

# TELLURIDE DAILY PLANET

Inside Today: The View, p3; Voices, p9; Life, p11; Sports, p12; Orbit, the back page.

## SUNDAY

APRIL 19, 2020  
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### Don't quote me but...

"It's all about the ratios. Thanks Crumb bakery for the starter!"

— Dave "Sportboy" Nesis, of Ophir

## Calendar

### Sunday

- Local transit: Buses operated by SMART and the Town of Mountain Village run with minimum-passenger loads from 7 a.m.-5 p.m. daily. Please use this transit for essential service only.
- AA: Meeting via Zoom, 5:30 p.m., zoom.us/j/229140239

### Monday

- Lost In Motherland: Writing to Discover Who We Are(n't), online workshop Mon.-Tue. with Rosemary Trommer, 10 a.m.-noon, sign up at telluridelibrary.org for a link to Zoom.
- Grow Your Food: An Intro to Permaculture, 3:30-5 p.m., register at telluridelibrary.org
- AA: Meeting via Zoom, 5:30 p.m., zoom.us/j/229140239

### Tuesday

- AA: Meeting via Zoom, 7 a.m., zoom.us/j/286675353
- Virtual Mountain Mama: Learn about prenatal health (via Zoom) from the care team at Telluride Medical Center, 3 p.m., tellmed.org
- Ah Haa Makers Moments: Live feed art, ahhaa.org

## Weather

**FORECAST:** Sunday, Monday and Tuesday are predicted to be snowy with highs in the mid- to upper-40s.

**MUSE:** "What matters most is how well you walk through the fire." — Charles Bukowski

## IN ORBIT:

Sunday Focus:  
Business

How local  
merchants adapt

Wednesday: Arts,  
Lifestyles &  
Nonprofits

## NONPROFITS

# 'We've never been busier'

By **LESLIE VREELAND**  
Contributing Editor

**T**here's a lot to be anxious and unhappy about during a pandemic — particularly if you're a human, which is to say, a creature prone to worry.

Animals, on the other hand, tend to take things a day at a time.

"They live in the moment," said Ellen Williamson, founder of the Telluride Humane Society. She's witnessed the remarkable

effects that pets — which take unalloyed joy in the very simplest of pleasures, such as the lateral trajectory of a fetid tennis ball — have had on humans these past few weeks.

"Remember when it all started?" Williamson said of what feels like forever ago (but which

is really only about a month), when everyone began mostly staying home.

"We were allowed to go out to walk the dog," Williamson recalled.

And people did. And connections were fostered. And speaking of foster: today the Telluride

Humane Society, whose mission is the successful placement of cats and dogs in loving homes, is having more success at exactly that than ever before.

"We've never been busier," Williamson said. It's a national trend — people who suddenly have time and space reaching out to foster cats and dogs — expressed in a particularly Telluride kind of way.

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Spending time in nature can be natural mood booster. Local therapist Lindsay Wright suggests going for a meditative walk, focusing on all five senses, as a mindfulness practice that can relieve stress and anxiety. (Photo by Bria Light/Telluride Daily Planet)

## COMMUNITY

# Isolated but not alone

Mental health services, financial assistance available

By **BRIA LIGHT**  
Staff Reporter

**I**t's no secret that the past month has brought about a litany of hardships. We're isolated from our friends and family members. We're juggling the realities of working from home, often in spaces poorly suited for focus and productivity. We're taking care of our out-of-school kids around the clock. We're newly unemployed, with tourism-dependent jobs pulled out from under our feet a month early, with no real certainty on the horizon as to when we'll be able to resume counting on a steady paycheck. With all of this and more, plus lack of access to many of our usual means of blow-

ing off steam, the stress and uncertainty can feel overwhelming, and can lead to increased levels of anxiety, depression and emotional upheaval.

These can feel like dark times, but local organizations and health care providers, such as the Tri-County Health Network (TCHN), the Center for Mental Health (CMH), and the Telluride Medical Center (TMC), remain committed to shining a light in the darkness in the form of access to mental health care for all community members.

Paul Reich, behavioral health program manager at Tri-County, highlighted the availability of therapy from the comfort of one's own home through the organi-

zation's teletherapy program. Partnered with licensed therapists across the state including bilingual therapists, the program allows clients to connect with a therapist via video chat, and is free to students, teachers and school staff in participating schools, and free for six sessions to those over 50. Tri-county also has some funding available to assist those under 50 years of age.

