

OUR VIEW

Salute their service, honor their hope

Sept. 2, 2020 marks the 75th Commemoration of the End of World War II, a conflict that claimed the lives of 405,000 U.S. military personnel.

On Sept. 2, 1945, formal surrender documents were signed abroad the USS Missouri, designating the day as the official Victory over Japan Day (V-J Day). V-J Day was especially momentous—the gruesome and exhausting war was officially over. WWII will go down as a bloody battle that ultimately helped restore peace to the world.

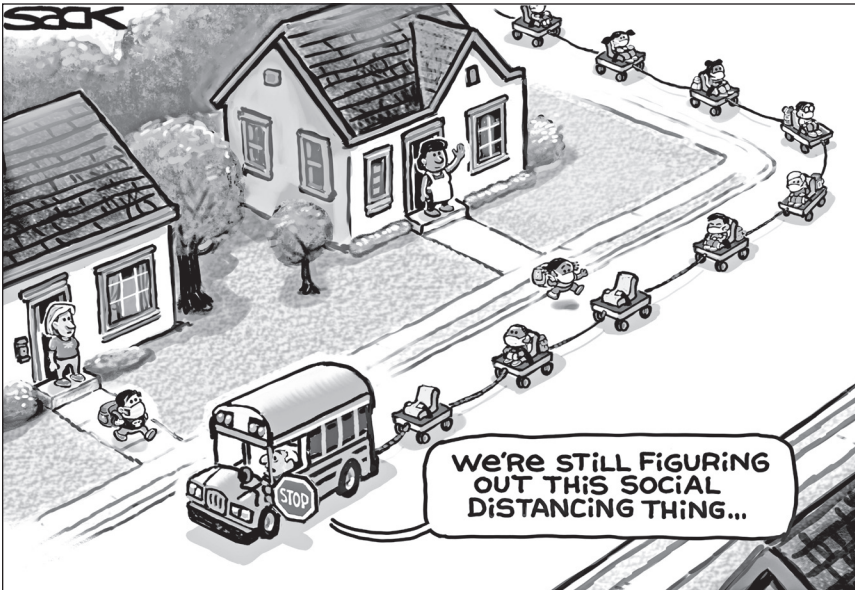
We need to pay tribute and honor to those who served in WWII as well as other conflicts around that same time period. No sacrifice was too great. Everyone contributed to the war effort. It's appropriate to salute their service and honor their hope in keeping America alive.

The number of survivors of WWII is quickly shrinking as many of them are in their mid-90s and older. In Blooming Prairie, there is only one survivor left—Merle McNutt, who is almost 102. There are more living in Owatonna, but the list keeps getting smaller as time passes by.

This week the Times is honoring WWII survivors for their bravery and heroism in preserving freedom and democracy. Check out our special section to get first hand insights into the war that took the lives of 70-85 million people across the world.

Thank you to the WWII veterans for their dedicated service. We appreciate your sacrifices made on the battlefields so long ago. The world is a better place because of your heroism.

And the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II should serve as a reminder to all of us of the ultimate sacrifice made by so many Americans to maintain the freedoms we enjoy.



GUEST COLUMN

Safety measures help to contain spread of COVID-19

BY DR. BRIAN BUNKERS AND DR. SUMIT BHAGRA

We are entering our third season – spring, summer and now fall – of COVID-19 and an unprecedented global pandemic. At each turn, we learn more about this virus and new ways to treat those infected, and how to better contain the spread.

By now, we are all familiar with the main ways to keep our community safe – hand washing, appropriate distancing and wearing a mask. We do this to keep ourselves and those closest to us from being exposed, and we do it to avoid unknowingly spreading the virus to others.

At Mayo Clinic, like other public spaces and places of business, many measures have been put into place to keep patients and staff safe, including wearing masks. Per Gov. Walz's recent Executive Order, places of business can impose stricter guidelines than the statewide mask mandate. This is particularly important in a clinic and hospital setting, as many patients are already in a high-risk category for contracting the virus. If you are coming to a Mayo Clinic facility, please remember all pa-

tients and visitors will be required to wear a mask while on Mayo Clinic property.

Our safety measures also include the addition of staff members who conduct a health screening upon entry in our facilities. They ask every patient and visitor coming to the campus a series of important screening questions and take their temperature to determine if it is appropriate for them to proceed inside the building. Behind the scenes, all of our staff follow self-screening protocols established during the pandemic. These preventive measures also mean that we have had to revise previous practices and no longer allow walk-ins for a non-emergency visit. If someone comes to a facility for non-emergency care without an appointment, they will be asked to leave and call to schedule a time for a visit. We recognize that this can be frustrating, especially if you are not feeling well, and we appreciate your cooperation.

Details about preparing for in-person appointments can be found on the Mayo Clinic Health System COVID 19 website. If you call for an appointment, please note that

the call volumes are high. If you hang up and call back, you will lose your place in the queue and may wait even longer. If you prefer to access your care without coming into the clinic, be sure to sign up for Patient Online Services (the Mayo Clinic patient portal) to message your care team and schedule a virtual visit for a number of primary and specialty care appointments.

We have all had to make adjustments to our routines and practices at home and at work as we navigate this pandemic together. On behalf of Mayo Clinic Health System, we wish to thank our amazing staff, patients and visitors for the cooperation and commitment they have shown to keep our community as safe as possible. We are all in this together and will continue to provide high-quality care with your health and safety in mind.

