



ROSE CITY PARK UMC JULY NEWSLETTER 2020



Making International Connections Through Cycling with Mari Rudd

In her book “Pedal Pushers Coast-To-Coast: A Cross-Country Bike Tour Fueled by Kindness,” Rose City Park UMC parishioner Mari Rudd chronicles her passion for bicycle touring. She began cycling as a

child and decided to cycle across the United States for the first time after she went on two week bike tour in the San Juan Islands following her graduation from high school.

Since then, she has embarked on self-supported bike tours in North America, Europe, and New Zealand. After meeting her husband Terry though mountain climbing, they went on bicycle tours before their son Erik was born. Then when Erik was in high school, the family cycled the Oregon Coast.

When asked about what these global cycling excursions inform her daily life, Mari offered this reflective analysis: A huge value of these trips is in the people we meet and the experiences we have along the way. Another big takeaway is an appreciation for so many things and the value of simplicity. A person doesn't need a lot of stuff. Everything that we need for the next two months, such as our tents, sleeping bags, and clothes, is on our bikes. I learned to appreciate simple things like electricity, water, fresh food from a grocery store, and a warm and dry place to sleep.

Mari's most recent cross country bike trip from San Diego to the Atlantic Ocean coincided with the Covid-19 virus. As a nurse with additional training in international education, she followed news about the impact of this global pandemic whenever she had internet access. Once essential businesses closed down in mid-March, she and her son Erik contemplated if they should continue the trip given the difficulties of navigating through five remaining states, each one with their own quarantine rules. They concluded they wanted to continue their adventure together as they were probably not much more of a threat to other people or themselves if they continued cycling, versus returning to Portland. Obtaining services like food, bathrooms, and showers became trickier. What didn't change was people's kindness. "One of the things I've learned through bicycle touring is the lasting impact from the kindness of strangers. Kindness goes such a long way, and is long remembered."

She noted how kindness from someone she didn't know made her feel welcome at Rose City UMC when she first set foot inside its doors in 1980 after graduating from college. Jack Ball talked to me and invited me to a coffee hour. Then he introduced me to other people where I learned about a bicycle group that was going on a trip. I kept coming back due to the welcoming community I found there. For example, Jack is still there greeting new people.

In this spirit, Mari enjoys attending Zoom services because they continue this community connection. "I am so appreciative of the opportunity to connect and interact with the congregation. It's a chance to see their faces, talk with them, and have conversations. I

love it.” To learn more about Mari’s work and bicycle touring in general, check out her website www.thepedalpushers.net or send her an email at mariparsley.rudd@gmail.com.

A Letter From Sheryl, Board Chair

I wanted to update the congregation on a few things the board is working on. The first is the reopening of our church. We have a few members from the board working with Elsa and Jack to make plans on when we will be able to have groups back in the building. Things are a bit complicated working with the Bishop's directive on what is allowed and when (the UMC has 4 phases), the Multnomah County directives and what the CDC is recommending. All groups will be letting Elsa know of their plans to reopen. As soon as we know anything about the congregation meeting for worship we will let you all know. It may still be many months before we can "SEE" one another without it being through a computer screen. We want to make sure we all stay healthy.

The second item that is being worked on with a few different members, Elsa, and Jack is about Do Good returning to the building. Do Good has really expanded since they left our space. They have several buildings housing homeless veterans, as well as a couple of hotels. In the first phase, they would like to open a food pantry and have use of our kitchen to help feed these facilities. They will occupy another office as well as an office for a group they are associated with called National Alliance of Black Veterans. There are a couple of other phases we are still working on to see if we can accommodate their requests.

It is good to see so many of you on Sunday mornings. If any of you should need anything please don't hesitate to reach out to me, any member of the board.

Sheryl Shake
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SCOUTING UPDATES

"Leaders from Scout Troop 117 and linked Girl Troop 5117 in Portland Oregon rush into the Rose City Park United Methodist Church parking lot to set up for a drive-in Scout Court Of Honor (COH), each one optimistically crossing their fingers to beat the forecasted rain. The local news said it was going to rain, and the dark clouds that hovered ominously over the parking seemed to confirm this. The clouds were heavy and low, building up like a water balloon that keeps getting filled. The local weather person may actually be right this time. The set up crew worked quickly to set up audio equipment, tables, easy-up canopies and awards. Things were coming together quickly.

It had been a challenging and exhausting year, between an unprecedented global pandemic that prevented the troop from their normal physical and social interactions, including their weekly dodgeball games, to ubiquitous civil unrest and racial justice protests. The atmosphere was swirling with chaos, isolation, insecurity, fear, but at the same time, hope. The ominous rain clouds were not going to keep the COH from happening. The troop was going to celebrate something special. Over the last few months, the scouts and leaders had come together like a true family, meeting and checking in with each other on a weekly basis, using a strange new video conferencing platform.

