

## Out and About

What a year! 2020 will go down in history as one of the scariest years due to the outbreak of COVID-19. I never thought I would live in a time where wearing mask was the norm.

It amazes me the way people have mask-shamed each other because they disagree on whether or not to wear them. My mind has been changed during this pandemic. At first I took it too lightly and exercised my right to not wear a mask. After my Mom and daughter tested positive for COVID and the loss of several family members and friends I now wear a mask more often. I forget sometimes so if you see me and my face is not covered give me a break and I won't judge you.

Trying times can either bring people together or tear them apart. Hard things have the potential to bring out both the best in us or the worst in us. Often pain and suffering are not met with compassion, but with judgment. We have all been on the receiving end of it. This type of judgment is unhelpful and hurts the well-being of our community and the world. We need compassion to solve problems we face in this world.

Let's make a New Year's resolution to be compassionate and get out of the judgment zone. It may be hard to believe but your worst enemy has felt grief just like you do. I found a list from thenewhappy.com to help move into the zone of compassion.

1. When you encounter someone who is suffering, identify what painful emotions they are feeling.
2. Consciously take the event out of your evaluation completely. Think about a time that you felt those same emotions
3. Try to bring yourself back to that feeling and re-immersing yourself in it as much as you can, thinking about what you would have loved to have received or heard in that time.

My daughter, Hannah Grace, is an RN at Greenwood Hospital. She has worked in the emergency room and COVID unit the past few months and dealt with the loss of patients. One very special patient she lost was her pastor, Brother Jeff Luellen. Hannah Grace sent me a message and told me she loves what she does and wouldn't change her career for anything. Some-

## By Jodie Bartmess Routon

times she needs a break now and then but everyone does.

How do we move forward when we have experienced so much grief? When we have to get up and go to work even though our heart is breaking? What do we do when we need a break?

Most important, spend time with the Lord. Pray, read your Bible, study His word and ask Him to give you peace.

Psalm 46:1 tells us, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, even though the earth be carried into the midst of the sea; though its waters roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with its swelling."

Let's make 2021 a year where we work together and focus on the positive. Remember to smile and be grateful. Take a deep breath and be at peace with who you are. Walk outside and enjoy the scenery. Give someone a compliment. These few simple things can change your attitude and mood and it may be just what your neighbor needs to make it through the day.

# Congressman-elect Letlow dies

(The Center Square) – Congressman-elect Luke Letlow, suffering complications following a COVID-19 diagnosis, has died.

Letlow, 41, was transferred from St. Francis Medical Center to the Ochsner LSU Health ICU on Dec. 23. He is survived by his wife Julia and two children.

"The family appreciates the numerous prayers and support over the past days but asks for privacy during this difficult and unexpected time," the family said in a prepared statement released to media. "A statement from the family along with funeral arrangements will be announced at a later time."

Letlow was the newest member of Congress elected from Louisiana, after defeating state

Rep. Lance Harris in a December runoff election.

"It is with heavy hearts that Donna and I offer our condolences to Congressman-elect Luke Letlow's family on his passing after a battle with COVID-19," Gov. John Bel Edwards said in a prepared statement. "I am heartbroken that he will not be able to serve our people as a U.S. Representative, but I am even more devastated for his loving family. I hope all of the people of Louisiana will join Donna and me in praying for Congressman-elect Letlow's family, especially his wife Julia and their two children, his many friends and the people of the 5th Congressional District. Louisiana has lost more than 7,300 people to COVID-19 since March, and each one

of them leaves a tremendous hole in our state."

Edwards has ordered flags to be flown at half-staff on the day of Letlow's funeral.

"We are devastated by the news of Congressman-Elect Luke Letlow's passing," the Louisiana Republican Party said in a prepared statement. "We have lost a rising political star and a good friend. He was a loving husband and father, and we ask for your prayers for his family at this difficult time."

Letlow was the chief of staff for three-term U.S. Rep. Ralph Abraham, who did not run for reelection. Letlow finished first in the nonpartisan open primary held in November and defeated Harris, a fellow Republican, in the December runoff.

# Congressman Scalise recognized as gun rights legislator of the year

BELLEVUE, WA – Recognized as a stalwart defender of the Second Amendment on Capitol Hill, Louisiana Congressman Steve Scalise is being recognized as the "Gun Rights Legislator of the Year" by the Citizens Committee for the Right to Keep and Bear Arms.

As House Minority Whip, Congressman Scalise, who has represented Louisiana's First Congressional District since 2008, has been a powerful voice in defense of the Second Amendment. The victim of an attempted assassination more than three years ago, Scalise didn't exploit his personal tragedy in an effort to disarm all Americans. Instead, he has remained faithful to the right to keep and bear arms, reminding hecklers at a gathering about a year ago, "These are not rights that Congress gave. These are enshrined in our Constitution — our founding fathers granted the rights of law-abiding citizens to defend themselves."

"Lawmakers such as Steve Scalise are a rare breed," said CCRKBA Chairman Alan Gottlieb. "When it comes to defending our right to keep and bear arms, Congressman Scalise is a standout. He has never wavered. He was one of our special guests during this year's online Gun Rights Policy Conference, and we're confident he will continue fighting on behalf of America's gun owners as he heads into another term in January.

"It takes someone with very special qualities to survive an attempt on one's

own life and not turn that into a spectacle," Gottlieb continued. "We could use a lot more people like Steve in public office, at all levels, from Capitol Hill clear down to town councils and local school boards. Some people try to fake their 'support' for the Second Amendment while Rep. Scalise is the real deal. That's why he is so deserving of this recognition, and why we're delighted he's in our corner."

Born in New Orleans in October 1965, the 55-year-old Scalise graduated from Archbishop Rummel High School in Metairie, and went on to earn a Bachelor of Science degree from Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge. He and his wife, Jennifer have two children.

As House Minority Whip, Congressman Scalise, he stands second in line in the House Republican leadership behind Rep. Kevin McCarthy of California.

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