Dr. Brian Bunkers is the CEO of Mayo Clinic Health System in Faribault and Owatonna while Dr. Sumit Bhagra is chair of Southeast Minnesota Safety Management and Resources Team for Mayo Clinic.

A new twist on fair foods

COVID-19 has thrown a mean curve ball at all of our plans over the past six months. This month we have gotten to experience what it's like to not have county or state fairs to attend.

I am one of those fair junkies who is shriveling up from the lack of yummy treats. The lifeline to fair food has been breached in the face of the pandemic.

Okay, I did take advantage of the Fair Food Parade at the Steele County Fairgrounds earlier this month to at least wet my appetite with a few food favorites.

But let's just say it wasn't quite enough to head off the urge of wanting more fair food.

If there is one thing I have learned throughout the coronavirus from United Way President Annette Duncan, it's "innovation out of necessity." She has coined that phrase several times in revealing what the United Way of Steele County is doing to rise above COVID-19.

Well, I took Duncan's advice and put that into action last week. I organized my first ever Fair Food Party at home for family members.

In this particular case, innovation is fair food party and the necessity



Hot Pursuit
RICK BUSSLER

is curing the withdrawals of fair food.

My party featured some of the great foods we have all come to love at the fairs over the years. We had deep fried cheese curds and pickles, oh how the grease is still dripping off my fingers, pork chops on a stick, corn dogs, gyros, French fries, shave ice, Sweet Martha's cookies (made famous at the State Fair), popcorn-candy mix, homemade mini donuts and some fresh lemonade to wash it all down with. All right, there was a beer or two thrown in with it as well.

I like to think my treats were nearly as good if not better than those you can buy at the fairs. There are a few things I have to perfect for next time, but by and large everything turned out quite well.

The best part of it was we fed a party of 10 people with a fraction

of what it would have cost us at the fair. And it was fun to sample so many different things without having to eat a full order. I think my waistline is even thanking me this week.

We didn't have to fight mobs of people either, at least in the case of going to the Minnesota State Fair, which I'm certain would have had record attendance last Saturday with the perfect weather conditions we experienced. I don't think I've seen such ideal conditions like that for quite some time. There is something to be said about not battling elbow-to-elbow with strangers at the State Fair.

I can't make the promise that my food party will permanently replace outings to the fairs in years to come. There is just something about the fair experience that gets in your blood.

If you're looking for something fun to do, I suggest having a fair food party with your friends and relatives. It's pretty easy to do and fairly inexpensive. It's a neat way to think outside the box and impress others with your ingenuity.

And it's a way of going in hot pursuit of avoiding to miss out on fair foods in the COVID world we're living in.

Tammi's memory lives on with her family



Reflections
HOWARD LESTRUD

It has often said that an inspirational way to pay tribute to a loved one who has passed on, is to plant a tree in their honor.

A tree in her honor lives on at the residence of my niece Michelle who lives near Cannon Falls.

Last Saturday was the 25th anniversary of our daughter Tammi's passing at age 22. She suffered from a chronic liver disease and died in surgery on Aug. 29, 1995. She was undergoing her second liver transplant, the first one being on April 15, 1995.

I have written about Tammi Jo (Lestrud) previously and related what a courageous, hopeful young person she was. Tammi also owned an infectious smile, one that an obituary writer in the St. Paul Pioneer Press called our attention to in a bookmark sent to us.

It often seems like we lost Tammi just yesterday, rather than a quarter of a century ago.

On the date of her passing, we as her family unit think of various ways to remember her. Daughter-in-law Nancy Lestrud posted Tammi's photo on her Facebook page and urged Facebook fans to share memories of Tammi.

Nancy and her husband Troy, our son, and

their three children sent five colorful sunflowers to be placed on her grave. Judy and I also put three roses on her grave and also placed two memorial stones near her monument.

Niece Michelle shared her memories of Tammi and related a story that we were not familiar with, or had forgotten.

Here's Michelle's remembrance: "This is about a Ficus tree. My Uncle Howard and Aunt Judy gave me this plant 25 years ago."

"It was one of the many plants sent in remembrance of Tammi on the day of her funeral, Sept. 1, 1995.

"All those many years ago it was only about 18" tall. Today, this tree, which has been through all the trials and tribulations of my last 25 years, stands tall and proud at almost 7 feet tall.

"It is a daily reminder of my cousin Tammi and her insurmountable spirit and zest for life.

"Lestrud's – as you mark this anniversary in your lives, please know that I am reminded of Tammi's insurmountable spirit every day and it is my blessing to care for and nurture it.

"And if you know me at all, you will also know that this tree is about the most resilient thing on the planet. That just has to be Tammi, taking over when I stumble. I love you all." – Michelle

As you can tell, Tammi has never been forgotten and lives on in our



SUBMITTED PHOTO

This is a ficus tree. It has kept Tammi Lestrud's memory very much alive.

hearts with the many memories she left us.

The ficus is a genus of about 850 species of woody trees, shrubs, vines, epiphytes and hemiepiphytes in the family Moraceae.

Collectively known as fig trees or figs, they are native throughout the tropics with a few species extending into the semi-warm temperate zone. The common fig is a temperate species native to southwest Asia and the Mediterranean region (from Afghanistan to Portugal), which has been widely cultivated from ancient times for its fruit, also referred to as figs.

Figs are also of considerable cultural importance throughout the tropics, both as objects of worship and for their many practical uses.

Tammi, we miss you but know that many of us cherish the imprint you have left behind.

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**MINNESOTA
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(Awards presented by the Minnesota Newspaper Association and the National Newspaper Associations)