

Last week I left you with a question: what can we expect from our community and what must we give back in return. Let's begin today with the dictionary which defines community as "a unified body of individuals, as in the people with common interest living in a particular area." That covers Lathrop of course, but I like further the definition of community as a "**feeling of fellowship** with others as a result of sharing common attitudes, interests and goals. " This latter resonates with my theme exploring emotional wellness, as it underscores not just that we live next door to each other , but that we commit to the common goal of aging well, living fully and where possible giving back something of the abundance we've received.

No doubt that life in community has its challenges. It requires lots of little sacrifices - of privacy, of time spent listening to other's stories of success and struggle, and of course treasure spent in support of "the commons." Need I state that relationships can be hard? We sometimes rub each other the wrong way and though there are many shared values, there are also personalities to navigate. And yet here we are, choosing to live and work in this particular community and hopefully bringing the needed courage and engagement to make it work.

And what is that work? I suggest we are here weaving **the web of caring**, which can link us and support us when we fall. It can allow us to feel tethered and know that someone along a thread of that web knows us and can help us directly or indirectly. We think of a spider's web as delicate, but the fibers that weave it have a phenomenal strength. We spin those threads by sharing, by talking, by showing interest and by making ourselves available. The web also transmits signals along its threads, and at one time or another, those may be signals of distress. Throughout our community are people willing to step forward and ask "how can I help" but like Parcival, they may balk, afraid of being too forward. Yes, there is a fine line between a nosey neighbor and a caring person who might see us heading off track. Let us empower that interest in each other and put it to work.

I urge you to get to know your neighbors; discuss with them how you might appreciate their concern and involvement with your well-being. Consider what your own level of privacy is and perhaps question whether more openness might have value in your life and in the lives of those with whom your life is woven. Share with them your emergency contacts. Perhaps your Lane Rep could serve as a gathering place of information about what's happening with folks when there is a status change. I am happy to serve as a nexus in that web and facilitate communication, but I am but one and miss the benefit of lane luncheons and the intimate chats around the garden.

In isolation we are weak. We are strengthened within our web. When the question comes about what I as Lathrop can do about this neighbor or that, or what I update I have, I'll first want to know what the neighbors and friends as Lathrop know or have done.