

The Diary of a
Reluctant Social
Distance Extrovert
Prisoner

**The COVID-19
Years 2020-2022**

From Friday, March 13, 2020, to Sunday, March 13, 2022

A Daily Chronicle of the Pandemic



Stephen Michael Soreff, MD

Dedication:

This book is dedicated to my partner Margarett (Peggy) Tucker. She has been my guiding light, inspiration, best critic, support, travel and hiking companion, and if the term is still kosher, my soul mate. We have shared the pandemic together. Thank you, Peggy-I love you!

Acknowledgments:

Even living in social distancing and, at times social isolation, for two years, it still took a village to produce this book. First, I thank my editors Lucy Edwards and Liz Bulkley at the Forum, <https://forumhome.org/>, the online newspaper serving Candia, Deerfield, Northwood, and Nottingham, NH for their encouragement, guidance, and constructive reviews of the Diary. Thanks to Valerie Chapman and Elaine Schmottlach for their contributions to *Laughter is the Best Medicine*, and Bill Garnett for items for **Did you Know** sections of the Diary. Thanks to Ed Miller of *Bradford Copy*, Raymond did the printing of many pages of the Diary and this book.

Stephen Soreff, MD wrote this during the COVID-19 pandemic

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The Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner Day 1

Steve Soreff, MD

It is Saturday, March 14, 2020 (Pi day) 10:45 AM. While listening to *Wait Wait... Don't Tell Me*, I am entering into the first morning of my confinement. To be exact this self-imposed prison sentence of an undetermined sentence began on Friday night, March 13, 2020 (Friday the thirteenth) at 10:12 PM. Upon returning home from attending Friday night services at Etz Hayim Synagogue and struggling with the toilet paper hoarding crowds in the supermarket, my partner greeted me with a request aka ultimatum.

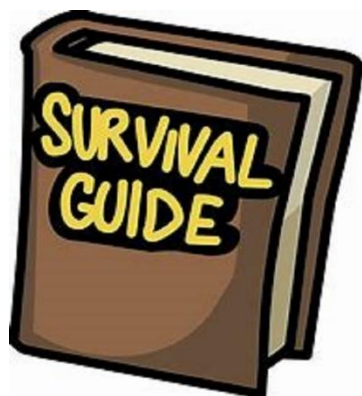
She suggested, we immediately commence a strict social distancing program for the next two weeks. Her rationale was correct and still annoying. She is the part-time caregiver for her delightful and brilliant 16-month-old grandson, Emerson. So if she were to become ill, then she could not fulfill her childcare duties. Plus, it is clear that locally and nationally self-isolation is the right thing to do. As a loose association, all Jewish observances begin at sundown, so it is traditional that for us to commence our self-imposed on Friday night.

My immediate response to this social distance dictum mirrored Elizabeth Kubler-Ross's five stages of dying: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. I am guilty of my initial reaction to coronavirus (COVID-19) was denial. Yes, I washed my hands while singing Happy Birthday twice and did go to the gym and religious services. Like America, I practiced denial. However, I rapidly went through anger, bargaining, and depression. I was angry about all the many, many things I would have to give up. This included pickle ball, Tai Chi, Historic Society attendance, not going to the synagogue, golf, and shopping. My response was diminished by the knowledge of ALL the things I was to go to were canceled.

Anger, bargaining, and depression marked my reaction after the denial had been breached. As a certified Meyer-Briggs extrovert, I was not ready for the turn of events. The anger was because of things I love to do were taken away from me. Dam, you, coronavirus. You wrecked my daily and weekly schedule. This was followed by the bargaining stage. Perhaps, I could just play golf because that was outside and in the fresh air. Perhaps, if we all washed our hands, we could play the domino game Mexican Train, with our friends. The coronavirus would not budge. Next, quickly I entered into the depression stage. To me, as a psychiatrist, depression equals loss or losses. I grieved all things I could not do. Sorry, it was not a clinical depression so I did not require taking an antidepressant medication. But venting did help. Hence, this diary.

So right now, I am reluctantly and slowly moving into the acceptance phase. I am discovering things I CAN do in social distancing. There are a number of things I can do and these, although not limited to, include the following: write more, proofread my book, kayak (if it gets warmer), check out some graveyards for the Nottingham Historical Society, walk on the Atlantic coast beach with Peggy, rake the beach in front our house, watch some movies at home, and hike Mount Pawtuckaway.

This is day one, more to follow.



The Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner: Part Two

Steve Soreff, MD

Day three Monday March 16, 2020. Looking back over the weekend, I discovered it held some unexpected treats. First, I discovered many of the places and things I wanted to do were canceled. Tai Ch was closed- practice at home was the message. My golf partners concurred with my decision. So, many of my 'sacrifice' proved unnecessary. Peggy and my outdoor adventure of looking for a graveyard on Saturday was successful. Sunday, we did major too long put-off yard work. And times we got out into the sunshine; the sun rays are supposed to kill viruses.

For my diary article, I received many thank and comment emails.

<https://forumhome.org/the-diary-of-a-reluctant-social-distance-extrovert-prisoner-p32507-1.htm>

Thank you readers. Based on those responses, the second article will go two new directions. The first is a review of the uniqueness of this pandemic. In the second, I plan to start an online discussion of strategies and tactics to deal with the social distance predicament we are all now in.

What makes the COVID 19 pandemic unique? Although this is not the first pandemic, <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/pandemic-resources/basics/past-pandemics.html>, it promises to be the most memorable because of speed of its transmission as well as the global media attention to it. Because of the international social distancing and its accompanying major disruptions makes this one standout. Furthermore, it is the immediate, dramatic and drastic personal impact it has on **everyone** which will make it unique. It is a shared global experience. In contrast to others calamities such as blizzards, ice storms, and hurricanes, although we did check on our neighbors by telephone, we did not meet nor greet them since we were observing social distancing. No block party this time.

How to survive and thrive I while practicing social distance? That is the question. Let us start by looking at difference between strategy and tactics. Strategy is the art of winning the war; tactics is the art of winning the battle. The strategy is to stop COVID-19 locally, nationally, and globally. So everyone's participation in social distancing is paramount and essential. Keep your eye on that prize. Yes, since the time frame to achieve that victory is as yet undetermined, your commitment must be unwavering. That is the strategy.

Now for the tactics. The following tactics are designed to help one survive and thrive day to day while practicing diligently social distancing. Remember, not one size does not fit all and over time be prepared to switch tactics.

1. Use the telephone to connect with others. Call any and all of these: old classmates, someone living alone who is really isolated because of social distancing, relatives you have not talked to in years, a friend out-of-state or out-of-country, some one from your wedding party.
2. Bring back the old board games. Yes, it is time to play Risk, Monopoly and OMG Candyland.
3. Work on a 1,000 puzzle.
4. Remember those boxes you had from when you moved in years ago? Time to unpack them. Huge flea markets opportunities await you when the crisis is over .
5. Do yard and garden work. One benefit, no black flies and mosquitos about.
6. Watch a movie and many films. Make them funny ones. Remember, *laughter is the best medicine*.
7. Watch over several days or weeks one of the amazing multi-segment shows on Netflix, Hulu or Amazon Prime.
8. Convene a family meeting to discuss options. Kids may have some great ideas.
9. Finally, organize your stamp or coin collection or whatever you have been collecting for years.
10. Start a diary. You are living and participating in historic times.
11. Write a letter to an old friend.
12. Take a walk, hike, visit the beach but only solo or with your social distance family. Painfully, I say this as an extrovert, these are not to be social occasions.
13. Meditate. Watch or listen to mediation CDs, DVD or Podcast.
14. Use your home exercise equipment.
15. Read a book
16. Find sometime humorous about the situation. Peggy greeted me today with ‘good morning, fellow prisoner’. Or perhaps are we in “Is it too soon to laugh” phase? Here are two COVID 19 jokes.

Why would COVID-19 won't do any harm to Hollywood actor Tom Hanks? Answer: He has already survived a World War, being stranded on an island, being stranded at an airport, a failed moon landing, an emergency flight landing on the river and a ship hijacking.

This is your pilot speaking. I'm working from home today”.

These are just a start. Your turn. What ideas, plans, and suggestions have you and your social distancing unit come up with? Please, share them.



In America all events are consecrated with tee shirts

The Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner: Part Three

Steve Soreff, MD

It is Wednesday, March 25, 2020, and I have been practicing social distancing for well over a week, now. This is my 12th day. I have maintained a social distance to everyone except the two other COVID-19 prisoners in our house. With that in mind, I am reviewing some of the many changes and adaptations that the virus has forced upon me.

One of my big favorite activities was going to Tai Chi classes. It not only provided me a way to both improve my balance and posture but was also a neat social opportunity. There we formed a neat little community. We all even celebrated the Chinese New Year together. But all that ceased when the Tai Chi associations stopped all classes and gatherings. However, one local Tai Chi trainer convened an informal not sanctioned outdoor, level public place where all participants practiced both social distancing and two Tai Chi sets. We meet three mornings a week. It was great to go through all the 108 Tai Chi movements in the fresh air and sunshine. It additionally allowed me to have some events in my appointment book (yes, I still use an appointment calendar book instead of one on my iPhone).



Doing an outdoor social distancing Tai Chi set

One of my anchor weekly focuses revolves around my synagogue, Etz Hayim, in Derry. I go there for many reasons and things. I like to worship there, especially on Friday night. I love to learn so I attend Saturday morning Torah Study. I enjoy teaching and developing an educational curriculum, so I am in-charge there of its continuing adult programs. And I look

forward to meeting my friends there. With COVID 19, everything stopped. What to do? ZOOM to the rescue. Through it, all these activities were able to continue. Sure, I miss the face to face contact and the food. But we were still able to be connected.



Rabbi Peter and Amy Levy leading a Torah Study on ZOOM

One problem with social distancing is how to get packages at the post office. It is amazing how many items were indeed delivered right to our doorstep by Amazon and USP. But in the case of US-mailed items, when and if the packages are too large for your mailbox, then all you get is a blue slip. That document informed you that you had a package at that post office and when it was open. And, we did get one of those blue slips. However, I did not want to actually enter the Post Office itself. In doing so, I would compromise my social distance position. What to do? The Nottingham Post Office to the rescue. I called them and explained my predicament. They said simply call us when you get to Post Office's parking lot. Then we'll bring the packages out and leave them. You can then pick them up. That is exactly how it worked. Spoiler alert, it turned out to be four packages instead of the two I expected.



My packages were brought out for me by the staff of the Nottingham Post Office 03290

What about exercise? I love to work out every day. Yes, I know the physical trainers preach to take a day off. But my doctor says I can do some physical activity every day of the week. I used to go the Planet Fitness at least three times a week. I have a love/hate relationship with the stair master there. But it is closed. Yes, we do have an elliptical machine and stationary bike at home. But I wanted more. The answer was right outside my house. We have Pawtuckaway Lake as our back lawn and the woods as our front lawn. I could go kayaking but that will wait till it is a little warmer. But in the words of Robert Frost, "I took the one less traveled". I hiked into the woods. I wandered through some thickets and then followed some trails. Great exercise; I heard the birds singing and watched a beautiful a sunset.



Two paths diverged into the woods and I followed both of the them

I was still able to cover my ultra-local journal 'beat' by watching the Nottingham Board of Selectmen (BOS) meeting Monday night March 23, 2020, on my television.

<https://forumhome.org/nottingham-board-of-selectmen-meeting-march-p32563-129.htm>

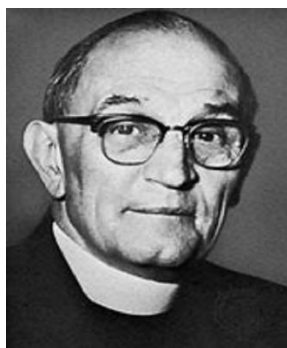
Democracy moves forward in face of COVID.



Nottingham Board of Selectmen meeting March 23, 2020

My son, Barak, and a later website reminded me of the famous and haunting poem by Martin Niemöller, with its ominous relevance today. You know that one. "First they came for the Jews". <https://www.hmd.org.uk/resource/first-they-came-by-pastor-martin-niemoller/> The current modification takes the following form. It came for the Chinese and we did nothing because we were not Chinese, with the repeated refrain about Italy and so on. We are slow to appreciate what is happening right in front of us and learn for history. A reminder, there have been other pandemics.

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/pandemic-resources/basics/past-pandemics.html> But none like this one.



Revered Martin Niemöller

In this time of social distancing aka self-isolation, I have been spending a great deal of time in my office. So, with the prompting of my partner, Peggy, we have been de-cluttering it. We found many books to donate both to the Nottingham library and my synagogue library. One quick public service announcement the Nottingham Library is closed and cannot accept donated books and other material at this time. <https://forumhome.org/blaisdell-library-eresources-p32559-129.htm> The surviving books have been placed in distinct sections by category on now dusted-off selves in bookcases. Tons of miscellaneous papers have found their way into the appropriate locations or soon will find their way to the Recycling Center. And despite pain involved in actually finally cleaning the place up, it looks and feels better.

Back to social distancing, been safe and be well.



Gov. Sununu's Order for March 27, 2020

The Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner: Part Four

Steve Soreff, MD

It is Sunday, March 29, 2020 and things have definitely changed. Two quick side notes before I talk about the big event. First, I call March 29, a national cribbage day-more to come later about that. Second, today marks the second full week of my social distancing life. Back to it, why the big change? It came about on March 26, 2020 when NH Governor Chris Sununu ordered all Granite Staters to stay home and ordering nonessential businesses to close in an effort to slow the spread of COVID-19. <https://forumhome.org/gov-sununu-issues-emergency-stayathome-order-in-nh-p32568-1.htm> The order came into effect at exactly 11:59 PM March 27! It was not the order itself which concerned me. What changed my world was that it was to be in effect until **May 4!!** The end of the tunnel was suddenly much farther than before. It reminded me of when Lieutenant General Lord Charles Cornwallis and his British army surrendered to the American and French forces on October 19, 1781 completing the Revolution's victory at the Battle of Yorktown. At that ceremony the British bands played "The World Turned Upside Down." With the Governor's proclamation, I had to 'recalculate' my social distancing strategies. Perhaps all the jokes about hoarding toilet paper (TP) were not so funny and too real. However, I did hear the grocery had more TP but they were limiting sales to one roll at a time.



Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra playing Beethoven's Ninth Symphony climatic Ode to Joy

Admitting that my "The World Turned Upside Down" moment was a downer, it spurred me to be more upbeat. Quick diversion. What happened to the hydrogen atom that lost its electron? Answer: It became positive! So, I want to talk about some positive things that have occurred doing my social distancing confinement (SDC). The Internet or the Information Highway has been a great sustaining force. Friends send me neat material hourly-thank you to all of them. One recent one was a YouTube featuring the Rotterdam's Philharmonisch Orkest. translation Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra playing Beethoven's Ninth Symphony climatic Ode to Joy, <https://youtu.be/3eXT60rbBVk>. It went viral under the tagline 'Innovation fights virus.' What made this so powerful, uplifting and creative was that each of the musicians was practicing SDC!! As the similar offering is done by the Virtual 'Love Sweet Love' From Quarantined Berklee College of Music Students, <https://www.npr.org/sections/coronavirus-live-updates/2020/03/24/821041006/virtual-love-sweet-love-from-quarantined-berklee-college-of-music-students>. Both lifted my spirits.

And since I am on the Internet tack, my friends regularly send me puns. While other may view them as punishment, I find those emails as *pun as mint!*. Here is a sample of recently really good ones. *When the smog lifts in Los Angeles , U. C. L. A; A will is a dead giveaway; A grenade fell onto a kitchen floor in France and resulted in Linoleum Blownapart; A plateau is a high form of flattery; and A thief who stole a calendar... got twelve months.*

While exercising on an elliptical machine and watching television, I see a new set of advertisements products for the 'new' normal. What an interesting term. Yes, we have definitely entered into the times of a new normal. That expression gave a glance at what life must have been like during World War II. I was born in 1942, so technically I am a war baby and not a baby boomer. Understandingly, I do not recall much of that era. But I do know people got used to war, new daily routines and especially living with uncertainty as to when the war would end. Today, we are adjusting to a new world war against a virus. We do not know when it will end. But, in contrast to WWII, no nation; e.g., Switzerland is spared, and the information flow is 24/7.

When I wrote the Diary Part Two on March 16, I offered a series of coping mechanisms for SDC. <https://forumhome.org/the-diary-of-a-reluctant-social-distance-extrovert-prisoner-part-two-p32511-1.htm> One of them involved tackling home projects neglected for decades. Well, this week I got to walk the talk. More specifically, if you missed the weather reports, hurricane Peggy, my partner struck our house in general and in my office specifically. We attacked my office vehemently. In terms full disclosure it had not been really organized and cleaned in 13 years. But because of SDC we had time to do it right. For the first time, books were shelved by category and many mischievous papers found their way to the appropriate folders. In fact, it took three days. Much went to the COVID rearranged Recycling Center. <https://forumhome.org/covid-changes-the-recycling-center-p32570-129.htm>. And many books will find their way to the Nottingham and synagogue libraries.



Office Before



Trash to Recycling Center



Office After

We are all adjusting to the new normal. That means for me daily walks to the mail box for exercise and to be outside. I go to many meetings on ZOOM. Telephone calls to friends and relatives. And oh yes, what about National Cribbage Day. I love cribbage. I believe it is the best two people card game ever. I learned it from my father. I have taught to my children and play it regularly with Peggy. And yes, I play it on my computer. In cribbage the highest possible point hand one can get is 29. To get this, you must have in your hand 3 fives and a Jack. Then if you cut-up the other five and it is the same suit as your Jack, you get 29 points. So 29th of every month, I declare it as National Cribbage Day.



To be continued. Keep on pegging as we all find our way in the new normal.

21 DAYS

The Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner: Part Five

Steve Soreff, MD

It is Friday, April 3, 2020. This marks the 21th day or third week of my distancing life. As my car's GPS says, "re-calculating", I am starting to work out strategies for marathon rather a nice, comfortable aerobics jog. At least, it did not tell me to make a U turn. I knew I was headed in the right direction. I just have to make some mid-course adjustments. My first priority in dealing with the new normal is develop a daily schedule aka routine. I do better when I organize my time. One of the centerpieces of my daily events is the walk or hike to the mail box in the afternoon. If I walk the dirt road it is about 1.2 miles. Or if I wander through the adjacent woods, it could be up to three miles. These excursions have not only provided me exercise, a break from the computer and fresh air but also a great appreciation of my neighborhood.

<https://forumhome.org/neighborhood-delights-p32596-1.htm>



When I take a long hike to get the mail, I go through this white birch grove.

As I ponder my new normal, I want to talk about one aspect social distancing or my son, Ben, tells me, it is now called physical distancing. Experts all remind us to do distancing in order to flatten the curve, to protect hospitals from being overwhelmed and to protect ourselves against getting COVID 19. They are all correct. But I want to focus on a different motivation-patriotism. Remember in World War II how every person made sacrifices to win the war. They had rationing; they bought war bonds. Many worked longer hours. All was done to defeat the common enemy. The new normal is based on sacrifices. But here the enemy is -and it is a global enemy- COVID 19. It is a patriotic duty to practicing distancing!



To practice DISTANCING!!!

Meanwhile, I marvel at the extraordinary global effects of COVID 19. It not only has a wide-wild impact but also represents an amazing amount of international cooperation. Scientists around the world are working together to find tests and vaccines for the virus. Healthcare workers across nations share information with and support for their colleagues.

As much as I cherish my daily and weekly route, on Wednesday, April 1, 2020 (no joke) I had to break it and went to my local pharmacy to pick up a prescription medication and several other items. I have several lifelong conditions (I hate the medical term, chronic illness-it sounds so negative) which require medication. Again, thanks to the folk who work and keep open the grocery and drug stores. The good news is that Walgreen's has a drive-up window. Thank you. So, this was my first, in two weeks, sortie into Raymond. What I witnessed there appalled me. On my venture out, I observed many folks were not observing distancing!! What will it take for some to really grasps the seriousness of this pandemic?

Switching subjects, here is an idea for COVID movie. It is based on the concept that survivors of the COVID 19 have at least short-term immunity to it. <https://www.phillyvoice.com/serology-test-coronavirus-immunity-blood-test-covid-19-testing-survivors-reopen-society/> Based on that premise, a group of idealistic third year medical students, consisting of some neat and interesting characters like seen in *the Breakfast Club* film, want to help in the pandemic. But they are told all they can do is be safe and practice distancing. They recognize that many healthcare workers now caring for patients will get the virus. And they will not be able to care their patients. They also know that there will be a critically need for these workers then. Thus, the students deliberately expose themselves to the COVID virus. They then get sick but survive. As result with their immunity, they call help take care of patients. And they are heroes.



The medical students' movie

Passover this year represents both bad and good news. The first night of Passover and therefore the first seder will be on Wednesday evening, April 8, 2020. But before I address the plusses and minuses, let me tell you a little story. *A man goes to his rabbi and says, "My friend has the corona virus. What is an appropriate food to bring to someone who is so gravely ill?" The rabbi says, "Matzah." The man says, "Ah, the bread of affliction, that makes sense." The rabbi says, "No, it's easy to slide under the door.* Passover with its two seders had always been a festive and enjoyable time of year for me. We hold the first seder at our house with family and friends. Peggy makes a great seder meal and make a heavenly matzo ball soup. Heavenly, because matzo balls are so light, they float up to the overhead light fixture. The second one is a community gathering at the synagogue. COVID 19 has put a stop to both. So, what can be good about? Thanks to ZOOM, my children and grandchildren (in New York, Connecticut, Israel and Massachusetts) and sister (in Illinois) will all be together for the first seder!! Yippeee.



The Seder Table Passover 2020

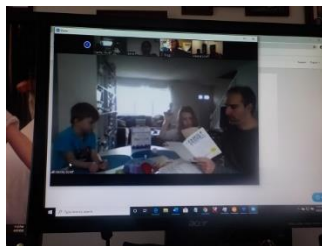
I nominate that 2020 is the year of the ZOOM <https://zoom.us/>. Yes, it is the Chinese year of the Rat. And global pandemic is all you hear about in the news. But what dominates my life recently is the ZOOM. It has provided the world with a social connection in the face of social distancing. Thank you!! I go to meetings, to lectures, to classes, to synagogue, to seders and to friends' homes via it. It is one of the few items in schedule book. And yes, the ZOOM maven, the Yiddish word for expert, controls the world or at least the meeting. That person can mute you at any time. Perhaps, Time magazine will have it as its Man of the Year. There is also ZOOM bombing. There are additionally ZOOM altercations, in which groups and people work out ZOOM programming priorities. One night, Peggy and I, each on our own computers, went to

two different ZOOM events at the time. It has changed the landscape of kindergarten through - graduate school education and made distancing learning possible. Thank you.



