

A story that needs telling

I do not want to do this. I do not want to talk about surviving COVID-19. Most especially I do not want to carry on about this plague when so many – 400,000 and more now – have not survived.

People that I know; even worse, people who are loved by people that I know. People like my next-door-neighbor’s parents, Neal and Lavonne Lo-sure, who were taken from her within hours of each other back in November. Or LeRoy Imler, who was cherished by so many and taken so suddenly.

So many people that all of us know someone who was lost to the scourge. I will not call it a “pandemic” because that the word has been stripped of its meaning over the past year, sanitized by overuse, just as “body count” lost all meaning 50 years ago.

And I do not want to talk about my simple travail while wonderful people are waging their struggle to remain among us.

But I must. I must because others who have not been there want to know and because that is what I do: Tell stories. I just don’t

want to tell my own.

But I must. And it begins simply enough by just going to the COVID testing center that has been in business so long now at the Clarence Faulkner Center on west 12th Street in Marion, so ironically named for a Marion man whose own granddaughter is now struggling to survive the scourge.

Mid-December it was. A Friday evening when my wife Joanne and I began this journey. Just not feeling well, circumstances that in another time would be dismissed without discussion, but not now, not in the Age of COVID. A little headache. A little catch in the breath. A few aches and pains. Chills. Maybe a cough.

For her, much more severe but not rising to a late-night hospital visit because, as she so correctly said that night, “you’d have to leave me there and I might never see you again.” Fifty-five years of marriage and companionship coalesced into that single moment. No, we shall not go just yet. And in the morning the fever was broken and the breathing normal. Prayers throughout that night had

been heard.

At the test center, a young lady from Sweetser who has been doing this through 7,000 or 8,000 such visits now, swabs the nose and completes the ritual. Two days later the message is posted in the e-mails to us. In boldface type it informs: “The result of your COVID-19 Nasal RT-PCR that was administered on 12-14-2020 is Positive.”

The same kind of emotional jolt that accompanies being told by a doctor sitting across the room from you that your biopsy is cancerous.

You catch your already-labored breath and read on: “Your Public Health Department has been told of this result as required by law.” And so on, through the meaning of self-isolation, and a litany of symptoms; yes, no, no, yes, I think so, maybe. And on into advice on medical care and when to call 911.

Home. That seems the only safe place right now. Under blankets on the couch, lots of sleep, lots of contemplation on what may lie ahead because, you see, no one yet knows very much about this. Not the

scientists; not the pharmacists; not the physicians, the family doctors accustomed to dispensing flu shots this time of year and newly trained to urge the wearing of masks and avoidance of crowds. All seem to be advising a cocktail of Vitamin C, Vitamin D and Zinc, all in seemingly large quantities, and little else. Signs of pneumonia trigger larger responses: Hospitalization and large doses of steroids.

My profile – old and weakened by years of cigarettes – also calls for an infusion of Regeneron, a hospital-administered portion of antibodies. No one knows exactly, but it can’t hurt.

Days evolve into weeks. The only constant is the need for sleep and energy. There is the ever-present gratitude that it did not worsen and the welcome calls from friends. Even that is strained because our usual communication system, the morning coffee klatch – six or eight of us around a table for four – has long ago been ruled illegal if not seditious.

So many things to go

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A MOMENT

Ed Breen



wrong. Some lose smell and taste, others have headaches that persist. For still others, there are the muscle aches and mental lapses.

And even in recovery there is caution. Yes, you should get the vaccine – both doses – but, if you have contracted COVID and come out on this side, as we – my wife and I — have, we are to wait 90 days before queuing for the shot in the shoulder.

It is both that simple and that fearsome. The terrible randomness of it seems . . . well, we are simply prayerful and thankful that we are here with you.

Council approves 6 measures

By Sean Douglas

After a month of discussion, debate, and deliberation, the Marion Common Council voted in favor to pass General Ordinances No. 22, No. 23, No. 24, No. 25, No. 26, and No. 27 in the latest Common Council meeting this past Tuesday, finalizing the new bill payment process in the city of Marion.

With the passing of these ordinances, going forward, the Common Council would pre-approve anything over \$5,000 before any product or service is acquired. After the product or service is acquired, the invoices would go to the city controller, Julie Flores, and then to the Board of Works for payment. Any bills under \$5,000, or any that address anything under the exception category, including salary, benefits, demolitions, the Board of Aviation, and the Engineering and Traffic Department, to name a few, would be processed and paid by the Board of Works, as usual. All six ordinances passed with a 5-2 vote.

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