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COLUMNIST FOR A DAY

FRONTLINE WORKERS AND COVID-19

JANSEN

From Page C1

They are much more than heroes to me

By Andrea Jansen
for the Mail Tribune

The title of "hero" is a bit overused these days. Our service workers and medical professionals certainly express qualities of bravery, stamina, selflessness and compassion; but in my mind these people aren't heroes, they're god-sends.

I am one of those seniors living alone with a rescue dog you've heard tell of. We live quietly in a small motor home parked on private property while waiting to reach the top of the Section 8 housing list.

My family is scattered to the

BE A COLUMNIST FOR A DAY

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Do you have something to say? Do you have a humorous take on current events or an insightful angle on the seemingly mundane? Maybe you have a view of life that will help us all see things a little more clearly. If so, email your 500-word column to features editor David Smigelski at dsmigelski@rosebudmedia.com. Please put "Columnist for a Day" in the subject line, and include your phone and city of residence. The rules are simple. Keep it short. Have a point. Don't cuss. And make us glad we asked. If we like it, we'll run it in the Sunday paper.

winds, and I avoid physical contact with even close friends, who cautiously visit their own families with their own interactions, and so on.

The feeling of isolation is a constant battle, and as I inadvertently meet individuals proclaiming their rights by not wearing masks in

public spaces, I am less and less inclined to go out at all. I am not someone's grandparent, but I am one of their friends, that should count.

Feeling like a target while watching the mounting COVID-deaths, I avoid depression by keeping busy and hoping, like everyone else, that the inevitable end is relatively soon. An end to what, I don't much care at this point. If it wasn't for Julie at the deli counter; the young fellow who fills my propane tank; the gal taking my temperature in the parking lot; and the mail-lady delivering essentials, all speaking a few words, I think I'd go mad.

SEE JANSEN, C2

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"You can always order online," the store manager responded when I asked about enforcing mask-requirement rules.

"I've done that; but I can't afford to spend (the minimum) \$30 each time if I just need a container of milk or loaf of bread." I don't have the luxury of storage space either, which is why I was dodging people refusing to follow even simple arrows until I broke down in tears at the register; psychologically forced to curtail my shopping before finishing my list.

"Too bad, Lady," I see it in their eyes. "But I miss chatting with Julie while she slices the hard salami," I couldn't very well say.

During my walk with BC this morning, I realized how much I depend on the kindness of these strangers who have become more so to me; they don't realize. I am forced to remain alone with my thoughts longer than what should have been necessary because of people with no self-control, compassion or willpower, take your pick. It is unfair I am prevented from enjoying what life I have left. What about my rights?

So to those who continue to refuse to follow simple rules meant to protect us all, I shake my already shaky finger and say, Shame on you. Don't be selfish and ruin us all by following one bad example.