I cannot leave without some Internet humor. One of my friends sent me this: “Day 4 of social distancing. Struck up a conversation with a spider today. Seems nice. He’s a web designer.” Here are some others. *As see on the CNN John Travolta was hospitalized for a suspected Coronavirus. But doctors soon realized that it was only a Saturday Night Fever and he will be Staying Alive.* The World Health Organization has announced that dogs cannot contract Covid-19. Dogs previously held in quarantine can now be released. To be clear, WHO let the dogs out. And *why do they call it the novel coronavirus? It’s a long story*

Be safe and well remember: keep on distancing as your citizen of the world duty.



My grandsons and son gathered for our first night Zoom global seder.

The Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner: Part Six

Steve Soreff, MD

Hello again, it is now Thursday, April 9, 2020 and my 27th day of distancing (almost my fourth week). Here are some my thoughts and things I've been up to. I know I am now in a marathon, but it is often to tell various days apart. Although the weekends do punctuate the week, too frequently one day seems much the other. In sense, we are living in either the movie *Ground Hog Day* or *50 First Dates*. However, to look on the bright side of things (thank you, *Monty Python*) with compliments to Internet, Facebook and Zoom, my dance card aka calendar now boasts places to go and appointments to keep. One advantage of distancing is I am saving a ton of money on gasoline. The irony here is recently gasoline seemed to be an historic low price. Go figure.

More good news. On, Saturday April 4, 2020, the sun came out and it stopped raining. It seemed that it has been an eternity of cold, wet days. With sun out, I saw my shadow for the first time in a while. And seeing it, reminded me of Ground Hog day, so I wondered if meant many days before distancing would be lifted. Moreover, a nice day translated into a more adventurous hike to the mail box. <https://forumhome.org/neighborhood-delights-p32596-1.htm> And by rambling in my neighborhood I followed what the NH Governor said. “We’re asking folks all over New Hampshire to find that little spot in your neighborhood, in your community, whatever it might be,” Gov. Chris Sununu said in a video posted on Twitter on Saturday’, April 4. <https://www.wmur.com/article/granite-staters-encouraged-to-safely-enjoy-outdoors-as-part-of-home-hike-challenge/32042052#>

The parameters of my local woods are that it is bounded by Lamprey Road on the west and Shore Road on the east with Pawtuckaway Lake to the north and NH Route 156 to the south. There is a particular trail which I call ‘the Northeast Passage’ <https://www.britannica.com/place/Northwest-Passage-trade-route>,. That route is the long-fabled route around Canada between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. In actuality, this is now well used year-round trail running east to west connecting Lamprey and Shore Roads. Thus, this Northeast Passage trail provided me with an exploration anchor reference point for my hike that Saturday and other ramblings there. I took one of rarely used trails which did eventually connect to the Northeast Passage trail. On my bolder track, I discovered a number of large boulders, that I had

not seen before. Several of those huge stones were covered with lichen, which I took a likened too. Furthermore, it was great to get out of the house.



Discovering my neighborhood boulders.

On Sunday morning, April 5, 2020 I made my first official loon sighting on Pawtuckaway Lake. Yes, others have reported seeing one, but this was my first. I had had a couple of possible sightings but they proved ducks. This view was of a single loon in front of our house. I took this a good omen. With the glance of the loon as my incentive, Peggy and I went out kayaking. It felt great to be on the water again. We rounded Horse Island and headed home. I saw Old Glory waving atop one of the docks. It reminded me of the flag over the debris of the Twin Towers and one at Iwo Jima. America was late to World War I and II, but once involved, we went on the victory. We will prevail over COVID 19.



Old Glory on Pawtuckaway Lake- we will win!

Also, on Sunday at exactly 7:00 PM, my daughter, Sasha, who lives in Manhattan, called me on my landline. She held her phone out her window so I could hear all her neighbors clapping. She says that happens every night at 7:00 PM throughout New York City. It is the people's way of saying thank you to all the healthcare workers and others who are sustaining the city in this COVID 19. Hearing the clapping and their appreciation was very moving.

Wednesday, April 8, 2020 proved a high point of the week in two ways. I finally found evidence of Spring. I saw flowers blooming along NH Route 156.

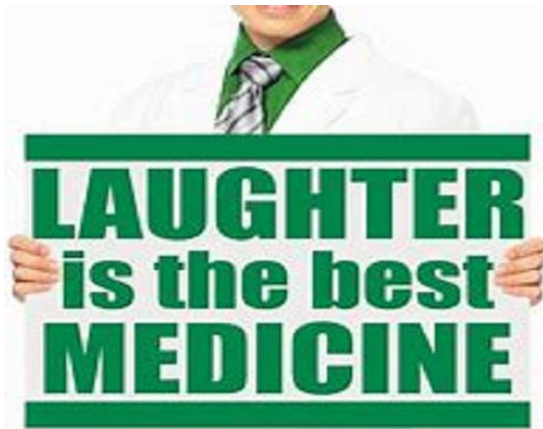
<https://forumhome.org/index249.htm> I took this a sign of hope. Amazingly enough, the flowers were growing right in front of the New Hope Church-how appropriate a name! Then, in the afternoon we celebrated the first Passover seder with my family via zoom. With **my children and grandchildren (in New York, Connecticut, Israel and Massachusetts) and sister (in**

Illinois), we were all together for the first in decades. The seder commences with the question-“Why is this night different than all other nights?” Never has that question been more appropriate.



Flowers o NH Route 156

In my 27th day of distancing, I still find the humor as one of the best medicines. And people keep emailing me jokes. Please, keep them coming. First, here are some the traditional jokes. *Headline: Break-in at the Apple store! Police are looking for iWitnesses;* I was just at the boat store and they were having a two for one sail; *There’s a big paddle sale at the boat store. It’s quite an oar deal.* and Q: What type of shoes do frogs wear? A: Open “toad”



Second, we have been in the COVIN 19 world long enough, so we have passed the “is it too early, to joke” stage. Here are some of the best pandemic humor I have received. *I used to spin the toilet paper like I was on Wheel of Fortune. Now I turn it like I’m cracking a safe;* Still haven’t decided where to go for Easter . . . The Living Room or The Bedroom; *This morning I saw a neighbor talking to her cat. It was obvious she thought her cat understood her. I came into the house, told my dog . . . we laughed a lot;* Day 5 of Homeschooling: One of these little monsters called in a bomb threat; and *Classified Ad: Single man with toilet paper seeks women with hand sanitizer for good clean fun.*

A final thought for now: **Better 6 feet apart than 6 feet under!** Be safe; be well. The flowers are blooming. Happy Passover and Happy Easter



The Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner: Part Seven

Steve Soreff, MD

It is Wednesday, April 15, 2020 and in normal times this would have a taxing day aka federal income tax due, but instead these are and continue to be taxing days for all. It marks my 33rd day of distancing. Yes, it is a very long-playing record. Looking day on the last week, it has been full of challenges, events and gratitude.

Recently, Eastern Oil & Propane <https://eastern.com/> delivered propane to our home. What a sense of duty and help the driver demonstrated! He wanted to make sure we had enough propane for our generator (more on that later). When I went, at social distance, to thank him, quickly he put up his scarf mask. He said “I want to protect my customers “as his reason the for mask. His behavior was representative of all the people we take for granted, who now sustain us. Many thanks to go around.

On Friday April 10, 2020 I had a minor crisis. Part of my vehicle’s standard operating equipment is a CD player. I will not leave home without a book on CD in the radio slot. Or in reality, I require two before I start the car. <https://forumhome.org/insights-for-a-better-mental-health-april-try-something-new-p32629-149.htm> Today, I finished one of my CD books, The Informant by Thomas Perry, a good read. Panic! What to do? In the spirit of those who sustain us, I remembered the Forum article about the Nottingham offering Library Porch Pick-up. <https://forumhome.org/library-porch-pickup-p32638-129.htm> I immediately called the library Liz Bolton, the Library Director of Blaisdell Memorial Library, answered it on the first ring. I explained to her the situation. After hearing my request, she added I could not return the listened to CD set nor any other item such as a book. The library had not yet figured out had to deal with returned items. She then relieved me of fear of the CD set being overdue. She told me everyone’s materials were not due until the end of May. When I got to the library later that morning, there was a plastic bag with four who-done-it CD sets. Great, my car was able to start again, after I got the bag. Thank you, librarians, you not only sustain democracy but also those practicing distancing.



Liz Bolton, Library Director, Blaisdell Memorial Library serving us while keeping distancing

Saturday, April 11, 2020 while exercising today on the elliptical machine, I heard three good news items. One headline said “Pet adoption surge in pandemic”. Another one noted that clear skies meant people around the world in urban areas were finally able see the stars. The final one noted this was the 50th anniversary of Apollo 13. For the pets and their adopters, it was a classic win win situation. Isolated distancers got companions; the pets got a home and to live. The clear skies not only allowed people everywhere a chance to see the constellations, but also to realize the devastation of our pollution. Score one for the Clear Skies Initiative <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2002/02/clearskies.html>. And Apollo 13 not only represented a brilliant example of teams solving problems but also one other time when all nations were united. As the capsule hurtled toward return to planet earth, the leaders and the peoples around the world said ‘land here if you can and come home safely’. In this pandemic, the global community is united to defeat it.

Saturday afternoon, April 11, 2020 I had two moments of insights. The first was that I missed the Boston Red Sox and the second was the power of hitting the mental wall. Let’s focus on sports right now. Remember the Joni Mitchell’s song *Big Yellow Taxi* which said “They paved paradise, Put up a parking lot... Don't it always seem to go, that you don't know what you've got 'til its gone?” So, I did not realize how much I missed professional sports, until they were gone. I had not given much thought to it when the National Hockey League, National Basketball Association and Masters Tournament as well as March Madness vanished. But I was momentarily concerned when opening day at Fenway Park was postponed.

That afternoon I appreciated that sports played a role in my life. In season, I would listen to the news for two things-that Red Sox won and the Yankees lost. Listening the Sox games on the radio was a great background noise to my writing. So then I got to thinking how television deal without games to broadcast? In moment of boredom and curiosity, I flipped on the television set and got my answer. They show reruns of famous or infamous contests. CBS on that Saturday and Sunday replayed the final round of the Masters’ Tournament from 2004 and 2019. In 2004, here was the headline:

“ Phil Mickelson's major leap and two of the greatest hours in Augusta history make the 2004 Masters very rewatchable”. <https://www.golfdigest.com/story/phil-mickelsons-major-leap-and-two-of-the-greatest-hours-in-augusta-history-make-the-2004-masters-very-rewatchable> For 2019, the banner line was “Why Tiger Woods’s 2019 Masters win stands alone in a storied career”. <https://www.independent.co.uk/sport/golf/tiger-woods-wins-masters-2019-majors-a9461151.html> Wow, as a wish-I -was- better golfer, those were great games and perhaps worth watching. But what hooked me was that the Fox channel re-broadcasted last game of the 2004 World Series when my beloved, long suffering Boston Red Sox played against the St. Louis Cardinals in St. Louis. The headline of that was “YES!!! Red Sox complete sweep, win first Series since 1918”. <http://archive.boston.com/sports/baseball/redsox/articles/2004/10/28/yes/ I>

flashed back to that event. I and all New England rejoiced. I appreciated the role of professional sports play in society. They not only entertain but also provide something bigger than ourselves to root for.



Steve with his 2004 Red Sox tee shirt

Later that afternoon, I departed my “Reversing the Curse” Red Sox 2004 victory revelry and hit my mental wall. Remember, I said we are now involved in a marathon. And, yes, at a certain mark some runners will hit “the wall”.

<https://www.runnersworld.com/training/a20854502/understanding-why-you-hit-the-wall/> In the marathon world, it is when runners are depleted and exhausted.

In the mental marathon world, it meant a moment of despair. Wow, what a too strong term for a psychiatrist. In reality, it was more a few minutes of discouragement and apathy. It was yet another Saturday night with nowhere to go or people to see. It marked our 5th Saturday night in distancing. Peggy suggested so yard work to get me out of funk. It partially helped. Then I started think, what could we do to make it different? Neither a movie nor any cable series appealed to us. And we have played a million games of Up-word, Scrabble, Super-Scrabble, Rack-rummy, Kings cribbage and cribbage. Then I came up with the idea of just the two of us playing Mexican Train, a dominoes game. In the old normal days, we would have played it with several other couples. While playing our game, we checked in by speaker telephone with some of our Mexican Train couples. Playing it just the two of us was something new. And looking back on the ‘down’ episode, I was reminded of the gains from moments of depression. There is a concept that out of chaos comes creativity. It happened here and to me. By acknowledging discouragement, talking about it and doing something about it, is great medicine.



A Mexican Train dominoes game with four players

By Sunday morning my last night’s twit and the Mexican Train completed its run, I awoke to a magnificent view of Pawtuckaway Lake. After several days of high winds, the calm,

reflective waters were a blessing. That afternoon I bush whacked for an hour and half. Using the Northwest passage as my starting point a wandered north until I hit the Shore Road. It was good to be woods and hiking about.



Sunday April 12, 2020 Easter Morning

Monday, April 13, 2020 proved to be called either challenging or interesting, depending how you frame it. It started with a stop at the Nottingham Post Office. I wanted to mail my taxes by April 15. Although there was a federal extension, parts of New Hampshire collections were still do on the 15th. But and there is that but again, in the spirit of distancing, I do not want to enter the Post Office building itself. After weighing my envelopes and checking online, I called the post office. They told me how many 55 cent stamps and forever stamps I needed to put on each envelope. My collection of neat, memorable forever stamps are now on their way to the IRS.



My forever stamps went bye bye

One neat thing I saw on the drive to distancing Tai Chi was many white plastic bags filled with litter periodically placed on Old Mill Pond Road. In the midst of this distancing world, residents found time to pick-up litter. Good for them.

That afternoon the crisis struck. The predicted high winds and rain warnings came true. They knocked out power. No problem, because we have an automatically activated propane powered generator. But, again with the buts, it did not go on!. We have a generator from Generator Connection <https://generatorconnection.com/>. A semi-fanatic call to them got me someone to tell me how to turn it on. That did not work. They then sent a technical to fix it. He came. After an hour and a half of work, he found the problem. BUT!, he did not have the proper part to remedy the situation. Meanwhile power was back on. He left. Then the power went out again. Wow, so then I experienced the 'good old normal days' with a black-out no generator, no lights, no computer and yes, candles. Good news, since I am writing this, the power did come back on. But, yet again, I want to say thanks to all those people that work at risk to keep us going. The technician who came out and the linesmen who restored power.

Looking back on the whole generator episode or saga since we are still waiting the proper part, I concluded two things. One is that without the generator back-up, the house feels vulnerable. I hated those hours without electricity. The other, is just like my earlier twit, I then had my moment of rage. I was angry at the whole situation we are all in. I apologized to the people was sharp with. Yes, distancing brings out all types of emotions.



Did you hear about the hydrogen atom that lost its electron? It became positive. I want to leave you on a positive note. Here are the latest offerings. But first there was this amazing seder-*Saturday Night Passover Seder feat. Dan Levy, Finn Wolfhard, Billy Porter, Idina Menzel & More* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QGRsH2Qti_Q Regardless of your religious affiliation you'll love it. And it raised money for a good cause.

Here are some of the regular jokes that I received. *The thief who stole my glasses, I will find you ... I have contacts.* To the guy who stole my antidepressants ... I hope you're happy. And, the calendar's days are numbered.

The bridge joke: [So](#) many coronavirus jokes out there, it's a pandemic.

Here are the COVID 19 jokes. *Day 6 of Homeschooling: My child just said "I hope I don't have the same teacher next year." I'm offended.* These two are related. A. *I need to practice social distancing from . . . the refrigerator.* And B. Every few days, try your jeans on just to make sure they fit. Pajamas will have you believe all is well in the kingdom. And *If there's a baby boom nine months from now, what will happen in 2033? There will be a whole bunch of [quaranteens](#).*

Be safe, be well, we move forward into the new normal as it becomes normal.

40 DAYS

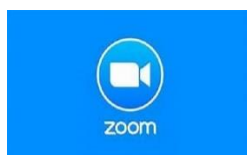
The Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner: Part VIII

Steve Soreff, MD

Welcome and hello as I enter my 40th day of distancing, Wednesday, April 22, 2020 which is both the end of my 6th week and is also the 50th anniversary of Earth Day (how appropriate). I realized that the number 40 has Biblical significance. It rained for 40 days in the Noah story, the Israelites wanders to 40 years in desert before reaching the Promised Land, Jesus was in the desert for 40 days and Lent is 40 days. But and here is the but again, 40 is just more day in a marathon, we are all on without any clear finish line. With that in mind, I will look back on the week.

Remember the old adage, be careful what you wish for? In the beginning of distancing, I welcomed zoom and my zoom meetings. They did and do serve a vital purpose. But there is the other saying, “too much of a good thing”. This week I realized that next week I would be trapped in a zoom maze. I belong to several organizations. As result, next week, each of them had a 7 PM zoom meeting. So, for each one of those time slots, I had a zoom commitment! As a result, I had to choose between two zoom meetings on the same night. You cannot be in two zoom places at the same time. To continue the same theme, Friday afternoon April 17, my sister called to say hello. I could not talk to her because I was in the middle of zoom meeting. Later, I returned her call. But she could not talk to me, because she was in a zoom conference. Life in this new normal can be complex.

And to continue with a very loose association, when my children were younger, they used to watch the PBS kids show, Zoom. <https://laughingsquid.com/remembering-1970s-pbs-kids-show-zoom/> Then Mister Rogers settled them down before dinner. And to complete my zoom revelry, there is also a Hebrew song called *Zum, gali-gali-gali, Zum gali-gali*. <http://www.hebrewsongs.com/?song=zumgaligali>.



The new normal: My zoom world

On Thursday, April 16, 2020 story was “New Hampshire’s schools will be closed to classroom learning for the rest of the year, Gov. Chris Sununu announced Thursday, citing continuing infections and uncertainty surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic”.

<https://www.concordmonitor.com/Sununu-closes-schools-for-remainder-of-the-semester-33927119> On Friday, I had expected, he would extend the May 4th deadline for social distancing. But her did not. As result, I made my own decision, regardless of any state or federal to decision to loosen distancing, I would continue, at least, the end of May to practice it. It is important to continue to follow the new now old adage: *Better 6 feet apart than 6 feet under!* And I urged groups that I am a part of, to keep on distancing for at least until the end of May, at a minimum

Our first seder, April 8, was family one via zoom. During it, I noticed my son was sporting a beard. When I asked him about it, said “it’s my COVID 19 beard”. Then more recently, as I walked to the mail box, a neighbor in his pick-up paused to chat with me. Yes, we maintained a social distance. But, and yet again with the butts, at first, I did not recognize him. After he identified himself, we proceeded to have a conversation. He said the reason that I failed to figure out who he was, is because he had grown a COVID 19 beard. I wonder, if there is another by-product of the pandemic, the beards.

Saturday night, April 18, 2020 I watched One World: Together at Home. <https://www.theverge.com/2020/4/7/21211716/one-world-together-at-home-benefit-concert-lady-gaga-covid-19-global-citizen> It was powerful, moving and important, I’ll admit I cried while viewing it. The production was tangible evidence that this was not only a global infection but also an international response of caring, thank you and people coming together. I have long lamented that lack of a regional and national common ground. I remember when everyone watched the Uncle Miltie and the Ed Sullivan Show and talked about them the next day. Well, with this Together at Home telecast, I witnessed a national and international common ground. It was great to see support for the World Health Organization <https://www.who.int/> and Global Citizen <https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/>. It was hosted by Jimmy Kimmel, Jimmy Fallon, and Stephen Colbert. When the three appeared on screen together, with Colbert in the middle, it was the first you could see a Jimmy, Steve, Jimmy- Oreo cookie!

The program honored healthcare workers, first responders, food suppliers and everyone who are keeping us alive and society functioning. Finally, something to be proud of. It showed people coming together, caring for each other, and working together. One particularly poignant part of the broadcast was when doctors and nurses talked about caring for patients with COVID 19 who were dying. Their families could not be with them. The healthcare providers were the last people those patients saw. That segment was emotional and powerful.



Sunday, April 19, the traditional and histrionic real Patriots Days, yes, the Battles of Lexington and Concord and the shot heard round the world, proved to be a banner day in two ways. First, because it was finally warm out and less wind, I went kayaking. Just being on the water is relaxing and comforting. I rounded Horse Island and upon returning toward home, I saw four loons!!!! Wow. And what was impressive is their acknowledgement of our pandemic. They moved about the lake practicing social distancing. Second, while exercising on my elliptical machine and watching a Great Courses lecture on the Greek mythology, I learned about Pandora and her story. Cutting to the chase, she is supposedly responsible both all the evil in the world and for hope. Wow, that combination is so appropriate for right now,



Four loons on Pawtuckaway Lake

On Tuesday night, April 21, 2020 the Nottingham Historical Society (NHS) had its meeting on zoom. As we discussed ways to proceed in the face of the pandemic, it was pointed out, that in a new normal way, this was our first ever zoom meeting. It is kind of our history. I recognized that indeed we were making history and living in historic times. I suggested to group we start to document right now our times. For example, currently, people are reviewing the Spanish Flu of 1917-18 for lessons learned. In fact, I has written an article about it called *The Forgotten Flu* <https://www.psychcongress.com/article/forgotten-flu>. This diary is my part in recording the story of our times. So, the NHS is starting to document this pandemic with local stories and pictures. Yes, today, there are photographs of Times Square and Paris streets empty and the Vatican with anyone there for the Papal blessing Easter Sunday morning. One person at the meeting talked about one-way supermarket isles. We recognized that things like that should be documented. I urge readers to take pictures and record your challenges. We are not only living history but making history.



One-way isles in the supermarket to preserve distancing

The recently I had a painful moment of realization. In the best of scenarios, with restrictions gradually being lifted, as a senior citizen in higher risk group, it might be a very long time before I could actually see in person my grandsons. That is bad. Here is what I am missing.



Westley with Thank You sign for Healthcare workers



Foster in the new normal

To get beyond my grandchildren withdrawal mood, here is one sign of Spring and hope <https://forumhome.org/new-signs-of-spring-and-hope-p32690-1.htm>.



The forsythia and flowers on NH Route 156 in Nottingham



And for humor.

Regular humor

Random thoughts of a wondering mind:

- What if my dog only brings back my ball because he thinks I like throwing it?
- The word “swims” upside-down is still “swims”.
- If you replace “W” with “T” in “What, Where and When”, you get the answer to each of them.
- Do twins ever realize that one of them is unplanned?

