



## Things to do in the 'Burgs

by Robin Nicholson, Communications Committee Member

### Enjoying Our Local Trail System

A truly wonderful and very unique feature of the 'burgs is our beautiful and distinctive parks and trails system. The 'burgs are home to over 20 local parks, and many with beautiful interconnected trails. One of these trail systems starts right down the road from the front gate of Penn Estates.

At the end of Hallet Road, we see the entrance to Pinebrook Park on North Fifth Street/Route 191. At Pinebrook Park you can start a trail system that extends all the way to Dansbury Park in East Stroudsburg and beyond, and even into the legendary Appalachian Trail! You can also choose to get on the trail from Brodhead Creek Park which also has its entrance just a couple miles from Penn Estates.

Locally we have many miles of picturesque trails that weave through local parks. This trail system is dog friendly and very well maintained, flat gravel that follow beside Brodhead Creek. The trails go through the Brodhead and McMichael Creek Greenway and provide local residents a truly extraordinary park and trail system.

If you get on the trail at Pinebrook Park, you can follow it through Brodhead Creek Park, Yetter Park which runs directly into the levee Loop Trail to Dansbury Park. From the Levee Loop Trail which encircles Brodhead Creek you can touch upwards of 14 public parks, from skate parks and playgrounds, to ball fields and public swimming pools at Dansbury to quiet nature preserves.

Yetter Park is home to the popular and unique disc golf course! A fun thing to do and see if you never have.

(continued on page 3)

## President's Message

by Sandy Bonet, PEPOA President

As I look through posts on the various social media platforms that address Penn Estates issues, I see some recurring topics. In this Harmony, I thought I would talk about some of those. Here goes:

### Sheds. To Be or Not to Be?

Our Covenants, which date back to the initial development of Penn Estates by the Cranberry Hill Corporation in 1977, don't permit the building of sheds. However, over the years, the Covenants were not always enforced and some members built or bought sheds. Pennsylvania law requires that HOAs consistently enforce their community's Covenants.

Many members attended the Board meeting in the subject and it was clear that the Covenants needed to be revised to better suite the membership's needs in 2020 and beyond. The Board formed a subcommittee to review the Covenants and recommend changes to eliminate duplication, clarify the requirements and adapt the Covenants to present day needs.

The Board reviewed and revised the draft. It was further reviewed by our attorney to make certain we are in compliance with various state and federal laws that govern how HOAs must operate. That was the easy part. The hard part is that Pennsylvania law requires 67% of the members must approve the changes by signing a ballot. There are 1700 homes in Penn Estates, so 67% of that means we must collect 1139 signatures to implement the changes. By comparison, usually about 120-130 (approximately 8%) vote at the Annual Meeting to change Bylaws and elect board members.

The draft Covenants are now available on the POA website. Also, there are hard copies in the Administration office. If these options don't work for you, please call the office and we will make sure you get a copy.

### Why So Many Rules?

People choose to live in a planned community for a lot of reasons such as:

1. The security that comes with gated and controlled access;
2. Public Safety Officers that are specific to the community;
3. The opportunity to participate in the governance process by volunteering for committees or service on the Board;
4. To have access to amenities like the pools, lakes, basketball courts, fitness center and community buildings;
5. In the case of Penn Estates, for the ability to live in harmony with nature here in our beautiful forests. But you can't have any of these advantages without rules that maintain them.

So, it's puzzling why anyone would choose to live in a planned community and then be astounded that there are rules. It is rare when more than 20 people attend the monthly Board meetings. But those who do attend have voiced their opinions and, in some cases, they have effected changes in the rules and regulations or By-law revisions. Some examples include: the shed discussion that resulted in the draft Covenant revisions, changes in the speed limits, addition of more 25 mph speed limit signs and recent changes to parking regulations.

Well, that only covers two topics but that's enough for now. You can always email me at [board@pepoa.org](mailto:board@pepoa.org) if you have questions or other things you would like to address.



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## New Board Member

by Sandy Bonet, PEPOA Board President

The Board has appointed Christopher Hoffman, a 17-year resident of Penn Estates, to fill a vacant position on the Board. He is a graduate of the U.S. Military Academy with a degree in Systems Engineering and has served in a number of leadership positions as an Army Officer. He served in a management capacity with Con Edison of New York for 13 years and is currently coordinating and planning large projects for Philadelphia Electric Utility.

Chris brings a wealth of experience in operations and project management to the Board and we look forward to his service.





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## From Phyllis's Desk

by Phyllis Haase, Community Manager

### Pool Reservation System

Members in good standing and long-term tenants may reserve swim times by accessing our website and clicking on the "Pool Reservation" tab on the dashboard. Reservations are limited to one per day per account, a maximum of six (6) persons in each booking, and must be made 24 hours in advance.



A maximum of three (3) sessions can be booked by one account per week. If the reservation holder does not arrive within 15 mins of the scheduled time slot, their time is forfeited. All reservations are pending until an approval confirmation is received from Administration. A waiver is required to access the pool. Please print the waiver, sign it, and bring it with you.

Those reserving time slots must be a member in good standing. Prior to entry to the pool, the following will occur at each visit: Present 2020 amenity badge, sanitize hands, sign a waiver (a parent or guardian must sign for those under the age of 18), and temperature will be taken and logged. All entering the pool area must wear a mask unless the guest is in the pool.

Those that have short-term rental properties, the owner must book the reservation, and the short-term guest must present a seasonal pass at the gate for each attendee in addition to the above mention requirements before entry.

It is important to emphasize that each of us is responsible for our own safety and for the safety of those that are dependent on us. We cannot guarantee that even with these guidelines in place that the virus may be present, and you may be at risk. We will continue to ask each of you to do your part and to cooperate with the staff at all times.

#### Pool Reservation Recap

- 90-minute swim times with a reservation required
- Must register 24 hours in advance of swim time
- Maximum 40 guests per swim slot per pool
- Closing after every 90 minutes for cleaning
- No furniture provided
- Masks are to be worn by all as per the CDC guidelines when not in the water
- Social distancing is required
- No toys, games, or floats
- Amenity Badges required

#### Thunder and Lightning

Swimming during a thunderstorm is one of the most dangerous things you can do. Lightning regularly strikes water, and since water conducts electricity, a nearby lightning strike could kill or injure you.

We have recently experienced some members refusing to leave the pool or beach area when asked by staff due to thunder or lightning claps. I have included Rules and Regulations Article IX and X for your review:

**Article IX:** Pools will be cleared for 30 minutes upon hearing thunder. An additional 30 minutes will be added for each thunderclap. In the event of lightning, the pools, and pool deck, must be vacated and remain empty for 45 minutes after the last lightning strike.

**Article X:** Lakes will be cleared for 30 minutes upon hearing thunder. An additional 30 minutes will be added for each thunderclap. In the event of lightning, the lakes, the beach, and surrounding area must be vacated and remain empty for 45 minutes after the last lightning strike. Sailing or boating during thunderstorms is not permitted; boats must be docked at the first signs of a storm.

