

## A DAY IN MY LIFE.....

It's 5:15 AM and my dreaded alarm clock goes off. I have already been awakened, however, by my buddy "George," our very early-morning (but cute!) dog. I stumble out of bed and head downstairs to do my morning workout. Next is to pack lunches for me and my husband, while eating a quick breakfast, then hit the shower. I get dressed and head to work. It all seems pretty normal, right? It is, but this is where "NORMAL" ends.

I drive 12 miles along Iowa's country roads to work at Central Bank in Storm Lake, Iowa. Although there is never a lot of traffic, now there is almost none. No school buses, no parents driving kids to school. Not many cars headed to work.

As I arrive in Storm Lake, I see several cars at Walmart, and a few at the grocery store. The other parking lots are empty, and store fronts are dark. I park, unlock the door and enter the bank. I glance up the steps that lead to the second floor which houses our bookkeeping and insurance departments. I know that I won't see any of those co-workers at all today, as we are not allowed to go up, and they are not allowed to come down. We used to share a lunch room and interact every day. Not now.....I haven't seen any of them in weeks! Now we rely on an interoffice lift to send items back and forth. And of course, there are phone calls, emails and texts between us, but no person to person contact.

Downstairs where I work, we are also divided, right down the middle. The tellers stay on one side of the lobby, and the loan officers and personal bankers stay on the other. If I have something to go to the teller area or back window, I set it on a table that separates us for them to pick up. They do the same. This is definitely not normal!

About half of our staff is working from home now. Before, nobody worked from home. Management assigned several people to work from home right from the onset of this pandemic to make sure that we had people away from everyone else, who could still work if the ones at work did get sick. Management has also encouraged those with children at home to take the time they needed (with full pay) to stay home as needed if child care became an issue. Other employees are rotating staying home for two weeks, then coming to work for two weeks, while other employees take off. This is an effort to keep several more people away from the virus, should it hit our bank.

Since we are short staffed right now, but with all the daily work that needs to be done, the days seem to fly by. Our management lets us support our local restaurants by ordering lunch in twice a week, at the bank's cost. Those of us still at work enjoy this perk, even if we can't eat together.

We went from a bank that used to enjoy inviting customers inside for a cup of coffee or just to sit and visit, to a bank that keeps the lobby doors locked and encourages drive thru or online transactions only. We do allow customers in by appointment only. Even those wearing masks!

As far as the Emerald Club, all monthly activities have been halted thru September 1. No day trips, coffees, luncheons; no get-togethers at all! We do have some fall trips scheduled, and are sure keeping our fingers crossed that they will be able to go. It's sure not normal to be visiting with members on the phone and not talking about the newest events and trips and inviting them along.

Now it's 5:00 PM, and I'm ready to head home from my not-so-normal day. As I drive home, I am happy to know that once I get there, I can hug my husband (and George.) I will cook supper and we will eat together, and even though there will be dishes to do, laundry to fold, and other chores to do.....I will welcome the NORMAL. I can't wait until the rest of the world can get back to normal too.

-Stacy Meyer, Central Bank (Storm Lake, IA)