If the Statue of Liberty needed a pair of shoes, they’d have to be size 879 to fit.

COVID 19 jokes

Chuck Norris got Covid-19, now the virus has a 14 days quarantine!

A man walks into a bar and goes up to the bartender and says “I’ll have a Corona please, hold the virus

Where do sick boats go to get healthy? The dock!

You know what they’re saying about 2020. It went viral faster than anyone thought it would.

Until next time, be safe and be well

49 DAYS

The Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner: Part IX

Steve Soreff, MD

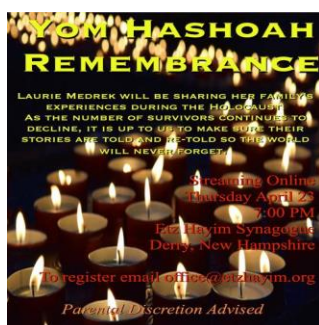
Hello again, today is Friday, May 1st, 2020, my 49th day of distancing and 7th week in my Nottingham bunker. May 1st means “May Day is a May 1 celebration with a long and varied history, dating back millennia... welcoming in a change of season (spring in the Northern Hemisphere). In the 19th century, May Day took on a new meaning, as an International Workers’ Day grew out of the 19th-century labor movement for worker’s rights and an eight-hour workday in the United States” <https://www.history.com/topics/holidays/history-of-may-day>. And speaking of the International Workers, my father was born and grew up in Lawrence, Massachusetts, home of the famous IWW Bread and Roses strike in 1912 <https://www.history.com/news/the-strike-that-shook-america>. In addition, Mayday is an international emergency word in voice distress signal. Wow, how appropriate for now.

Let’s see what happened this week-I can hardly wait!

Thursday, April 23, 2020 was a productive day. After writing in the morning, I took a long hike again in neighborhood. The white birch grove welcomed me and I saw neat little pockets of water in the woods. Not really ponds as ultimately, they will dry up, but for the moment, it was nice to notice them. The more I walk in the woods, the more details I see. I am feeling like a junior Henry David Thoreau.

But everything today was building toward that night. That night my Synagogue Etz Hayim <https://www.etzhayim.org/> in Derry via zoom had a Yom Hashoah Remembrance event 7:00 PM. This observance remembers the 6 million Jews killed by the Nazi. I am haunted

by the Holocaust <https://www.britannica.com/event/Holocaust>. When I wake up in the morning when it is cold out, I immediately think what was it like in Auschwitz <https://www.history.com/topics/world-war-ii/auschwitz>. In the service Laurie Kagan Medrek detailed her father's and other members of her family survival and in painful, detailed gave an account of the brutal deaths of members of her family. It was profound. I remember seeing *Schindler's List* <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0108052/> and not being able to leave the theater for an hour and a half. Her story was personal and intimate. Like the story of Ann Frank, she put a person to the number of 6 million. And, I know that is my family's story too, because the Nazi murdered the great-grand parents of daughter, Sasha and my son, Ben. What made her talk so particularly appalling to me, was how much in occupied Europe especially Eastern Europe, anti-Semitism in some of the population contributed to folks aided the Nazi in finding and killing their fellow Jewish countryman! Promise, please, not to forget it was 6 million individuals - children, adults and old folk.



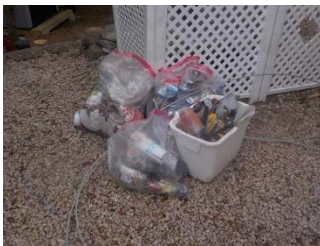
Moving beyond the emotional trauma of her presentation, I had two thoughts. Thank God I live in America. I have and my parents' generation have encountered some anti-Semitism here, but nothing like what nationally feed the Holocaust. And second, compared to the suffering of the slaughtering of my people, the distancing is in reality not that big of a deal. Again, thanks to all those people who sustain and maintain society through the Pandemic.

Friday, April 24, 2020 I learned two new neat things and had one important event. While exercising on the elliptical machine and watching the World Channel on PBS <https://www.pbs.org/show/world-channel/>, I discovered that not only sea animals like the salmon return to spawn on land but also some land animals such as crabs go to the sea to lay their eggs. Different show, same work out, geologists have strong evidence of "Killer Flood" covered much of the earth 9,000 years ago. This backs up the story of Noah. And the generator got fixed, yippee! New part is now in place and I feel much less vulnerable.

Saturday morning, April 25, 2020 Peggy Tucker and I wanted to celebrate Earth Day and do our part in the Pawtuckaway Lake Improvement Association's (PLIA) Adopt a Highway Program. We picked up litter from where the Pawtuckaway River goes under NH Route 156 to about a quarter mile north toward Nottingham Square. To observe the Governor's social distancing orders, just we did it alone. Other members of the PLIA did different sections at different times. We separated the recyclables from the trash. Thereby, we honored the spirit of the Earth Day. Here is what we picked up.



Peggy Tucker picking-up litter of NH Route 156



From a quarter of mile on NH Route 156

Monday, April 27, 2020 proved to be a banner day three ways. How so? I'll tell you. First, I went to distancing informal Tai Chi. As I noted earlier, I go three times a week on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Those events give a schedule and organization to my week. Basically, it is something I look forward to and gets me out of the house. And yet again, we practice distancing throughout the two sets of 108 moves each. What make it special was that Cindy took a group picture of us on her phone (for the record, I still use an ancient instrument, a camera, to take my pictures). She would send that photo shot to a temporary homebound member of our group. Cindy then read her description of our group. Warning, I violated one of the Ten Commandments 'You shall not covet thy neighbor's poses'. With her permission, here is depiction of our group's experience.

"My Tai Chi classes were cancelled in February, but a half dozen of us still gather outside in an out-of-the-way town park to practice a couple of sets (appropriately distanced, of course) three mornings per week. We are often distracted by a riotous choir of birdsong, stands of ivory paper birches arching in synchrony within a spring wind, or an ambush of balsam scent on the breeze, but so be it. Under other circumstances, we probably would not have chosen to be friends, but in this era of enforced isolation, we have become a tight little support system for each other, and the new things we are learning about one another unfold like petals in this thin spring sunshine." Wow, does she have a way with word!!



Our informal Tai Chi group at the proper distancing apart

My second nice thing happened as took my daily walk to get the mail. On the side of the road, I spied a peculiar rock. I stopped to investigate. There it was, a stone with Be Kind written on it with white paint. What a super message for our time. Remember, I have been a quest for signs of spring and hope <https://forumhome.org/new-signs-of-spring-and-hope-p32690-1.htm>. I count that rock as one of those signs. I do notice people in general seem to be more pleasant to one another. Most motorist on my road wave as they slowly drive passed me. And my third good thing happened when I got the mail. My automobile insurance company, MMG Insurance Company <https://www.mmgin.com/>, sent me a small check. With this explanation “We know COVID-19 has presented extraordinary circumstance...Driving has significantly decreased...we are returning 15% of the premium for the months of April and May”. Wow, someone else beside a rock was Kind!



A Be Kind stone next the rocky road we are all traveling.

Tuesday, April 28, 2020 proved to an adventure. And I mean adventure in positive, exciting and rewarding trip. It combined two of my favorite local activities. First, it involves the ‘mighty Pawtuckaway River’ <https://forumhome.org/the-mighty-pawtuckaway-river-p32679-129.htm>. And second, it also satisfied my desire to hike in the neighborhood <https://forumhome.org/the-diary-of-a-reluctant-social-distance-extrovert-prisoner-part-vi-p32644-1.htm>. Instead of usual normal route to the mail box, I followed the roaring Pawtuckaway River through the woods. In the process, I discovered a huge stone wall system

along the river's edge. We have lived here for over 13 years and I had never seen that wall before. Distancing has not only made me appreciate my neighborhood more but also me discover more things in it. WOW And as bonus, on the way back with the mail, I heard the birds singing. That is always a good sign, just like hearing them when we do distancing Tai Chi,



The stone wall along the roaring Pawtuckaway River

Wednesday, April 29, 2020 I awoke to a sudden realization. This is my second National Cribbage Day observance <https://forumhome.org/the-diary-of-a-reluctant-social-distance-extrovert-prisoner-part-iv-p32601-1.htm> during my distancing isolation. And to celebrate, I won my Cribbage game on the computer!

Thursday, April 30, 2020 proved to a challenge in an unexpected way. Yes, no zoom appointments and rain curtailed my neighborhood wandering. But I had the task of resetting my watch. How come? Glad you asked. My watch not only tells time but also gives the day of the month. Big deal! However, here is the rub. April only 30 days in contrast to other months; e.g. March 31. Thus, I have to manually advance the watch's date. And that got me to asking why do some months have 30 days and others 31? This led to semi-satisfying Google search.

Here is what I found out. Calendars have a long and complicated history. The Roman Calendar <https://www.britannica.com/science/calendar/The-early-Roman-calendar> had 10 months with 304 day. Martius (31 days), Aprilis (30 days), Maius (31 days), Junius (30 days), Quintilis (31 days), Sextilis (30 days), September (30 days), October (31 days), November (30 days) and, December (30 days) https://calendars.wikia.org/wiki/Roman_calendar. Of interest, the last five were named Latin words for numbers five for Quintilis, six for *Sextilis*, seven for septem, eight for octo, nine for novem and ten for decem. Later the months of January and February were added. With the Julian Calendar around 708 BCE, there were months names changes- with July for Julius Caesar and August for Emperor Augustus. Much later alternations with Gregorian calendar in 1582 and English shifts in 1752. I found the search vexing but interesting. The easy answer blame it on the Romans. But I welcome a more definitive answer as to why April has 30 days and I therefore have to change my watch manually.

APRIL 2020						
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
		1	2	3	4	
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

As a final note, on my walk to get the mail, a wild turkey crossed the road. Yes, I know the official answer is “to get to the other side”. The bird was alone and usually they travel in groups in my neighborhood. When I asked him, “why alone?”, he replied, “I’m practicing social distancing, just like you humans are.” And said back, “thank you”, May Day!!!!



Regular jokes.

Here’s today’s Biblical joke: The oldest computer can be traced to Adam and Eve. Yes, it was an Apple. But with an extremely limited memory. Just one byte. Then everything crashed.

I finally realized my parents favored my twin brother. It hit me when they asked me to blow up balloons for his surprise birthday party.

An old classic! Why do seagulls fly over the sea? Because if they flew over a bay they would be bagels.

A dog gave birth to puppies near the road and was cited for littering.

Two silk worms had a race. They ended up in a tie.

In a democracy it's your vote that counts. In feudalism it's your count that votes.

Corvid 19 Jokes

Isolation Jokes

I’ve just been talking about this with the microwave and toaster while drinking coffee and all of us agreed that things are getting bad. I didn’t mention anything to the washing machine as she puts a different spin on everything.

The grocery stores in France look like tornadoes hit them. All that’s left is de brie.

Yeah, I have plans tonight. I’ll probably hit the living room around 8 or 9.



56 Days

The Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner: Part X

Steve Soreff, MD

This marks a landmark for the Diary chronicles, it is now in double digits-X=10. Amazing, remember your 10th birthday? When you hit 10 years old. We are Friday, May 8, 2020, my 56th day of distancing, my 8th week in the Nottingham bunker or put another way, my 2nd month! Wow who would have thought. Let's look back a bit.

It is Saturday morning, May 5, 2020 and I two reactions to the Governor's proclamation of May 1, 2020. Let me rephrase that with the old vaudeville line. *I saw the ball coming toward me and it got bigger and bigger, then it hit me.* The Governor's statement then prompted two responses in me. To begin, let's look at what his press release actually said.

“Governor Chris Sununu Announces Stay at Home 2.0

Concord, NH – Today, Governor Chris Sununu announced he is implementing a new, modified Stay-at-Home Order. Stay at Home 2.0 is in effect until May 31st. The state is taking steps to reopen the economy in a smart, phased approach that is supported by facts, science and data.”.

<https://www.governor.nh.gov/news-media/press-2020/20200501-stay-at-home.htm>



What I heard mentally was the musical One Day More Corona Parody <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DwlnT3WxrI&feature=youtu.be> Readers, please, take several minutes and listen to it. It hilarious. But what I really got out of it was One More Month. To be honest, I agree with that extension. It put people before profits. It will save lives.

But, and yes, there is the but again, I started to look in the various components of the rolling forward openings. The devil was in the details. Since I am a want to be golfer, I focused on the plans for golfing. Here is what it says. “COVID-19 REOPENING GUIDANCE, GOVERNOR'S ECONOMIC REOPENING TASKFORCE Effective May 11, 2020, golf courses may open to members and New Hampshire residents only if they operate according to the following guidelines”. <https://www.governor.nh.gov/news-media/stay-at-home/documents/20200501-golf.pdf> I immediately focused on the “New Hampshire residents only”. Although I can appreciate its rationale, it raised the specter of the evil of the out of starters. Yes, we all know the derogatory term that northern New Englanders often apply to folks from Massachusetts. And I have heard locals voice discomfort with “those people from Lawrence” at the State Park. In the pandemic people from New York, New Jersey and Connecticut were labeled as **pariahs** by folks in Florida. I remember in the *Grapes of Wrath* <https://www.britannica.com/topic/The-Grapes-of-Wrath>, the ways California attempted to block the Okies from coming in. We already prohibit out of state fire wood be brought into New Hampshire. I do not see not a wall with Mexico but I wonder if there will walls around each state between nations and between continents? You cannot drive into California without stopping at an Inspection station.



On a brighter note, learned today of the Blue Angels and Thunderbirds flew over Washington, DC to honor health care workers and first responders. They did also over Baltimore and Atlanta. Last week, Tuesday, April 28, 2020 they did the same over New York City and Philadelphia. It was beautiful, emotional and very much appreciated by the healthcare workers as well as all the residents of those areas.

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=Blue+Angels+And+Thunderbirds+Fly+Together&view=detail&mid=E3F6A48B48822AB5D2BCE3F6A48B48822AB5D2BC&&FORM=VRDGAR&ru=%2Fvideos%2Fsearch%3Fq%3DBlue%2BAngels%2BAnd%2BThunderbirds%2BFly%2BTogether%26FORM%3DHDRSC3>



Navy's Blue Angels and Air Forces' Thunderbirds

The sun shone on the weekend May 2 and 3. It was a very welcome visitor, especially after a series of cold raining days. On Saturday, I seized the day and kayaked for an hour and a half. Yes, I paddled directly into the wind, but after gaining the shelter of the south channel, it was smooth kayaking. The on Sunday, I went for a long hike into the woods. Yes, in the tradition of Robert Frost <https://forumhome.org/the-diary-of-a-reluctant-social-distance-extrovert-prisoner-part-iii-p32566-1.htm>, again I took the road less travelled, but I also hike into woods in the spirit of Henry David Thoreau. He wrote “**I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived.**” That is a bit grandiose, but I did hike deliberately that day. I found a neat huge, long stone wall. I followed that wall west to east until at a right angle, it was joined with another stone wall. And to paraphrase, two stone walls “diverged in a wood, and I—I took the one less” prominent. I hiked south along the other wall for a bit.

Ever since I discovered a stone wall along the Pawtuckaway River <https://forumhome.org/the-diary-of-a-reluctant-social-distance-extrovert-prisoner-part-ix-p32742-1.htm>, I have gone a little nuts over stone walls. My interest in them was accelerated when I attended a NH Humanities zoom talk A Walk Back in Time: The Secrets of Cellar Holes <https://www.nhhumanities.org/programs/walk-back-time-secrets-cellar-holes>. The speaker, Adair Mulligan talked about stone wall mapping <http://granit.unh.edu/resourcelibrary/specialtopics/stonewalls/>. This was mind blowing concept which I am now trying to master. It allows you add in stone wall you have located in your neighborhood to its collection as well as tells about existing NH stone walls. On a less positive note, the welcoming warm day also brought out the attacking black flies. Finally, in my woods wanderings, I came upon some fiddle heads. Yet another sign of spring and hope <https://forumhome.org/new-signs-of-spring-and-hope-p32690-1.htm>.



A stone wall corner



Fiddle Heads

My wood peregrination additionally led me to behold a magnificent pasture pine tree https://northernwoodlands.org/outside_story/article/pasture-pines along the stone wall. I have found huge one on my road, in the woods and on islands in Pawtuckaway Lake. What makes them so remarkable to me, is not only their eminence size and multi-branched trunk structures but also, how they appear half dead and half alive. Certain branch trunks are dead. Other branch trunks are full of green, living needles.



A stone wall in the woods with a pasture pine along it

Monday, May 4, 2020 proved to be (pause) -a quick set-up riddle-what is the definition of a farmer? Answer-a perosn outstanding in a field!. The day was outstanding in two ways. First, last night we attempted to grill some chicken but the propane tank was empty. Then we could not loosen the back-up tank. Raymond's Irving https://www.irvingoil.com/location/irving-oil-496?utm_source=Bing&utm_medium=lpm&utm_campaign=irving to the rescue, they not only took back and replaced the defective tank we could not open but also allowed me to exchange empty tank out the building and gave me a face mask!. What geat customer service.



Me sporting my new Irving face mask

Second, as you know I have been lamenting not being able to physically see my grandsons in Connecticut. In the middle of the night, I hit upon a way to connect with them. I would run a virtual scavenger hunt with them. With them and myself on telephone facetime, they would figure out the five items in or about the house. Once, they guessed it, I would go to that location and provide with clues clues to the next place. When they have figured out all five thing, I would give them each a prize. I nearly hurt myself, by patting self on my back, because it was a good idea but my son, their father actually liked it!. In fact, he helped me not only to design the items to be guessed and therefore found but also come up with the appropriate clues that the kids would understand. I can hardly wait until next week when we will actually do it. Film at Diary XI!

New subject, I recall from my days as a Psychiatrist working an Emergency Department that the Chinese symbol for crisis, had two meanings-danger and opportunity. Well, certainly the COVID 19 represents danger with sickness and death. But, it has created some opportunities. I am thinking about the annual meetings of organizations I belong to. Yes, the traditional gathering with many people for the immediate future is simply out of the question. But, and here is that but again, with the help of zoom each of them is developing a creative, engaging and dare I say exciting way of holding such a meeting. Thus, for this year the new normal means annual meetings will be zoom meetings. In that same vein, it looks like in September, the High Holidays aka the Jewish New Year and Day of Atonement services will also be on zoom instead of person.



The Appalachian Mountain Club, the AMC, just announced it would not open its highhuts in the White Mounttains. Wow. It was the right decision, but and there is that but again, I am an

Information Volunteer in them. One of major good weather activities is gone. Friends gave us a new card game, Monopoly. Yes, dud just say card game? It is now in that form which is quicker and playable by two people. So just like us playing two person MexicanTrain, we were making some small modifications. But with all this major event changes for the summer and beyond, I heard the echo of my brain, "recalculating". More to come, as I look down the very long road back to normal.



Regular aka normal Humor

If a parsley farmer is sued, can they garnish his wages?

The midget fortune teller who escaped from prison was a small medium at large.

If you jumped off the bridge in Paris, you'd be in Seine.

New section: When Insults Had Class...

"He had delusions of adequacy." -Walter Kerr

"I didn't attend the funeral, but I sent a nice letter saying I approved of it." -Mark Twain

"He has no enemies, but is intensely disliked by his friends." -Oscar Wilde

COVID 19 Humor aka the new normal humor

Finally, introverts experience a world that is suited for us. All events cancelled; we don't even have to go thru the trouble of flaking. No one is making random small talk or physical contact. Everybody minding their business.

Homeschooling is going well. 2 students suspended for fighting and 1 teacher fired for drinking on the job!

I don't think anyone expected that when we changed the clocks, we'd go from Standard Time to Twilight Zone.



63 days of distancing and still counting

The Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner: Part XI

Steve Soreff, MD

Wow, this is Friday, May 15, 2020; my 63rd day of distancing and my 9th week in the Nottingham bunker. I love numbers, so $9 \times 7 = 63$ and 15 is my lucky number. The reason for my affection for it is because B 15 was the last open space I had to cover in a BINGO card. And, at that moment, the caller said “under the B, 15. I won! Now to look backward on the week and hope forward.

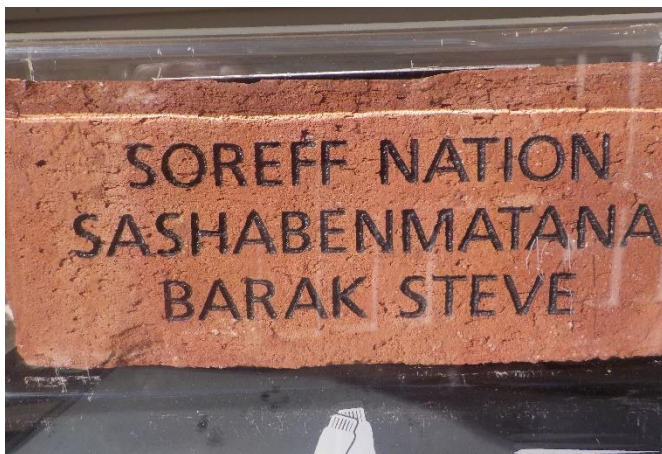
On Saturday, May 9, 2020, I entered into almost my 57th day of distancing. Please, forgive my pun, as 57 is in Heinz sight for hindsight. I relish that idea and you’ll catch up. Enough, I am saying is that on Friday, instead of exercising to my Great Courses lectures on Mythology, I watched the BBC America broadcast. From it I learned a number of very disturbing things. One, we now exceeded the number of unemployed than in the Great Depression. The reporter focused on the plight of a laid off mother with rent due and the landlord demanding it. Two, the program highlighted the Opioid Epidemic in New Hampshire. Fascinating and painful that the BBC focused on New Hampshire. Last year there were more than 400 Opioid deaths in NH. Those suffering from addiction, now with the Pandemic face even more struggles with even less resources. Third, May 8, 2020 marked the 75th anniversary of Victory Europe, V-E Day. The show appropriately focused on Britain’s ceremonies to remember it. The news show reminded me of Alexis de Tocqueville observations about America. It takes a foreigner to point out things about us.



A Nottingham connection V-E Day was that in May 2015, the Nottingham Historical Society held an exhibition to commemorate that day. The event highlighted the bomber crash on Pawtuckaway Mountain November 29, 1944 in which 9 airmen died. The Nottingham Girl Scouts of Troop 11069 was so inspired by it, the group raised \$2,300 to erect and then dedicate a monument at the crash site. <https://forumhome.org/wwii-bomber-crew-remembered-p28126-1.htm>

That Saturday afternoon proved to be a major bookcase event in two ways. What is he talking about? Sorry, let me stop to explain, please in our semi-dining room huge bookcase there are two objects which proved to feature prominently in events in that PM- a brick and rock on board.

