

Make the most of isolation

By KATHERINE ANTHONY

In isolation from the virus, it's easy to, literally, become isolated. But it doesn't have to be that way. Resources to enrich time inside are just a click away.

The Georgetown Public Library's new online Adult Toolkit for Sheltering in Place provides information and helpful resource links about what we need to know, what we worry about and how we can de-stress while social distancing.

The toolkit "is a perfect fit" with the library's mission to provide information and resources, reference librarian Ann Evans said. "We wanted to compile a list of resources people are looking for, and also that we here at the library are accessing for ourselves."

The toolkit is at https://library.georgetown.org/adult_toolkit/

Clickable topics include

- Smile Resources
- Making Sense of Things
- Mental Health Resources
- Unemployment and Financial Resources
- Relaxation Ideas
- Fitness and Health
- Meal Planning
- Learning New Skills and Games and Brain Activity.

Each topic includes links to organizations, services, publications and agencies that offer information and opportunities to enrich the stay-at-home experience.

For example, Smile Resources includes links to real-time video at zoos and aquariums, and virtual trips to NASA and museums around the world. Help for staying afloat financially is under Unemployment and Financial Resources. Under Learn a New Skill, toolkit users will find free music and photography lessons, and, yes, doodling instruction.

Ms. Evans said compiling the toolkit took just a week of online sleuthing and that it is a work in progress. New links are continually being added. It's also possible for the kit to have a longer life. A post-virus revamping as an ongoing resource may be useful to library patrons, she said.

Staff make special deliveries thanks to new van

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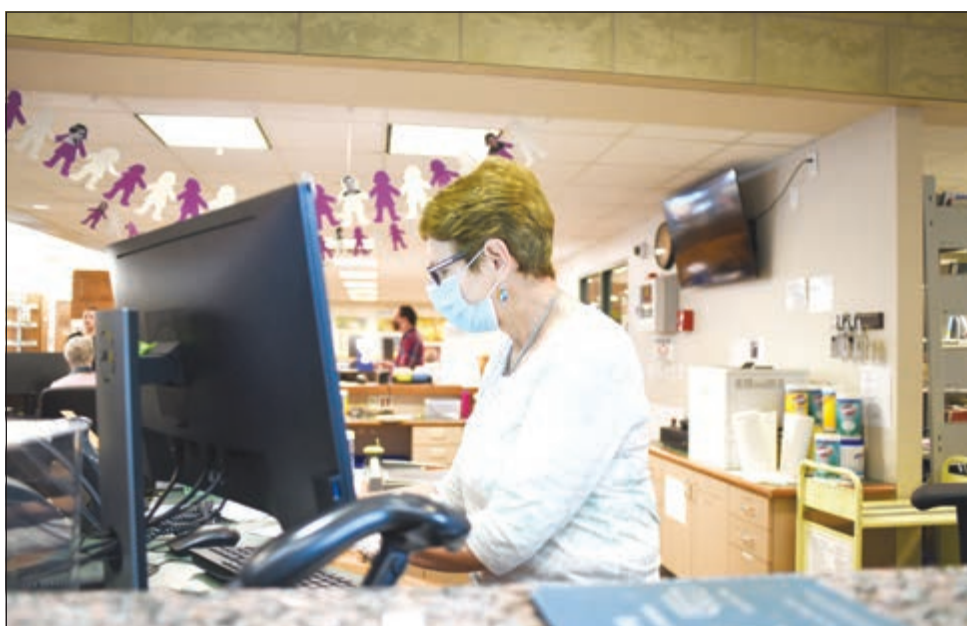
Dana Hendrix

The Georgetown Public Library began a very unusual service last week that harkens back to the Pack Horse Library initiative of the 1930s — a New Deal Works Progress Administration effort in which librarians on horseback took books to isolated readers during the Depression.

Our library staff will be using our "pack horse" — a shiny new air-conditioned home delivery van — out to Georgetown residents who are self-isolating as part of the worldwide effort to contain the coronavirus.

We are adapting from day-to-day just like everyone is. First, we closed to the public just four weeks ago on March 18. We quickly began augmenting and communicating about our e-library resources — e-books, e-audiobooks, databases and more. At the same time, we reorganized our processes and began offering curbside pickup in the library parking lot. Curbside pickup had to end to comply with the county's Stay Home Stay Safe order on March 24, but on April 9 we began offering careful home delivery of reserved items for our Georgetown resident cardholders.

