

Artist shows 'Silver Lining' in ND quarantine stories



Pieper Fleck Bloomquist works on her Bonadsmålning painting. Photos special to The Forum

By John Lamb
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In July, Taylor Swift surprised fans by releasing an unannounced album. Much of the press around the album focused on the stripped-down sounds as a reflection of her writing and recording in isolation during the coronavirus pandemic.

Tay Tay isn't the only artist still creating during a global health crisis. A Grand Forks painter, Pieper Fleck Bloomquist, turned to a centuries-old artform to share stories of life around North Dakota during COVID-19.

"Silver Linings" was commissioned by the North Dakota Council on the Arts to show how people around the state connected in isolation.

A painting about isolation during a pandemic may seem like dreary material, but Bloomquist wanted to make something that reflected "the positive emotional outcomes of the quarantine." "During this time, many people experienced a

... people going above and beyond to make this situation better for others — there were so, so many stories.

PIEPER FLECK BLOOMQUIST, painter

shifting in priorities as we were forced to face our own mortalities, reexamine how we spend our time and money, and isolate from our family, friends, work and social environments," she wrote in a piece that accompanies and helps explain "Silver Linings."

The work is created in the traditional southern Swedish folk art style Bonadsmålning, a type of storyboarding, often used to tell biblical tales or commemorate historical events. The piece is typically broken into panels with each frame depicting a scene with a decorative script running horizontally over the pictures, adding context.

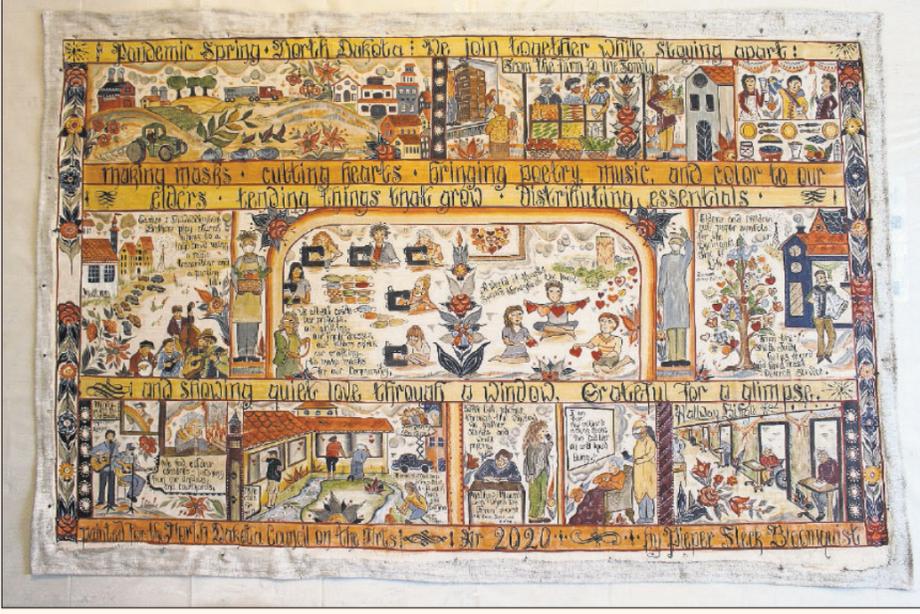
The finished product looks like a large — 37-by-58-inch — cross between a comic book and a quilt as it takes a colorful look at life from farm to table and from church services to hallway bingo in retirement communities.

"When I started looking for examples of silver linings — people going above and beyond to make this situation better for others — there were so, so many stories," she says from her home. "The more I talked to my friends and neighbors, the more fantastic examples I gathered. Artists and musicians all over our country were stepping up to the plate to make this world a little bit brighter."

SILVER LINING: Page B2



Above: Pieper Fleck Bloomquist's painting depicts how North Dakota artists shifted focus during the coronavirus outbreak. Right: Bloomquist's painting depicts some of the brighter stories in North Dakota during the coronavirus outbreak.



Caution fatigue | Experts weigh in on why we can become 'calloused to the threat' of COVID-19

By Melinda Lavine
Forum News Service

DULUTH — Did you wear gloves to the grocery store, count to 20 while washing your hands and self-quarantine for two weeks after coughing, once?

If that was you a couple months ago, and today, you're sliding on hand hygiene and physical distancing, you may be experiencing caution fatigue.

How fear works

The amygdala, or body's fear system, responds to threats in our environment.

Caution fatigue occurs when the body's response to that perceived threat starts to fade or diminish; or our response loses its urgency, said Dr. Steven Sutherland at Essentia Health in Duluth.