First, I will talk the brick. Remember, when they did major renovation of Fenway Park to celebrate its 100th anniversary in 2011 <https://historicboston.org/bricks-mortar-and-memory-at-fenway-park/>? You could buy an engraved brick for a brick walk there and I did. The brick was engraved with “Soreff Nation” (my way of being connected to Red Sox Nation) “SashaBenMatana Barak Steve” in honor of my kids in their birth order. You can see that brick for yourself in Gate B, Carlton Fisk https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carlton_Fisk section when go to Fenway Park (I miss the Red Sox) And, yes, a replica of that brick is on the book case.



A replica of the Soreff Nation brick at Fenway Park

When I floated out the idea of a zoom call with all of my children, they agreed with several stipulations. Sasha in NYC wanted the picture of Soreff Nation brick in my zoom background. Matane in Tel; Aviv, said it had to fit her time difference and work schedule. Ben in Norwalk desired a time which fit his kids schooling and Barak in Dorchester indicate, it had to fit his work responsibilities. I, in term discovered putting the brick text on zoom, meant a mirror image of it. But, when I flipped my picture, I solved it. Thus, on Saturday afternoon. We all came together. I loved seeing us all and observing we were all safe and healthy despite the distancing life around the nation and the world. Two of the gang had developed some drawing and painting skills and each exhibited their works via zoom. Bragging rights -I have some amazing and talented children and grandsons. And, yes, here is another use for zoom, an art gallery. Sasha did this powerful and moving piece of art. Moreover, in the conversation, I learned from them the new terms BC and BCE. They now means Before Corona or Before the Corona Era, depending on your religious beliefs. But best of all in the zoom connection, we all laughed together.



Sasha's artwork created during her distancing in NYC

Now for the second item on the book case, the rock on board. It says "Yankee Weather Rock If it's wet, it's raining. If white, it's snowing. If it's moving, it's windy. If there's a leaf on it, it's Autumn. If it's not visible, it's pretty darn foggy. If it's dry and still, just wait a minute, it's a mistake and will change soon." That is exactly the weather on Saturday. It snowed in the

morning and in the afternoon. But, while it was snowing, the sun was shining. The wind was gusting. And on occasion, the day was dry and the air was still. The Yankee Weather Rock was right its prediction ability and shouted out, "I told you so"!! I am listening to rocks now after many days of distancing.



Sunday, May 10, 2020 was Mother's Day. How to celebrate without going into stores for flowers and cards nor going out to dinner? It was solved by my making a card on the computer. My Hallmark card was a collage depicting many facets of Peggy's life. These included photographs of her children and grandson, her rock wall building and as her role of a fairy village god-mother. I got Chinese take-out for dinner. But, perhaps the best gift in this distancing era was a two boxes of Kashi cereal, which a family member had just procured. In recent, sorties in the grocery stores, this commodity was not there. So, simple joys in the new normal.

How do you get water on the brain? Answer-by a brain storm! Sunday, I had a bit of an insight. It is based on the proposition: how is playing golf like writing. And, I am writer. In golf, each hole is a challenge and hope. How do I hit the ball correctly and far enough to par or birdie each hole? And, I'll admit, this more of a hope than a reality. In writing, I have the same challenge, how to craft each sentence, each paragraph, each newspaper article and each book to be good, effective, original, genuine and useful? That is my challenge and hope.

On Tuesday, May 12, 2020 I saw what I was waiting all spring to see. On that day, the birch trees exploded in green. I had a hint of that watching some birch trees while did distancing Tai Chi. But they were their trees; not my birches trees which guard my Northwest Passage. It was glorious to behold their brilliant green.



Birches April 23, 2020



Birch trees May 12, 2020

Also, on Tuesday, I had another first, thanks to COVID 19. I am the Nottingham reporter for our ultra-local online newspaper, the Forum <https://forumhome.org/index249.htm>. In that role, I have had the opportunity interview a number of area people. But, and yes, there is that but again, these were done face to face. On that day I did by first zoom interview. No limit to what one can do on zoom.

Wednesday, May 13, 2020 two random thoughts. One is that in telephone conversation with a friend, he made the following observation. In response to the traditional question, “How are you”? He said “time was both flying by and was going very slow”. Some of these distancing days, I have had the same perception. Interesting-how about for you?

The other one dealt with the documentaries I was been viewing on PBS. Specifically, I enjoy watching the World Channel <https://worldchannel.org/> while I am exercising. I have seen the Roosevelts: An Intimate History, Frontline, Vietnam War: The History of the World, Asian Americans, and Reconstruction: America After the Civil War, just to name a few. These viewings have left me with one impression and one hope. The first is that American history is not pretty. These programs painfully chronicle of incredible hatred, xenophobia, lynching and prejudice in our national history. That is not my America. At least I hope not. We, as a nation, have much to atone for.

The second is that many of these documentaries said America was not prepared for World War I or II. But, once we got into each, our national might turned the tide and helped win the wars. This is my hope, the America once focused can defeat COVID -19. It is my hope and prayer

Thursday, May 14, 2020 was glorious. The sun kissed earth and the winds abated. The lake called and I answered it, by kayaking. There is something very soothing about being on the water. It offer aquatic opportunities. And the simply says, “I am here for you”.

I cannot end, without offering humor-enjoy and perhaps, laugh.



Humor

Moses may have been the first one to get messages from a cloud, But Adam and Eve had the first Apple.

I'm gonna work on being less condescending. (Condescending means to talk down to people.) (*Oops.*)

“To be or not to be a horse rider, that is equestrian.” — *Mark Simmons, comedian*

I bought some shoes from a drug dealer. I don't know what he laced them with, but I've been tripping all day.

When someone tells me “You're gonna regret that in the morning,” I sleep until noon because I'm a problem solver.

Atheism is a non-prophet organization.

I just found out I'm colorblind. The diagnosis came completely out of the purple.

COVID 19 Humor

The barista at Starbucks was wearing a face mask.

Me: Why are you wearing a surgical mask?

She said: I'm not, it's a coughy filter

Which composer got the coronavirus? DryCoughsky

The first case for COVID-19 has been confirmed in Russia.

The patients name is Ivor Chestikov



71 Days of Distancing

The Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner: Part XII

Steve Soreff, MD

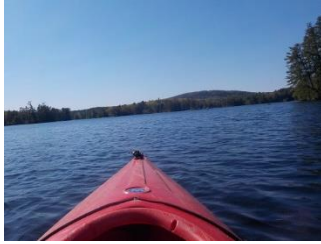
Today is Saturday, May 23, 2020, my 71st day of distancing as well as the end of my 10th week of it. Wow, time flies when you have to choose between the living room and the office with brief moments in the kitchen. This week has been challenging both emotionally and dentally. Let's take a look at what happened.

The weekend of May 15-17, 2020 had many varied activities. I mowed my lawn for the first time this year. The event had several aspects to it. Number one, it is always a celebration that the mower actually started. It had sat in the garage all winter and had had pangs of jealousy with all the attention and use focused on snowblower. For the record, now it is the snow blower's turn to be jealous. Number two is the pitiful condition of the front lawn. Last year, on July 5, 2019, I signed the official surrender treaty to the weeds. For over a decade, the weeds in various denominations have been slowing taking over the lawn. In realty, I mowed weeds with intervals of green grass between. And number three, I consider cutting the grass as a major indication that we are finally in Spring! Yippee.

On Saturday morning, May 16, 2020 my younger sister arranged for a family zoom call. It not only included my children and grandsons but also significant others (remember that term from the 60's?) and cousins in California. With daughters in NYC and Tel Aviv, a sister in Chicagoland and cousins in California, it was cleared the COVID 19 was indeed a pandemic. Distancing, isolation, restriction and disruptions are globally and with no end in sight.

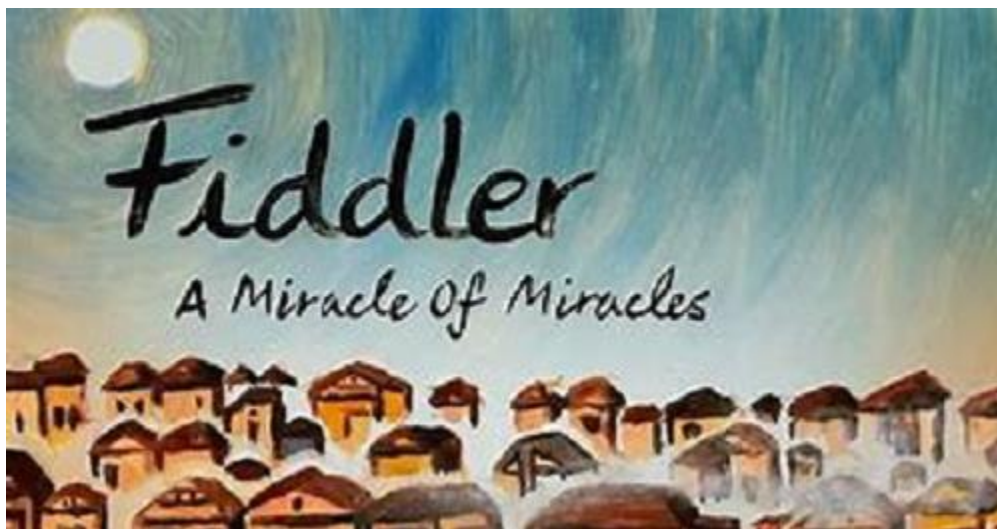
On that afternoon I took a major kayak trip and adventures on Pawtuckaway Lake. I saw two loons-nice. I became yet again with the basic and fundament rule of kayak: *No matter in*

which you kayak, you will always be kayaking into the wind. And today proved no exception. I paddled into wind all the ways until I reached the calm waters of Mountain Brook Cove. But and here is that but again, upon my journey home, the wind had dramatically and more vigorously had shifted. So, I fought the wind all the way home. But just as I neared home, the wind abated and the sun broke out, through the Ansel Adams type clouds and welcomed me into port. So, if anyone were to have be watching me arrive, there was no evidence to testify about my kayak ordeal. However, I am thankful, I have the lake and kayak.



Upon returning home after kayak quest, the mail arrived and with it was my US Treasury COVIN check. I somehow thought it might come sometime, but it was very pleasant and welcomed surprise. It does help, since distancing all I have been doing is paying bills. Thank you, Uncle Sam.,

Saturday evening was Peggy and my date night. We went to the theater, and watched on the big screen television through a laptop connection *Fiddler: A Miracle of Miracles*, the 2019 movie directed by Max Lewkowicz. <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt10003978/> It is “The origin story behind one of Broadway's most beloved musicals, *Fiddler on The Roof*, and its creative roots in early 1960s New York, when "tradition" was on the wane as gender roles, sexuality, race relations and religion were evolving”. Watching it was a profoundly, disturbing bitter bittersweet experience. A quick backstory on how we got to see that movie at home. It was scheduled to be the kick-off event of the 12th Annual New Hampshire Jewish Film Festival <https://www.nhjewishfilmfestival.com/>. But the Pandemic postponed the series. So, the organizers made it available on zoom.



Now, here is why such a profoundly, disturbing bitter bittersweet experience for me. The sweet part is easy; I love the music. As the film said, once you hear the music, it will be in your mind forever. Besides the music being played at many bar and bat mitzvahs and wedding I attended, many of the songs are neat and catchy-tradition!! I also enjoyed watching the “origin story” of the play and the movie as well as learning its link to women’s liberation. Besides, I enjoy the personality of Tevye. The film stressed the universality and family dynamics the original play. The movie ended by noting that every day of the year, somewhere in the world Fiddler is being performed.

The bitter is based on the actual storyline. A review of my history of my experience with the actual play. I have always loved the music but had never seen the play. I did so many years ago at the Brunswick Maine Summer Series. I was not ready nor prepared for the horror of “The celebration ends abruptly when a group of Russians rides into the village to perform the "demonstration." They disrupt the party, damaging the wedding gifts and wounding Perche, who attempts to fight back, and wreaking more destruction in the village” <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0067093/plotsummary>. The Jewish history in Russia is one of pogroms. I am here because my grandparents left Anatevka. It was an early Holocaust. That is why the Fiddler’s storyline is so deeply disturbing to me.

Sunday, May 17, 2020 proved eventful in several ways. At exactly 1 PM, we commenced the First Zayde Scavenger Hunt. It was a team effort. Peggy held the iPhone facetime camera. Westley and Foster asked questions to identify the object. And Ben, the kid’s father and I, aka zayde, the Hebrew word for grandfather, provided clues.

Here were the ground rules and 5 locations they need to identify. “We will start in Zayde’s living room and go inside and outside. Prizes goes to the winners. You may need clues to find all 5 items, that is okay. You can and should ask questions to help you find those things. Zayde will work with you using facetime on his iPhone. Once you figured out the first location, you will go there with zayde. Then you will get clues about the next location. If you working together figure out and find each of the 5 items, each of you will receive a Cash Prize from your zayde. *Go*

Starting in the living room, 1st *I am big and ROUND and people like to climb me. Who am I?* (The big rock on the front lawn). 2nd *I joined the journey in the wizard of Oz but I live here now.* (The scarecrow in the garden,). 3rd *I am red and long, and you are going to guess Hot Dog but that is wrong. Who am I?* (Zayde’s kayak). 4th *I am small but no one has a whale of good time on me because I will smash.* (The model of the Charles W Morgan, the last of the whaling bark and it is at Mystic Seaport). And 5th *I have two kings and two queens, but I do not have kingdom. What am I?* (The marble chess set).”



Steve aka zayde at 2nd (the scarecrow in the garden).

The boys identified the items. And the proud zayde mailed the cash prizes and completion certificates to them.



Grandsons Foster and Westley with their prize money and certificate

Tikkun olam (Hebrew: תיקון עולם, lit. 'repair of the world') represents one of the fundamental principles of Judaism. That Sunday afternoon I got to practice it. A group of us observing social distancing, beautified my synagogue's, Etz Hayim in Derry, grounds. We raked the lawn, trimmed the trees and bushes, and weeded some areas. We left the place better than we found it.



The synagogue after the clean-up.

Tuesday, May 19, 2020 began with the sun kissing the earth, the lake calm and inviting and an open schedule for exercise and fun. Remember how I obsess about Cribbage? Well, in Cribbage, a 19 hand means you have no points. So, the date, the 19th, was clue of what was to come. As I sat at my computer, decaf coffee in hand and a muffin in my mouth, an upper tooth crown came off. This was traumatic dramatic day changer. Suddenly, I was in need of an emergency dental appointment. Yes, I was down in the mouth aka depressed because something came down from my mouth. At least, I had the crown. Fortunately, my dentist at Generations Dental Care in Concord <https://www.generationsdental.com/> could see me early that afternoon. So, off the I went. And to keep the Cribbage connection involved I also lost my computer Cribbage that morning, too!

Entering the office was something from twilight zone. I wore my face mask-thank you Mandy for making it for me. Two dental assistances greeted me in full body gowns wearing rubber gloves with smiles behind their masks. Seeing their masks, I asked them the following riddle. *A man leaves home, takes a left turn, another left turn and a final left turn. Then upon returning home, he is greeted a masked man. What is it? Answer-a baseball player!* They took my temperature and asked me a million health related questions. These included where I had traveled to and any exposure to any COVID 19 persons as well as if had been coughing.

They then granted me solo access to the building. The questions were asked again once I was in the dentist 's chair. Despite my fears, I was examined my a very talented and personable dentist. Victor Stetsyuk who was wearing a plastic transparent full-face shield. I had been to him before many times. The bad news was a cavity had dislodged the crown and more extensive works, more visits and unexpected use for my stimulus check. The good news, he could put old crown back on a temporary basis and he also remembers several jokes I had previously told him. I did offer him and his dental hygienist some new humorous material. As the newspaper says, “a good laugh was had by all”.



Photo from Generations. One of the Generation's dentists, Dr. Chris Binder, in the middle, with assistants Heather Dodge, right and Stefanie Carlson, left.

And I capped off the day, with the crowning achievement of training with groups of folks to be Pawtuckaway Lake Weed Watcher by zoom. Yet, another way zoom is not part of mu new normal.

On Wednesday, May 20, 2020 the way back from distancing informal Tai Chi, I listened to on NHPR's 1 A , an insightful and thoughtful discussion entitled “ [There's No Closure': How A Nation Grieves At Home](https://www.npr.org/podcasts/510316/1a) <https://www.npr.org/podcasts/510316/1a> It detailed with painful stories the twin problems of death in the pandemic. Many patients die alone, no visitors. And many folks mourn alone. Wow- zoom cannot hold the hand nor hug you. I was reminded when I taught called Death and Dying in a Massachusetts State Prison, MCI Norfolk for Boston University. In prison, inmates could not be there when a loved was dying, nor attend the funeral nor be comforted by families. Yet, another dimension of COVIN 19 distancing world. And remember this is being played out every day with the national death toll nearing 100,000. As the program indicated it is many 747 crashes each day!!When I talked to Rabbi Levy about this, he recalled a recent story. A woman lost to COVID 19, but she could not visit before he died. Then, she had to drive herself alone to the cemetery for a graveside ceremony. Finally, she drove herself home alone.



A distancing funeral in the new normal

Thursday, May 21,2020 was a landmark day. First, we had friends over for distancing kayaking. It was great to have a distancing conversation with people rather than on zoom. I miss real conversations. Then I did my zoom broadcast of my synagogue, Etz Hayim' s Hot Topics and Cool Contemporary Stuff lecture series entitled *Oy Vey, the Pandemic! Jewish Humor in this Distancing Era* by Zoom. It focused on that Jews have long tradition of laughing at things, regardless of the circumstances. In the paraphrased words of Haggadah, “Why is this plague different than any other plague?” This talk answered that question. I showed how humor had been part of survival and reviewed the healing of laughter as the best medicine. And thanks to zoom it not only enjoyed an appreciative local audience but also a nation one reaching 39 computers. In the chat box there were also some groans and one person wrote, “If the

coronavirus doesn't kill you, then these jokes will". But the program made its points and many did laugh.



Steve doing the zoom program with his famous rubber chicken participating

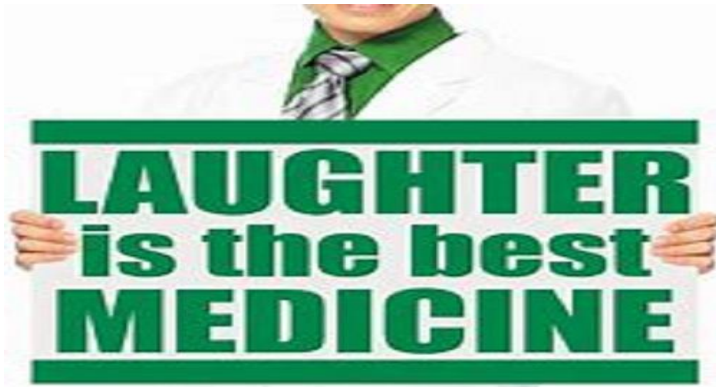
Friday, May 22, 2020 I walked the talk. I am co-captain of the Pawtuckaway Lake Improvement Association's (PLIA) [https://pawtuckawaylake.com/Weed Watchers](https://pawtuckawaylake.com/Weed%20Watchers). On the social kayaking trip yesterday, I spotted a suspicious plant on Horse Island. That location I had been monitoring for years. I went today and found great deal of new growth Purple Loosestrife <https://www.nps.gov/articles/purple-loosestrife.htm>. This is an invasive weed. It is beautiful to look at but very destructive. For the moment, I pulled all weeds I could find. Of interest, the initial suspicious plant proved to be native and no threat. But I did thank the plant for alerting me. Wow, I really into the new normal. That day, I also learned of a California cousin death. That NPR program was so right. Now, we talk about Zoom Shiva <https://www.nbcnews.com/health/health-care/zoom-shiva-jewish-funerals-mourning-age-covid-n1191806>.



Steve with his pulled weeds

And this Saturday was one of consolidation. I went to Torah Study on zoom. We are just starting the Book of Numbers. In the afternoon, I had my handyman triumph. I hooked up our small pump. The little machine lives in a small dog house structure during the warm seasons. It pumps lake water to the plants and flowers in the front of the house. It is a neat system. It pumps the lake water with its nutrients. It warmer than well water and spares the well water supply. Tonight Peggy and I will Mexican Train-all board!

Next week is Memorial Day. Much to talk about.



Humor

I'm terrified of elevators and I'm taking steps to avoid them.

I have so many problems that if a new one comes along today; it will be at least two weeks before I can worry about it.

A bicycle can't stand alone; it is two tired.

When a clock is hungry it goes back four seconds.

A will is a dead giveaway.

COVID 19 Humor

The longer this goes on, the harder it will be to return to a society where pants and bras are required!

Today's Weather? Room temperature

30 Days Hath September, April, June and November, all the rest have 31 ... except March which had 8000

The economy is so bad that:

- . I got a pre-declined credit card in the mail.
- . I bought a toaster oven and my free gift with purchase was a bank.
- . CEO's are now playing miniature golf.
- . Exxon-Mobil laid off 25 Congressmen.
- . Motel Six won't leave the light on anymore.
- . A picture is now only worth 200 words.

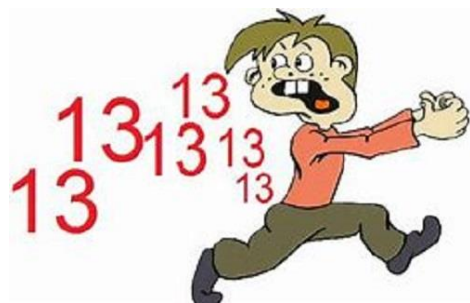


78 days of distancing

The Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner: Part XIII

Steve Soreff, MD

First things, first. Let us talk about Triskaidekaphobia. What's that? It is fear of the number 13. It gets played out in hotels and hospitals not acknowledging a 13th room or floor. It has two origin myths. "The most popular theory about the origin of fear of the number 13 is biblical: there were 13 diners at the Last Supper. The 13th to arrive was Judas, who betrayed Jesus. In Norse mythology, too, a table of 13 proved unlucky, to say the least. According to one of the myths, the primary 12 gods were dining together peacefully until the god of mischief (and frequent superhero-movie villain) Loki showed up. As soon as this 13th guest arrived, chaos and carnage ensued." <https://www.rd.com/culture/fear-of-number-13/> With either story, 13 means bad luck. So why I am focusing on that? Simply because this is 13th diary. And what does that mean? With the pandemic, go figure.



This is the 13th Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner Wow!