Resident cardholders are those who live inside the



Karen Limbaugh, library assistant, confirms delivery addresses before deliveries are scheduled.



Kalena Powell, library assistant, prepares to depart with materials to deliver in the library van purchased with funds raised in 2019 by the Friends of the Georgetown Public Library.

Georgetown city limits and therefore pay city taxes. These 27,000 taxpayers are our primary patron base, and they live relatively close to the library and to one another, which made

it possible for us to begin offering home delivery of reserved books and other library materials to them last week.

We also have several thousand nonresident cardholders of different types living at addresses from Austin to Round Rock to Cedar Park to Florence to Jarrell to Salado and beyond. We are not able to offer home delivery that far afield, nor can we allow those patrons to come pick up at the library, though we wish we could.

The staff time involved in our new home delivery effort for residents is significant. A staff member calls every resident as their reserved items become available to see if they want home delivery, and to make sure we have their correct address in our system. Last week, our staff made hundreds of phone calls, and that part of the process — individual confirmation by telephone — continues dai-

ly for new reserves.

In addition to the phone calls (which are delightful — people are so glad to know we can bring their books to them), we have to prepare the deliveries. We sanitize and check out the books and other materials, bag and label them, determine the day's route, group the items geographically and load them in bins into the van. We then deliver them to patrons' doorsteps and leave them there for the patron to step out and retrieve after we depart.

Here is what we ask our city resident library cardholders to do:

- If you would like your reserved items to be delivered, place reserves in our online catalog. That function has been turned back on now. If you need help with that, just call us.

- If you would not like reserved items delivered to your door during this period, please don't place new reserves until we reopen, or we can defer your account. That way your place in line will be maintained but we'll skip over you until we reopen.

- If you get a phone call

from us, please answer. We need to have your OK and confirm your address before we can deliver to you.

- If you are expecting a delivery from us and have other materials to return, just bag them and we will pick them up from your front porch at the same time we deliver new items. (If you have items to return but no delivery coming, please either keep them, or if you are out for essential errands, return them in the library's Ninth Street parking lot drive-thru book drop.)

Please bear with us as we work out the inevitable kinks in this completely new way of offering a library service. It is not a service we had planned for, and it is quite labor intensive. It is a temporary service, just offered until the library can restart curbside pickup or reopen the building to the public. But we know from the reception we're getting as we call people to see if they want home delivery that it is a very needed service now, as people are isolated and in need of inspiration, reflection, information and distraction.

We do thank the Friends of the Georgetown Public Library for raising the funds in 2019 for our home delivery van. We purchased it to take books and other library materials to home-bound resident library patrons, and now we are also using it to take materials to as many other city residents as we can. Our routes will be much easier than the Pack Horse Librarians' routes were — no streams to wade on horseback nor feet frozen to the stirrups — but we take inspiration from those librarians' determination.

Dana Hendrix is the Fine Arts Librarian at the Georgetown Public Library.



Sheri Miklaski, librarian, leaves books on doorstep in Old Town to be retrieved by resident after she departs.

Complaint alleges judge broke rules

Continued from 1

how many people attended the party. A gathering of more than 10 people would have been a violation of the county's social-distancing order.

"If the bunker suit was totally sealed, he was not a danger to anyone," one observer noted, while speculating Judge Gravell probably wore the gear to entertain his grandson.

Stating "a virus knows no boundaries," Judge Gravell issued the stay-home order March 24, which required non-essential businesses to close and non-essential activities to be curtailed.

County officials have said they are relying on people to voluntarily comply with the directive. Georgetown police have said essentially the same thing.

Violations of the judge's order are punishable by up to 180 days in county jail and a fine of up to \$1,000.

Among what's listed as "frequently asked questions" accompanying Judge Gravell's March 24 order are the following.

Question: "Is this mandatory or just guidance?"

Answer: "The stay home, stay safe order is a legal order that must be followed by all persons located in Williamson County."

Question: "Can I leave home to visit friends or family members if there is

no urgent need?"

Answer: "No, this is not an 'essential activity.'"

A three-way call

Late Monday afternoon Mr. McCabe said District Attorney Shawn Dick acknowledged receiving his complaint.

Mr. Dick told the *Sun* that circumstances in the chain of events compel him to forward the case to County Attorney Dee Hobbs, whom he said also has jurisdiction in these matters.

Here, in summary, is how events unfolded April 7.

Someone photographed Judge Gravell, wearing the fire department gear, arriving outside the party in Jarrell, which his daughter hosted.

