

FROM THE PUBLISHER...



As modern society attempts to grapple with a threat that cannot be coerced, bargained with or tweeted at, we find ourselves in uncharted territory.

The tide has gone out and revealed structural issues of our current system that simply need to be addressed in our county, our state, and our country.

Here are some sobering facts courtesy of studies by the Federal Reserve in 2017 and 2018:

Nearly 25% of Americans have no emergency savings;

30% of adults are either unable to pay their bills or are one modest financial setback away from hardship;

12% of adults would be unable to pay their current month's bills if they also had an unexpected \$400 expense;

Just 18% of Americans have enough savings to cover three to five months of expenses and only 29% of Americans have enough emergency savings to cover the recommended six months of expenses.

Compound these facts with the reality that family income is a strong indicator of whether an American will receive medical care and it is no wonder that a pandemic exposes the frailties of our system for all to see.

How strong is the correlation between income and healthcare?

When household income is less than \$40,000 approximately 36% of those households will do without medical treatment. Conversely, 8% of households earning over \$100,000 will avoid medical treatment.

This disparity leads to other challenges and threatens the social fabric of our communities. Perhaps the threat of COVID-19 will bring a policy-making epiphany to Raleigh and Washington D.C. on healthcare or perhaps not, but it is clear that the virus sees no barriers when confronted by a gated community.

It is time to acknowledge that **health security = economic security = community security.**

A family doctor for everyone = a more prosperous, more secure, and healthier Chatham County and America.

chatham
County Line

"where all voices are heard"
<https://ChathamCountyLine.org>



ESTABLISHED IN 1999

PO Box 1758, Pittsboro, NC 27312

phone: 919-949-1274

chathamcountyline@gmail.com

editor@chathamcountyline.org

Chatham County Line is a community newspaper serving all of Chatham County as well as the southern part of Orange. Our mission is to inform our community by providing a forum "where all voices are heard." We seek all views and ideas about our community, and we report on important matters — including our cultural life — comprehensively and in-depth. Our commitment is to create the best-written, best-edited and most stylish community newspaper anywhere. Chatham County Line is published ten times a year.

Publisher & Editor: Randolph Voller

Editor Emeritus: Julian Sereno

Page Design & Layout:

Lesley Landis Designs

Photographs: Bett Foley & Gary Simpson

Website Design: UniqueOrn.com

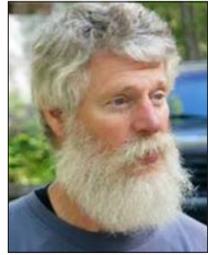
Distribution: V. J. Penley

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The Wisdom of Trees

by Joe Jacob



I have been known to hug a tree. In fact, I hugged a tree just before writing this article. Why? What did I expect would happen? I did not have any expectations. Did I feel better? Yes. Did I feel like the tree hugged me back? No. Then, why did I hug the tree? For me, it was my way of saying thanks for all that tree and other trees have done and do every day to support my existence on Earth. Did the tree feel better? Maybe, but that is not the point. I feel better. Try it. Next to love, gratitude is perhaps one of the most powerful gifts a human can offer to another human or another life form be it a pet or a tree. Go ahead and try it. See if your outlook on life is improved. Believe me, there are worse things in life than being weird or crazy. Not expressing love and gratitude are two of them. Who cares what others might think? It is not your life they are living. They are going to be judgmental anyway. You might as well give them a reason.

You see, among humans, there are givers and there are takers. Trees are givers. It is interesting that we and trees share one quarter of the same genes. They have existed on this planet far longer than humans. You might say, they prepared a way for us to even exist. They take nutrients from the soil, and through the process of photosynthesis, take carbon dioxide and water in the presence of sunlight and give us oxygen to breathe and wood fiber with which to build and/or heat our homes. Many trees provide us with food in the form of fruits or nuts. At the end of their lives, trees return all of the nutrients they used to give us what we needed. Then, they decay back into the soil if we allow them to rot.