Today is Saturday, May 30, 202. It is my 78th day, my 12th week and my 3rd month of being in my lake side bunker and practicing distancing. Before I look at the week, I want to make an observation. What I, my family, my friends and the nation is dealing with and feeling fear. The fear of getting, carrying and dying from COVID 19. It underlying all our decisions. And that fear, judging by the dire headlines, makes people react emotionally, cognitively and behaviorally in many strange ways. But, what is key here is to recognize just how powerful and pervasive fear is.

Now, I said what I wanted about that. Time to look back at the week.

Sunday, May 24, 2020 morning began with two mistakes which led to two new awakings. First, the mistake. When I awoke, I read the digital clock as 8:24. So I got up. Then, once fully dressed and ready for the day, I looked again at the clock and was it was really 6:36 AM! Since I was already awake, I exercised watching a number of talking heads news programs. That was a second mistake. All I heard was series accusations, political divisions and infighting, and bleak realities and predictions of doom and gloom. What I saw was discomfoting and disturbing.

Then I watched The Open Mind <https://www.theopenmind.com/> which led to the first awaking. It featured Ainissa Ramirez, the author of The Alchemy of Us: How Humans and Matter Transformed One Another. The book is described as “In *The Alchemy of Us*, scientist and science writer Ainissa Ramirez examines eight inventions—clocks, steel rails, copper communication cables, photographic film, light bulbs, hard disks, scientific labware, and silicon chips—and reveals how they shaped the human experience” <https://www.amazon.com/Alchemy-Us-Humans-Transformed-Another/dp/0262043807>. Here is the link to that actual program, The Alchemy of Us <https://www.pbs.org/video/the-alchemy-of-us-iyys2d/>. I found inspiration from the show. It pointed out the need for scientific appreciation and thinking. The author emphasized the importance of asking questions. It dealt with understanding the impact of innovations. I was reminded of a wall panel in the Library of Congress. IGNORANCE IS THE CVRSE OF GOD KNOWLEDGE THE WING WHEREWITH WE FLY TO HEAVEN. What a great message for this time of the pandemic!! We need more than ever, accurate, scientific information and knowledge.



The Library of Congress

My worries about the world changed when a new activity presented itself and created my second awaking. I went to Peggy’s garden to help out. Her garden has become my Planet Fitness. Peggy has been building and restoring raised boxed vegetable and flower gardens. We have had two different lumber deliveries this week. I volunteered to work there. She is the project’s master architect and carpenter. However, I could support her work by bringing buckets of mulch via an ancient wheelbarrow to the garden’s walkways. In this case, the early worm aka me, got to the mulch as unexpected part of life-long bucket list. I know the early bird gets the worm, but in this situation, my physical activity awaken me from unsettling news programs to an improved outlook.



Steve working on different one of life’s bucket lists items-mulch.

This Memorial Day Monday, May 25, 2020 weighed heavy on me this year for a number of reasons. My Tufts College roommate, Jonathan Hayes, died in the winter. He was a US Air Force fighter pilot in the Vietnam War. “He distinguished himself by flying 356 combat sorties and earning five Distinguished Flying Crosses”

<https://airandspace.si.edu/support/wall-of-honor/cpt-jonathan-hayes>. I, also recalled at my Tufts College graduation, someone made the following statement: “The Class of 1964 will never be together again”. At that time, I thought it was ridiculous. Boy, was I wrong. Within several months afterwards, we learned of the death of my classmates in Vietnam. And maybe it’s all the COVID 19 deaths are getting to me. At any rate, I more than ever appreciate those who sacrificed themselves so the America in the land of the brave and land of the free.



The American flag at half-mast at 8:30 AM, Memorial Day Monday, May 25, 2020 Nottingham Square

And while I am thinking about Vietnam, for 18 years I lived in Worcester, Massachusetts next to Green Hill Park. During that time, the Commonwealth constructed in it, the Massachusetts Vietnam Veterans Memorial <http://massvvm.org/>. In water pool setting, there are 6 granite pillars. On some of them are listed all folk from Massachusetts who died in that war. The listing of their names mirrors the national Vietnam Wall in Washington, D.C But on several of the pillars were letters written by soldiers in Vietnam. to loved ones back home. What made these letter so pungent was that the writers never made it home. With tears in my eyes, I recalled one Christmas letter. It was written by a soldier to his parents. He said that he was fine, he missed them and he would be coming home soon. So sad, his was one of the names listed on the those who died pillars.

Switching from my sad mood and moving to a different place, as I drove home from distancing Tai Chi, I went through Epping. There I saw, banners honoring individual Epping High School graduates hanging on telephone poles throughout the downtown. On each pole were two pictures of graduating students and their first names. What a neat way to celebrate the 2020 graduation. Also, the Epping Fire Department displayed a sign saying “Wear a Mask: Save A Life”. What a great message. Yes, masks prevent the spread of the virus. I heard a new phase, “Mask it or casket”! But, and yes again with the but,, at my gasoline stop in Raymond, I saw many folks walking around without masks. So sad, when will the public understand and practice “Wear a Mask: Save A Life”?



Epping salutes its high school graduates

Tuesday, May 26, 2020 began with a surprise enlightenment. While exercising on the elliptical machine, I happened to watch on World Channel, a powerfully moving documentary entitled *The Greatest Bond* <https://www.pbs.org/show/greatest-bond/>. It told the story of Patriot Paws. This is a Texas program that provides veterans who have PTSD with service dogs. And the women who train these dogs are prison inmates. The program emotional hit me on many levels. Having just observed Memorial Day, I was more acutely aware of the debt we owe veterans. As a psychiatrist, I recognize the how the dogs can help people with PTSD. The film showed an example of where the dog did save a life. The documentary emphasized that 22 veterans a day commit suicide. The movie highlighted the female prisoners actually trained these service dogs. When I taught for Boston University in the Massachusetts Women Prison in Framingham, many of my students were training service dogs. The film showcased this truly win win situation. The documentary made one other neat point, the dog choses the veteran.



Heat defined Tuesday and Wednesday. The winds I had complained about all spring, now were welcomed. I kayaked Tuesday and it was grand. There is something soothing about being on the water. And speaking of water, Peggy’s garden plants were screaming for water. When I watered them on Wednesday, they were yelling, “I’m thirsty!”. I shouted back “It’s Wednesday, not Thirstday.” They thanked me for the water and promised to grow.

Remember the old line, “I can resist anything but temptation”? The semi-heat wave made the idea of jumping in the lake look very possible. On the Tuesday while kayaking I saw several folk swimming. And after the watering the plants, I was hot enough so I did ‘jump in the lake’. In all honesty, I slowly waded in. I did swim for a small fraction of a lap. The water on the surface was inviting but the lower level was cold. But and there is the but again, I have claiming rights to be the first person in my neighborhood to go swimming in the lake this year!

On Thursday, May 28, 2020 the two other shoes fell. I know, the cliché is supposed to be “the other shoe dropped”, but that is not the way the day went. The imaginary Doctor Seuss’ book entitled, *Shoe One and Shoe Two*, defined that day. One Shoe was mowing the lawn aka the weeds for a second time. Yippee, the mower started and the weeds with high and thick enough for mower to have a very satisfying experience. The lawn mower shouted, “I’ll show the weeds who is boss!”. Shoe Two was my return trip to the dentist. This proved to be a more extensive and expense experience. Yes, you know the drill. He did a masterful job and I now have a temporary crown. Instead of the biting into some mushy substance to make an impression for the new crown, they used a computer connected light producing camera like wand device called an iTero Element <http://www.itero.com/en-us> to map mouth. Dentistry is getting real high tech. And, I did give my dentist a picture of a Burger King Crown, to keep things even, Steven.



The new normal in healthcare

Here is the e-mail I received from the dentist before my visit.

The new normal in the dental world. From my dentist at Generations Dental Care in Concord
<https://www.generationsdental.com/>.

“What to Expect at Your Next Dental Appointment

We wanted to let you know what to expect during your next visit:

- We are not currently asking for our patients to wait in their vehicle.
- Everyone entering the office ages 5+ needs to wear a mask. If you don't have a mask, we will provide one for you.
- Please arrive no earlier than 5 minutes before your scheduled appointment time as we are reducing the amount of time spent in our reception area.
- When you arrive, we will check your temperature and oxygen level, and provide you with hand sanitizer and then go through the screening questions with you again that you were asked prior to your appointment either on the phone or by email.
 - The screening questions include:
 1. Have you had a fever within the last 2-3 weeks?
 2. Are you having shortness of breath or cough?
 3. Any flu-like symptoms, such as gastrointestinal upset, headache, fatigue etc.?
 4. Any loss of smell or taste?
 5. Have you been in contact with any confirmed COVID-19 patients?
 6. Are you over the age of 60?
 7. Do you have heart disease, lung disease, kidney disease, diabetes or any auto-immune disorders?
 8. Have you traveled in the past 14 days to any regions affected by COVID-19?
 9. Do you live in an elderly community or a nursing home?
- We have arranged our reception area to allow for proper social distancing. We ask that if anyone is joining you for your appointment that they wait in the car. For children with appointments, a parent can attend with them but they will need to wait in the reception area during the appointment.
- We have suspended the complimentary beverages and reading materials in the reception area.
- We are cleaning each chair in the reception area between each use.
- As we are wearing the proper protective equipment (PPE) to keep everyone safe, we are keeping the office at cooler temperature so please come prepared.
- If you need to make a payment on your account or if you have a copay for your appointment, please do so over the phone or on our website at (instead of paying while in the office for your next visit).
- While we love rewarding our small smiles, we had to suspend the treasure chest prizes for now to reduce the spreading of germs.
- For dental cleanings, we are not able to use the Ultrasonic and we will be hand scaling instead. If you have any questions about this, feel free to discuss with your dental hygienist at your appointment or give us a call.
- Our employees are being screened each day as well and having their temperature taken to ensure your safety.

We appreciate your cooperation and understanding, and we are excited to see your smiles again!"

Wow, what a new normal!!!

It is Friday, May 29, 2020. It also represents my third observance of National Cribbage Day since I've began distancing. Remember, every 29th of a month is National Cribbage Day This is getting to be ridiculous. This day proved be one of making four connections. The first one of these was figuring out why I kept on tripping over my right kayak sandal. When it happened today, instead of just complaining about it and ignoring it, I actually examined the shoe. I discovered the culprit-the strap's link to the shoe's sole was out of place. And I fixed it. Easy lesson, stop, look and examine, not just complain. The second connection was distancing kayak with a friend. It was neat to share the lake experience with others. The third one happened when we were kayaking in the South Channel. There we talked with Dr. Mary Bates. It turns out, in one of her physician March health talks in the Nottingham NH News and Information Facebook, she strongly had advocated social distancing long before others did. Her warning was taken very seriously by my kayaking friend. In fact, based on her ideas, he and his wife immediately commenced social distancing. It was a neat connection.

One last connection, was my solving the mystery of why there was only island in Pawtuckaway Lake with a house on it? I had found out who the owner was and interviewed him. I felt like an investigator reporter. My article was published as The Only Island with a House on it in Pawtuckaway Lake in the Forum <https://forumhome.org/the-only-island-with-a-house-on-it-in-pawtuckaway-lake-p32864-129.htm>. And, the piece was well received as others too had been curious about island house too.



The Only Island with a House on it in Pawtuckaway Lake

One unexpected delight this week was a gift from my Barak. One way he handles distancing is by knitting. He made me a yarmulke. The prayer skull cap was not only thoughtful but also full of thought. It has the colors of Israel in it-blue and white. But, not only that, it has the colors of my college Tufts-brown and blue. I wore it to zoom Friday night and Saturday morning shabbat services.



My new yarmulke



Regular Humor

When I was a kid, my parents taught me to not believe everything I saw on TV.
Now I have to teach them to not believe everything they see on Facebook.

The roundest knight at King Arthur's round table was Sir Cumference.

Cows have hooves because they lactose.

A thief fell and broke his leg in wet cement. He became a hardened criminal.

Yiddish Curses <http://yiddishradioproject.org/exhibits/stutchkoff/curses.php3> based on the ides if cannot says something nice, say it in Yiddish.

Ale tseyen zoln bay im aroysfaln, not eyner zol im blaybn oyf tsonveytung.

All his teeth should fall out except one to make him suffer.

Heng dikh oyf a tsikershtrikl vestu hobn a zisn toyt.

Hang yourself with a sugar rope and you'll have a sweet death.

A groys gesheft zol er hobn mit shroyre: vus er hot, zol men bay im nit fregn, un vos men fregt zol er nisht hobn.

He should have a large store, and whatever people ask for he shouldn't have, and what he does have shouldn't be requested.

Gut zol oyf im onshikn fin di tsen makes di beste.

God should visit upon him the best of the Ten Plagues.

A hiltseiner tsung zol er bakumn.

He should grow a wooden tongue

Oyf doktoyrim zol er dos avekgebn.

He should give it all away to doctors.

Vaksn zolstu vi a tsibele mitn kop in dr'erd!

May you grow like an onion with your head in the ground.

Lebn zolstu biz hundert un tsvantsik yor—mit a hiltsernem kop un glezerne oygn.

May you live to a hundred and twenty—with a wooden head and glass eyes.

COVID 19 Humor

Wisdom in the Coronavirus Age

Ladies, it's time to start dating older men. They can get you into the grocery store early.

I can't believe I can walk into a store to buy marijuana but I have to meet my hairdresser in a back alley with unmarked bills to get a haircut!

Wearing a mask inside your home is now highly recommended — not so much to prevent coronavirus, but to stop eating.

Sitting at the bar in the kitchen last night. Tried to pick up my wife. She gave me a fake phone number. *(Read that with Rodney Dangerfield's voice in mind.)*

New command by cops these days: "Come out with your hands washed."



My 85th day of Distancing

The Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner: Part XIV

Steve Soreff, MD

We have reached June 6, 2020. That date signifies two important dates in World War II history, our nation's current agony and my 85th Day of distancing as well as my 13th week and beginning its 4th month of being in my bunker. A pause to look back in history. Today marks the 76th anniversary of D-Day, the Allies landing at the beaches of Normandy, France. A quick confession, I did not see *Saving Private Ryan*; I could watch the slaughter of the American troops at Omaha Beach. But I do appreciate the how significant that event was.

It also notes the 81st anniversary *St. Louis* incident. That is when Cuba, the United States and Canada refused the ship carrying Jewish Germany refugees landing rights. "May 1939, the German liner *St. Louis* sailed from Hamburg, Germany, to Havana, Cuba, carrying 937 passengers, almost all Jewish refugees. The Cuban government refused to allow the ship to land, and the United States and Canada were unwilling to admit the passengers. The *St. Louis* passengers were finally permitted to land in western European countries rather than return to

Nazi Germany. 254 *St. Louis* passengers were killed in the Holocaust.”

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/voyage-of-the-st-louis>

And today, there are national and international protests about the death of George Floyd. Yes, the common dominator of all three of these is prejudice, religious persecution, intolerance, hatred, and racism and their consequences.

Wow, that is a hell of way to start off! Now let's look back at last week.

Sunday, May 31, 2020 aka the last day in May proved to one of discovery and rediscovery. The first, rediscovery is that New Hampshire weather can switch on a dime. We went from a hot summers day to windy, cool autumn day overnight. The second was the discovery of great new neighbors we have. This how they came to our rescue. I have been talking about working Peggy's garden aka my Planet Fitness in the front yard. She has been constructing huge garden boxes grow flowers and vegetables. These gardens bed are also our answer to the weed invasion. With one of the major boxes raised beds finished, she faced the issue of filling it with a combination of dirt and manure. Both of these ingredients stood in large piles on the lawn. The new neighbor came to the rescue. He has small tractor with many earth moving options.

He motored over in his tractor with his three small children accompanying him on their bicycles. With the tractor's front loader, he moved huge amounts of dirt and manure from piles into a large garden box. His children armed with small shovels and rakes helped. His work save us hundreds of wheelbarrow trips. What was so nice was not only his great helping attitude but also how his children were so willing to pitch in.



Three kids, one dad, and a tractor filling the garden box

The third event was both a discovery and a rediscovery, With the warm weather, the winds down and the lake level up, kayaking had commanded my time and attention. Yes, the hull! But and there it is, the but again, with sudden advent of fall like weather, I had a chance to go back to the neighborhood woods. Around me, I had witnessed the signs of spring-flowers blooming and trees exploding into vivid green foliage. But I was unprepared for how truly glorious my woods had become. It was so green, yes Ed McMann from the Johnny Carson's Tonight Show, “they were so green, I almost did not recognize them”. In fact, I momentary lost

the Northwest Passage trail at one point in my hike. I have been gaging the seasonal changes by observing the white birch corridor. Look for yourself ant the dramatic changes during the distancing era. WOW



On April 23, 2020



On May 12, 2020



On May 31, 2020

But, just when I thought things could not get much worse than the pandemic, they did. The death of George Floyd changed everything. After the headline for over 75 days, COVID 19, the loss of George Floyd's life moved to the top of the front page. And just as coronavirus turned into a pandemic, his death has led to worldwide protests. Being a white male, in what I call semi-isolation rural New Hampshire, I felt safe. But my and an America's soul is on fire. Driving While Black (DWB) is real Although the Declaration of Independence proclaimed, we are all equal, the Constitution reversed that notion. I had hoped the election of Obama would have advanced the inter-racial connections and relations. However, the protests show how far we still need to travel. Too many of us make assumptions about race, religion, ethnic background, and socioeconomic class <https://forumhome.org/assume-makes-an-ass-of-you-and-me-p32752-149.htm>. Those assumptions lead to prejudice and discrimination. It is time to add the new normal, a new appreciation that we are all people!

The more I thought about it, the more I want to understand what is going on. I consulted an eminent sociologist, Robert Cadigan, PhD <https://www.bu.edu/met/faculty/full-time/robert-cadigan/> for an answer. He suggested the protests represent the ‘perfect storm’. I agreed with him but then attempted to see all the elements which converged to make this explosion. First, the death dramatically testified to the theme that Black Life’s Matter. Second, it takes place at a time when because of the COVID 19 pandemic, many people of color are suddenly without income. Yes, there is the painful dilemma rent due and no money. Third, it comes at a time when there is a pervasive undercurrent of coronavirus fear. It is not only uncertainty of the new normal but also the fear you and your loved ones could get the virus and die. Fourth, there is the video itself. The film is horrifying, lengthy, compelling and a game changer. On man fighting for his life is something everyone can identify with. Fifth is the general disruption of society and the social order caused by distancing. The new normal is not normal And, sixth it took place in a northern state and city. From the civil rights days and marches, police brutality was shown in southern states and cities. The bottom line is that suddenly everyone recognizes that every life’s matters!

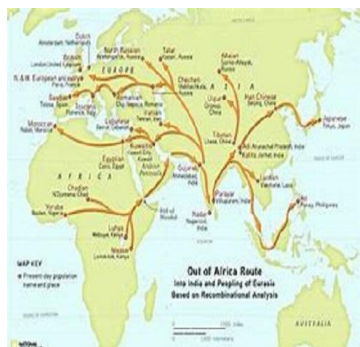


Social Distancing and social protesting

By Wednesday morning, June 3, 2020, I realized my soul was still on fire. The real message is that all lives matter. I have witnessed the prejudice, bullying and belittling attitude of the Chicago police. I have also seemed the kindness of other police officers who acted more like social workers and practiced community policing. The protests remind us, we have a long way to go. Can we learn for this? I hope so.

On Thursday, June 4, 2020 with my soul continued to be on fire. I heard two news items which further enflamed me. The first was a report of a protest group who held a moment of silence for eight and forty-six half minutes. That is at least how long the police officer was pressing on George Floyd’s neck. Try a minute of silence, now imagine over eight minutes!!! The second was an article of his death as like lynching. Wow! Linking his death to lynching was very powerful and painful. It reminded me of “The National Memorial for Peace and Justice, informally known as the National Lynching Memorial, is a national memorial to commemorate the victims of lynching in the United States. The memorial is intended to acknowledge past racial terrorism and advocate for social justice in America. Founded by the non-profit Equal Justice Initiative, it opened in downtown Montgomery, Alabama on April 26, 2018” <https://museumandmemorial.eji.org/>. I have seen programs about lynching which showed how often that had occurred in the United States but also how police officers observed and did not intervene in them. In the case of Mr. Floyd, it was the police directly involved!

Bu as my rage percolated within me, the television channel, The World Channel <https://worldchannel.org/> rescued me. Let me explain. Just as I started to exercise and watch on the World Channel on television. I saw a program called Africa's Great Civilizations <https://nhpbs.org/schedule/series.aspx?progName=Africa%27s+Great+Civilizations>. "Beginning with Africa's ancient history as the cradle of mankind, this documentary series with Henry Louis Gates, Jr. brings to life the epic stories of both little-known and celebrated African kingdoms and cultures. Journey with Professor Henry Louis Gates, Jr. to Kenya, Egypt and beyond as he discovers the origins of man, the formation of early human societies and the creation of significant cultural and scientific achievements on the African continent." It was an eye opener. It showed how we all came from Africa. Not only do all lives matter but all of have an African ancestry! Through maternal inheritance of human mitochondrial DNA all of our mothers are linked based to the first homo sapiens <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC350359/>. The program demonstrated how advanced civilization was in Africa. It highlighted cave art work found in southern Africa 70,000 years before the art was done in France caves. It also showed that at one period in geologic history the vast Sahara Desert was at one time a huge savannah with elephants and tigers. That program gave relevance, prominence and location to Africa in world history. It challenged many of ethno-European- centric notions of civilization.



Africa as the origin of all mankind

Time to regroup rethink. One of the utter joys of my Nottingham bunker is that my front lawn is Pawtuckaway Lake. With warm weather, all I have to do is push my kayak in to water and paddle about, no need haul and trailer. On a recent aqua excursion two loons greeted me. They appeared to scouting locations for a nest. Their presence is such a reassuring and comforting experience.



My neighborhood loon

As my week of distancing ended, I became reacquainted with one of my past favorite subjects, embryology. This happened because of my gardening work. That all sounds a bit obtuse, let me explain. As a pre-med college student one of my favorite courses was

embryology. It is the study of how we develop from one cell as the egg and sperm get together. It is amazing how we go from one cell to 30 to 40 trillion cells in one human body. And while in medical school, I did some work in an embryology research lab. So now to gardening. This winter Peggy got some seeds. She then planted them in soil filled egg containers. Thus, while the snow was on the ground, these seedlings were growing in the guest room.

With the warm weather, they migrated in pots outside. Still later they moved into her garden beds. During this process, I got to water them. As a result, I not only got to appreciate the joys of gardening but also the thrill of plant development. It is fantastic to witness their unfolding and maturity. And to think it is all because of theirs and our DNA!!



Regular Humor

With the rise of self-driving vehicles, it's only a matter of time before we get a country song where a guy's truck leaves him too.