*We take the safety of our members very seriously. Those that choose to disregard the direction of staff may be fined and/or lose their right to use the amenity for a period of time.*

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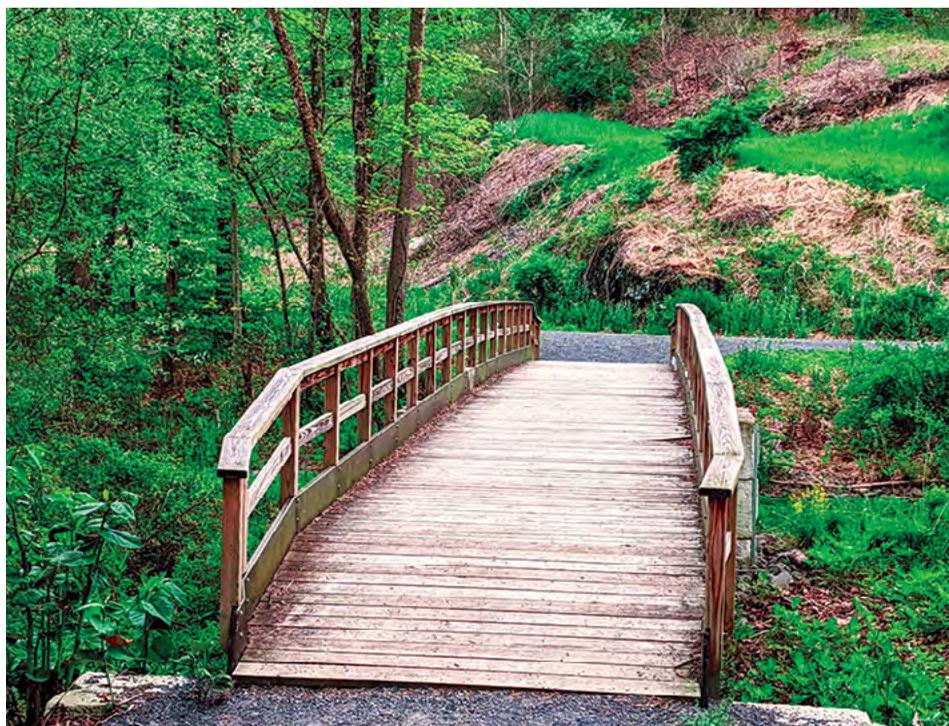
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## Enjoying Our Local Trail System

(continued from page 1)



The recreational trail system provides great exercise opportunities, and are a gratifying way to unwind and get connected with nature. Another very important aspect of our local trails is they preserve critical open space, create natural corridors for wildlife. By the development of the regional trails the Stroud Region offers an extraordinary park and trail system for residents and future generations to enjoy.

What is amazing is this incredible trail system is always growing and expanding. When the southern portion of the trail is completed it will connect with a route to neighboring Delaware Water Gap and the trail head for the Appalachian Trail which extends 2160 miles and connects to unlimited destinations. Currently hikers can access Appalachian



Trail through the Totts Gap Trailhead off Totts Road in Stroud Township.

We are so lucky that we can access this trail system, right down the road! You can take a short walk with your dog, relax and sit under the shade of a tree on a bench next to the creek, bird watch, nature study, go for a run, go biking, or go for a serious hike and venture into the Appalachian Trail!

So, get out and go exploring and enjoy our extraordinary local treasures in nature! You can download maps of the park and trail system at Stroud Region Open Space & Recreation Commission website (SROSRC.ORG) and follow on Facebook.

## Enjoying the Summer and Maintaining Harmony

by James Ruffini, Communications Committee Member

The sun is out, everyone is enjoying this beautiful summer. It's wonderful to see. Aside from the joy of seeing people basking in this bountiful weather and getting out and about, there's been a slight increase in speeding along Penn Estates Drive. The summer warmth frees us up and motivates us to want to get to where we're going *quickly*. It's totally understandable.

What we need to keep in mind though, is that there's also a lot of pedestrian traffic along Penn Estates Drive, as well as people jogging, riding bicycles, walking their dogs, and not to mention the wildlife crossing the road too. The 25 mile an hour speed limit gives you - the driver - enough reaction time to slow down and move around this traffic. It also protects you and others from a very unnecessary and tragic accident if it were to occur. Let's not have that happen.

On the subject of wildlife, it's also great and wonderful to see in Penn Estates. In order to continue and respect this balance we share coexisting with the other life - life which enriches our community - please refrain from feeding the animals to get close to them. We want to see them face to face, maybe even reach out and pet them, but they are of the wild.

As much as we desire, they are not the dogs and cats we are so used to and love. If they suddenly get scared or startled, you could be perceived as a danger, especially around their babies. A very dangerous impulse humans have, for instance, would be to take selfies when they see a Black Bear. To put things in perspective: Black Bears run at an average speed of 30 mph. A regular human runs at an average speed of 12 mph. How many seconds will it take for that bear to catch you?

So, just enjoy them from afar. We live in a vibrant and wonderful community called Penn Estates. Enjoy the weather, the life around us, and above all, be safe.



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# My Top 5 Ways to Work from Home

by Debra Celentano

Working from home isn't a new thing for me. I've done it for nearly seven years but it took a lot of time to get a routine down. If working from home seems difficult or impossible please check out the list below of my top five ways to work from home.

1. Find a dedicated area to work from. For me, I have two (and in the warmer months, three) spaces – dedicated office, a small area in my bedroom that I use when I need a change of scenery and then I use my deck in the nice weather.
2. Set your hours to work and stick with them. This was the hardest for me because it's so easy to run to the store, clean, nap, watch tv, etc. but you just need to remind yourself you couldn't do that at an office so you can't do that now.

3. Figure out how you work best. Do you like having noise playing in the background? Or complete silence? For me, I like background noise so I binge on a Netflix show I've seen before so I can have the noise but not get caught up in watching the TV. If TV isn't your thing maybe invest in noise canceling headphones and listen to music. During quarantine, SiriusXM was a life saver for me. I blasted 80s music and was reminded of easier times and got myself focused on work.
4. Having the proper desk and chair is SO important. The set up I have in my office isn't visually pretty (two mismatched desks to make an L shaped desk) but it works for me. Also, it took me years to find the right chair. One that didn't hurt my neck or shoulders. I find working from home (once you get into a groove) you tend to work for longer periods of time. This has caused some issues for me with my neck. Test your set up and switch out chairs you have in your house to see what's working for you. I've bought and gave away so many chairs and desks because I just couldn't get comfortable with them. Finally, I have a set up I love and that doesn't cause me pain.
5. Which brings me to taking breaks. Schedule them into your day. You'll be surprised how you can spend hours at your desk when you get into "the zone" and not notice the hours passing by. Make sure you use that timer on your phone or have Alexa (or whatever handy device you have) to remind you every hour or two to get up and use that time to move. Take the dog for a walk, or do a small project in your house (or break up a bigger one into smaller chunks). Your body and mind will thank you for it.