It's alarming when you hear about the threat of



Photo illustration by Gary Meader / Forum News Service

coronavirus. You take it seriously. With repeated exposure, it becomes normalized, less sensationalized, and you don't respond to it as strongly with safety behaviors.

Physiologically, it's incredibly normal to experience caution fatigue because our physiology doesn't keep up that full-alarm response forever. Adrenaline decreases in our system, and "the

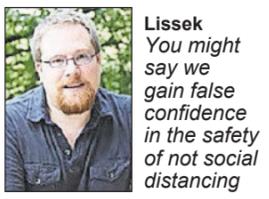
body starts to grow, you could say, 'calloused,' to the threat and develops chronic stress versus acute stress," Sutherland said.

We also perform a type of a cost-benefit analysis, weighing the benefits of following guidelines with the costs of our actions.

The benefits are safety for yourself and others; the cost is the effort

and constraints placed on activities. Over time, the benefit of the safety behavior is devalued or reduced, said Shmuel Lissek, associate professor at the University of Minnesota.

Touching groceries was associated with contracting COVID-19, so it became a conditioned stimulus. If you're repeatedly exposed to groceries, and you don't contract



Lissek You might say we gain false confidence in the safety of not social distancing

COVID-19, the fear of groceries declines, Lissek said.

Lissek shared another example:

Say, I don't social distance with friends, and I never develop symptoms or contract COVID-19. On a cognitive level, I may understand there's a probability I may get the virus, but that experience says it's not dangerous to meet with friends closer than 6 feet.

"You might say we gain false confidence in the safety of not social distancing," Lissek added.

We're equipped to avoid and respond to acute danger, such as natural disasters, but we haven't evolved a logical system to respond to prolonged, chronic stress, such as COVID-19, said Sutherland.

'It's worrisome'

No one is immune from caution fatigue, but in the case of COVID-19, this can be problematic.

There were 194 news cases reported in the Northland the week of July 27-Aug. 2.

In Minnesota, there are 54,463 total positive cases and counting, according to the Minnesota Department of Health; and across the U.S., the number of cases surpassed 4 million, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

It's worrisome, Sutherland said, because our efforts to keep our community safe and to not overwhelm our health resources depend on us doing our best to follow these precautionary measures. In every situation where we don't do our best, we are technically increasing the risk in our community.

FATIGUE: Page B2

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Say it but don't spray it

Dear Annie: I realize that this is a difficult issue on which to offer advice, but I suspect it might have wide-spread interest. I have found that many friends with

whom I have coffee in the morning talk in an exuberant way, and in the process, spew pieces of bagels, croissants and more across the table, often into my face or food. This is also a frequent, if not inevitable, occurrence at cocktail parties, in which hors d'oeuvres are passed around to people who may not have the clearest awareness of what is going on.

I have resolved not to be a participant in this "wood chipper" game by chewing slowly and carefully and not speaking while I'm chewing. But I wonder how you would advise staying out of the fray of unwelcome food particles while not insulting well-meaning people. — No Wood Chipper

Dear NWC: Nobody likes a salivary shower, but if you find yourself irritated with most of your friends over this, the problem might be on your side of the table. I suggest you plan your socializing around activities that don't involve eating — going for a walk, taking a hike, volunteering together — as much as possible, and keep a wide berth the rest of the time.

Dear Annie: I am 77 years old and have known for most of my life that I'm not beautiful. I have a sharp chin and nose and have actually had a few warts removed. I realized when I was a child that I was not cute — a fact that was reinforced through my teen and young adult years. In my late teens,

I was thrilled to marry a handsome "bad boy" type. You can imagine how that turned out!

I persevered and developed a successful career, plenty of friends and a church family. I gained a level of self-confidence. Then I married the most kind, gentle, caring man. We raised a family, and I felt we had a very successful marriage. He encouraged me in many endeavors such as returning to school and finding a more suitable career.

One problem is that my husband is so kind that he would never criticize anything about me, especially my appearance.

And now, since the pandemic, I've been stuck at home, with no weekly visit to the beauty salon and no makeup or fashionable clothes. These past few months have made me painfully aware that I'm "ugly"!

Recently, a neighbor came to call (admittedly, not a very smart person) and related how when she first met me, I looked just like a friend of hers who she said looked "just like a witch" as she got older.

That was all it took! I now doubt why my husband married someone who looks like me. Does everyone I meet immediately also think I resemble a witch? I feel all of my qualities as an empathetic, successful person are of no avail.

