

Hello everyone,

This late fall, I find myself with more time on my hands (and less daylight) now that the garden calls me less and I feel slightly less inclined to be out enjoying the weather. As such, I have more time to think and to read, and a little less focus.

Good-bye, Viaduct

January 4th the Alaskan Way Viaduct will close and with that, it will truly be the end of an era. The Viaduct has been a part of my entire 40+ year Seattle experience. I will especially miss the beautiful views of the water, ferryboats, Olympics, the animal-like cranes, and even the ferris wheel. I actually have fond memories of being stuck in a big traffic jam heading north on the Viaduct into Seattle on a clear, sunny afternoon when I was able to simply relax and enjoy the time waiting, relishing the view.

Times change, and I realize when resistance to change is futile, we must move on and find other pleasures. I will do so reluctantly. Farewell, Viaduct!

Caricatures

The fine caricatures included in this month's issue were done by the late Jim Brown and are from Mendocino Folklore Camp in the 1980's (not Mendocino Balkan Camp, as I erroneously stated last month). The Mendocino Woodlands are the site of many folk dance weeks, including Folklore, Scandia, Hungarian, Balkan, and Lark in the Morning. Jim Brown was a folk dancer and artist from San Francisco who was a regular at Mendocino Folklore Camp and an ardent Camp supporter. Many of his beautiful sketches and water colors depict the camp, its activities, campers, and instructors. Mendocino Folklore Camp has graciously given us permission to use them. This camp will hold its 67th (!) and final session in 2019. Explore their offerings at www.mendocinofolklore.com.

Loneliness

These increasingly short dark days of late fall sometimes can seem so discouraging that we don't even want to leave our homes. This in turn can lead to feelings of loneliness and isolation. Did you know loneliness is just as dangerous as or worse for our health than smoking, lack of physical activity, obesity, and high alcohol consumption? A study conducted by researchers at Brigham Young University finds both loneliness and social isolation could shorten a person's life span, comparable to the effects of obesity. In older people, loneliness and social isolation were a clearer indicator of early mortality.

In another study, researchers from the University of Chicago and the University of California in 2015 found that loneliness can trigger the body's fight-or-flight response, which can affect the production of white blood cells and eventually undermine the immune system. Being lonely can trigger cellular changes in your body that increase your chances of getting ill and not living as long as you could have, plus give you higher levels of inflammation.

Dancing and folkdancing are a satisfying and enjoyable cure for loneliness and isolation, as many of us have found. Dance is also good for our brains because we use our body, move

our body, and use our brains. This sort of multi-tasking does wonderful things for us. All we have to do is leave our houses and get ourselves to a dance!