You'll eventually find what works and doesn't work but I hope the list above will help you stay on track, keep you productive and sane!

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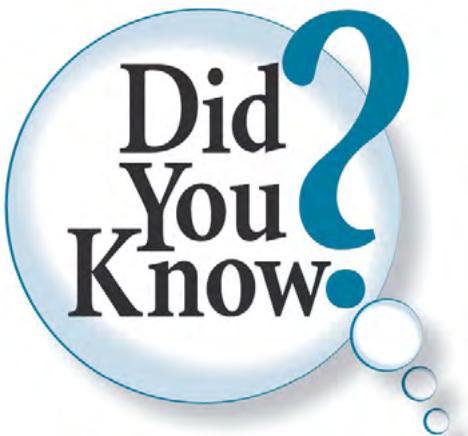
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# Yes, You Must Pay Assessments

by Phyllis Haase,  
Community Manager

Association members who pay their assessments late or not at all come up with some very interesting excuses. Here's a few of the most common, and why it's smart not to use them.

**Excuse #1: "You can't do that!"**

*"These people have no right to make me pay for common area upkeep."  
"If they think I'm paying those outrageous late fees and interest, they're crazy."*

Actually, the association not only has the authority, it has a duty to all owners to collect assessments. This authority is established in the governing documents and the state's common interest ownership statutes. When you moved into a community association, you agreed to abide by those documents—and that includes paying assessments.

**Excuse #2: "I never use the recreational facilities."**

*"I don't use the pool. I shouldn't have to pay to maintain the facility."  
"I've never been in the fitness center, and I don't plan to ever use it. Why can't you pro-rate my assessments accordingly?"*

Admittedly, recreational facilities are expensive to operate and represent a good portion of the budget. Nevertheless, the declarations specify that even if you don't use the association's amenities you're still obligated to pay for their upkeep.

Many of our residents moved into this community specifically for the recreational amenities; they're willing to pay for them because they take full advantage of the opportunities they provide. Even if you're not using some of the amenities, they make the community more desirable,

and the homes in the community more valuable.

**Excuse #3: "I paid in full."**

Sometimes the association receives a check that says "paid in full" in the memo section or how they want the payment applied. Or the check will arrive with a letter or note, stating the check is "payment in full," or it covers all charges through a specific date. Nice try.

The owner is required to pay the amount due. The Uniform Planned Community Act (UPCA) states how the payment is to be applied: first interest, penalties, legal fees, and finally assessment.

**Excuse #4: "The fees are too high."**

Assessments reflect the actual cost of maintaining all common elements in the community. If you owned your home outside the association, you would have to pay individually for all the same expenses your assessments cover. In fact, you're actually spending less on assessments because the association has bulk buying power, and you're getting more because the common areas provide amenities that you likely could not afford on your own.

**Legitimate Reasons - Not Excuses**

When association members lose their jobs or become injured or ill, management understands that arrangements need to be worked out for paying assessments. If you have a legitimate reason for falling behind and you need to work out a payment plan, please call the administration office. Management considers each situation individually and will try to accommodate your unique circumstances.

As a reminder, all accounts are to be paid in full by July 15. Automated Gate Access cards will be deactivated on July 16 or thereafter for accounts not in good standing or without an approved payment arrangement.



## Harmony

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# Why the Census is Important

by Jennifer Shukaitis, Stroud Township Supervisor

When driving down a smooth, paved road with the windows down and the sun streaming through the trees, what thoughts flow through your mind? Chances are, you are not thinking of where the funding comes from to pay for the road maintenance. But you actually play a key role in ensuring the roads are maintained.

An important source of funding comes from data extrapolated from the Census. Our community benefits the most when the census counts everyone. Federal funds, grants and support to states, counties and communities are based on population totals and breakdowns by sex, age, race and other factors. When you respond to the census, you help our community get its fair share of the more than \$675 billion per year in federal funds spent on public works such as roads, as well as schools, hospitals, fire departments and other vital programs.

How did this happen? The Founders of our fledgling nation had a bold and ambitious plan to empower the people over their new government. The plan was to count every person living in the newly created United States of America, and to use that count to determine representation in the Congress.

Previously censuses had been used mainly to tax or confiscate property or to conscript youth into military service. The genius of the Founders was taking a tool of government and making it a tool of political empowerment for the governed over their government. The Census has been taken every ten years since 1790 according to the first Article of the Constitution:

“Representatives and direct Taxes shall be apportioned among the several States which may be included within this Union, according to their respective Numbers... within every subsequent Term of ten Years...”

- The Constitution of the United States, Article I, Section 2.

What does this mean for you? The Census is more than just a snapshot of who we are and where we live. It provides vital data for business owners to decide where to set up shop. It provides funding for training and equipping our volunteer fire departments. It also indicates communities most at need for vital programming and services for families, older adults, and children.

Education and school lunch programs, Medicaid, mental health services and hospitals are all bolstered by funding allocated by the Census data. The Census strives to count everyone living in the United States and its five territories.

One person should respond for each home. That person must be at least 15 years old. They should live in the home or place of residence themselves and know general information about each person living there. The better the response rate, the better we are provided for.

You can track the response rates of the Census on the interactive map at [2020census.gov/response-rates](https://2020census.gov/response-rates) to see how your municipality and state compares to the rest. Are you up for the challenge of making this year's Census the best response rate?

**How can you help? Complete the Census.** If you are responding for your home, count everyone who was living and sleeping there most of the time as of April 1, 2020. This includes young children, foster children, roommates, and any family members or friends who are living with you, even temporarily. The only exception is if someone was staying with you temporarily on April 1 due to the COVID-19 situation; they should be counted where they usually live.

There are three easy ways to ensure your entire household is counted. Complete and mail the Census invitation mailed to your address. If you did not receive a mailed invite or you misplaced it, you can respond by calling 844-830-2020. You can also respond online at [My2020Census.gov](https://My2020Census.gov).

Challenge friends and neighbors to complete the Census as well. Then, the next time you drive down that smooth, paved road, with the windows down and the sun shining through the trees, you can smile, knowing that you played a part in making that happen.

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# A Short Story (untitled)

by Evelyn Infante, Contributor

A woman stood by her stove and dipped her wooden spoon into the boiling pot of her homemade chicken soup. The chicken, fideos, carrots, and potatoes, swirled in a circular motion as she moved the spoon. She'd risen early and gone to the market to buy the freshest ingredients. Inhaling the aroma permeating her kitchen, she was glad she did. After a few seconds, the woman lifted a spoonful of broth out of the pot and blew on it before tasting. She smiled at the perfect combination of flavors. She put down the spoon. The soup was ready.

Picking up a ladle she carefully spooned some of the soup into a plastic container, the kind used by Chinese restaurants. She made sure to portion out the right combination of meat and vegetables before securing the lid. Blowing on her fingers as she wrapped the hot container in a brown paper bag, she then shoved it into another paper bag. In her haste, she almost forgot to pack a soup spoon and a couple of napkins. Satisfied, she set her package aside and closed the cover on the pot still sitting on the stove. Although she hadn't eaten anything that day, she did not want to take the time to sit down to a bowl of soup. She was anxious to visit her daughter and reasoned when she returned home the soup would be cool enough for her to eat.

