

This is Erin Dunn of the Fortuna Chamber of Commerce with a Community Comment.

Anyone else out there battling allergies? I battle on two fronts—seasonal and it-doesn't-matter-what-time-of-year-it-is types. I'm miserable most of the time, but when I'm not, I feel like I'm 28 again.

This weekend's culprit? Hay. And not hay out in the field in its natural habitat, but hay used as decoration—in a closed room—in a closed small room.

I had to sit at a table in the back of the room during a Rotary function Friday night and explain to people that I was allergic to the hay or I'd be up sitting by them.

The hay problem normally happens only during rodeo week, my bank also uses hay as decoration at that time. I usually like going to my bank—but I'll use the drive up that third week in July every year.

Last week—it was feathers. And they about did me in. We stayed with friends in Healdsburg and they had a real feather pillow in the guest room—the kind with feathers sticking out of the fabric. Not the hypo-allergenic kind, but the real feathers that immediately made my eyes swell and my throat close up.

I used to have such a problem with feathers that I would always take my own pillow when I went out of town. But most hotels these days have non-allergenic feather pillows or fake feather pillows—so I got lazy. And paid for it.

At first we put the pillow across the room. It didn't help. After about 15 minutes, I realized I was going to have to put it in the closet, put something over it, and close the door.

The effects were so bad I started having to clear my throat every few seconds. I knew I was straining my vocal chords with every throat clearing, but I was stuck.

I took an allergy pill. And then waited for it to work.

The medicine was slow to kick in. I honestly thought at one point I would need to go sleep in my car. I'd have to risk the cops being called by the neighbors reporting someone on their street was sleeping in their car. Just as I was planning what blanket to take to the car, it calmed down a bit.

The next morning I was hoarse from all that throat clearing. And I was supposed to do voice over work the next day. I used to make fun of those professionals whose voices were their craft—You might know the ones—they have a scarves around their neck, avoid drafts and are always drinking tea. Oh brother.

The triumvirate of allergens for me also includes cats—the one I managed to avoid this month.

So I'm hoarse again and having to battle grasses, pollen and trees at the same time.

You will have to excuse me, my tea is about ready and I need to move from this draft and adjust my scarf.

This has been Erin Dunn with a Community Comment