That person apparently sent the photo to "Buddy Falcon," the pseudonym used by a frequent critic of county government.

Buddy Falcon posted the photo to his Twitter account and Mr. McCabe commented on the photo with a post of his own: "This is a violation of Texas Penal Code 'Abuse of Official Capacity' ... that is public equipment that that now must be sanitized due to this stunt. At what cost?"

Mr. McCabe said that about 20 minutes after posting the comment, he received a telephone call from Mr. Dick, who said Judge Gravell needed to

speak with him.

"I can confirm that Judge Gravell contacted me, with an urgent need to get ahold of Robert McCabe," Mr. Dick said Monday, "Assuming that the call was related to the coronavirus, I put the two of them together."

Mr. McCabe, in his complaint, said Mr. Dick listened to the conversation he and Judge Gravell had but did not speak and Judge Gravell did not have Mr. Dick "lean on" him.

Mr. McCabe said Judge Gravell asked him to remove the photographs from Twitter, to which Mr. McCabe replied he has no control over Buddy Falcon.

"I don't know [who he is] and I don't want to know," Mr. McCabe later told the *Sun*.

Meanwhile, Mr. McCabe's legal complaint goes on:

"He [Gravell] stated that he was fully aware Dick was on the phone, and knew full well that he could be prosecuted for his misconduct, that he had a deputy drive him and his wife to the Jarrell Fire Department where he then borrowed bunker gear, dressed up and had the deputy drive him to his grandson's birthday party so he could surprise him because he had not seen him in some weeks.

"Gravell asked again if I could take action to remove the photographs posted by 'Buddy Falcon.' I declined

The complaint attorney Robert McCabe filed against County Judge Bill Gravell alleges the following three violations of the law on April 7.

Violation of the emergency management plan

"Gravell was not engaged in official county business as an essential employee when he violated the 'stay at home' orders in place at the time he attended the birthday party on April 7, 2020."

Abuse of Official Capacity

"Gravell used his position as County Judge to misuse government property from the Jarrell Fire Department to dress-up to surprise his grandson for a birthday party. That equipment was out of service while being used by Gravell. The property must be re-sanitized before being placed back into ser-

vice for official use. This will result in an expense.

"Gravell used his position as County Judge to misuse government personnel by having a sheriff's deputy drive he and his wife to the Jarrell Fire Department and onward to the birthday party. This was for a non-official purpose. The deputy was presumably being paid for his services by the taxpayers and not by Gravell personally."

Official Oppression

"Gravell used his position as County Judge to subject the sheriff's deputy driver to mistreatment, namely, by unnecessarily exposing that deputy to health risks during the COVID-19 emergency, by having that deputy drive him to the Jarrell Fire Department and onward to his grandson's birthday party for a non-official purpose."

and told him that people are missing funerals, re-scheduling weddings and have been unable to see their loved ones due to the stay-at-home orders, that he was not above anyone else and that I did not appreciate his 'do as I say, not as I do action' ...

"Gravell then disconnected the call. Dick and I then spoke for several minutes. In relation to this call, Dick acknowledged that he would need to consider what action his office planned to take in relation to criminal charges, as Gravell made admissions during the call which could rise to the level of criminal misconduct and that Dick was now a witness to those admissions.

"Dick was also shocked that Gravell characterized the need to reach me over this as an 'emergency' given the COVID-19 crisis."

What happens next?

County Attorney Dee Hobbs could not be reached for comment, but situations such as this are not without recent precedent in Williamson County.

In 2018 his office filed an official oppression charge against then-County Judge Dan Gattis, stemming from an alleged threat Judge Gattis made against Sheriff's Office Chief Deputy Tim Ryle.

It was alleged Judge Gattis — frustrated by one or more of Sheriff Robert Chody's tweets — told

Chief Deputy Tim Ryle he would "zero out" the Sheriff's Office budget if the sheriff didn't stop tweeting.

Judge Gattis did not run for re-election in November 2018. He retired, leaving office at the end of that year.

On Jan. 9, 2019 Visiting Judge Sid Harle dismissed the charge, upon the recommendation of Sheriff Robert Chody and Jason Nassour, a prosecutor in Mr. Hobbs' office.

Mr. Nassour said Judge Gattis' retirement made the case moot, but emphasized it still had to be filed when the 2018 events unfolded.

He said residents might be outraged if they perceived one elected official was giving another elected official special treatment.