On the bus, this mother, now a grandmother, had to move her package from one leg to the other, hoping the bus driver would hurry so she wouldn't get a burn through her summer slacks. Finally, the bus stopped a block away from Woman's Hospital. Careful not to drop the bag, she walked slowly to the entrance, inquired at the front desk for the correct floor and proceeded to the elevators.

When she found the room, she entered wearing a big smile. Setting the bag on the pull-out tray over the bed, she bent over her daughter and gave her a big hug and kiss. She wanted to know how she was feeling. Her daughter assured her she felt good. Her mother smiled again and turned toward the package. She proudly

took the container out of its wrappings, opened the lid, and retrieved the spoon ready for the new mother to eat her special soup. She admonished her daughter needed to regain her strength after childbirth and soup was a good way to kick start her recovery. But her daughter wasn't hungry and promised to eat it later. Her mother's face registered no visible disappointment.

Perhaps because she was exhausted from long hours of labor, still euphoric at the sight of her beautiful baby, certainly wrapped up in her own world, the new mother could not have conceived the joy a taste of chicken soup would have given her mother. Interrupted by the nurse who brought in the baby, grandma spent the next hour doting over her granddaughter. But every once in a while she urged for her daughter to eat the soup and continued to lecture her about the toll childbirth has on a woman's body and the importance of nutrition. The young mother never did eat that soup, never even ate a spoonful to satisfy her mother. Frankly, she was annoyed at the lecture.

Many years later, the memory of that chicken soup popped into the now middle-aged daughter. She imagined the chicken soup was thrown away by one of the nurses; the soup her mother made especially for her, filled with love, thrown away like garbage. How sad her mother must have felt riding the bus home after leaving the hospital. The thought brought tears to her eyes.

Twenty-five years after her mother's death, the daughter, now a grandmother, thinks of all the little things her mom did for her, things taken for granted, memories resurrected in her later, wiser, contemplative years. She was certain her mother forgave her but with all her heart, she wishes she would have eaten the soup.

*Editor's Note: Penn Estates resident Evelyn Infante, when not busy running her business, writing her crime novel or tending to her large family, occasionally writes a short story. I love her stories. This one is a very thinly veiled tale of her mother visiting her after her first child was born. I hope you enjoy it.*



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## Cristina Primrose Team



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### Did you know:

- 24 homes are presently for sale in Penn Estates.
- 97 homes were sold in 2019.
- The highest-priced home sold for \$319,000 year to date.  
(Information provided through Pocono Mountain Assoc. of Realtors MLS Service)
- 93% of buyers start their search on the Internet.
- The average age of today's buyer is 33 years old.

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# Out & About

## Things to Do and See in the Poconos

by Sharon Kennedy, Communications Committee Member

Summer is truly here. Really? Really! I have COVID brain. Put those together and I feel out of sorts, unsure of the season or day of the week. I have never waited until June to change over my snow tires to my all season tires before! Are you similarly disoriented? Who would ever have thought that we would need to wear masks everywhere, think twice before going anywhere, or schedule a time to be at the pool!

The reality of the pandemic struck home again when I was researching events for this article. Annual event after annual event was listed as canceled for 2020. The Poconos without fairs, carnivals, music festivals and craft festivals just doesn't feel real. I did find some events that are still tentatively scheduled, but check before you go.

As I write this, the numbers are rising again. Some states are reinstating quarantines when entering their states. Residents of the United States are not welcome to travel to many countries due to our numbers of infection. Most every cloud has some sort of silver lining. Covid isolation and cancellations have led to some free live streaming events available to us all.

Here are some of the other upcoming events around the area. As always, I take my information from internet sites. Please call to confirm dates and times and costs. Of course, there is a delay between writing this article and the publication of the Harmony. You may want to check the newspapers, and internet for other events.

There are some outdoor activities that are still happening throughout the area. Quiet Valley Living Historical Farm reopened in time for the July 4th weekend. Some of their annual events are canceled but others are still scheduled. Their Heritage Craft Festival is on August 8th and their Children's Day is August 15th. They are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from 10 to 4.

StroudFest is still scheduled for September 5th from 11 to 6. Jim Thorpe's Independent Film Fest is still scheduled for September 10 to 13. Tannersville bog walk apparently is still offered on Wednesdays from 10-12:30. The walk costs \$6 for adults and \$4 for children under 12.

PEEC has reopened for their outdoor programs. Check their schedule of events on line. They offer everything from fishing for beginners to quilt camp, and even a virtual scavenger hunt.

Shawnee is offering their usual concert series on Tuesday nights. Folks that usually run the Music in the Mountains series came up with a creative solution during the pandemic. Music in the Mountains will be live streamed as "Silent Symphony" at Skytop on August 1st. You can hang out at Skytop and listen on your headphones or just listen from your own deck. It is free this year.

Are you a runner? Master the Mountain run is on August 8th at Shawnee. On August 15th is Savage Run, an obstacle run, in Albrightsville. Outdoor activities are probably the safest activities during the pandemic, so you might check out rafting and biking events. For example, the Twin Trails Ride of 30 miles will be held on a variety of dates (8/14, 9/27, 10/9, 11/7). The cost is \$54.99 but includes equipment, transportation, and guide. Would you prefer to not be powered by your own muscles? The Stourbridge line offers a variety of train rides. For example, on Fridays they offer a 2 hour round trip train ride with an ice cream sundae stop.

The safe option is to just stay home! I have enjoyed free live streaming of Broadway plays (such as the King and I) and opera from the Met. Check out metopera.org for opera live streaming. You can enjoy free chamber music from the Lincoln Center at chambermusicsociety.org. T

here are free events that you can find from the following websites: billboard.com, grammy.com, and eventbrite.com. Some of those events are free for live streaming and are later available for free through YouTube, such as DC Jazz Festival. Note that on Eventbrite, some events cost but some have you register as though they cost, and when you press "register", the cost is 0.

Have fun! Stay safe. Stay well.



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# August and September Observances (and Request for Contributing Articles)

by Sharon Kennedy, Communications Committee member

The events of the last few months have brought to our society's awareness that we truly are "all in this together". We cannot fight the pandemic one geographic area at a time, for we truly are all connected. My mask and caution contribute to your safety and yours contribute to my health and well-being. We cannot truly heal the economy unless we can control the pandemic. We cannot truly move forward as a country unless we move forward together, without leaving any person or group of people behind.

We cannot truly honor the Declaration of Independence's protection of "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" if we do not change the systemic biases that take that from any of our citizens. And, I believe that we cannot come together without truly honoring and respecting our differences, along with the depth and richness that those differences bring to us all.

One place that our richness is made manifest is in the awareness days and months that remind us of important cultural, religious and historical dates. To begin honoring those important dates, I am listing some of the awareness days and months that will be occurring during the months of this issue of Harmony.

