



FINDING GOOD

HOPE FOR WHAT COMES NEXT

One of the most surprising things I discovered about myself over the last few weeks is how much I enjoy seeing other people. I don't just mean spending time with my friends or family members. Shortly after the Ohio shelter-in-place order went into effect, I realized how much I missed seeing the folks down at the Industrial Commission. We aren't bosom buddies, but I've seen some of the hearing officers and other representatives off and on for almost 30 years. They've become something like an extended family — sometimes, the kind of family who only sees each other every other Thanksgiving but who you like to catch up with regardless. Not being able to see these folks created a sort of grief.

The COVID-19 pandemic created a lot of time for self-reflection. Even folks considered essential workers were spending a lot of time at home, unable to do anything else but go to work. I was relieved that we were able to keep coming into the office. The rest of

the office complex shut down, so it was safe for us to come in and work while practicing social distancing. I think I would have gone a little crazy if I was cooped up in the house all day long. My wife and I took a lot of walks around the block with our cat, Sweet Beast, trying to stretch our legs and pass the time. Of course, my wife was also in Illinois for a while as her dad passed away.

I have to give a shout out all to the folks working from home while also juggling home-schooling their kiddos. My children are all grown, and no one at the office has kids at home, but I did a few video conferences with folks with their little ones at the house with them. That's a full-time gig. I applaud all the parents able to navigate those challenges on top of everything else.

To say these last few months have been difficult would be putting it mildly. Between the threat of the virus and the threat of civil liberties being eroded

in the name of "safety," the future looked scary and uncertain. But when I looked around, between all the bad news, there were bright spots. There were many people trying to do good, from doctors coming out of retirement to treat COVID-19 patients to college students starting free grocery delivery services to help seniors in need (see Page 3). Even in the stress and uncertainty, people were treating each other with compassion.

I hope it brings people back together more. We all went through the same storm together. These kinds of challenges can force people apart, but it can also bring people together. Based on the good things we've seen and how people have come together, I think we can be united. Going through this challenge together may encourage people to be more compassionate toward others when someone is going through their own personal struggles.

I think it's going to be hard to get back to normal, but we can get there. It's going to take time, so we have to do it together. If this isolation has taught me anything, it's that the other people in my life mean so much — even the folks I only see occasionally through work. We're all human, and we're all in this together, so let's remember to help our fellow men and women when we can.

"Even in the stress and uncertainty, people were treating each other with compassion."

-Jim Monast

3 IDEAS FOR THE ULTIMATE CAMPOUT

Right in Your Own Backyard

Even though it's almost peak camping season, you and your family might opt to cancel your out-of-town trip this summer, but don't worry. Just because you don't head into the mountains doesn't mean you can't still enjoy time outdoors with a backyard campout. It might not be your favorite spot in a sprawling national park, but that doesn't mean you can't turn backyard camping into the best staycation ever with these ideas and more.

MAKE A DIY TENT While pitching a tent for camping always comes with some level of frustration, making your own tent using household items like tarps, rope, blankets, and more can be a fun project for the kiddos. It's an opportunity to let them exercise their imaginations and build something they can relax, play, and even spend the night in.

CREATE AN OUTDOOR MOVIE THEATER If you've been craving the big screen experience that you thought only movie theaters could offer, you're in luck! You can make your own big-screen at your backyard campout. All you need is a large white sheet, a home projector, and some speakers. Then, snuggle up in some cozy blankets and pillows under the stars while you watch the best summer blockbusters or throwback favorites.



BUILD A FIREPIT No campout — backyard campouts included — is truly complete without a roaring campfire. With a gravel base and a simple stone barrier (as well as some quick and easy instructions available online), you can build the ultimate firepit for warming up on chilly nights, telling spooky ghost stories, and of course, roasting marshmallows. As a bonus, you can keep a firepit around when cooler weather rolls in too.

This is far from a comprehensive list of backyard camping activities. That said, these three ideas alone can make for several nights of outdoor entertainment. Why not explore the various ways you can have the best camping experience your backyard has to offer?

CLIENT STORY

LARRY HAYDEN

I guess it never dawned on me before, but I've had lots of school employees in my family. Charles, my father-in-law, had a second job (he worked at Caterpillar during the day) as a custodian at the high school in Morton, Illinois. My brother-in-law, Steve, just retired after 35 years of doing maintenance work at the same school. My sister, Kathy, worked as a secretary and assistant librarian at an elementary school in Fort Smith, Arkansas, and two of my daughters-in-law (Holly and Britney) taught pre-school and special needs students, respectively.

I've also represented my fair share of teachers, school bus drivers, and maintenance and custodial workers. One thing about working in and around schools (as with many other jobs) is that there's ample opportunity to get hurt! Slipping on playgrounds or floors, moving heavy items, finding broken chairs the hard way, and recently, assaults by students ... as Gilda Radner used to say, "It's always something!"

One veteran of the chalkboard cathedrals is Larry Hayden. After working several years as a railroad brakeman following high school, Larry decided it was time to "clean up his act"! He was hired as a custodian at Springfield City School District and rose to become head custodian over his 22 years.

Most of us who've held the title "manager" or "head" of anything know the position not only involves directing others but also often means doing the jobs others won't do. Larry was in charge of a 75,000-square-foot building and grounds. He scrubbed, buffed, mowed, plowed,

Larry Hayden and his lovely bride Vikki, who's been by his side throughout it all!



cleaned, and vacuumed. He maintained the boilers and made repairs. He ordered supplies and supervised others.