— Witchy Woman
Dear WW: I know it's been said so many times that the words practically have no meaning, but it still bears repeating: Real beauty is on the inside. A loving heart means infinitely more than a pretty face. And when you exude warmth and empathy, there's no way anyone would mistake you for a witch. Be as kind to yourself as you are to others: Start each morning and end each night by looking in the mirror and saying, "I love you."

Send your questions for Annie Lane to dearannie@creators.com.

Food processors vs. blenders

By Becky Krystal
(c) 2020, The Washington Post

Food processors and blenders tend to get lumped together when people talk about kitchen appliances. After all, you can throw a bunch of ingredients into each and come out with something pureed.

That is certainly true, but these two staples for home cooks work differently and excel at different things. Here's how to differentiate them — and decide which one is right for you, or your recipe.

How they work

Food processors and blenders are similar in that both typically involve a motorized base and a repository for the food (bowl or jar) fitted with a blade. With their tall, narrow jars, blenders work by creating a vortex that continuously sucks food down to the blade. The food processor's wider bowl means it relies more on the longer blade to slice horizontally through the food as it rotates.

"The major difference is the way they operate," says Mary Rodgers, director of marketing communications for Cuisinart, which offers both types of appliances. Primarily, that relates to speed. Food processors operate at around 1,700 revolutions per minute, while blenders start at around 17,000 rpm and can go even higher than 30,000 rpm. More on the significance of that below.

How they differ

In general, a food processor is more multi-functional than a blender, thanks to its slower speed and variety of blades that can be used for slicing, grating, making dough and more. (High-end models such as the Vitamix are pushing the boundaries of what a blender can do, but considering the price tag and what's still in many home kitchens, we'll focus on the more traditional style of appliance.)

Because the food processor goes slower, Rodgers says, it gives you much more control over the texture of your food. You can do everything from a brief pulse to full-speed processing, giving you food that runs the gamut from coarsely chopped to pureed.

The faster speed of the blender blade means food is broken down at a much quicker pace, so you begin to cede control over the size of the food and how quickly it's being worked. You can, for example, pulse ingredients for salsa in a blender, but if you think about the shape of the jar and the way food tends to ricochet up and around it, you'll begin to understand why the chopping will never be as even as it is in a food processor.

Let's take the tomato prep in another direction to further illustrate the difference. Rodgers says if you compare pureed tomatoes made in a food processor versus a blender, you may get smaller specks of skin in the food processor be-

cause of the slower speed. The puree is more likely to be completely smooth in a blender, thanks to its faster blade. Similarly, it's much easier to chop an onion in a food processor.

"If you put an onion in a blender, it's going to be onion juice," Rodgers says.

Rodgers notes that even if you were to make the same recipe in both appliances — say, hummus — you would find that you need to add more liquid to the blender version to ensure the food moves freely around the jar and over the blade. More liquid prevents cavitation in a blender, that annoying phenomenon when an air pocket forms above the blade and keeps it from coming in contact with the food.

How to pick

Food processors and blenders are different enough that, if you can, it's helpful to have both in your kitchen arsenal. But budgets, kitchen sizes and other factors make it possible to turn this into an either/or proposition, which is fine, too. And even if you have both, sometimes you need to decide which to pull out.

Pay attention to your cooking style, Rodgers says, or what your particular recipe is trying to accomplish. If you want a tool that can replicate a lot of knife work, go with the food processor. "It's not easy to do any type of dough in a blender," Rodgers adds. "You cannot slice or shred in a blender." Those are

common tasks to keep in mind as well.

If you need something primarily for beverages, the blender is absolutely the way to go. Smoothies, frozen drinks, horchata and agua fresca — the blender excels at them all. Manufacturers typically do not recommend breaking down ice in a food processor.

Pureed hot soups are a possibility in both appliances, though you need to pay attention to the fill lines in each. Again, you'll achieve a somewhat smoother consistency in the blender.

Other considerations

Price is one driving factor. Blenders tend to have a lower point of entry, and you can reliably find reasonably priced, well-performing models for less than even a no-frills food processor. You can, however, look into a mini processor as another option.

Speaking of size, think about how you will store your appliance. Both types can be stashed on the counter or in a cabinet, assembled or broken down into their two main parts. Food processors skew heavier, while blenders run taller.

As far as life span, I have run through a couple of blenders while I'm still on my first food processor. But much depends on your model, how much you use it, how you care for it and more. Focus on your needs in the here and now, though, and you won't go wrong.

FATIGUE

From Page B1

It's hard to force physical distancing onto an environment that wasn't designed to accommodate it.

Our lives are arranged around social closeness — school, public transportation, concerts, sporting events.