## August is American Indian Heritage Month

- August 9 International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples
- August 12 Krishna Jayanti celebrating Krishna's birthday (Hindu)
- August 20 Muharram - the beginning of the Islamic liturgical year and the migration of Muhammad from Mecca to Medina (Islam)
- August 21 Senior Citizen's Day
- August 23 International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition

- August 26 Women's Equality Day (1920 passage of 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution)

## September is Suicide Awareness Month and National Recovery Month

- September 5 International Day of Charity
- September 7 Labor Day
- September 11 Remembrance of terrorist attacks in 2001
- September 15 National Hispanic Heritage Month (through Oct 15)
- September 17 Constitution and Citizenship Day
- Sept. 19 & 20 Rosh Hashannah celebrating the New Year and first of High Holy Days (Jewish)
- September 22 Autumnal Equinox
- September 23 Bi+ Visibility Day
- September 28 Yom Kippur, Day of Atonement (Jewish)

I wish we had room to write a bit about each of these special remembrances. For now, I hope that you will google some of them to increase your personal awareness beyond just a name or blurb. I am also asking that if any future awareness days have special meaning to you that you write something about that special day or month for the corresponding Harmony issue and submit it to pepoharmony@gmail.com.

There would be so much texture and richness if a community member who is Latina or Latino would write about family traditions for Cinco De Mayo, or for someone of the Jewish faith to write about Yom Kippur traditions, or someone who is Black to write about a book that has touched you or how it was to not be represented in school history books or about a historical person that has special meaning for you. As we said in the 1960's, "the personal is political."

Remember that the Harmony comes out every two months and the deadline for submission is a month earlier. For example, the deadline for August/September was July 7.



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# Stargazing Without a Telescope

by Jennifer Nicholson- Communications Committee Member

I am no astronomer, amateur or otherwise. But I love stargazing and I love all things Space related. You don't have to have expensive equipment or years or training to enjoy the skies above, although, it is rather addictive and you may find yourself wanting to delve deeper. For now we will talk about how you can stargaze and be able to identify what you are seeing with just a cell phone.

After routinely stargazing from my back porch, I began to wonder. What is that really bright thing? What was that thing that just glided by? Wonder brought me to my phone and getting some cool apps to help me identify what I am seeing.



First off, if want to be able to identify stars and planets with the naked eye then there are tons of cool astronomy apps that do just that. Type in "astronomy" and hundreds of apps like Skyview, Star Guide, Star and Planet Finder, Night Sky and Star Tracker will pop up. These are wonderful apps that allow you to point your phone in any direction in the sky and it will give you a labelled picture on screen of what you are seeing.

Many of these apps will identify stars, planets, nebulas and constellations. Constellations are something that I was never very good at so I am learning a lot through repetition on how to identify constellations. There are also specific apps on the planets alone that will help you identify planets with the naked eye and also give you detailed information about the planets.

When you stargaze for just a night or two, you will start to notice things that move. We are all familiar with "shooting stars" (which are not stars at all but just meteoroids burning up from friction as the travel at high speed into our atmosphere) and you will definitely see them if you give a chance. But, you will notice other things that move as well. Most glide by silently at a steady pace. Sometimes trains of these silent lights one after the other will glide by for 5 minutes at a pop. What are these guys?

Most likely, they are satellites. The Earth is surrounded by over 5000 satellites with over 2000 currently operational. More are being launched almost every day. Many satellites are observable with the naked eye. There are apps that catalog and track all of the satellites surrounding Earth. Apps like Orbit will show a picture of the globe with all of the satellites surrounding it and which ones are observable overhead at any given moment and tell you the names of each satellite.

Apps like PulseSat get a little more detailed and divide satellites into groups (weather, communications etc) and allow you to search their exact location at any moment along with detailed stats (such as launch date, latitude, longitude, altitude etc) about the satellite. There are also specific apps like, Find Starlink, which specifically track Elon Musk's Starlink satellites (identifiable by a long train of up to 60 satellites gliding by one after the other) or apps like Satellite Tracker, which despite the name tracks specifically the International Space Station. I love setting reminders to watch Starlink or the ISS go by.

Lastly, Flightradar24 is one app that I love that you can use day or night to identify moving objects in the skies above. Flightradar24 tracks all aircraft in the sky and gives up to the second information on their location (via visual map), it tells you what kind of plane it is, where it took off and where its landing with times for each, altitude, speed etc. It a great app if a loved one is on a flight and you want to keep tabs on where they are.

Armed with all these apps you should be an expert star/planet/satellite/plane gazer in no time. If you happen to observe anything moving up there that is not identified by these apps, let me know...because I'm interested in those guys too.

# Real Estate Pulse

by Lisa M. Sanderson, Contributor

## Our Two-faced Real Estate Market

Like many areas across the country, we are experiencing unprecedented demand for homes here in Monroe County and surrounding areas of the Poconos. In the first week of July, for instance, the Pocono Mountains Association of REALTORS reported 122 new sales contracts in our County, while only 80 new listings came on the market.

This demand is driven by several factors, including historic-low interest rates, pent up demand from the past couple of years of low inventory, and pandemic driven movement of those in or near cities looking for some space and fresh air. Similar to the influx we saw after the 9/11 tragedy happened, people in New York, as well as those in Philadelphia and the Lehigh Valley, have their eyes on the Poconos as their escape plan.

While this is great news for homeowners and their equity, it stands in stark contrast with the realities being faced by many families and workers in our local area and everywhere who find themselves without jobs and with greatly reduced income. The hospitality & service industry, for instance, which is a huge portion of our employment base here in the Poconos, has taken a huge hit because of the pandemic shut downs. All of this has widened the affordability gap for local residents, making finding homes to buy or rent almost impossible as they compete with the monied folks coming in to the area.

There is help available for those having problems making their rent or mortgage payments. Visit the PA Housing Finance Agency at phfa.org for links and resources that could help you. Additionally, with the market being what it is, a call to your favorite local Realtor may be in order to help you evaluate options for selling or moving.

## Penn Estates Home Sale Data

Information has been gathered from the Pocono Mountains Association of REALTORS' Multiple Listing Service on July 8, 2020.

	Active Listings	Pending Sales	Closed YTD	Closed 2019
Total	29	29	34	97
Foreclosures	2	1	5	9
Short Sales	0	0	0	0
Low List/Sold \$	89,900	74,900	55,801	50,000
High List/Sold \$	390,000	282,000	319,000	260,000
Avg. List/Sold \$	202,958	166,145	152,175	149,315

\*Pending Sales reflects list prices. Sold information is not available until the sale is final.

About the Author: Lisa Sanderson is a Past President of the PEPOA Board of Directors, founder of the unofficial Living in Penn Estates Facebook Group, and a 28-year veteran of the real estate industry. She is a full-time Associate Broker with Keller Williams Real Estate in Stroudsburg. Comments and questions are welcome at poconolisa@gmail.com

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# Volunteering for Penn Estates – A Gift to Yourself

by **Stephanie Joy Lewis, Contributor**

Did you know that Penn Estates has a large handful of committees made up of volunteers, that help our community run a little better allowing for greater quality of Penn Estate's life to homeowners, residents and visitors?