The Center for Mental Health, Reich noted, is also accepting new patients, and the TMC and the Uncompahgre Medical Center in Norwood each have behavioral health clinicians on staff and accept insurance including

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## PUBLIC HEALTH

# VAPING RISKS

Officials warn of youth e-cigarette use during pandemic

PLANET STAFF REPORT

**T**he use of e-cigarettes, often referred to as "Juuling" or "vaping," caught many parents, school districts and health professionals off guard in early 2018. Use of these devices, initially promoted as a smoking cessation tool for adults, exploded among youth in 2018, and with little knowledge about the risks of using these devices or the contents of the pods, many communities struggled with an effective response. Some schools installed "vapor detectors" in bathrooms, others beefed up their monitoring of bathrooms and some struggled to find the right balance between punishment and education to help students experimenting with these devices. In 2019, news reports of deaths associated with these products briefly dominated the news amid reports of tainted vape pods. The Centers for Disease Control reported in late 2019, 2,506 lung injury cases that required hospitalization and 54 deaths linked to vaping.

Locally, the Healthy Kids Colorado 2017 survey, administered to Telluride middle and high school students, showed that 42.4 percent of Telluride high school students reported using an e-cigarette within the past 30 days of taking the survey. Dr. Diana Koelliker, medical director of emergency and trauma services at the Telluride Regional Medical Center, said, "As anxiety increases in these unprecedented times, reliance on devices to ease stress, like vape pens, may

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In this April 2018 file photo, a high school principal displays vaping devices that were confiscated from students in such places as restrooms or hallways at a school in Massachusetts. Local officials are warning youths about e-cigarette use as it relates to COVID-19. (AP Photo/Steven Senne, File)

Thanks for a great Winter!

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## Vaping risks

VAPING, from page 1

make a bad situation worse for some of our young adults.”

The COVID-19 virus, a respiratory illness that primarily targets the cells of the lungs and respiratory system, puts youth who vape, smoke tobacco or inhale cannabis at greater risk. Public health experts warn that the use of these substances and devices is problematic for several reasons. Cigarettes are known to increase inflammation in the airways, and it is suspected that e-cigarettes have a similar impact, possibly increasing the risk for complications if a youth contracts the virus. Many users of cigarettes and e-cigarettes develop increased coughing, which increases the risk of spreading the virus if they are infected. E-cigarettes are much more likely to be socially shared among adolescents than traditional cigarettes increasing the likelihood of spreading the virus on the device itself.

“The sharing of devices and the coughing that can lead to increased spread are certainly concerns,” Koelliker said. “As with any respiratory illness, people who inhale toxins into their lungs tend to have worse effects when they get sick. COVID-19 is having some devastating effects on lung tissue, even in the young and healthy patient population, and smoking

of any kind can exacerbate that effect.”

Paul Reich, Tri-County Health Network behavioral health program manager, has been involved with the ongoing e-cigarette education locally. He explained that the school district has been diligent in educating students about vaping, adding that seemingly fewer students are using e-cigarette products. College-aged youth use is higher, though, Reich said. He commended the

*“As with any respiratory illness, people who inhale toxins into their lungs tend to have worse effects when they get sick. COVID-19 is having some devastating effects on lung tissue, even in the young and healthy patient population, and smoking of any kind can exacerbate that effect.”*

**DR. DIANA KOELLIKER**  
Medical director of emergency and trauma services at the Telluride Regional Medical Center

Town of Telluride for its work in creating a Tobacco 21 ordinance raising the age requirement to purchase tobacco products from 18 to 21. Tri-County Health Network will continue its educational outreach.

In April, the Massachusetts Attorney General and Massachusetts General Hospital issued a specific warning about e-cigarette use. The advisory warned that smoking or vaping could increase the chances that a person will be infected by COVID-19 and need hospitalization and advanced life support to survive, and are more likely to develop a severe case of the virus than those with no smoking history.

“You touch the cartridge. You put it next to your face. You are spreading whatever is in your hand into your body. At the same time, many of my patients who smoke or vape have increased coughing or expectorating. And

that’s a recipe for increased spread,” said Dr. Jonathan Winickoff, director of pediatric research at the Massachusetts General Hospital Tobacco Research and Treatment Center, according to a news release.

Despite physical distancing and the stay-at-home orders, there are online resources available to youth to help them quit smoking or using e-cigarettes. The National Jewish Hospital created a vaping and tobacco cessation program, “My Life, My Quit,” specifically targeting the estimated 5 million teens across the United States that are vaping and using tobacco. For more information, visit mylifemyquit.com. Through the program, teens work with a coach who listens and understands their unique needs, provides personalized support and helps them build a quit plan to become free from nicotine.

The Truth Initiative, America’s largest nonprofit public health organization focused on tobacco, also has free online resources developed in collaboration with the Mayo Clinic. For more information, visit truthinitiative.org.


“Quitting during this pandemic could not only save your life, but by preventing the need for treatment in a hospital, you might also save someone else’s life,” Winickoff said.

The San Miguel Communities that Care has more information about vaping on its website at telluridectc.com, as well as links to vaping cessation resources. For more information or to join other community members working to reduce youth substance use, contact Tri-County Health Network at 970-708-7096.

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