"We have really strong needs for survival, but also, really strong needs to meet our needs, which we've been socialized to involve lots of things that we're not able to do right now," Lissek said.

Couple that with feelings of hopelessness and no clear end-date, and "It's overwhelming to think about doing this for the next two years."

"I think we've all become a little more lax," Sutherland said.

"I'm definitely experiencing

some caution fatigue myself," Lissek added.

We cannot compare this ongoing threat with an unknown end-date to anything else we've experienced. For most of us, this is case No. 1 of 'How do we respond to chronic stress of this nature?'" Lissek said.

What to do

Give yourself permission to have caution fatigue. It's normal human physiology. You shouldn't be ashamed of it, but then act accordingly, Sutherland said.

Any new form of discipline requires psychological resources and self-control.

Avoid loosening safety measures for impulsive reasons.

Stay up-to-date with the threat of COVID-19, and stay abreast of what's working or not working in neighboring communities, states and across the world. "We have a responsibility to follow the sta-

tistics and science," Sutherland said.

List easy ways to stay safe, and consider products or tools that make social distancing and sanitation more convenient.

Humans tend to gravitate toward the actions around them, so check your surroundings.

If we work in a setting where caution is the culture, we adapt to that. But if a workplace is hands-off or dismissive, we're at risk of falling into that response, Sutherland said.

Talk with friends, neighbors, family and co-workers. Keep a dialogue open, by asking, "Are we doing this the right way?"

Each individual or family can best address this in a way that matches their circumstances.

Approaching this as a group doesn't cure caution fatigue, but it makes it less likely for us to make foolish decisions if we have those conversations, Lissek said.

SILVER LINING

From Page B1

She's not talking about the Taylor Swifts, but rather artists closer to home. At the center of the piece is a two-part panel. On one side are seven women sewing around the words, "We set aside our projects, our quilting, our jingle dresses, our ribbon skirts, our crafting, to make masks for our community."

The other side of a floral motif separating the panel shows three kids cutting out paper hearts, a reference to the paper hearts many hung in home and business windows to show love and care during the shutdown. She's even depicted the North Dakota State Capitol in Bismarck, where lights were kept on at night to form a heart.

That panel is flanked by upright figures, both dressed in personal protective equipment, one a health care worker, the other working in the food service industry — two jobs greatly affected by



Maureen McDonald and Matthew Musacchia interviewed elders and turned their stories into poems during the coronavirus pandemic.

the pandemic. Bloomquist is a nurse and really wanted to express her gratitude for all that health care workers have done during the outbreak.

At either end of that center row are musicians. Bloomquist isn't commenting on how concerts have mostly come to a halt during the pandemic, but rather how musicians found new

outlets during it. On the left is an image of The Waddington Brothers playing a drive-in Easter service in the Fairstroads in Mott. The show was held in a parking lot and broadcast over the radio to allow people to listen safely from their vehicle. On the other end is Judy Larson, who worked with her pastor to build

a recording studio in an old building on her farm. There, she would record accordion music for the church services so parishioners could listen at home.

"A painting that can tell the positive stories of COVID-19 in North Dakota is an important historical item to have," State Folklorist Troyd Geist says.

The bottom row also features a pair

of musicians, David Gorder and Shawn Carrier, playing a concert outside an elder care facility in Langdon.

All of the bottom row depicts life inside and outside residential care spaces, including hallway bingo and writers Maureen McDonald and Matthew Musacchia interviewing people through the window at a senior center and turning their stories into "Where I'm From" poems.

Another section is set entirely outside a senior care center and shows how family would gather at residents' windows to show their love and devotion. One person depicted is Bloomquist's husband, Mike, whose mother took ill during quarantine and would later die in isolation.

"There are these really, truly touching personal stories people relate to in this painting," Geist says. Bloomquist says it wasn't a difficult scene to include.

"It was a very joyous day for us. It was the first time in months we got to see her face to face," she says. "We

were so relieved on that day. As I walked around the building, looking for her window, I was struck by all of the family members there at the other windows. Just sitting, or standing, with their faces pressed to the glass. All I saw was great, great love at those windows. How fortunate we were."

The scene also includes artist Melissa Gordon, who created sidewalk murals outside elder care facilities around the state. In the background is the depiction of a Fargo-Moorhead family that used a truck with a lift to rise up to a grandmother's window to celebrate her 90th birthday.

"Bonadsmålning is meant to be compact, with small details filling every space, and like a lot of my paintings, I think there is so much going on all over the place," she says. "A person can look at it for a long time and keep finding new things tucked in here and there."

Readers can reach Forum reporter John Lamb at 701-241-5533.