

HOPE-HERNANDEZ HOUSEHOLD NEWS

May 2, 2020



Pandemic Pastimes

Margaret Hope

These are not such tough times as you may think when we can have a Sunday in the park, by George.

Sunday, April 19, I suggested to Maggie that we plan a picnic at one of the tables with benches that I thought were in Woodward Park. She almost jumped out of her skin. Loved the idea, but she said there are no tables in the park; if there were, they'd be possibly infected. So, we decided to use camp chairs on the grass. Monday would be warm and wonderful.

On Monday, Maggie greeted me in the kitchen, "Let's have a picnic today!"

We packed lunches of egg salad, potato salad and a fruit salad of apricots and mandarin oranges.

Within 90 minutes we were under the shadiest, tallest oak tree in Woodward. There were a lot of other people there – mostly keeping safe distances from other parties – some carrying babies, some alone. What a change of atmosphere it was after six weeks of sheltering in place.

Remember to take something to drink - there is no concession stand anywhere around. Someone ought to bring in a Good Humor truck with jingling bells, or set up a refreshment stand this summer.

Tallgrass Prairie Preserve

Oh, for a drive in the country when the sky is not cloudy all day.

On April 26, our family of four decided to break out of the house together and take a long drive, without stopping at an eatery. I'd never been to the Tallgrass Prairie, so we decided on that destination – about an hour and a half from midtown Tulsa. Tuna salad sandwiches and fresh cantaloupe slices were rushed into production and away we went around 1:30 p.m.

The Preserve terrain, near Pawhuska, is mostly treeless. A long, winding gravel road takes you through the tallgrass. Signs welcome you and also warn of "Loose Bison." There's no fence on either side; the buffalo are (mostly) off in the distance in small herds of 25 or 30.

At every turn in the road another herd appears on the horizon, grazing in consummate stillness – huge animals that seem unaware that cars are passing slowly, stopping, getting out and taking pictures at a safe distance.

To me, the great natural appeal of the place is the prairie itself – low rolling hills rising and falling away out of sight. The buffaloes' home is 40,000 acres in all directions – an expanse that inspires awe in a visitor. To see the Visitor's Center would have been interesting – it was closed for the pandemic – but seeing the great plains themselves are well worth the trip.



COVID-19 Facts as of Today – May 2, 2020

	Worldwide	US	Oklahoma
Cases:	3,467,507	1,152,328+*	3,851+**
Deaths:	243,754	66,921+*	238+**
Recovered:	1,113,854	170,179+*	
Unemployment:	Week ending May 1: 3.8 million new unemployment claims Total since mid-March: 30+ million		

* Testing in the US has increased but has so far covered only a tiny fraction of the population. Experts are certain that there have been many more US COVID-19 cases and deaths than have been confirmed or reported.

** Oklahoma COVID-19 testing per capita ranks among the lowest of the 50 US states. This week, Gov. Stitt (along with governors of about a dozen other states) lifted shelter-in-place orders and closures of non-essential businesses – despite failure to meet CDC guidelines for doing so. Tulsa's Mayor Bynum has reluctantly complied. Pandemic experts expect spikes in new cases and deaths.

Partay

Chris Hernandez

The highlight of our week just past: Marge's birthday.

It started off with a surprise "Special Edition" of *H-H-H News* devoted to Marge and her birthday.



The week before, Maggie had held an editorial meeting in which, as usual, she parceled out assignments – entirely for misdirection. (Most of the assignments

from that week's editorial meeting are included in this week's issue.)

At a private and secret get-together, our editor assigned actual stories for the Special Edition. Though, as she acknowledged in last week's Editor's Note, Maggie wasn't sure the subterfuge had worked. Apparently it did, judging by Marge's delighted – if bemused – surprise Saturday morning.

A day's worth of festivities ensued. Flowers from Marge's son Marty. A balloon bouquet and "Happy Birthday" surreptitiously planted in our front flower bed by an old friend, **D.J. Morrow**. A virtual Zoom party attended



by many dear friends – including **Sue Humphreys**, dialing in from London. Heather had spent days organizing the virtual party – and helping tech newbies with the setup.



A dinner of boiled lobster, asparagus and garlic-rosemary roasted potatoes finished the day – followed by an as-always spectacular birthday carrot cake and an episode of "Miss Marple" via Brit Box.

All in all, a memorable birthday – in a very memorable year.

Valuable Vocabulary

Margaret Hope

Every day that you read the news, you'll find words describing various and sundry people. These are well-chosen to be as descriptive of the person in the news of the day. Can you guess who?

Added - Befuddled, baffled

Abysmal - Appalling, fathomless

Germophobe - Someone with an abnormal fear of germs

Macabre - Tending to produce horror

Whack job - A crazy person



Here Kitty, Kitty

We are (most of us) pleased to announce the expected arrival of a new member of our family: Alfie (if it turns out to be a boy), Trixie (if it's female).

Maggie is terrifically excited. Heather is getting there. Chris and Marge remain somewhat skeptical. But they'll undoubtedly warm to Alfie / Trixie when they get to know him / her. How not?

