



MEMORIES MUSINGS

By Cheri Sims

Cheri lives, writes and gardens in Charleston.

I thought I would lose my mind the other day; I had 19 robo calls between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. A couple a day is annoying but this takes the cake and is an absolute nuisance. I listed my phone numbers with the government "Do not call" registry a couple years ago and have re-entered them each year since but someone out there just keeps selling our information and other computer scammers keep figuring out how to get around the registry.

For years I have received the same three calls, "your number is not registered with Google," "your number is not registered with Yahoo," and "your car warranty is about to expire" or "we have called you numerous times, this is the last time we will offer your warranty extension!" I have even gone so far as to click the appropriate number just to speak to a person and to ask them to take me off their list. They usually and rudely just hang up but occasionally someone will apologize and offer to take me off their

list. It does no good because whoever is selling the information sells it to many different companies and they do not care about bothering you time and time again. Not only do we have to deal with the pressures of staying home now we can't even get away from the robo calls. They have us trapped!

Recently a new version of the same call started. These recorded messages state, "don't hang up, bla, bla, bla". These people, while having learned a very annoying talent, still must be pretty stupid because when I hear "don't", I do! I have tried to adapt to some of the calls; when I answer the phone and there is a pause before someone answers, I hang up. I know if I wait past the pause that it will be one of these recordings. Sadly, I have discovered that some of my friends have cell phones and they, too, have the pause effect so I have missed a couple important calls. I have had a lot of phone experience in my business life but I have not figured out how to stop these

calls; my Mom decided she would blow a whistle in the phone when she gets one of these calls. At first she did not realize that the calls were recordings and she told me that the person just ignored her whistle blowing and kept on talking. She was pretty irritated to find out that she was blowing a whistle at a recording.

Sharper Image has a unique tool called a "spam call blocker" which sells for \$99.99 but I have not purchased one as of yet. Many cell phones have call blocking functions and I have tried them but the spammers use so many different numbers that they keep getting past my settings. Some landline companies offer free call blocking services but they are few and far between.

AARP has a very good online article with tips and tricks to stop spam and robo calls, <https://www.aarp.org/>. Here is an excerpt of the article; "Do hang up on illegal robocalls.

Do add all your numbers to the National Do Not Call Registry operated by the Federal Trade Commission (FTC). It won't stop fraudulent calls, but it will make them easier to spot because most legitimate telemarketers won't call numbers on the registry.

Do explore free and low-cost call-blocking options, such as apps and services that screen calls and

weed out spam and scams. Ask your phone service provider if it offers any such tools."

I hope you are having better luck than I am having in stopping all those annoying calls but since I just got that off my mind I decided to put up the Easter tree early this year. I have finished unpacking the last of the boxes on the back porch which left a nice space for the tree. The boxes contained the remainder of mine and my friend, Gale's, ceramic cat collection. She gave me her collection a couple years ago and I treasure them and added them to my collection. They make a very pretty display under the tree and it makes the back porch look more warm and cozy.

For now the tree just has clear lights, flowers and a few pieces of cat memorabilia on it but when it gets closer to Easter I will add the decorative eggs and bunnies and other Easter related decorations. I am not very good at crafts but I decided to purchase mini oval picture frames and when they arrive I will cut out and insert pictures of all our cats, family and friends in the frames and hang them on the tree. Hey, I have plenty of time on my hands and I can't continue to bake and eat constantly!

Well, speaking of baking, (sorry, it is my main hobby) I have a new recipe

to share. I have been craving peanut butter cookies the way my aunt Georgie made them when I was a kid but I can not find that recipe in her recipe box. I started searching depression era recipes and discovered many stories about depression recipes making a comeback this past year. I mentioned this to my Mom and she asked if I had found a recipe for Pickle Pie. Her mom canned many jars of pickles in the fall and when food was scarce in the winter she would make pickle pie. Low and behold I found a pickle pie recipe but my Mom stated the pie she remembered was made with homemade pie crust. Guess I will be making a pickle pie this week instead of cookies.

