

Gathering

If the 2018 Camp Fire taught one lesson it is this big one: Life is with people.

If that seems too obvious, it isn't. The U.S. Surgeon General tells us half the country now suffers from an epidemic of loneliness and isolation, particularly the young. For this malady he prescribes "the healing effects of social connection and community."



by
David Leon Zink

The author lives in Magalia as a musician, business consultant and community organizer with an ear for people.

Disaster is no vaccine, but it does demand we connect and cooperate to survive.

That Nov. 8 afternoon five years ago, the people of Paradise Community Guilds—whose vision is to "Be the community you want to live in"—sent out a call to gather

at the Chico Guild Hall so we could take a head count, comfort each other, share needs and resources and figure out next steps. We continued to gather there twice a week for the next eight months, inviting our displaced community to join us as we felt our way

forward through trauma and confusion toward stability and a new normal.

Before the fire, most of us saw ourselves as helpers, not people in need of help. Now utterly dependent on others, we learned to make peace with our vulnerability and find new strength in community. We learned that our inner lives mattered to someone. We gathered to learn new ways to care and forged bonds that we'll cherish for a lifetime.

Communities that came through their own horrors—such as the Tubbs, Valley, and Cedar fires—sent emissaries to gather with us, to listen to our stories, share their experiences and offer advice to younger siblings in catastrophe. Many of us came through our trauma faster as a result.

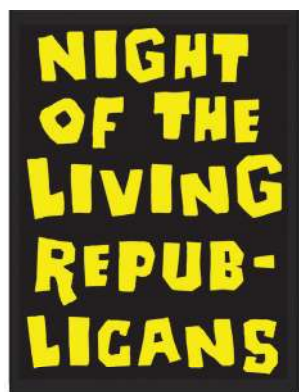
This is what "Life is with people" means—to be caught and to catch others in the act of living, and in the process make life better.

Now, as the elder siblings, we must share our lessons with those who are just coming through their own disasters—such as the Maui wildfires—while remembering the still lonely and isolated among us.

Life is with people. Be the community you want to live in. Amen. □

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BY TOM TOMORROW



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In Recognition of National Family Caregiver Month

How to Survive Caregiving



JOIN PASSAGES CAREGIVER RESOURCE CENTER FOR AN ENLIGHTENING WORKSHOP. GUEST SPEAKER, SUSANNE WHITE, FOUNDER OF CAREGIVER WARRIOR AND AUTHOR OF *SELF-CARE FOR CAREGIVERS* WILL DISCUSS ESSENTIAL PRACTICES TO SURVIVE THE CAREGIVING JOURNEY.

THE WORKSHOP WILL INCLUDE TIPS ON:

- SELF-CARE
- GRACE
- EMPOWERMENT

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WHEN: NOV. 28TH | 12:30 – 2PM
WHERE: BUTTE CREEK COUNTRY CLUB
175 ESTATES DRIVE IN CHICO

a practical guide to caring for you while you care for your loved one