A boiled egg is hard to beat.

Parents in Beverly Hills fired their nannies and learned their children's names.

. I was so depressed last night thinking about the economy, wars, jobs, my savings, Social Security, retirement funds, etc., I called the Suicide Hotline. I got a call center in Pakistan, and when I told them I was suicidal, they got all excited, and asked if I could drive a truck...

Saul Epstein was taking an oral exam in his English as a Second Language class. He was asked to spell "cultivate," and he spelled it correctly. He was then asked to use the word in a sentence, and, with a big smile responded: " Last vinter on a very cold day, I vas vaiting for a bus, but it vas too cultivate, so I took the subway home."

COVID 19 Humor

I hope they give us two weeks' notice before sending us back out into the real world. I think we'll all need the time to become ourselves again. And by "ourselves" I mean lose 10 pounds, cut our hair and get used to not drinking at 9:00 a.m.

New monthly budget: Gas \$0 Entertainment \$0 Clothes \$0 Groceries \$2,799.

When this quarantine is over, let's not tell some people.

Day 37: The garbage man placed an AA flyer on my recycling bin.

The spread of Covid-19 is based on two things:

1. How dense the population is.
2. How dense the population is.

The dumbest thing I've ever bought was a 2020 planner ...

Enjoy your day. You don't have anything else to do.



92 Days of Distancing

The Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner: Part XV

Steve Soreff, MD

Today is Sunday June 14, 2020 and marks my 92nd day, my 14th week and the end of 3rd month of physical isolation. And what a week it has been. First, I will spare you my repeating the ramble about Triskaidekaphobia as this 13th of June <https://forumhome.org/the-diary-of-a-reluctant-social-distance-extrovert-prisoner-part-xiii-p32889-1.htm>. That done, now I will talk about how this week reminded me of the climatic and world changing Battle of Yorktown in the American Revolution 1781 <https://www.history.com/topics/american-revolution/siege-of-yorktown>. When the British troops under General Cornwallis surrendered to the combined American and French forces, their band played “*the World Turned Upside Down*” <https://www.americanrevolution.org/upside.php>. This week between the Black Lives Matter, the pandemic and the patchwork of the phased reopening in many states and countries, the world has turned upside down. Let’s take a look at that week.

It is Sunday, June 7, 2020 and I am in a very contemplating mood. I am pondering two ideas: the new normal and the big blue marble. Let’s take them in order. And order is the first topic. Let me explain. When I did the piece on Patterns in the Neighborhood Wilderness <https://forumhome.org/patterns-in-the-neighborhood-wilderness-p32796-105.htm>, I was transfixed by the fiddles heads. Later I returned to see they had transformed into ferns. That made sense and is part of the natural order. Well, for 85 days I have been using the term *new normal*. I will admit, in the beginning, I used the term facetiously. Trivial Pursuit detail, facetious is one of the few words in the English language which has all the vowels appear in order. That was then. Now, it is no long the new normal. It is the normal! As in last week’s COVID 19 Humor, “I hope they give us two weeks’ notice before sending us back out into the real world. I think we’ll all need the time to become ourselves again. And by “ourselves” I mean lose 10 pounds, cut our hair and get used to not drinking at 9:00 a.m.”. I have my distancing routine and schedule. I have zoom meetings, distancing Tai Chi, walking to get the mail, and exercising routine is now my normal. And because of my fear of getting or giving COVID 19, if the governor were to open the state tomorrow, I will not change my now established daily pattern.



Fiddle Heads May 11, 2020



Ferns June 6, 2020

Here is the second idea, which was triggered by Earth rise in 1968. That's a bit to abstract, so let me explain. As part of my now normal exercise routine, I was on my elliptical machine, watching a lecture on the Book of Job. The speaker was looking to the story as one explanation of suffering. And, do we have a lot of suffering right now. She offered a more theological and out of this world answer. To make her point, she showed the iconic photograph of Earth Rise https://www.nasa.gov/multimedia/imagegallery/image_feature_1249.html. It was taken from Apollo 8 as it orbited the moon on Christmas Eve, Dec. 24, 1968. That picture dramatically demonstrated we are all just on one planet. That photograph led to that amazing television series called the Big Blue Marble <http://www.tv.com/shows/the-big-blue-marble/>.

And that picture got me started on to my second idea, The COVID 19 pandemic and the world wide protests over the death of George Floyd reminded us, we are all one the same plant. I once proposed all mailed letters written throughout the world use the following address, Steve Soreff, PO Box 2020, Nottingham, NH 03290, USA, Plant Earth. Oh my, I want to back into song, *We are the world*

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=we+are+the+world+video&view=detail&mid=1431F9FA93027241AAC61431F9FA93027241AAC6&FORM=VIRE0&ru=%2fsearch%3fq%3dwe%2bare%2bthe%2bworld%2bvideo%26form%3dEDGTCT%26qs%3dLS%26cvid%3de1906a99ba0e494fa39f3a9575f5f185%26refig%3d0b8da1df43c64ea9b20460e6988a5b4c%26cc%3dUS%26setlang%3den->

US%26elv%3dAQj93OAhDTi*HzTv1paQdnicxLZDPQMp4svaqXvNN8*D1EMYJPPpfoyRx4IRawVWoVYkAIYeU4eGqp4d6AXTbTCuoAIWCDj5cpPg2Ib8QUTz%26plvar%3d0%26PC%3dLCTS.



Earth Rise Christmas Eve, Dec. 24, 1968.

Sunday continues with Peggy and I did garden work and did kayak patrols for Milfoil finding and removal in Pawtuckaway Lake's south channel. The weather was good and much was accomplished in both areas. I did have a lingering concern that although protests were going on in New Hampshire, the nation and the world, I should be there making my voice heard. My old line was the Christians were born with original sin and Jews were born with original guilt. I felt guilty that I too had participated in one of the many New Hampshire demonstrations. Yes, but as stated above in my now normal life, I had vowed to avoid any crowd-period! But I still wanted to be involved. And that evening, I watched a PBS board cast of *Les Miserables* <https://www.pbs.org/video/les-miserables-25th-anniversary-concert-o2-qi2zrd/>. Terrific music and performance and yet about another example of civil unrest.

Monday, June 8, 2020 proved to be a day of recalculating. On the morning news talked about peaceful New Hampshire protests, I had heard the opposite about those in Boston. Their rallies had been accompanied by police shoving, intimidation and tear gassing. These police actions often occurred as the crowd was dispersing after peaceful protests. It reminded me of the anti-war and civil rights rallies of the 60's. But, hearing about the police behavior in Boston caused me to how official law and order personnel could actually turn a lawful peaceful gathering into police attacks on the protesters.

So how did protests against police violence triggered by George Floyd's death led to police violence against protesters as witnessed in Boston happen. It is a difficult question and has a complicated answer. This is how Michael Barbara in the New York Times' *the Daily*, on NHPR has on weekdays at 6:30 PM addressed it. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/08/podcasts/the-daily/police-brutality-protests.html>. On one level, the program indicated early vandalism by a minority of the protesters seemed to have triggered an aggressive police response to latter demonstrations. The broadcast talked about the police departments culture and a growing shift in national expectations of their police officers. And for me, America is re-evaluating of the policing.

The second re-calculating came about because of the readers' concerned that I focused too much on all lives matter. They were right. The real issue of Floyd's

death is that Black Life Matter (BLM). Nic Naithani, of the West Coast Eagles in the Australian Football League (AFL). said, “Saying all lives matter is like going to a cancer fundraiser and saying there are other diseases. Yes, every life matter and is of equal importance/significance but right now we are highlighting black lives.” <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8386477/Nic-Natanui-response-people-saying-lives-matter-wake-George-Floyds-death.html> Clearly, I have not walked a mile in a black man’s shoes. The Auschwitz Institute <http://www.auschwitzinstitute.org/> said “The killing of George Floyd by police forces in the U.S. city of Minneapolis, Minnesota has sparked waves of protests across not only the United States, but the world. His murder represents the most recent media-acknowledged entry in an unspeakably long list of Black people killed by a racist society. In 2020 alone, the lives of Ahmaud Arbery, George Floyd, Tony McDade, Breonna Taylor, and many others have been claimed by police violence. U.S. police forces shoot and kill nearly 1,000 people annually.”

The degradations suffered by African-Americans is real. And the world wide discriminations of minorities underlies the global echoing of the protests in the United States. 2019 marked the 400th anniversary of slaves being brought to America. When I walk into a store, people do not immediately look at me as threat nor robber. Why? Because I am white. I have not endured a life of oppression. This question was once asked, if Hitler were caught, what would be the appropriate punishment for him? The answer was live as a black man in the United States. This website presents “Why you should stop saying ‘All lives matter’, explained in 9 different ways” <https://www.vox.com/2016/7/11/12136140/black-all-lives-matter> .



The morning of Tuesday, June 9, 2020 I woke wanting to free my mind of all my concerns about the coronavirus and the protests, I kayaked on the calm waters of Pawtuckaway Lake. As you see, it gave something different to reflect upon. It was smoothing

to paddle on the quiet lake. I saw several loons; I heard the birds; and I observed a fish as it swam under my vessel. The rest of the day I followed my now normal schedule, Talmud class in the morning, exercise in the afternoon, water the garden, walk to get the mail and a zoom meeting at night.



Pawtuckaway Lake reflecting Mount Pawtuckaway and its islands

But and there I go again with but, I attended George Floyd funeral by radio and television <https://news.yahoo.com/live-george-floyd-funeral-houston-115227305.html>. It was powerful, poignant, passionate and peaceful. The officiating pastor said they would send George off with foot stamping music. If one role of the funeral is to be uplifting, then this one was. I got to know him as person. It linked him with history and worldwide recognition. One of the speakers noted that George's crime was that he was born as a black man in America. Another, linked George's humble beginnings to that of Jesus. And he further noted that each man changes the world. It was also clear that funeral was being held during the pandemic with most of the audience wearing face masks and practicing social distance. The message was clear, he did not die in vain. In length, in depth and in relevance, the message was clear-his Black Life Mattered.

In my distancing Tai Chi, one of the members came up with the nifty term, 'chutzpah without hubris'. That is a complex and almost weird combination. I liked it and I have two associations to it. First, I love the Yiddish term, chutzpah. It has many meanings including extreme self-confidence, audacity, gall and flagrant boldness. Alan M. Dershowitz wrote a book with that as its title. Here is one of my favorite examples of it. A man kills his parents, then throws himself on the mercy of the court he is an orphan. And, at a recent zoom talk at my synagogue explained why Israel is one of the leading innovations and start-up countries in the world because of its citizens have chutzpah.

The other connection to 'chutzpah without hubris' came, when I watched while exercising, the PBS program *In their own words: Muhammad Ali* <https://www.pbs.org/video/their-own-words-muhammad-ali-full-episode>. It fit him and his life. Although I do not like boxing, I did remember enjoying his poetry and character. He made an important contribution to the Black Pride Movement and his story resonates the current Black Lives Matter protests.



This lettering has Chutzpah!

Thursday, June 11, 2020 offered a foggy, calm morning and the lake beckon me. I answered the call. Once again, my trusty red kayak roamed the lake. Although fog obscured Mount Pawtuckaway, the quiet waters provide great moments for the islands, trees and rocks for their reflections. But that afternoon, it rained! Actually, for about an hour, it was a down pour. The water was welcomed our flowers and vegetables as well as the newly seeded Marston fields.



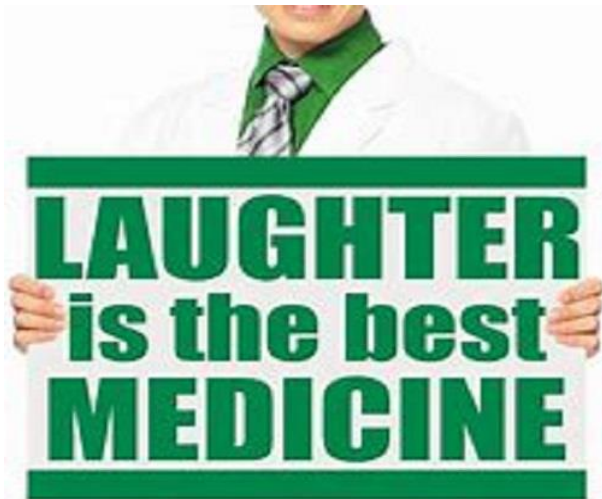
The reflections on the lake offers moments for reflecting

Friday, June 12, 2020 proved to be productive. First, while during our distancing Tai Chi, I observed a number of parents who brought their children of various ages to the Little River Park in Lee. If there is a silver lining to the distancing, it was some parents did have more time to spend with their kids. Then, I interviewed the Nottingham Chief of Police, Gunnar Foss to hear his reactions to Black Lives Matter protests <https://forumhome.org/black-lives-matterask-a-police-officer-p32946-129.htm>. It was quite illuminating and reflected his empathy for those who had been discriminated against. He talked about the importance that all police officers take an oath to serve and protect all people.

Today, Saturday, June 13, 2020 was one of contemplation, reflection and physical activities. Yes, like in Sesame Street game, pick the one of the three “that’s not like the others”. Torah study offered new insights into the relationships among Moses, Miriam and God. The news showed how far the Black Lives Matter is right now changing the world. Not only are folks questioning the role and behavior of the police but also reexamination and removal of offensive racist statues. These include those of Confederate Generals and its President. NASCAR has blamed the Confederate flag. The Civil War was not about states’ rights; it was about keeping and maintaining slavery. And I will admit, I did not know that a

number of Army bases were named after Confederate officers. That is nothing to brag about!
Pun intended.

I completed the day with a distancing kayak with a friend, doing work in the Planet Fitness gym of the garden, attending an Havdalah service by zoom and playing Mexican Train.



Regular Humor

A danger sign on the back of the boat: a stern waning

Don't spell part backwards. It's a trap.

I bought some shoes from a drug dealer. I don't know what he laced them with, but I've been tripping all day.

I'm reading a book about anti-gravity. It's impossible to put down.

I wasn't originally going to get a brain transplant, but then I changed my mind.

I just found out I'm colorblind. The diagnosis came completely out of the purple.

eBay is so useless. I tried to look up lighters and all they had was 13,749 matches.

Half way to pandemic humor.



Wine becomes a hand sanitizer

Here is another example of the world turned upside down. “Flag Hill has temporarily suspended normal distilling operations to manufacture Hand Sanitizer for the Covid-19 Pandemic.”

<https://flaghill.com/> One thing nice to know is that winery makes its hand sanitizers free to all first responders. Wow and thank you. And, I cannot resist this. She was only a boot legger ‘s daughter, but they loved her still!

COVID 19 Humor

I want to wine about the quality and quantity of COVID 19 jokes. A recent survey of the Internet material has been disappointing. There are several reasons. One is because the low hanging fruit such as about toilet paper has been has been played out or there is enough of it in the stores now. Another is the home school situation has moved into summer vacation. A third is that people are just worn out by the distancing and do not find it funny in any way.

Thus, when I asked Alexa for COVID 19 jokes, she said, “Here is what I found”.

You know what they’re saying about 2020. It went viral faster than anyone thought it would.

Why don't chefs find coronavirus jokes funny?

Because they are in bad taste

What’s the difference between COVID-19 and Romeo & Juliet?

One’s a Coronavirus and the other is a Verona crisis

Help!!! Please, send me new material. 😊



99 Days of Distancing

The Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner: Part XVI

Steve Soreff, MD

Hello, today is Saturday, June 20, 2020. It is my 99th day and 15th week of distancing. And for the record, today is the Summer Solstice <https://www.newsweek.com/summer-solstice-2020-celebrations-around-world-1512319>. That translates into the longest period of the day light during the day for the year. If you are watching, every day from now on will have slightly less day light, but you will not notice the change. However, by mid-July, you will start noticing the shortened day light. This perceptual phenomenon is called Weber's Law <https://www.britannica.com/science/Webers-law>. For the record, June 20 is also the first day of summer.

Switching gears, as the legendary Red Sox baseball, Joe Castiglione <https://www.allaccess.com/net-news/archive/story/192976/weei-boston-sets-2020-red-sox-radio-team> used to say, "Would you believe". Thus, would you believe tomorrow, Sunday June 21, 2020, marks Father's Day and my 100th day of distancing? More on next week. Now let's look back on this week.

Sunday, June 14, 2020 brought a renewed attention to my neighborhood. In the past, I had marveled at my woods, my lake and their patterns <https://forumhome.org/patterns-in-the-neighborhood-wilderness-p32796-105.htm>. With my helping in the garden, I had gained a new

appreciation of growing things. But today, and there is the but again, I discovered we had an oak forest beginning in our driveway. A quick confession, did not notice it until Peggy pointed it out to me. There. it was growing in the dirt of our driveway, a colony of oak tree seedlings. Wow!

I had known from the tons of acorns in the front yard and in the woods, that last year was a mast year <https://phys.org/news/2019-11-tons-acorns-mast-year.html>. I learned now is those little acorns strive very hard to become trees. Seeing the acorn with its roots and leaves reminded me of the Robert Fulghum's [All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten](https://www.goodreads.com/work/quotes/2399046-all-i-really-need-to-know-i-learned-in-kindergarten) <https://www.goodreads.com/work/quotes/2399046-all-i-really-need-to-know-i-learned-in-kindergarten>. “Be aware of wonder. Remember the little seed in the Styrofoam cup: The roots go down and the plant goes up and nobody really knows how or why, but we are all like that.” It was just a few years ago, when the opposite of a mast year occurred. Acorns were few and far between. The squirrels were dying in huge numbers as they attempted scamper across roads for precious acorns. Some, indeed, swam across the lake in search for acorns. I did feel a moment of guilt, uprooting the seedlings because the world needs more trees. But I did not want oak trees growing in the driveway!

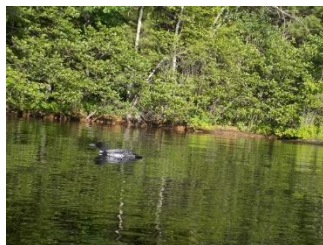


A future oak tree grove in the drive way



An acorn with its root and leaves

Later, watered the garden and mowed the weeds. I realized my fascination with the acorns, offered a welcome relief the turmoil of last week and my fears about COVID 19. Mentally, I was circling the wagons and focusing the home front. I'll listen to the news tomorrow. And with the day waning but the sun still shining and the waters calm, I did quick, relaxing kayak. Being on boat is gently soothing and comforting experience. A loon spent the afternoon in our cove. He, too was resting and getting ready for the next day.



A loon taking Sunday off.

Let me tell you about my Tuesday, June 16, 2020. To set the scene, I fall back on my old standard one liner. What is the definition of a farmer? The classic answer is a man outstanding in his field! Today was an outstanding day. I began with exercising while learning about the Bhagavad Gita. Then I went to a great Talmud study zoom class. We are exploring how the Rabbis developed structured prayers to replace animal sacrifices. These prescribed prayers were necessary after the destruction of the First and Second Temples. Next, I watered the gardens and saw the plants were growing like crazy. Watching their progress is like an applied Botany class. The first part of the day was completed by productive zoom session planning the New Hampshire Jewish Federation's annual meeting.

At 3:30 PM I had my first telemedical encounter. Five years ago, I had a bout with prostate cancer. It came with 44 radiation treatments as well as hormone medication. I was due for my annual urological visit and to learn of my PSA test results. Like many cancer patients, our health stats hinges on laboratory findings. I was ambivalently eager to find out about my PSA level. My visit was a zoom session with my urologist's nurse practitioner. To cut to the chase, my PSA was low-yippppppppee. My tele-medical session was better and more productive than I had anticipated. Having a career of helping folks face to face, I was skeptical about a television practice. I was wrong. The nurse practitioner was pleasant, engaging, knowledgeable and helpful. I can see a future for tele-medicine.



My session with the nurse practitioner

A quick walk and semi-jog to the mail box resulted in a mild anti-Amazon rage. Drivers had left at the bank of mail boxes two large packages. This was wrong and I was concerned that boxes were not only left in the open but also in that location they were susceptible to be stolen. More about that in that in a moment. After retrieving the mail, no bill today, again good news, I attended a zoom early evening cocktail party for our distancing Tai Chi group. We have become a very cherished, warm supportive collection of people. In the zoom, each one demonstrated a skill or story. It was enjoyable and up-lifting.

Now back to the delinquent packages. I knew the addresses to whom they should have been delivered. Both addresses were on lake front homes. Armed with that knowledge I set off on my trusty kayak to alert the intended recipients. We are almost to the summer solstice, so the daylight was longer in evening. This permitted me a later water trip. For the big box, I kayaked over to a neighbor of the addressee. They knew that person and also were aware that he was not home for several days. They agreed to retrieve the box and take it to his home. One box down, one to go. While I was kayaking, I met a woman also kayaking. After some pleasant greetings, I discovered amazingly that she was the wife of the second package recipient! She assured they had picked up that package. Two boxes accounted for. All those things-PSA down, Tai Chi zoom meet-up and boxes taken care of, made it an outstanding day.

Moving quickly on to Thursday, June 18, 2020, I will tell you a tale of two places. I had my long-awaited permanent crown placed on my injured tooth. To enter the dentist office, I must first pass a hygienist located between the outer and inner door. Both of us have masks on. Only one person can enter that space at time. She shoots at my forehead with a device to measure my temperature without touching me. With a finger clamp, she measures by blood's oxygen level. Quick loose association, when I was in medical school, class of 1969, I was phlebotomist aka blood d rawer, to earn spending money. (That job would not cover the cost of Medical School

then and now) At that time, one had to stick a needle into an artery to get blood gas result. Thank goodness, things have changed. In the visiting room, chairs are arrayed so you must sit 6 or more feet apart. I was seated in chair 8. As soon as I went to the dentist's chair, the dental assistant called out "number 8". Immediately, the person who took my temperature, went over and cleaned my chair. My dentist triumphantly cemented the new crown on. The color matched my other teeth and now I can chew on both sides of my mouth and eat harder foods including my beloved dark chocolate almonds.

The is to dwell on this health encounter is to illustrate its contrast to all the other meetings that day. In many places folks do not wear masks. They do not observe physical distancing. I keep on going back to the sign in Epping which said Wear a Mask: Save a Life. Hence this is tale of two places.

Another thing that happened to me Thursday. Remember how I had surrendered the lawn to the weeds. Today, I let Peggy cut my hair. A quick online: *If the short people came over on the shrimp boats, what did the barber come over on?* May I have the envelope, please! *They can over on the clippers.* My hair behind my neck was like wild carpet threatening to move down my back. With my out of control long white hair I looked like either Bernie Sanders, David Ben Gurion or Albert Einstein. She did a great job! Thank you, Peggy. And I trimmed my devil like Groucho" Marx eyebrows myself.