Enjoy, who knows we might like it!

Pickle Pie

Ingredients

- * 1/2 package refrigerated rolled pie dough (such as Pillsbury Pie Crusts)
- * 1 1/2 cups granulated sugar
- * 3 tablespoons corn starch, divided
- * 5 large eggs
- * 1 cup half-and-half
- * 4 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
- * 1 1/2 teaspoons lemon zest (from 1 lemon)
- * 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- * 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg

- * 1 cup sweet pickle chips, plus more for garnish
- * 1 1/2 cups whipped cream

Directions

* Preheat oven to 350°F. Form pie dough into a 9-inch pie plate, and crimp the edges.

* Whisk together sugar and two tablespoons of the cornstarch in a large bowl. Add eggs and half-and-half, and beat with an electric mixer until combined. Add butter, zest, cinnamon, and nutmeg; beat until well combined.

* Process pickles in a food processor until finely chopped, reserving 1 tablespoon for topping. Stir pickles and remaining 1 tablespoon cornstarch together until lightly coated; stir into filling. Pour filling into unbaked pie shell.

* Bake in preheated oven until lightly golden brown and filling is just set, about 1 hour to 1 hour and 10 minutes. Let cool on a wire rack until room temperature, about an hour. Refrigerate at least 2 hours until well chilled.

* Stir together whipped cream and reserved 1 tablespoon chopped pickles in a medium bowl. Top each slice with pickle cream; garnish with a pickle chip, if desired. <https://www.my-recipes.com/recipe/utah-pickle-pie>



REAL LIFE WELLNESS

By Dr. Bill Hemmer

A Hill to Die on

I have been extremely blessed in my life with great friends, family, community and religious upbringing. We live in a country where a Bill of Rights is central to our constitution. But the last 330 days have shaken all of that. It snapped us back to examine core principles each of us hold dearly...said and

unsaid. When my examination occurred, I was asked about my core principles and "What Hill was I willing to Die on?" In other words. What were my most basic truths that are your foundation for your future health, your family's health and the health of your community.

That's an easy one for me. Your body has been blessed with the God-given Innate Intelligence to heal itself if put into the right environment.

You don't have to will a cut to heal. You get over COVID-19. Your heart beats, liver filters, stomach digests and brain functions without conscious thought being used. We live in a self-healing body. We just need to learn how to get out of its way.

My core principle has been on the low end of the totem pole since the beginning of the pandemic. There has been little talk about how

diet, exercise, mindfulness and self-preservation has always been the go-to until 2020.

If you eat a non-inflammatory diet for you, your natural ability to heal is greatly increased. Chemicals that were used to fight inflammation before, can now be diverted to help you heal. This also contributes to having high quality bugs in your gut. The bugs in your gut are where your health resides. When your bugs aren't happy, the rest of you isn't going to be happy.

Your daily exercise should also be part of your personal Bill of Rights. I

use the term "exercise" very loosely. Exercise to me equals movement. We all need to move every day. Our muscles rely on movement to stay strong. Our nervous system needs movement to stay connected to all parts of the body. Your lymphatic system relies on movement to transport tissue debris out of every square inch of your body. If you don't move, your body can't take out the trash.

The final part of my personal hill is self-preservation based on mindfulness. This last year has forced me to deal with my ability to remain present in the moment, being grateful for all the gifts

God has given me and using my experience to provide new ideas and reinforce old patterns that are helpful for my patients.

I go into every situation looking to make things better, not worse. I strive to do more listening than talking. My comments will always be best case scenario, unless I state that it's not. The Golden Rule should be polished up and be followed at all times. Community must become our new source of Hope not further isolation.

So, my hill to die on is 902 South Court Street Suite 2. This is the address of my practice in Tuscola.