We await with interest the reception this new kitty will receive from Tommy and Rosie.



Take my advice....

Dear Inga,

By Dr. Inga Problemsolver

I live with my daughter, who shall be nameless. She works from home like everyone else. My only conflict with her concerns the Trump press conference every day at five. She claims the sight and sound of Trump nauseates her. Contrary-wise, I like to watch him. The situation is dire. How would you handle such a conflict?

Esperanza Hidalgo

Dear Essie,

Your dire situation is not unique. Many citizens of this blessed America are sickened by the President's press conferences. Like you, I enjoy seeing and hearing him make a fool of himself for all the world to see. I have turned my abhorrence of his pathetic bull session into a chance to observe a rare example of insanity. It's natural for you and me to wonder when the men in white jackets will take him away!

Don't further upset your daughter if she does not feel this call to witness an ongoing crime of historic magnitude. May I suggest using wireless headphones?

Dr. Inga Problemsolver



Books

The Magic Mountain

Margaret Hope

Almost 100 years ago, the German author Thomas Mann wrote a novel featuring characters isolated by an infectious disease. *The Magic Mountain* has since been considered of historic importance. According to the Barnes and Noble website, it is "an elegy to the romanticism of Europe's middle class in the days prior to World War I."

Mann created a tuberculosis sanitarium in the Swiss Alps where patients lived isolated and unpredictable lives. Tuberculosis was one of the great scourges of humanity, and it survives today.

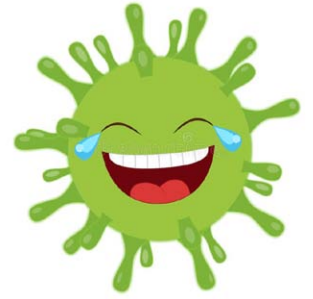
It is strange to recall now that, as a young woman, I read the book from the New York Public Library. I won't attempt to describe its content here, although I have never forgotten how interesting it was to me and very touching.

Laugh It Up

Just told my daughter I'm older than Google.
She thinks I'm joking.

Commas are important.

- No more tequila.
- No, more tequila.



My stomach is FLAT. The "L" is just silent.

Due to quarantine, we will be telling inside jokes from now on.

Adulthood has shown me that you don't need fun to have alcohol.

Has everyone picked out their outfits to wear to the living room?

Day 51: We've finished Netflix.

Words to Live By

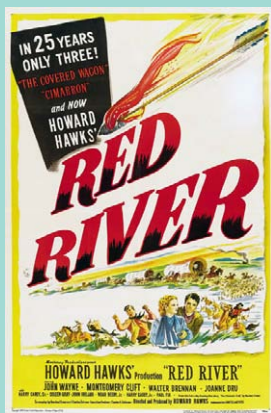
Margaret Hope

"Idiocy has its place."
– Anonymous

"Here's the thing life teaches you: sometimes the truth can only be reached by exaggeration."
– Niall Williams, the Irish author of "This is Happiness."

". . . it is scientifically proven that dancing releases hormones that help you feel joy."
– Jan Gotch

"Variety is the very spice of life."
– William Cowper (1785)



REMEMBRANCE OF THINGS PAST

Margaret Hope

After our visit to the Tallgrass Prairie, I had an entrancing dream that brought to my unconscious the movie images of life on the open range, where cattle drives occurred yearly. In my dream there were no buffalo, but thousands of beef cattle in the months-long drive to Kansas City from Texas. The movie was “Red River” with John Wayne and “heartthrob of the day” Montgomery Clift. The year was 1948, when cowboys were heroes and financiers were villains.

I’m an Old Cowhand from the Rio Grande

I’m an old cowhand
from the Rio Grande
but my legs ain’t bowed and my
cheeks ain’t tanned

I’m a cowboy who never saw a cow
Sure ain’t fixin’ to start in now

Oh, yippie yi yo kayah
Yippie yi yo kayah

We’re old cowhands
from the Rio Grande
And we come to town
just to hear the band
About the big corral
where the doggies go

We learned them all
on the radio.

Oh, yippie yi yo kayah
Yippie yi yo kayah

– Johnny Mercer

Springtime in Tulsa

Chris Hernandez

It was about 5:30 in the evening on Tuesday April 28, when we heard the sirens begin to wail. It’s springtime in Tulsa – so take cover. Tornado warning.

It took me a long time to get used to these not-infrequent seasonal siren soundings. Now, it’s hard to take them seriously, sometimes; all too many Tulsans ignore them – unless there are signs of an imminent tornado right in their neighborhood.

This time, like last year, we took shelter in Marge’s giant closet. Maggie had readied it with a chair for Gay-gay, and soft things for the rest of us to sit on – as well as beverages for the four of us and Tommy and Rosie.

No tornado touched down anywhere near here. Worse luck next time?



But afterwards, we saw something I’d never seen (or heard of) before: an amazing sky overhead, filled with pillowy “mammatus clouds” – literally “titted clouds.” The name fits.