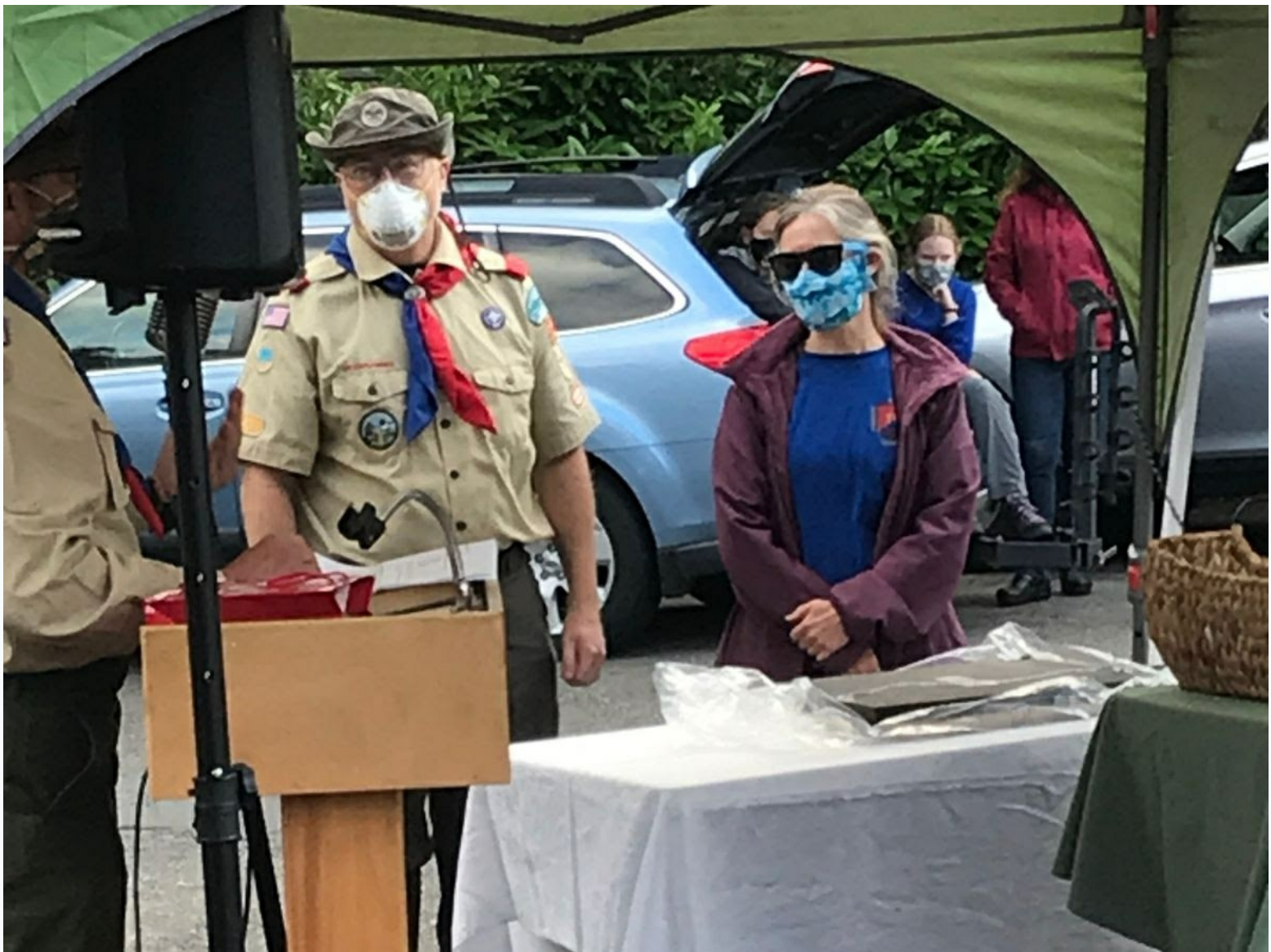
The troop met religiously, lifting up each other's spirits with backyard campfire programs, skill based activities, self-organized merit badge courses, rank advancement work, and a cool Mafia game night meeting, which became a hit... pun intended. The troop even overcame the possibility that their plant sale fundraiser would be a complete loss, but it wasn't. The troop utilized every opportunity at their disposal to "keep on keeping on" – Steve Miller Band – and held

the plant sale in the Rose City Park United Methodist Church parking lot, the same place where they would now hold the COH; a fitting and appropriate place. Scouts were motivated to work hard on their ranks before the COH, exercising Scout Law #8 (Cheerfulness) - "A Scout smiles and whistles under all circumstances." The troop had adapted, had overcome, had supported each other, and had demonstrated the scout spirit, and they were going to celebrate that rain or shine.

The COH was set up on time and the entire troop began to drive in, one at a time, backing into parking spots facing the center program stage, now flying the U.S. and troop flag. Everyone was wearing masks and spaced out to meet all of the safety and social distancing requirements, but... they could see each other. Being near each other again was a special moment, even if it was socially distant. The audio equipment and speakers crackled as the Assistant Senior Patrol Leader opened the meeting with the pledge of allegiance and the Senior Patrol Leader followed with some words to officially open the meeting. The Scoutmaster was invited up to say a few words as well, "With Liberty And Justice For All," as he pointed to the U.S. flag, making a declaration that the troop would stand in solidarity with the community in support of racial justice, then one minute of silence followed.

After everyone lifted their heads, there was a profound sense of importance and meaning, every eye was focused on the center stage as scouts, leaders and parents were called up to receive awards, certificates of appreciation and a farewell gift for the previous Scoutmaster, a special frame with a picture of the troop, and some campfire ashes in a little bottle. The newly established girl Troop 5117 and their leaders were recognized and celebrated. The clouds opened up and the rays of the sun shined down on the parking lot. It never rained. I guess the local news weather forecast was wrong after all. "

Chuck Ehrismann | Troop 117 SM



Facilities Update from Elsa Johnson, Building and Facilities Manager

While our Bishop has reluctantly allowed churches to move into the next phase of reopening, that does not change much in our operations at church at this time. We now have a Reopening Team who are beginning to plan what safety guidelines will look like for church and for the building in the future. I continue to connect with all of our building users so they know what to expect from us as we plan. In the meantime, I'm thankful for the team of people that make Zoom church happen, fostering connection even when we are not able to meet in the building. Thanks to all who make that happen.

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