He first hurt his back lifting a 4x8 slate chalkboard. When therapy and nerve blocks didn't ease the pain of the herniated disc, he underwent his first surgery and returned to work a couple months later at the start of the school year. The back and leg pain returned, the herniation recurred, and his second surgery soon followed. After this, the pain never went away, but he went back to work.

Less than a year later, he slipped on ice in the school parking lot and landed on his knee. This led to two knee surgeries and a promise from his doctor that a knee replacement would be inevitable.

Before the second knee surgery, Larry had his third back surgery. This was a big one, as it entailed fusion, fixation, bone grafts, and decompression. Fortunately, Larry's surgeon specializes in complicated surgery. Larry got to see him again after his third injury (folding up large cafeteria tables) when he underwent an almost unheard of second fusion involving titanium mesh, complete discectomies, and partial removal of vertebra at several levels. Needless to say, Larry now stands straight as his back has almost no curvature.

After a year of healing, braces, and therapy, Larry wanted to return to work but his doctors said, "No way!" Given his ongoing pain, limited mobility, and lack of motion, the Industrial Commission agreed this wasn't possible and granted permanent total disability.

Larry now spends his time with his lovely bride, Vikki. They're involved with their church and like to fish, weather permitting. He's still ornery and always greets people with a big smile. I'm grateful to know him!



Some Good News

SHOPPING ANGELS HELPS COMMUNITIES AROUND THE WORLD

Jayde Powell is a pre-med student attending the University of Nevada, Reno. Like many students, Powell's school year was derailed by the COVID-19 pandemic. But rather than complain about missing spring break, Powell took action by helping those in her community who'd been put in danger by the pandemic.

"As a pre-med student, I know that people who are older or people who have heart, lung, or immune conditions are especially at risk for contracting the virus," Powell said in an interview with CNN.

For these at-risk individuals, just going to the grocery store during the pandemic was dangerous. After hearing that her mother had been contacting elderly neighbors who needed extra supplies, Powell was inspired to start a free grocery delivery service. Called Shopping Angels, this service delivers groceries to seniors and immunocompromised individuals,

allowing them to stay home and stay safe during the pandemic. While clients have to pay for their own groceries, the delivery service is free of charge.

Shopping Angels started with just 20 members from Powell's medical fraternity, Phi Delta Epsilon. As the need for Shopping Angels' service grew, so did the number of volunteers. After an interview with a local news station launched Shopping Angels to the national stage, Powell was flooded with phone calls and emails from people across the country, both from folks who needed the help and from volunteers who wanted to help in their own communities. Food banks and manufacturers also reached out to donate goods for folks who couldn't afford the supplies they needed.

"It's just mind-blowing," Powell said. "We have branches starting in Canada and Australia that are going to try and do the same thing. It's just so exciting to see how the communities are wanting to give back."

What started with one college student in Nevada has turned into an international project. The COVID-19 pandemic has put us all through hard times, but movements like Shopping Angels show how we can come together in times of trouble to make a difference. Learn more about the Shopping Angels mission at Facebook.com/ShoppingAngelsInc.

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ANSWER

NIBBLES WITH NUG



Inspired by TasteOfHome.com

INGREDIENTS

- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 clove garlic
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 3/4 cup balsamic vinegar
- 1/4 cup tightly packed fresh basil leaves
- 8 Roma tomatoes
- 4 boneless skinless chicken breast halves (4 oz each)

DIRECTIONS

1. For marinade: In blender, combine olive oil, garlic, salt, vinegar, and basil. Cut 2 tomatoes into quarters and add to mixture. Cover and process until blended. Halve remaining tomatoes for grilling.
2. In bowl, combine chicken and 2/3 cup marinade. Cover and refrigerate for 1 hour. Reserve remaining marinade.
3. Heat grill to about 350–400 F. Lightly oil grates. Grill chicken until internal temperature reads 165 F, about 4–6 minutes per side. Grill tomatoes until lightly browned, about 2–4 minutes per side. Discard remaining marinade.
4. Serve chicken and tomatoes with reserved marinade.



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THE BEST WAYS TO HELP LOCAL NONPROFITS

IN CHALLENGING TIMES

Over the past several months, families, businesses, and nonprofits have had to navigate life in this challenging “new normal,” and it can be hard to support your favorite nonprofits when times are tough. Here are a few ways you can help these important entities, even when you don’t have resources to spare right now.

DONATE

While many people donate generously during the holiday season, remember that nonprofits need donations throughout the year, and different nonprofits need different things. A monetary donation can often go a long way, but never feel obligated to give money, especially when your budget may be tight. Instead, consider cleaning out your closet. What clothes, shoes, or other accessories can you part with? What about dishware or small

appliances? When you clean out your home and donate unused items, you benefit those in the community who need them most.

VOLUNTEER

In a time of social distancing, volunteering may be discouraged, but nonprofits still need volunteers to operate. The good news is that many nonprofits need volunteers for positions that maintain social distance, such as driving. Food banks and kitchens need drivers to pick up donations or ingredients from donors and to deliver food to people in need, such as the elderly or those with disabilities.

ADVOCATE

Even if you don’t have time or resources to give, you can become an advocate for important causes



around your community. While it might not seem like much, sharing information about local nonprofits on social media can make a genuine difference. Nonprofits need exposure, which is greatly boosted through community support. Sharing useful information about nonprofits — or sharing their posts — increases their visibility so more people will take action.