NATURE

Heather Hope

Driving around the city, taking in the sights — trees and bushes greening up, the fading azalea blooms — we noticed the wonderful wild flowers growing along the Gathering Place on Riverside Drive. We were reminded that it’s both ecologically and economically sound policy to plant wild flowers on the sides of the road and in the median rather than grass that has to be mowed and watered to keep green. How wonderful to enjoy the flowers blowing in the breeze.

That brings us back to our garden. Plans are still underway, but no trip to the nursery yet. I’ve settled on more hostas for the backyard, definitely. Perhaps more bulbs. We’ve got a beautiful purple iris in bloom. I’d love to see more of those. What else? Are tall elephant ears in our future? I think what is keeping me from the nursery is the COVID restrictions that say you can shop but not get assistance from the workers. I need guidance, and hesitate to go wander the store only picking up half of what I need.

We worked in the front yard yesterday. It’s very hot and sunny there, great for full-sun flowers. Maggie planted sunflower and zinnia seeds in the raised bed that came with the house.

I replanted a salvia from the back yard to the front to be with the others. It’s looking droopy in the mid-morning sun. Perhaps it’s too close to the brick which gives off lots of heat. I’ve just remembered where I’m going to replant the hydrangea I put in last year.

Gardening is an exercise in strategic thinking and accepting change.

I love it.

Entertainment Pandemic Games

Heather Hope

What's in a game?

Laughter? Definitely. Silliness? Not always. As we look for things to amuse and entertain us in these long days and nights of staying safe at home, we've implemented evenings of Charades along with two other games that test our acting and quick-thinking skills.

Charades you will all remember as an old standby for group games. We don't follow the rules precisely — we make up our own topics rather than pulling from a hat — but that doesn't make it any less hilarious, confusing, and laughter-inducing. We've added to it an improved game Maggie learned

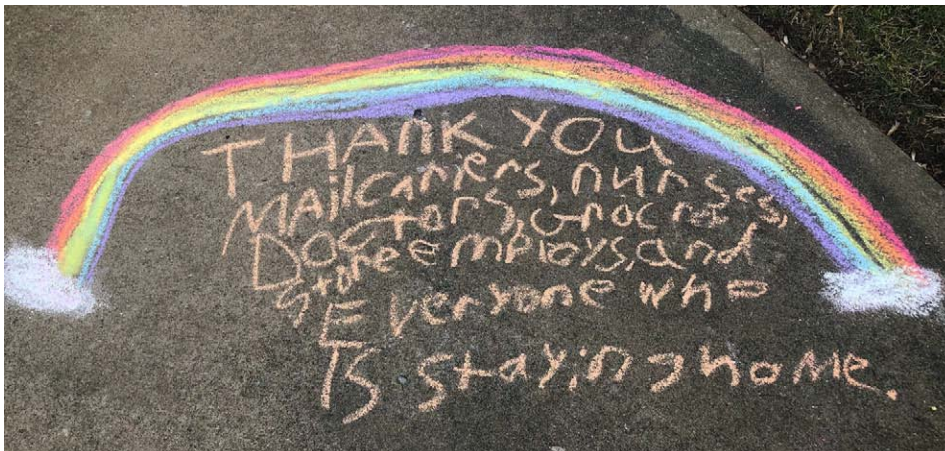


in acting camp: Taxi. Kind of like Charades, but you're a character in a taxi and the driver has to ask questions to figure out who you are. Mother Mary? You're kidding!

Lastly, we added a version of our family favorite: the alphabet game. The twist is to have a conversation with each new speaker's sentence starting with the next letter of the alphabet. For example:

- *Apple juice is one of my favorites.*
- *Buttermilk always makes me smile.*
- *Certainly those are good, but I prefer tea.*
- *Do you like coffee, too?*
- *Easy to imagine, but not really.*
- *Figures.*
- *Gad zooks, don't forget the wine!*
- *Heck, no!*

Etc.



Editor's Note

Hello friends and family! As you know from earlier articles, we will have a new addition to the family. We will be adopting a new kitten the week of May 18th.

We have no idea what gender it is, so we have had to come up with two names.

Please write in the comments if you like the names Trixie and/or Alfie.

In other news, one of my friends has come up with a great idea or I think it is one. We have decided that it

would be nice to write messages on each other's drive ways with chalk. I think that if you have any extra time it would give your friends a nice surprise when they open the windows in the morning.

Your friend,

Margaret E.

Hope -Hernandez

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Haiku

Margaret Hope-Hernandez

Many people don't know about the wonderful ancient Japanese form of poetry that is Haiku. Haiku is poetry that goes in a very particular order: for example, five syllables, seven syllables, five syllables. Here are some Haiku poems I have written.

Creatures live all around
Living in a fairy tale
They are nature bound

Moonlight shines on us
Turning our skin pale as ice
We are ghosts tonight

Pollen, like spring snow
Covers all the land like snow
Snow and pollen, yes

Stillness at night
Nothing can break the stillness
Now is eternal