## Time-Friendly Volunteering Opportunities

With many of us busy working or raising our families, we often feel we have too scarce time to donate personal hours to volunteer. However, did you know that most Committee volunteering only requires about two hours of volunteering time per month (with some limited exceptions)? I lived here many years before I tested the waters with volunteering, and the rewards have been well worth taking the leap. I have to acknowledge that I wish I had volunteered sooner.

## Give a Little; Get a Lot Back

Volunteering for Penn Estates' various committees can help you "make friends, learn new skills, advance your career, and even feel happier and healthier."<sup>(1)</sup> For those that are new to the community, particularly in this day of pandemic restrictions, volunteering can provide a great way to meet new people while remaining safely within guidelines. It also naturally keeps you informed of community happenings and resources that you may not otherwise have learned of, including expanding your support network within the community.

For those retired or otherwise not working, as well as those working full time but with a little extra time, volunteering is a great way to share your experience and skills, in a manner that specifically helps the community you live in. Many a friendship is made between committee members, a friendship grown from the camaraderie that can easily develop when working together on any given project.

## Opportunity for Young Adults

For young adults in the community, volunteering provides the opportunity to practice and develop their social skills in an environment where they regularly meet with a group of people with the common interest in the Committee activities. It is a fantastic training ground for a first serious job. Being a member of a volunteer-based Committee can also provide a great addition to one's resume, particularly because it provides experience in teamwork and effective communication as well as problem solving, project planning, task management and organization. Employers often prefer applicants who are productively active in their communities and specifically, those who volunteer.<sup>(2)</sup>

## Diversity of Members

In Penn Estates, the volunteer-run Committees are filled with all kinds of folks, from seniors to youngsters, from career professionals to stay-at-home parents, including those with disabilities and without. Many enjoy volunteering for a Committee (or three) because it allows them to contribute their area of experience or interest to an area in the community where it is needed. They appreciate that their volunteer contributions allow the community to avoid outsourcing some of these needs and thereby helping to keep HOA dues down.

## Committees and Volunteers

Among Penn Estate's several committees are Communications, Safety, Recreation, Appeals, Architectural Review Board, Election, and Finance. More information about each one can be obtained at the Administration Office. Here are what a few volunteers have shared about their volunteering experience:

A very visible committee that most of us have enjoyed the fruits of is the Recreation Committee. It may also be the committee with the most visible action for those that want more involvement. One long term volunteer of the Recreation Committee explained her decision like this: "When the kids and I first moved here, we didn't know anyone but Lisa. I thought volunteering for the Recreation Committee would be a fun way to meet people. I'm still volunteering because I enjoy the events and want to be a part of them." *Debbie Weatherford, 7/3/2020.* Debbie is also a member of the Elections Committee.

Another important committee for the residents of Penn Estates is the Architectural Review Board (ARB). "When we purchased our home 16 years ago, our Realtor, Lisa Sanderson shared her love for Penn Estates with us. Lisa stressed to us the importance of being involved. At the first PEPOA meeting we attended, I was invited by Norm Damron to join ARB. I have served on various committees

through my time living here, including ARB, Appeals, Communications, Community Day, Long Range Planning and Recreation. My all-time favorite is the ARB – here I use my construction engineering knowledge while helping homeowners improve their properties." *Nancy Padilla, 7/3/2020.*

One Appeals Committee volunteer explained it this way: "I volunteered because it made me feel I had something to contribute to the community I enjoy being a part of. Also, it was a way to meet people and, believe me, I've met some great people. I serve on the Appeals Committee and in the past served on the BRG committee." *Barbara Sweeney, 7.5.2020.*

Another volunteer utilized the opportunity to learn more about how her community, where she owns property, operates. She states, "I volunteer because I wanted to understand the Rules, Bylaws and Covenants. Just reading them did not give me a full understanding. I knew sitting on the sidelines and complaining about things I didn't understand would get me nowhere. I also knew that to be part of the change, I had to volunteer." *Bettyanne Nevil, 7/6/2020.*

A very honorable mention must go to the Communications Committee. This Harmony newspaper we look forward to every couple of months is put together by the Communications Committee, an instrumental volunteer-led group that provides for writer contributors and gathers the content articles we read each month.

There are so many good reasons to volunteer right here in Penn Estates.<sup>(3)</sup> Volunteering for the Penn Estates community can create positive change within ourselves as well as fuel positive changes and growth for the quality of life here in Penn Estates.

(1) <https://www.helpguide.org/articles/healthy-living/volunteering-and-its-surprising-benefits.htm>

(2) <https://fortune.com/2016/06/28/volunteer-work-resume/>

(3) Many volunteering positions on a committee require that you're a resident, while a short list of positions require being a deeded property owner and resident.

## Breathing When Exercising

by **Yolanda Sarrabo, CPT NASM, BCS**

The outbreak of COVID-19 has addressed the concerns of lung capacity and how important each breath taken is vital for everyone, but more so for the many struggling with the likes of asthma, emphysema, and lung cancer. Now with the onset of wearing masks it can be a struggle for some to grasp.

With summer in full bloom and the very hot days ahead, what are some safe tips to consider for the many who are safely considering exercising from their homes and outdoors?

**Tip 1- Stance** Before starting any exercise it's always recommended to start with warm ups to get your body acclimated with the exercise routine to follow. Always start with taking deep breaths while standing or sitting straight. Fill the lungs with the oxygen needed to move forward with your exercise routine.

**Tip 2- Mask no Mask** Wearing a face mask whether its heavy or light fabric is not suggested per the (W.H.O- World Health Organization); limiting breathing capacity is not the goal when working out. Again, you need full oxygen to breathe comfortably. Now, when taking a slow walk then perhaps that is okay when it involves mask wearing. However, using the proper social distance guidelines will protect you and your fellow man/woman.

**Tip 3- Mindful Intake** Breathing in general is a mechanical process in which our body (for most) does automatically. When we exercise we use a lot of oxygen as our bodies rely on this oxygen to get us through without collapsing. Sometimes, it can depend on the type of workout that may depend on the correct intake of a breath. Low impact will be slow but steady inhale (1,2) exhale (1,2); whereas high intensified exercises or heavy weights may need deeper breaths to fill the lungs while releasing the air.

Lastly, never hold your breath when exercising as it can lead to raising your blood pressure, which may lead to becoming lightheaded and possibly unconsciousness. Breathe on!