Friday, June 19, 2020 I completed my head's health trifecta. In the horse racing world, that term means correctly predicting and betting on the horses to finish first, second, and third in particular race. In my case, I had three problems with my head. (Yes, I know that gives you a wide opening to make a snide remark. Please, don't!) On Thursday the dentist put the new permanent crown on. Also, I went to the eye doctor's shop and had my glass frames adjusted. Wearing earphones for zoom meetings is rough on them. And if you are counting, that is one and two. On Friday I went to my hearing aid shop, Hearing Life in Barrington <https://www.hearinglife.com/> because for about a week, my left ear hearing aid functioned just barely.

Yes, I wear hearing aids. In the past, I wore them with some ambivalence. Last year, I was treated to a more advanced set. They were sensational. In the ad for the new ones, the company uses the slogan, "hear the nuance". I could. I was vexed the left one was not working well-dam! First, I thought it was cerumen aka ear wax as the culprit. A painful ear flushing did not yield any improvement. At the office, I waited in my car. The audiologist came out and gathered my hearing aids. Later, she returned with the left one fixed- Halleluyah! So now I can eat better; my glasses fit better and I can hear better- my trifecta.



To celebrate my winning, I spent several hours working out in Peggy's garden Planet Fitness. Modesty I move tons of mulch into position and water the thirsty plants. It has become an eye-opening adventure of discovery in my course of Horticulture 101. Already, I see cucumbers and miniature peppers growing.



One of Peggy's raised boxed gardens

One more thing about Friday. I went via zoom to Friday night services. But and there is the but again, this night the rabbi and his wife were at the synagogue instead of running the service from their home. He lamented the empty chairs there. Weak pun-that was his pew report. He could see the congregants faces on his zoom screen, but then envisioned how we would be sitting in the synagogue. Before the COVID Era (BCE). That sadden him and actually all of us. We all miss being together. I wanted to hug him and say at least we're together. I also want to say Peggy's niece, Donna, favorite expression for these times is "You get what you get and you don't get to pick". In so many ways that is so appropriate for these days and nights.

Saturday, June 20, 2020 was a great long-awaited adventure. Tom Duffy had recruited a gang of us to circumnavigate the Big Island. That is part of Pawtuckaway State Park <https://www.nhstateparks.org/visit/state-parks/pawtuckaway-state-park>. Before the creation of that state park, Big Land was an island. With the advent of the park with its camp grounds, camp sites and its access roads to them, it was technically no longer an island. The expedition was to commence at the state beach. At the start was the first portage. Then we were to kayak through a lagoon to the second portage. The second portage would lead to Burnham's Marsh. The journey through the marsh would end in the Fundy. The Fundy is a shallow extension of the North Lake part of Pawtuckaway Lake. Once the North lake was gained, we would complete our circumnavigation of Big Island and kayak back to the state beach.

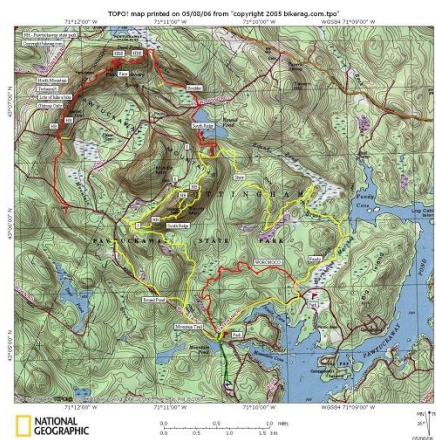
However, the lagoon proved impenetrable. We turned back and retraced our journey. There were many great things about the trip. First, after the first portage, we had in the words of

Star Trek <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0060028/>, we went “where no man has gone before”. Second, the team spirit there with each helping each other. Translation, some of the kayaks were heavy and were best carried by two people. Third, we all kept our social distance. We plan another attempt-stay tuned.

Also, on route to the expedition gathering point, I kayaked passed the campsites now with happy campers. The campsites were only officially opened on Friday, June 19. Right now, only campers can use the state park beach on weekends. However, starting next week the state park beach will be open to the public Mondays through Friday, starting June 22,2020. It was good to have the campers back. It reminded me in of scene in the movie, *What’s Eating Gilbert Grape* <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0108550/> when the campers return for the season,.

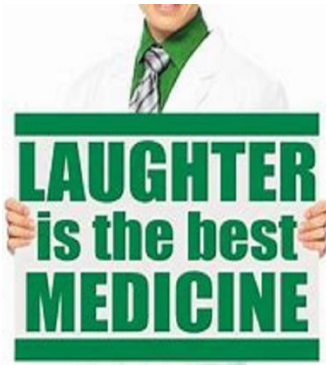


The expedition after the first portage.



The map of Pawtuckaway State Park with the Big Island on it.

Wow, time for humor!!!



Regular Humor

With hindsight, I wouldn't have sat on that cactus.

I've always enjoyed spending time outside. As a kid, my brother would roll me down hills in old tires we'd find in the junkyard. Those were Goodyears.

A man's car stalled on a country road one morning. When the man got out to fix it, a cow came along and stopped beside him. "Your trouble is probably in the carburetor," said the cow. Startled, the man jumped back and ran down the road until he met a farmer. The amazed man told the farmer his story. "Was it a large red cow with a brown spot over the right eye?" asked the farmer. "Yes, yes," the man replied. "Oh! I wouldn't listen to Bessie," said the farmer. "She doesn't know a thing about cars."

A young lawyer, starting up his private practice, was very anxious to impress potential clients. When he saw the first visitor to his office come through the door, he immediately picked up his phone and spoke into it, "I'm sorry, but my caseload is so tremendous that I'm not going to be able to look into your problem for at least a month. I'll have to get back to you then." He then turned to the man who had just walked in, and said, "Now, what can I do for you?" "Nothing," replied the man. "I'm here to hook up your phone."

COVID 19 Jokes

Back in my day you would cough to cover up a fart. Now, with COVID-19, you fart to cover up a cough.

Where do sick boats go to get healthy? The dock!

The first case for COVID-19 has been confirmed in Russia. The patients name is Ivor Chestikov.

The barista at Starbucks was wearing a face mask.

Me: Why are you wearing a surgical mask? She said: I'm not, it's a coughy filter.



108 days of distancing

The Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner: Part XVII

Steve Soreff, MD

It is Monday, June 29, 2020 and my 108th day of distancing, the beginning of my 17th week and completing my 4th month. Today marks my fourth month in which I observe National Cribbage Day- 15 for 2 is the way the pegging goes. 108 is a very significant number as it is the actual number of moves in a Tai Chi set. Yes, I continue three times a week distancing Tai Chi. It's got to help my balance and posture. And it is definitely a supportive group-thank you. And NH Route 108 goes passed the University of New Hampshire Durham campus and boy has distancing been an educational experience to all of us. Let's take a look back at the last amazing 8 days. It had its ups and downs, culminating in the Town Meeting, Join me. Walk together with me in this uncertain world of a pandemic, protests and a search for meaning.

Today, Sunday, June 21, 2020 marks two significant events-my 100th day of distancing and Father's Day. Let me take them in order. The number 100 is a big deal. In the Presidency of the United States, the first hundred days in office are considered high important <https://www.history.com/news/fast-facts-on-the-first-100-days>. Although the actual focus on the first hundred days may have begun with Napoleon's return exile on the Elba, the real start was Franklin D. Roosevelt's with his New Deal. Warning, quick detour. Did you ever have a Napoleon steak? That is bone apart! FDR rolled out 15 pieces of Congressional initiatives in his first 100 days when he took office in 1933. So, in the political arena the first have become a land benchmark. For me, it yet another numerical landmark in my distancing world. I not sure I would have predicted it would have been that long nor thought it would be going on seemingly indefinitely.



The number 100 adventure done, let's look at Father's Day. Here is a quick history of how it got to be Father's Day. In yearly chronology and history, Mother's Day came in first. It happens in May, therefore, a month ahead of June. Moreover, although Mother's Day was first introduced by Anna Jarvis in 1908, it did not become an official United States holiday in 1914. Father's Day <https://www.history.com/topics/holidays/fathers-day> followed a different route. The concept of a Father's Day began in Washington state June 19, 1910. Then in 1924, <https://www.dummies.com/education/history/american-history/a-brief-history-of-fathers-day/> President Coolidge sets it on the third Sunday of June for that year. In 1956, Congress officially recognized Father's Day by a joint resolution. In 1966, President Lyndon Johnson proclaimed it to be on the third Sunday in June. Finally, 1972, in President Richard Nixon permanently established it on the third Sunday in June as Father's Day in the United States. I know, too much information.

As for my Father's Day it was great. By zoom I was with a daughter in New York City, a son with two grandsons in Norwalk, Connecticut, a daughter and her husband in Tel Aviv, Israel and a son in Boston. They are healthy and weathering the pandemic. Best of all we laughed together.



Steve with Father's Day cards from grandsons left to right Foster and Westley

I attempted to kayak on Sunday afternoon following my zoom Father's Day call/card. However, the rumble of thunder in suddenly graying sky, caused me to abort the adventure. Thus, today, Monday, June 22, after a Tai Chi gathering and a zoom planning conference, I set out again to kayak under a warm early summer afternoon. My goal was to get to the Pawtuckaway State Park beach which is now open to the public Mondays -Thursdays <https://newhampshirestateparks.reserveamerica.com/camping/pawtuckaway-state-park/r/deDetails.do?contractCode=NH&parkId=270061&siteId=64469>.. It was neat to see all the people there on the beach. In the world of global protests, I was nice to observe on it folks of all ages and all different back grounds enjoying being there. They walked; they explored: they talked and they swam. The beach was a live again.



Pawtuckaway State Park Beach Monday June 22, 2020

As I paddled toward the beach, I observe a woman in kayak parked next to a small island sunning herself and having a long conversation on her cell phone. Brace yourself, one of my pet peeve's coming up. Here she was in the midst of a glorious day with marvelous scenery and she was on her cell phone! I know we are in an era of social distancing. It even has its own initials, SD. And yes, the phone allowed her to be social. Clearly, she was having an enjoyable talk with

someone. But, and here's that but again, the phone allowed her to be *distancing* from beauty. All too often I have observed in all settings where the cell phones distant people from those who are right in front of them. It can be in restaurants and at parks. It can be parent from their child and child from their parents. I have observed hikers not see nor hear the trails, summits and paths they on, because of the device in their hands and heads. Wow- I'm glad I got that out of my system. Thanks for listening 😊

Tuesday, June 23, 2020 I listened to a cavalcade discouraging news items. Here were some of the headlines-minorities more impacted on by climate change than other groups; the pandemic is accelerating climate change; US death toll is excessing 120,000 and many southern states have a dramatic number of new cases of COVID 19. I was desperate to find something good. In the early days of distancing, I sort signs of spring to lift my spirit and hope, now where could I find it? Again, exercising while watching the World Channel, I got inspiration. The story began when the tsunami hit Rikuzentakata, Iwate prefecture of Japan in 2011. It killed 70,000 pine trees. However, one pine tree survived and it began known the 'miracle pine' <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2291799/The-miracle-pine-Tree-survived-2011-Japanese-tsunami-dying-months-ago-rebuilt-monument-19-000-victims-disaster.html>. It was a national symbol of hope and recovery. Great tale, but it did not stop there. The tree lasted another year and was replaced by a 25-meter statue of it.



The Miracle Pine

However, a "Tokyo violin maker Munyai Nakazawa was granted permission to use a small amount of wood from the miracle pine to craft the sound post of a new violin." <https://www.limelightmagazine.com.au/news/tsunami-surviving-miracle-pine-makes-debut-in-form-of-violin/> Out of the death and destruction there emerged music and life. Furthermore, he has continued to use wood from that tree in making other violins. And these miracle pine violins are now being passed around to have 1000 people play them. The miracle pine into violins and then into music reminds me of Shel Silverstein's *The Giving Tree*.

https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/370493.The_Giving_Tree. What a great story about the Miracle Pine. It made me feel better,

Thursday, June 25, 2020 With the warm weather, actually a heat spell and many days without significant rain, my neighborhood attention has shifted from acorns to the lake bottom. That is a long way of saying, I been swimming a lot or a few laps to keep the water reference going. I have seen circles made in the lake bottom near the shore. In full disclosure, I have

observed them before. But and there is the but again, now I paid more attention to them. This time I saw a large fish staying in the middle of the circle. Indeed, the big fish appeared to be guarding the structure. After consulting Peggy, friends and the Internet, here is what I found <https://www.britannica.com/animal/fish/Reproduction>.

The circle is called a fish nest. I had always assumed nests were in trees, not true. What happens is the female fish swims about and builds this circle. By its swimming actions, the fish moves the sand out of the middle of the nest and it becomes a small but noticeable circular wall. And, by driving the sand out, it creates a more gravel granular inner surface. That rougher bottom is a better base for her to lay her eggs in. Once, she deposits her eggs, the male fish comes by and deposits its sperm on the eggs. The sperm discharge is called milt. The fertilized eggs develop from embryos to little fish. Then, the little fish leave the nest. I actually, walked through a school of little fishes as I waded out to go swimming. And, like thousands of acorns produced, the number of fish eggs and sperm, leading to many tiny fish is huge. The numbers help for survival.



Fish nest

Switching gears completely, I just learned that the 2020 Deerfield Fair had been cancelled <https://forumhome.org/deerfield-fair-cancelled-for-p33010-1.htm>. It was the right and it had been an expected move. But it is also more evidence the pandemic is not over nor going to be over quickly. I have measured by fall with preparing for the Jewish High Holidays and preparing for the Deerfield Fair. It is a signature landmark local and state event. You cannot zoom fried dough! In that same idea of fall events, I have heard that the postponed Boston Marathon rescheduled for September, has been cancel, too <https://www.cnn.com/2020/05/28/us/boston-marathon-2020-spt-trnd/index.html>. I'll get my pictures to exhibit ready for the Fair in 2021. That is when my daughter in Tel Aviv says she'll see us.

Reflections on change. In a way the fact that the Deerfield Fair was canceled was hearing about a death. Yes, you knew it was inevitable, but when it happens, it is still a shock. As I was recoiling from that news, I went on my stationery bike and watch again on the World channel the Prehistoric Road Trip <https://www.pbs.org/show/prehistoric-road-trip/>. In this marvelous program, Emily Graslie travels across the western United States exploring ancient landscapes for fossils of dinosaurs, ancient mammals, and other prehistoric creatures. It delightfully combines geology and Paleontology, the study of the history of life on Earth as based on fossils. <https://www.nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/paleontology/>.

And when you start to look at dinosaurs, you inevitably have talk about their obliteration after the meteor hit the Yucatan Peninsula 66 million years ago. The program showed the Cretaceous–Tertiary, or K–T, boundary (also referred to as the Cretaceous–Paleogene, or K–Pg, boundary <https://www.britannica.com/animal/dinosaur/Extinction>. This is thin layer is world-wide and identified by high levels of abnormally high concentration of the rare earth metal [iridium](#) which is found in meteorites. Below the K-T boundary, there were dinosaurs; below, none. Connecting the dots, the COVID 19 is world-wide disaster too. I have already heard the term BCE-Before the COVID Era.

The extinction of the dinosaurs, got me to thinking, What will the world look life after the pandemic era is over? It will not go back to normal. Telemedicine, work from home, online education are here to stay. More folks will zoom to meetings. We will think first before we drive anywhere.

Skipping ahead, it was Nottingham Town Meeting time Saturday June 27,2020 <https://forumhome.org/nottingham-holds-an-historic-town-meeting-p33033-129.htm>. . Peggy and I selected to go over the mild protests of some of our children. I wanted to go because I have grown to love the town meetings, because I have a job to do the Nottingham reporter for the Forum (I believe in the power and importance of journalism to democracy and a free and open society – sorry, I got carried away and just wrapped myself in the American flag) , and because I am engaged and active local citizen. But, and there is that but again, I was assured by all the steps the town had done to preserve social and physical distancing <https://www.nottingham-nh.gov/home/news/town-meeting-saturday-june-27th>. Furthermore, we had purchased some M-95 face masks for the occasion.

As I watched and participated in the meeting, I felt I was observing the death of an old and valued friend. That friend was the Nottingham Town Meeting. That day marked its 298th time Nottingham Town Meeting had met and it would be the its last. In my mind, all I could hear were the words of Joni Mitchell’s [Big Yellow Taxi](#), *don't it always seem to go, that you don't know what you've got, Till it's gone, They paved paradise, And put up a parking lot*. I agree I am being a little melodramatic. The cause of my consternation was the warrant article “Article #09: Shall the town adopt the provisions of RSA 40:13 (known as SB2) to allow official ballot voting on all issues before the Town of Nottingham on the second Tuesday in March?” <https://forumhome.org/a-primer-for-nottingham-town-meeting-saturday-june-p33019-129.htm>

As with many court decisions, it was not deciding between right and wrong. I was choosing between two rights. There are many good and actually democratic arguments in favor of moving to a deliberative session and then ballots for voting later. This would allow more

people to potentially vote on issues. I get it. Not everyone can take the whole Saturday to sit and discuss town issues. But also, damn it, I like the full and open discourse and then vote which happens at a town meeting. I have gone to enough of them to know that a good, thoughtful civil dialogue has changed my mind and my vote. And, yes, there is the social aspect of the gathering I liked. When the discussion was over and the votes by secret written ballots were counted Article 9 passed and this was our last Nottingham Town Meeting. Thanks for listening. As I left the meeting, I saw a large painted stone. It said, "Old ways won't open new doors" by an unknown author. Who knows the what changes, opportunities and results will come from this last Nottingham Town Meeting? Democracy moves ahead.



Message in painted rock garden at the Nottingham School

Okay gang, pity party is over, It Sunday, June 28, 2020 and time reflect on the Town Meeting in another way. The meeting took place in the Nottingham School. Yes, there and then it hit me! A school means education, learning, teaching, knowledge and perhaps amazingly wisdom. I love a song written and sung by Pete Seeger entitled *What did you learn in school today?* It starts off with "What did you learn in school today, Dear little boy of mine? What did you learn in school today Dear little boy of mine?"



The Nottingham School, site of the Town Meeting

Changing the question slightly-what did I learn at Town Meeting yesterday? I learned a great deal. First, it was a civil and controlled discourse. Everyone who wanted to speak had an opportunity to talk and be listened to. It followed Robert's Rules of Order <https://robertsrules.com/default.html>. Motions were made and seconded; votes cast and counted. People accepted the voting decisions, although they may not like them. People talk to each other and listened to each other. Individuals were allowed to passionate. Some were able to express their own peculiar styles without censor. It was democracy in action and in practice.

Finally, one other piece of good news. It rained Sunday night!!! Yippee- we needed it.

Enough is enough, time to lighten-up a bit.



Regular humor

One day the Garden of Eden, Eve said, "God, I have a problem, It's a beautiful garden, but I'm lonely and I'm sick of eating apples." "Okay," God said. "I'll create a man for you." Eve said, "What's a man?" "He is a creature with aggressive tendencies and an enormous ego who doesn't listen and gets lost a lot, but he's big and strong, he can open jars and hunt animals, and he's fun in bed." "Sounds great!" said Eve. "There's just one thing. He's going to want to believe I made him first."

Thanks for explaining the word "many" to me, it means a lot.

What is the best thing about living in Switzerland? Well, the flag is a big plus.

If a child refuses to sleep during nap time, are they guilty of resisting a rest?

Two windmills are standing in a field and one asks the other, "What kind of music do you like?" The other says, "I'm a big metal fan."

I couldn't quite remember how to throw a boomerang, but eventually, it came back to me.

COVID 19 Humor

If coronavirus isn't about beer, why do I keep seeing cases of it?

China got this virus right off the bat.

The corona virus can be spread through money. If you have any money at home, put on some gloves, put all the money in to a plastic bag and put it outside the front door tonight. I'm collecting all the plastic bags tonight for safety. Think of your health

Since everybody has now started washing their hands, the peanuts at the bar have lost their taste.



115 days of distancing

The Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner: Part XVIII
Steve Soreff, MD

Hopefully by now, you all will have recognized my interest, perhaps obsession, with numbers. If you ever drive with me, you will notice my fascinations aka in Freudian terms fixation with **Palindromes in the odometer. You remember palindromes-same way forward or backwards- 123321, radar or Madam, I'm Adam**
<http://www.derf.net/palindromes/old.palindrome.html#:~:text=Standard%20Palindromes.%201%20A.%202%20A%20but%20of,A%20man%2C%20a%20pain%2C%20a%20mania%2C%20Panama.%20> Today's diary is number 18. Ready, I am going nuts over all the meanings that number holds for me and this diary-ready?

First of all, in Judaism, 18 is lucky, important and magical number. For those fans of numerology, especially Hebrew numerology, Hebrew letters Chet (ח) and Yud (י) (small note, Hebrew is read from right to left), together spell the Hebrew word Chai (חי). That translated into the number 18 and the Hebrew word means life, being alive and living
<https://www.learnreligions.com/chai-in-judaism-2076800>.
At this point, we stop and break into the Fiddler on the Roof song, *To Life*. "To life, to life, l'chaim. L'chaim, l'chaim, to life. Here's to the father I tried to be! Here's to my bride to be! Drink, l'chaim, to life! To life, to life, l'chaim. L'chaim, l'chaim, to life."

Now I want to point out the three meaning of 18. On the low hanging fruit topic, 18 to Jews is life. Many Jews will wear those letters as a charm on a bracelet or necklace. It is customary for Jews to give bat or bar mitzvah, wedding or anniversary gifts in the amount of \$18 or multiples of that; e.g. 36, 54, 72 etc. You might see contributions to many non-profit organizations in that realm. And on a very personal note. My son Barak was born on January 18th. We regarded his birth on that date quite lucky and significant.

Level two, the pandemic causing social and physical distancing. We do those things to save lives. I and my loved ones have practiced distancing to preserve life. We view wearing a face mask as an act of patriotism. Back to the Epping Fire Department sign-Wear a mask, save a life. We do these things not only so we will not get COVID 19 but also to protect others from it. There is a new term hitting the media- “lockdown fatigue”. It has been employed to explain the reason in ‘locked down’ states that have opened too quickly, the surge of many folks going to bars and beaches. Sadly, then there is another spike of cases. Yes, it hard and difficult to be distancing. The fatigue is real. One still needs to fall back on the discipline of protecting yourself and others with masks and distancing. We are all in this together.