State directs excess vaccine from Pharmacy Partnership Program to eligible recipients in Phase 1B of the vaccination effort in Illinois

Illinois Department of Human Services deploying teams to help vaccinate long-term care residents and staff as quickly as possible

In order to increase the limited supply of vaccine to eligible recipients, the State of Illinois is working with Walgreens and CVS pharmacies to temporarily redirect approximately 97,000 coronavirus disease (COVID-19) vaccine doses that have not yet been used for the federal Pharmacy Partnership Program to providers across the state.

After this transfer, approximately 110,000 doses will still remain available for the federal effort to vaccinate long term care residents; the federal program is administering approximately 36,000

doses per week. IDPH will continue to closely monitor the program and additional doses will be directed to the program if needed or if the rate of vaccination accelerates.

Doses were intentionally allocated to the federal PPP to ensure the program would have more than enough doses to fully vaccinate all long-term care facilities. Allocations to the federal PPP were based on total number of beds in each facility and assumed full participation by residents and staff in the vaccine program. As the pharmacy partners work down

the current surplus, the State will closely monitor their progress and direct additional vaccine to the program as needed.

The doses will be used to supplement the limited supply of vaccine for the more than 3.2 million Illinoisans who qualify for Phase 1B of the state's COVID-19 Vaccination Plan.

Long-term care facilities remain a top priority in the state's COVID-19 Vaccination Plan. To supplement the federal PPP, the Illinois Department of Human Services is sending at least eight teams of nurses, volunteers

and support staff to assisted living facilities, intermediate care facilities for people with developmental disabilities and group homes. Teams are expected to be deployed and in facilities this week. Facilities that are in the final stages of the federal program have been offered the opportunity to have a state team visit their site in place of the federal teams.

"We want to make sure every dose allocated to Illinois can be used as quickly and equitably as possible," said IDPH Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike. "Long-term care residents and staff remain a top

priority and we will ensure there will be as many doses readily available to those facilities as the PPP can administer each week. The State is grateful for its partnerships with hundreds of providers and we are directing excess doses that otherwise would be sitting in the freezer three weeks from now to locations across Illinois to vaccinate our Phase 1B residents."

The federal PPP includes Walgreens and CVS pharmacies and is responsible for scheduling and administering COVID-19 vaccinations to long-term care residents and staff. The state is work-

ing closely with our partners to vaccinate our long-term care residents and staff as quickly as possible. Of the 97,000 doses being reallocated, 80,000 doses from the CVS portion of the PPP and approximately 17,000 doses from the Walgreens portion are being directed to their respective retail stores.

For information on how to make an appointment to receive the vaccine, updates on the state's plan and eligibility, and answers to frequently asked questions about the COVID-19 vaccine, go to coronavirus.illinois.gov.

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The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) helps low-

to moderate-income workers and families get a tax break. If you qualify, you can use the credit to reduce the taxes you owe - and maybe increase your refund.

You may claim the EITC if your income is low-to moderate. The amount of your credit may change if you have children, depen-

dents, are disabled or meet other criteria.

Don't be the one in five that misses this credit. If you or someone you know earned less than \$56,844 from wages, running a business or farm or from Form 1099 MISC, check it out.

It's easy to find out if you qualify. Use the EITC Assistant on irs.gov, available late January, and answer questions about yourself and other family members to see if you qualify and estimate the amount of your credit.

EITC eligibility depends on several factors, including income and family size. If you don't have a qualifying child and earned under \$15,820 (\$21,710 married filing jointly), find out if you qualify for a smaller credit, worth as

much as \$538. Don't guess about EITC eligibility use the EITC Assistant to find out if you do qualify for EITC. And, see what other tax credits are available.

It's easy to find free tax help to prepare and file your taxes. Use the VITA locator tool on [IRS.GOV](https://irs.gov) to find a volunteer site near you, such as your LifeSpan Center. Or, you can prepare and e-file your own taxes with brand-name software using IRS's Free File.

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