*Yolanda Sarrabo is principal at Chronic Fitness Personal Training Boutique Service and a regular contributor. [www.chronicfitnessinc.com](http://www.chronicfitnessinc.com)*

# Michael's Kitchen

by Michael J. Tyrrell, Communications Committee Member

Once the warm weather arrives, we want to get back on the wagon as far as what we eat. Sometimes we try and make sudden changes to our diet that are too radical. A good strategy is to concentrate on easy family dinners that are satisfying but reasonably healthful and well balanced. Here are a few recipes that I developed in the past that I think are a good start. If anyone gives these a try, take a photo and we can include in the next *Harmony*; email to pepoharmony@gmail.com

## Grilled Chicken Francese-Style

[4 servings]

1½ lbs thinly sliced chicken cutlets  
 1½ tsp lemon pepper  
 ½ lb prepared polenta, cut into 1/2-inch-thick slices  
 1 tbsp olive oil  
 3 tbsp chopped shallots  
 ½ cup dry white wine  
 1 tbsp all purpose flour  
 1 cup chicken broth  
 2 tbsp lemon juice  
 2 tbsp capers  
 2 tbsp chopped parsley  
 ¼ tsp salt  
 ½ tsp salt  
 2 tbsp unsalted butter  
 Roasted carrots (optional)

1. Heat a lightly greased grill pan over medium-high heat
2. Season the chicken with the lemon pepper. Grill 3 minutes per side or until internal temperature registers 160° on an instant read thermometer. Remove to a plate and keep warm. Grill polenta slices 1 to 2 minutes per side until grill marks form. Set aside.
3. In a medium-size saucepan, heat oil over medium-high heat. Add shallot and cook 3 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add wine and simmer 1 minute. Stir together flour and broth and add to saucepan; simmer 2 minutes, until thickened. Stir in lemon juice, capers, parsley, salt and pepper. Whisk in butter.
4. Serve chicken with sauce and grilled polenta. Serve with roasted carrots.

## Cheeseburger-Zucchini Pie

[4 to 6 servings]

¾ lb lean ground beef  
 1 medium onion, chopped  
 1 medium zucchini, chopped  
 ½ tsp salt  
 ¼ tsp lack pepper  
 1 cup shredded Italian blend cheeseburger  
 ½ cup heart-healthy reduced-fat biscuit mix (such as Bisquick)  
 1 cup milk  
 2 eggs  
 Green salad, if desired  
 Steamed broccoli, if desired

1. Heat oven to 400°. Spray a 9-inch pie plate with non-stick cooking spray.
2. Spray a large non-stick skillet with non-stick cooking spray; heat over medium-high heat. Crumble in ground beef. Stir in onion and zucchini and cook for 6 minutes, stirring occasionally. Season with salt and pepper.
3. Spread beef mixture into the prepared 9-inch pie plate. Sprinkle the cheese over the top.
4. In a medium-size bowl, whisk together biscuit mix, milk and eggs until smooth. Pour mixture over beef mixture.
5. Bake at 400° for 25 minutes or until a knife inserted in the center comes out clean. Allow to cool for 10 minutes. Cut into 6 wedges and serve with a green salad and steamed broccoli, if desired.

## Pork Teriyaki

[4 servings]

2 tbsp teriyaki sauce  
 4 garlic cloves, chopped  
 juice and zest of 1 lime  
 1 lb pork tenderloin

### Sauce

1 can (14½ oz) chicken broth  
 3 tbsp teriyaki sauce  
 4 tsp cornstarch  
 1 tsp sugar  
 ¾ tsp hot sauce

### Vegetables

2 tbsp vegetable oil  
 1 large onion, peeled and thinly sliced  
 1 red sweet pepper, seeded and thinly sliced  
 8 oz sliced mushrooms  
 4 scallions, trimmed and cut into 1-inch pieces  
 12 oz microwave ready green beans, cooked following package instructions  
 3 cups cooked brown rice

1. **Pork.** In a large zip-top bag, combine teriyaki sauce, garlic, lime juice and zest. Add pork and marinate in refrigerator for 2 hours.
2. **Sauce.** In a small bowl, combine chicken broth, teriyaki sauce, cornstarch, sugar and hot sauce. Set aside.
3. **Vegetables & Pork.** Remove pork from marinade; discard marinade. Cut pork into ½-inch slices. Heat 1 tbsp oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Stir-fry for 3 minutes. Remove from skillet and keep warm.
4. Add remaining tbsp oil to skillet. Add onion and cook 4 minutes; stir in red pepper, mushrooms and scallions. Cook 3 minutes. Stir in the green beans, broth mixture and pork. Simmer 2 minutes until thickened.
5. Serve pork over cooked rice.

## Lightened-Up Penne with Vodka Sauce & Vegetables

[6 servings]

12 ounces Multigrain Penne  
 1 lb zucchini, cut into 1/2-inch quarter moons  
 1 cup frozen peas  
 8 cups baby spinach  
 1 tbsp olive oil  
 1 small onion, finely chopped  
 6oz Canadian Bacon, chopped  
 ½ cup vodka  
 15 oz can no-salt added diced tomatoes  
 8 oz can no-salt added tomato sauce  
 ½ tsp salt  
 ½ tsp red pepper flakes  
 ½ cup fat-free half and half  
 ½ cup shredded Parmesan cheese

1. Bring a large pot of lightly salted water to a boil. Add penne and cook following package directions, about 11 minutes. Add zucchini and peas during last 3 minutes. Stir in spinach. Drain and place back into the pot.
2. Meanwhile heat oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add onion and cook 5 minutes, stirring occasionally; add Canadian Bacon and vodka and cook 1 minute. Stir in diced tomatoes, tomato sauce, salt and red pepper. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer, uncovered, for 10 minutes.
3. Stir in half and half and ¼ cup of the cheese. Toss with pasta and let stand 10 minutes. Stir and spoon into serving bowl and top with remaining cheese.

# Nature's Wonderland - Boulder Field

by Ting Qian & Ning Wang, Contributors



If you want to get out of the house for a short day trip, we recommend Hickory Run State Park. It's about 50-minutes' drive - not too far. We recently explored this park and found it amazing. It's famous for an 18-acre bed of rocks known as Boulder Field, a natural national landmark from the ice age 2000 years ago.

From afar, you may feel like you're about to see a lake. When you get closer, you realize it's a lake entirely made out of rocks and boulders - no water. At 400 ft wide and 1800 ft in length, Boulder Field has rocks ranging in size from under 18 inches to more than 25 feet in length, all in different shapes, colors and textures.

Why are there no plants growing in the middle of a giant field? Possibly a perfect confluence of natural factors. We learned that the Boulder Field is slightly lower than the surrounding area. Over time when the ground became deeply frozen every winter, a permafrost formed, killing off all the trees and leaving just

the bedrock. In the summers, water from the mile-high glacier above cascaded into the field and washed away any sand or soil. This is just one of many theories from geologists. The place is unique for its size and flatness. It attracts geologists from all over the world to come and visit the site.

Wear sneakers and bring water. Jumping from rock to rock makes you feel like you're practicing Shaolin Kung Fu. You can sit on a rock or lean back on a tall bunch of them, day dreaming or simply watching the time go. Enjoy this vast natural surrounding and let your imagination soar. You may choose to walk or climb on the rocks for a unique experience while practicing balancing.