We have learned a lot about trees over the years. Did you know that they communicate with each other? They do this by emitting chemicals into the air. One tree in a forest that is being attacked by an insect can let all the rest of the trees know that there is danger. Sounding that silent alarm often gives the other trees time to emit a substance that can draw predators to them which attack the insect. The initial tree that was attacked

Hug a tree lately? Why not? What do you have against hugging trees? Think it is weird? Are people who hug trees crazy? On occasion throughout my life,

by the insect literally lies down its life in a way that can save the other trees. Who ever thought a tree could be a hero, but it can be. Our human self-centeredness makes us think that only humans can be heroes, but trees do not judge us. They just keep pumping out that oxygen and producing products we use to benefit ourselves.

Sharing is something trees do better than us. You may not have known that trees share nutrients by passing them on to other trees through their root system. If a tree has more nutrients than it needs, studies document that they share their nutrients with other trees that are not doing as well. Imagine that. As far as we know, trees have no religion, governmental agency or non-profit organization to share what they have. They just do it, and why do you think that is? I guess that humans just have not been around long enough to really understand the survival advantages of sharing the wealth. Remember, humans are takers and givers, and I am afraid in our society today, the takers are winning over

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the givers and that does not bode well for the future. I think that deep down in our core, we know that and want things to change for the better.

If trees can communicate and share their abundance, what other admirable traits do they have? Could it be that trees mourn the passing of other trees? Can they pick up on the sorrow of other trees and share that sorrow with other life forms? I am beginning to think they can. As weird and as crazy as I am, I believe that the sorrow I feel every time I drive by the slaughter of a development creeping across the landscape is a sorrow that I am sharing with Nature as it witnesses what we are doing.

In our society, being older used to give people the license to offer advice because of the wisdom life experiences offer. At seventy-four years of age, here is my advice. You, and all of us, would be better off if we just lived like a tree, shed all of the negative traits of being a human and focus on being a loving person who is grateful for everything Nature provides us. What do you think? Are you ready?

Joe Jacob, a 30+ year Chatham resident and a marine biologist by training, is president The Haw River Canoe & Kayak Co., www.hawrivercanoe.com



AWARD WINNING AUTHOR CASSANDRA KING CONROY TO APPEAR AT CHATHAM LITERACY EVENT

Known for her humor and honesty, award winning author Mrs. Cassandra King Conroy will speak at Governor's Club April 29th (11am – 2 pm) for Chatham Literacy's Spring for Literacy Luncheon (tickets \$100; tables seat 10).

Author of five novels, many short stories and magazine articles, Mrs. Conroy's latest work, "Tell Me a Story: My Life with Pat Conroy" details her marriage with the famed writer in his beloved lowcountry before Mr. Conroy's death from pancreatic cancer in 2016.

The Conroy's were both teachers and supported numerous literacy efforts in Beaufort, South Carolina. The Pat Conroy Literary Center in Beaufort is dedicated to Pat Conroy's legacy. Mrs. Conroy says for them both literacy was a fundamental need, "I made reading a major requirement in all my classes. Pat and I both believed that reading not only enriches our lives, it has the power to change them." She said her husband spoke and wrote continually about educational efforts that failed basic needs for students.

The event includes a raffle for a luxury 3 night/4 day "Lowcountry Literary Getaway" in the Beaufort, South Carolina and a tour of the Pat Conroy Literary Center (raffle tickets \$100; only 250 tickets). The raffle winner does not need to attend to win.

Chatham Literacy helps adults living or working in Chatham County acquire the literacy and educational skills they need to function successfully in society.

Luncheon and raffle tickets available February 15th at www.chathamliteracy.org or 919-214-1269. Purchase the book at McIntyres and 20% goes to Chatham Literacy.

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Ask Me About
Ayurveda

Tim Keim

919-444-3715
timkeim811@yahoo.com

AYURVEDIC HEALTH COUNSELOR
IAYT CERTIFIED YOGA THERAPIST
AUTHOR SPEAKER