the world

is different because genes get turned "on" and "off" differently in each of us. RNA is the switch to control these differences.

The new COVID-19 vaccinations use a specific type of mRNA. When this mRNA is injected into you, immune system cells are activated to produce a specific type of protein. Many different proteins in your body are started with a mRNA "on" switch. The vaccine mRNA tells your Immune system cells to produce a type of protein called a spike protein.

Spike proteins are how the COVID-19 virus is thought to attach to your cells and once the virus is at-

tached, then the COVID-19 virus mRNA (which is a different mRNA than the one injected in the vaccine) can get inside of that cell and infect you.

So, if that spike protein is met by antibodies before it can attach to your cells, the scientists believe less cells will become infected and, therefore, if that person does become infected with COVID-19, their symptoms will be less, and the length of the illness also decreases.

By the way, that is the general definition of the effectiveness of any vaccine. Effectiveness is not based on preventing you from a disease, it is based on how well

the vaccine decreases the symptoms and the length of time you are ill with the disease.

The biggest difference with the COVID-19 vaccines and other vaccines is the mRNA technology being used for the first time in a worldwide way. You have to make up your own mind. That is what makes America a great country, we are free to do just that. Just make sure you look at all sides of a story before you go into action.

(The views and opinions expressed in the submitted columns are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the position of The Tri-County Journal.)

Only three new laws take effect in Illinois starting January 1, 2021

By Sarah Mansur
Capitol News Illinois

When a new year begins in Illinois, there typically are dozens if not hundreds of new laws going into effect.

Not this year. Like so many other things in 2020, the legislative spring session was stunted by COVID-19. Once the global pandemic reached Illinois in March, the General Assembly would meet for only four more days — wrapping up the odd session during masked and so-

cially distanced gatherings at the Capitol and Bank of Springfield Center. The fall veto session was scrapped altogether.

As a result, only three new laws will take effect on Jan. 1, 2021. Here's a look at them, as well as the next increase in the minimum wage that will be applied Friday:

Insulin costs cap
Senate Bill 667 (Public Act 101-0625) amends the Illinois Insurance Code to cap out-of-pocket insu-

lin costs at \$100 per month for all patients using a state regulated insurance plan, regardless of the amount of insulin or type of covered prescription insulin drug used to fill the insured patient's prescription.

Roughly 1.3 million adults in Illinois, or 12.5 percent of the population, have diabetes, according to the legislation.

SB 667 also provides that the Illinois Department of Insurance, along with the Department of Human Services and the Department of Healthcare and Family Services, must create a public insulin pricing report that includes a summary of insulin pricing practices and public policy recommendations to control and prevent the overpricing of insulin prescriptions.

Sen. Andy Manar, D-Chicago, who was one of the bill's sponsors, said in a statement that the legislation shows Illinoisans don't have to accept costly prescriptions as the status quo.

"We can change the fact that prescription medication costs more in the United States than any place in the world. This legislation passed because people spoke up and told their story. This historic legislation doesn't become law without them and their effort," Manar said in the statement.

Use of DNA in missing person cases

House Bill 2708 (Public Act 101-0266) amends the Missing Persons Identification Act to allow law enforcement agencies to obtain a DNA sample of a missing person or a DNA reference sample from family members' DNA, once a missing person report is made.

The law also provides that law enforcement cannot retain DNA samples from family members or the missing person after the person has been located.

It also adds the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System, a national information clearinghouse for missing persons, to the list of laboratories that law enforcement agencies can work with when trying to find a missing person.

Sen. Tony Munoz, D-Chicago, who was one of the bill's sponsors, said in a news release that using the national system will hopefully help law enforcement find missing people sooner.

"Successfully finding a missing person requires law enforcement to move fast, and we want to make sure they have every tool available to do their job," Munoz said in the release.

Keeping victims' addresses confidential

House Bill 2818 (Public Act 101-0270) amends the Address Confidentiality for Victims of Domestic Violence Act by including

survivors of sexual assault and stalking in the Illinois Address Confidentiality Program (ACP), which offers survivors protection from their abusers by allowing them to acquire and use a substitute address instead of their real address.

HB 2818 allows survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking who fear for their safety to apply to the ACP through the Attorney General's Office. The ACP forwards all first-class mail and provides survivors with a substitute address for public records and documents, such as driver's licenses and state-issued identification cards.

The bill also changes the name of the law, from the Address Confidentiality for Victims of Domestic Violence Act to the Address Confidentiality for Victims of Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault or Stalking Act.

In a written statement, Illinois Attorney General Kwame Raoul said ACP is an important added layer of protection and peace of mind for survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking.

"I am committed to ensuring that survivors have access to the resources and support needed to aid their recoveries, and I encourage survivors to participate in this program that can help protect them from the individuals who perpetrated

crimes against them," Raoul said in the statement.

Minimum wage increase

The minimum wage in Illinois will rise from \$10 per hour to \$11 per hour on Jan. 1.

The Illinois General Assembly passed increases to the minimum wage in 2019 with legislation that raises the minimum wage \$1 every year until it reaches \$15 per hour in 2025.

In 2020, wage earners saw their hourly wage increase from \$8.25 to \$9.25 on Jan. 1, and to \$10 on July 1.

"We want to make sure that workers earning minimum wage are aware that the \$1 increase should be reflected in their paychecks for any time they work after the first of the year," Michael Kleminik, director of the Illinois Department of Labor, said in a news release. "While we fully expect employers will pay the new wage, we also want workers to be aware of the change."

Capitol News Illinois is a nonprofit, nonpartisan news service covering state government and distributed to more than 400 newspapers statewide. It is funded primarily by the Illinois Press Foundation and the Robert R. McCormick Foundation.

Good Riddance, Rodents.

BUSTED

Mice giving you a fright?
Call Crist Termite - they do it right!

The Sentricon difference. No more colony. No more problem.

Crist Termite & Pest Solutions, Inc.
David Crist
217-543-2890
207 N Oak Street Arthur, IL 61911

VISA, MasterCard, Discover

<https://cristtermite.com>