It's a great fun place for families and kids. The Boulder Field is located in Lake Harmony, a 38-mile drive from Penn Estates. The parking lot is very close to the entrance of the field. There are many hiking trails in the park. If you have extra time, explore Hawkfalls, and Hickory Run Lake in the surrounding area.

Have fun while staying safe!

## Safety Basics for Bicycling

*(very basics from one mom to her kids)  
(not an expert and not expert advice!)*

### TRAVELING ON RIGHT SIDE

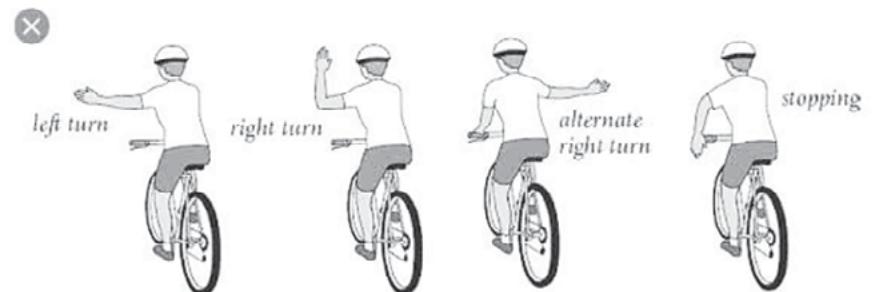
- Ride bike on the **RIGHT SIDE** of the road, like a car – travelling **WITH** traffic, **NOT AGAINST** traffic. Try to stay far to the right side of your lane, but not going off the road unsafely.
- When in doubt or concern, or if you need a rest, pull **OFF** the road to the right shoulder.

### INTERSECTION AWARENESS

- Always look ahead to determine where your next intersection is, so you are **AWARE**. When you approach it, be careful about intersecting (crossing) vehicles that may not abide by **THEIR** stop signs.
- You may want to start by stopping before **ANY** intersecting roadway, for now, even if you do not have a traffic sign. Looking and then proceeding when safe.
- **AWARENESS TIP:** Always know ahead of time which intersection has a **STOP SIGN** for you. Start to brake **WELL BEFORE** the stop sign. Look all "10 ways" ☺ before safely proceeding. Make sure after you turn you are, again, on the **RIGHT** side of the road way.

### MAKING TURNS

- You **MUST** use a signal. Because (if) your bike does **NOT** have electric light up signals, you must use a hand signal of your own. This is **YOUR** way of **COMMUNICATING WITH OTHERS** on the road, so they know where you are going and then can avoid hitting you.



### BRAKING

- Brake with **CARE** and forward thinking! Last minute quick braking can result in getting thrown from your bike. Always know ahead of time, to the extent possible, when you will need to start to break for an intersection or traffic signage.
- **AWARENESS TIP:** Always be **AWARE** of the sides of the road you are on, particularly the right side. Keep your mind's eye on whether this roadway side up ahead would be safe to steer into if you should need to get off of the roadway for **SAFETY** in an **EMERGENCY**. And knowing **WHAT** parts of the sides are **NOT** good for steering off into is also super important, because you will want to most consciously travel down that part of the road with this limitation in mind.



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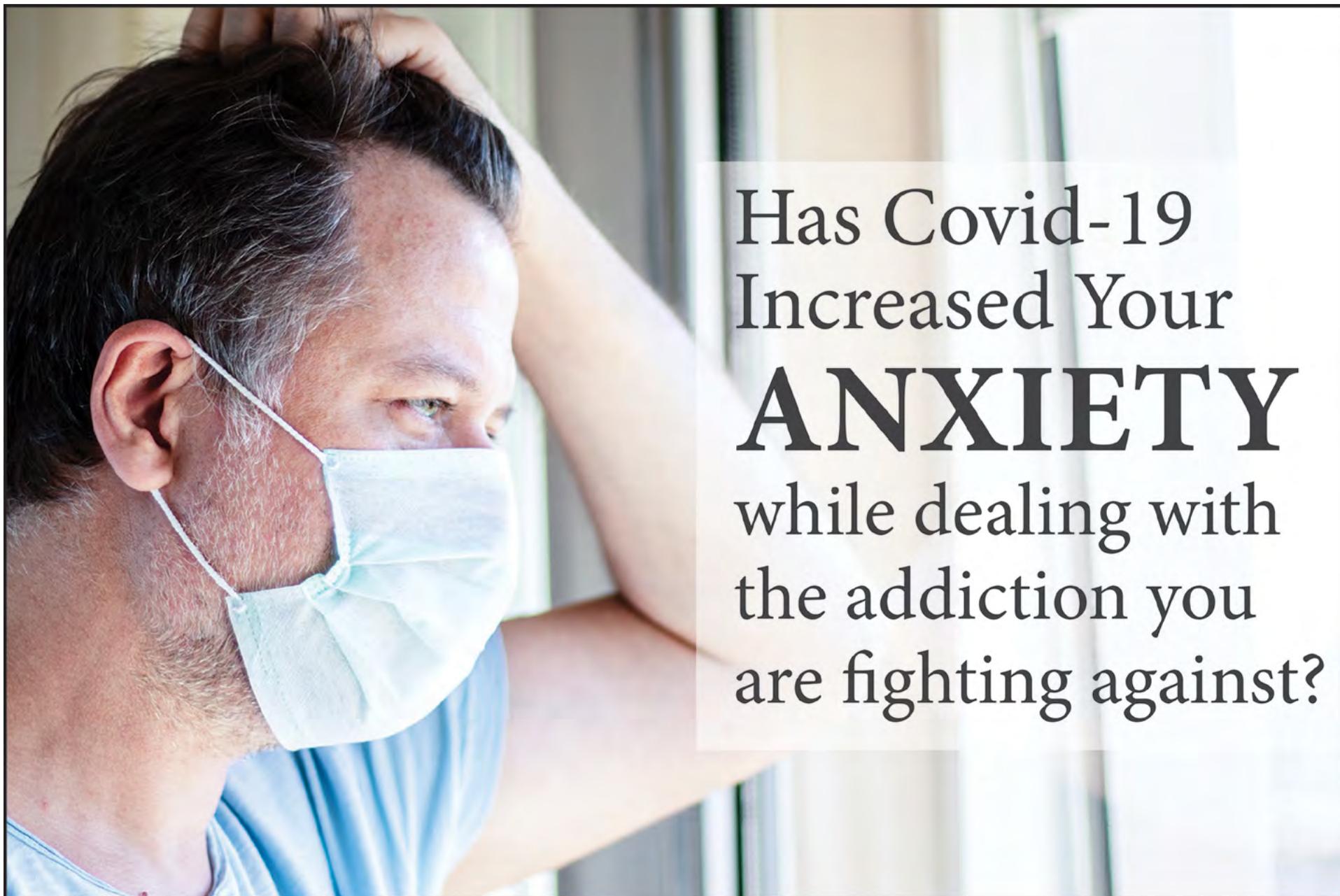
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