Level three is the reason for The Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner series. My daughter, Sasha, gave me Mark Nepo’s book The Book of Awakening: Having the Life You Want by Being Present to the Life You Have https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/7581.The_Book_of_Awakening. The volume offers daily ideas and insights. Here, I focus on the subtitle “Having the Life You Want by Being Present to the Life You Have.” I did not choose this life of distancing. I preferred and actually liked my Before Covid 19 era (BCE) life. But and there is the but again, this is my life now. And I will live it. The diary is both an anchor and challenge. It does give me a purpose. And part of that purpose to not only share it with others but also to chronicle life in the COVID era. We are making and living history. Therefore, I am writing it for the history books.



Chai (חי) is a Hebrew word for life

Now that my 18 fascination, aka my Chai (חי) high is over and done, let’s start with today, Monday July 6, 2020, my 115th day, the beginning of 19th week and unto my 5th month of distancing. First, I will look back over the last week which had a lot of fireworks in it because of July 4th in it. Then, come back to today and my Tai Chi adventure,

Wow, it is Tuesday June 30, 2020. It is time for some good news and a confession. The good news is that it has been raining off and on and more on than off, since Sunday, June 28,

2020. This has been the long awaited and fabled soaking rain. It is good for the flowers, the plants, the water table, and the lake level. The lake level has been dropping, making it difficult for the nesting loon to gain access to the lake.

Here is my confession. Before Talmud class I exercised and watched a lecture on **The Thousand and One Nights** <https://www.britannica.com/topic/The-Thousand-and-One-Nights>. **The book and its stories are amazing and fascinating. But and here is that but again, I always assumed that the book was about 1001 knights! In my world of puns, I had heard the title but never seen it written out. I had the same issue with the Nottingham School. This Nottingham's K-8 grade school has of its mascot knight. In fact, a couple of Medieval armored warriors guard the entrance to the school building. I work regularly with the school 'parent newsletter, entitled *Knightly News*. As result of my exposure to the school and my mind set, when in the evening when someone wished me a good night, I hear good knight. Yes, cheap one- surely, I joust. Moreover, from the talk, I learned a lot about the book. It features the king's doomed wife, Scheherazade use of telling stories to stay alive. The lecturer linked the book's major theme of t a cruel king, Shahryar, and his clever wife to the Book of Esther and the Purim story<https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/the-story-of-purim/>. Who knows, perhaps I stole Scheherazade's intriguing story idea as I end each diary with some humor?**



The good knights of Nottingham School

And while I am on the subject of night and knight, there is the classic Passover story aka joke about King Arthur <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Arthurian-legend>. It goes like this.

King Arthur is with his group at the round table. Suddenly, Sir Lancelot is seen riding up wearing a pink set of armor with a purple feather in his helmet. King Arthur calls out in Hebrew *Mah nishtanah ha'lilah ha'zeh mikol ha'leilot?* מה נִשְׁתַּנָּה, הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה מִכָּל הַלַּיְלוֹת?

The translation is Why is this night different from all other nights?

<https://www.learnreligions.com/four-questions-at-the-passover-seder-4038588>

If you are obsessed by knight and night, as I am, you'll find funny. At least, it is fun to tell at a seder.

One more neat thing happened Tuesday. One of the unintended consequences of social and physical distancing aka home isolation. Home renovations, room cleaning and yard work have resulted from people staying at home. They are paying more attention to their immediate surroundings and doing a great deal of home improvements. Our dwelling is no exception. Hurricane Peggy helped me clean and liberate my office. She has built many raise beds gardens. But and there is that but again, she has used old tires as garden beds. Thus, still on Tuesday, we

went to Country Tire in Raymond <https://www.facebook.com/County-Tire-Alignment-101652539912775/>. They offered us pick of old, used tires at no charge. In fact, they have to pay \$5 per tire to dispose of them. We took five of them. As you can see, the tire garden beds are great for growing zucchini aka a summer squash. Also, getting the tires from them was a win win proposition. The garage did not have to pay 5 tires hauled away and got 5 free tires. It is a good thing, I am retired lol.



Leaping ahead to Thursday, July2, 2020, that day had many adventures and one moment breaking of the zoom meeting cycle. The first big event was another trip to the Concord Dentist. After three years of a soft mouth guard, the dental hygienist and my dentist had persuaded me I needed a hard mouth guard. Off I went, to get the new one fitted. My dentist had accused me of grinding my teeth at night, the hence the necessary of new one. He pointed out the destruction I had already done and argued the new one would protect his investment in my mouth. The investment consisted of many expensive crowns and one bridge. I think the dental work in my mouth has paid for many of my dentists; kids college tuition. The adjustments took a long time in the dentist chair and now it 2:56 AM and I am trying to get used to the new apparatus. I hope I get used to it or I will never sleep again.

When in the big city of Concord, I stopped by my mother Planet Fitness which just reopened. Because of the pandemic, I will not go into the indoor gym. They nicely allowed me to freeze aka not pay my monthly black card fees until October, One more detail, on driving home, I attempted to get gas at the Raymond, Irving. All the pumps were blocked off-no refilling that day. In the afternoon, it was back to wetting the garden and swimming. Having the lake as a front lawn, is a great way to do distancing, Then, at night, I went to meeting of the Nottingham 300th Committee outside in Nottingham Square. In 2022, my town of Nottingham will; celebrate its 300th anniversary. I have been on this committee for several years. We will feature a year long, series of events. These will include reading of the charter, parades, enactments and encampments. What was neat is that it Chairman, Steve Welch had the meeting outside with us all at a social and physical distance of 6 feet. After over 100 days of zoom meeting, I was at an old fashion real meeting.



At meeting of the Nottingham 300th Committee at Nottingham Square

Friday, July 3, 2020, I had made now familiar pattern. Distancing Tai Chi in the morning, and exercising while learning of the Great Mythologies of the World. This set of ancient myths focused on the Middle East and Southeast Asia. Today's session looked at the common denominator of many of the stories include massive destruction of the earth by either a major flood or huge fire. These catastrophes were brought upon the world by the gods for various reason including the misbehavior of the planet's inhabitants. But and here is the but again, another unifying theme of these stories was the survival of a small group of people. The lecturer said the emergence of society after the upheaval represented the concept of renewal. Thus, the destruction was followed by a better world. This is not unlike the dinosaurs extinction event, which was not good for them but led to current life and world.

What is my point? These myths got me to wondering what will our world look like after COVID 19 and the Black Lives Matter? As my mother used to say, "did you learn something from it"? Watching the news, it is clear the more disciplined and more practicing distancing the states and the nations are, the lower the infection rates and death tolls. Early or premature loosening of restrictions has led to soaring rates of new cases of COVID 19. Wearing masks does matter; protecting you and others is important. The jury is still out on the fight against racism. People are saying the right things. Will there words translate into a more inclusive world? I hope so.

It is Saturday, July 4th morning and I am a bit bummed that the pandemic has canceled my traditional Independence Day celebration. That consisted of, in my community, a breakfast with local musicians playing patriotic songs followed by the reading of the entire Declaration of Independence. Counselors-in-training from a neighboring Jewish camp join the festivities. However, without that breakfast 4th of July party, I still do have the Pawtuckaway Lake Improvement Association's (PLIA) Annual Four of July Boat Parade later in the morning to both watch and report on. But I just did not feel the spirit of the day.

Then, back to a familiar theme, while exercising I watched on the World Channel part of a series called Paving the Way, a program *the National Park-to-Park Highway: See America First* <https://pavingtheway.tv/about-the-film/>. It showed a 1920 first ever automobile road trip of over 5,000 miles and taking 76 days, to visit all the great western states national parks. Readers, work with me here, I am about connect several dots. The film demonstrated how America's travel landscape had been up-ended by the advent of the car. This was especially true with the introduction of Henry Ford's Model T. Before the automobile travel to these parks was by train which was exclusive and expensive. The Park to Park trip was designed not only to show case those magnificent national parks such as Yellowstone and Yosemite but also to underscore the need for good roads to access them.

Fast forward to the birth of Pawtuckaway State Park. In 1836, the Newmarket textile mills through its two dams created two ponds which would ultimately become Pawtuckaway Lake. But the state of New Hampshire would not acquire the lake in 1955. Then after years of studies and work it would ultimately result in the Pawtuckaway State Park, which was dedicated in 1966. The big argument for having a state park here was that it was within about 30 miles of half the population of New Hampshire by car. It was the automobile, featured in the Park-to-Park road, and reason for a state park in Nottingham which made Pawtuckaway Lake. And so, connecting those dots made me excited about watching the Annual Four of July Boat Parade.

And I did enjoy the boat parade <https://forumhome.org/the-annual-th-of-july-boat-parade-on-pawtuckaway-lake-p33065-129.htm>. I went to a friend's dock on the South Channel to get a better watch of the procession and the delightful and refreshing water fights between super

soaker armed vessels and shore bond folks with super soakers and water hoses. I, myself, was docked out in red, white and blue. The shirt you might recognize. It said “Now I can die in peace” celebrating the Red Sox World Series victory in 2004! Over 60 boats decorated in patriotic themes or reflecting the pandemic passed by in route to the South part of Pawtuckaway Lake.



Steve covering the Boat Parade



A Hospital Ship/Boat Towing a Load of Toilet Paper under the banner My Precious

Later, July 4th, on zoom birthday call/party for Jeff Tucker-yes, he was born on the 4th of July, I heard something that reminded me of a classic old carton. The cartoon depicted two cows talking together in our West Great Plains pasture, “I just heard a discouraging word”. In the zoom event two of the participants noted they are now working from home full time and that would continue they said, “would be indefinitely”. I asked them how long was indefinite? They indicated it would until the first of the New Year. Wow, it paralleled my reaction to the cancelation of the Deerfield. COVID 19 pandemic is going to be with us for a long, long time.

Finally, back today, Monday July 6, 2020. Our informal distancing Tai Chi group faced a bit of dilemma. Our group’s two most experienced members would be away this week. What to do? Remember, Tai Chi is a well established set of 108 moves <https://www.108taichimoves.com/moves.html#.XwNVrShKgdU>. These have to be done in order. We decided we wanted have our sessions even if they were away. We divided the 108 into 5 sections, since our group that week would be 5 members. Each one of us take a section. Mine was moves 1-17. We all then realized that this mini-crisis, proved to be a great learning

opportunity. There was an old medical school maximum” see one, do one and teach one”. Each of us by leaning our section gained a better appreciation and understanding of Tai Chi. After some warm up exercises, we did two full sets of 108 moves. We gave ourselves a round of applause after we completed each set. We did it!!



Part of the informal distancing Tai Chi group with a picture of Maitre Moy the middle.
 . of us

Wow, Happy July 4th, time to laugh.

Regular Humor

Q: What did the drummer name their twin daughters?

A: Anna 1, Anna 2.

One dark night in Dublin, a fire started inside the local chemical plant. In the blink of an eye, it exploded into massive flames. The alarm went out to all the fire departments for miles around. When the firefighters appeared on the scene, the chemical company president rushed to the fireman in charge and said, “All our secret formulas are in the vault in the center of the plant. They must be saved. I will give 50,000 pounds to the fire department that brings them out intact.”

But the roaring flames held the firefighters off. Soon more fire departments had to be called in as the situation became desperate. As the firemen arrived, the president shouted out that the offer was now 100,000 pounds to the fire station who could bring out the company’s secret files. But still, the firefighters could not get through.

From the distance, a lone siren was heard as another fire truck came into sight. It was the nearby rural township volunteer fire brigade, composed mainly of old men over 65. To everyone’s amazement, that little run-down fire engine roared right past all the newer sleek engines that were parked outside the plant. Without even slowing down it drove straight into the middle of the inferno. Outside, the other firemen watched as the old timers jumped off right in the middle of the fire and fought it back on all sides. It was a performance and effort never seen before. Within a short time, the old timers had extinguished the fire and had saved the secret formulas. The grateful chemical company president announced that for such a superhuman feat he was upping the reward to 200,000 pounds and walked over to personally thank each of the brave firefighters.

The local TV station caught the thank you on film and asked the chief, “What are you going to do with all that money?”

“Well,” said Paddy, the 70-year-old fire chief, “the first thing we’re going to do is fix the brakes on that bloody fire truck.”

A Classic Golf Joke

Moses, Jesus, and an old man were enjoying a friendly round of golf together. Moses stepped up to the tee and hit the ball. It went sailing over the fairway and landed in the water trap. Moses then parted the water and chipped the ball onto the green. Jesus stepped up to the tee and hit the ball. It went sailing over the fairway and landed in the water trap. Jesus just walked onto the water and chipped the ball onto the green. The old man stepped up to the tee and hit the ball. It went sailing over the fairway and headed for the water trap. But just before it fell into the water, a fish jumped up and grabbed the ball in its mouth. As the fish was falling back down into the water, an eagle swooped down and grabbed the fish in its claws. The eagle flew over the green where a lightning bolt shot from the sky and barely missed it. The startled, eagle dropped the fish. When the fish hit the ground, the ball popped out of its mouth and rolled into the hole for a hole-in-one.

Jesus then turned to the old man and said: “Dad, if you don’t stop fooling around, we won’t bring you next time.”

COVID 19 Humor

The first three are posts from England

The videos of Italians singing on their balconies in lockdown is so beautiful. I PRAY it doesn’t get to that here because I cannot take English people singing *Look on the Brightside Side of Life* from their front porches

Going to start a self-isolation podcast, breezy and full of cheer on day one, advising you what films to watch and books to read, and then chronicling my swift decline into babbling urine-drinking madness by day three

Oh no! Now Jehovah's Witnesses will know we're in

What types of jokes are allowed during quarantine? Inside jokes!

Whenever I'm afraid of Corona, I remind myself of my mom's six sisters.
So many auntie bodies...

The Legos stores have finally reopened in Europe after Corona virus,
People have literally been lining up for blocks!!



123 days of distancing. still counting and not holding my breath

The Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner: Part XIX
Steve Soreff, MD

Today is Tuesday, Ju14,2020 and my 123th day, the middle of my 20th week and my 5th month of distancing. Weather has been delightful with long warm days of sun shines, a pleasant breeze and the lake water welcoming. In the distance has been the threats of thunder showers. The garden still screams for more water but keeps amazing growing. In the news, the surge in many states and countries, reminds me that we are on the right course by distancing. Let ‘s look back on last week.

Moving on, it is now Tuesday July 7, 2020. Quick question, Do you know who Shango is? Until this morning, neither did I. Back to my Tuesday in my now normal routine of exercise and Talmud class, while on the elliptical machine, I watched a series of Great Mythologies: African Mythology. The lecturer talked about Shango. Shango is major deity in the southwestern region of Nigeria, Yoruba <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Shango> . The speaker offered an introductory overview of the African mythology. He noted that it predated many the more well-known Persian, Indian, Greeks, and Roman myths. H talked about how complex these oral stories were and how the blended the religious with the secular aspects of life. He noted the contradictory aspects of the gods both being destructive with firebolts aka lightening and compassionate with nourishing acts like rain for the crops. He told the fascinating persons called tricksters. These people through their clever use of tricks helped people gain insight into their own lives.

But and here is that but again, what he dwelled on the reason, that few of us know much about the rich, intriguing and fascinating African mythology. He attributed our ignorance of African folk tales to the 19th century’s emphasis scientific study of religion. But I wonder if this is yet not another example the real meaning of the Black Lives Matter protests. What I am saying is that African aka Black history, culture and civilizations do not matter to many people. They did not see the subject worth learning about or studying. I look forward to discovering African mythology. On the same theme, a cooking show talked about what is considered “Southern Cuisine” actually has its real origin in Africa.

By now I hope you have been acquainted with my utter joy, amazement and fascination with Peggy's garden. This spring into summer has been great for growing vegetables and flowers. Not only was it warm but we had added to the m nurturing mix equation the following ingredients: peat moss, manure, planting dirt, seedlings started in the late winter and early spring indoors, regular watering and love. As a result, we now have cucumbers, squash and zucchi. These two pictures show the growth in several weeks.



June 20, 2020



July 8, 2020

As I mentioned in Diary 18, I read daily passage from Mark Nepo's book [The Book of Awakening: Having the Life You Want by Being Present to the Life You Have](https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/7581.The_Book_of_Awakening) https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/7581.The_Book_of_Awakening. The reading for July 8 entitled "Moments, Not Words" had this passage which caught my eye, "Or my oldest friend who always listens like a lake". The reason this, perhaps perplexing sentence, is so meaningful to me that we live on Pawtuckaway Lake. Or as I am fond of saying, our front lawn is the lake. In a way, it is my companion. In fact, I liked it so much I took pictures of it early morning for a year. Those pictures are now in the Nottingham Community Center on the corridor town offices. Previously, the Blaisdell Memorial Library exhibited them in 2018 as A Year on Pawtuckaway <https://forumhome.org/a-year-on-pawtuckaway-p29233-129.htm>.

The lake as my friend has several ways. First, it is great to see in morning; it is magnificent view. Then, once I am in my kayak, there is comfort in just being in the water. Next, the lake offers me places to paddle to, islands to visit, loons to look at., coves to explore and friends to visit. Yes, after 13 years of living on the lake (this is bar mitzvah year on Pawtuckaway), I know many folks along the shore front to say hello to. The lake provided me with an avenue to give back to. Does anyone remember from Psychology 101, Erik Erikson 8 stages of life <https://www.simplypsychology.org/Erik-Erikson.html>? His 7th stage is called Generativity vs. Stagnation. Its principle feature is giving back to the community. Peggy and I do

just that as co-captains of the Pawtuckaway Lake Improvement Association's (PLIA) Weed Watch team. We organize and train folks to survey the lake shore for invasive species.

The lake offers me a place to exercise. I can paddle and paddle against the wind which is good for upper body strength. I can swim in it which is an all-around good way to keep in shape. I can relax in the lake. Namely, I will kayak for a while and then metaphorically sit there in the water and fall sleep. As I said, being in the water is very comforting. And sometimes I will go out in the kayak and practice my Torah portion. Every Rosh Hashanah aka the Jewish New Year, I read from the Torah. In the summer I practice my portion. Someday I'll get it right. The loons says I am improving. I hope by now I have convinced you; the lake is like an old friend who listens.



Pawtuckaway Lake in the morning

Friday, July 10, 2020 I stopped on the farm stand on NH Route 152. I love farm stands.. The news of COVID 19 and the protests often eclipse that the New Hampshire <http://www.localfarmmarkets.org/NHfarmmarkets.php> or New England or, for that matter, the American farm stand is still standing, One of the great summer traditions is buying fresh fruits and vegetables as well as other products at these open-air road side, farm stands. They have been here, long before the restaurants finally figured out about the 'farm to table' idea. There are a number of features of many of farm stands which I particularly appearing. Most, if not all, are out in the open air. Therefore, the shopper does not have to push a cart on a one-way supermarket aisle. Many operate on a give and take system. Let me explain. Shoppers such as my partner, Peggy and I bring old egg cartons and plastics bags to the stand for them to recycle. And yes, for cash we do buy items from it also.

The stands, I frequent, are by definition have only fresh fruits and vegetables. If the fruit or vegetables is in season, they have it. If it is not in season and fresh, they do not have. When I stopped, the stand had fresh eggs but no strawberries. Often that stand is unmanned. You pick out your items and pay for it. There is always money in the form of dollars bills and coins to make change from. In this time of credit cards and Internet purchasing, it is refreshing to see a cash economy based on honesty and an honor system. They trust us and we trust them. That is so neat.



A farm stand on NH Route 152 in Nottingham

Saturday, July 11 2020 brought fulfillment and two concerns. Two things have sustained me through these seemingly decades of distancing-my neighborhood wilderness aka woods and my front lawn Pawtuckaway Lake. With the glorious warm summer weather, the inviting and refreshing water, and the call of the loons, the lake has commanded my attention and activities. But then there is that but again, in the sense of even Steven, I was feeling guilty that I had neglected the woods. With the possibility of tropical storm Fay hitting the area, I welcomed the chance to revisit my beloved white birch glove corridor. In the words of Henry David Thoreau, “I went to the woods **because I wished to live deliberately**, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived.” Sorry, that is a bit too grandiose even for me. What I was keying on was the word **deliberately**. **I really wanted to get back to the woods and see what changes summer had made.**

I set off hiking poles in hand, water in the backpack and my camera at the ready. Quick loose association, the walk would serve as a long route to get the daily mail. As I started the long-established Northwest Passage trail from Lamprey Road to Shore Road, I encountered my first concern. There, in the clearing, by the several piles of stacked woods was a dead car. It had not been there before and it interrupted the natural setting. This is one thing I have noticed about New Hampshire, it is not uncommon to have a dead vehicle on the property. I know it is on someone else’s property, but it still seemed to me out of place. Get thee to car junk yard!



Dead car in the woods

After a deep breath, I proceeded east on the Northwest Passage. I reached my beloved white birch glove corridor. I was not disappointed. The tall white trees lovingly displayed their full green foliage. Warning, I am about to break into song and praise of New Hampshire’s full all four seasons. Shall we dance? And, we have not even reached the splendor of the fall foliage.



The white birch grove corridor

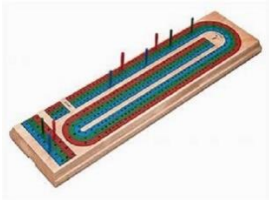
I continued on the path until I reach the spot of my second concern. There a sign posted on a newly began side trail saying: STOP Do not use this trail anymore. These trails are being cut illegally and this needs to be stop now. Don't forget this is private property that can be posted. No one wants to see that. Please be respectful, stop using there illegally cut trails and stop making new ones". I suddenly heard Bod Dylan singing *The Times They Are A Changin'*. At least, I was hiking on a firmly established trail. I was not guilty. Historically, I have bushwhacked in these woods. I use a compass, get lost, find my way back and finally home. A clear warning, someone is making trails-wow. I took two messages from hike. One, property owners should keep their places looking good and natural. Two, people who walk on private property have a responsibility to respect the owner's landscape rules,



Sign: No new trails

Sunday, July 12, 2020 after a Book Club zoom meeting, Peggy and I watched an Israeli film called *Love in Suspenders* https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/love_in_suspenders. The movie was in Hebrew with English sub-titles. It was a neat comedy which depicted seniors and love. Yes, old folks can fall in love. It showed the many dimensions of widowhood as well as the reactions of their children to a mature couple romance. It also helped me improve my Hebrew. And, it demonstrated good acting is. The characters showed the feeling rather than speak their lines. When the woman was in love, her face glowed!

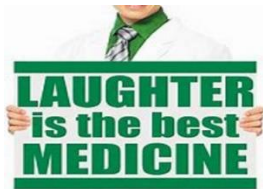
And for the record, and since this a record of the COVID 19 world, today is my 121 day of distancing. Remember I am slightly obsessed with cribbage. Thus, it is important to recognize in a cribbage game played with pegging, the first person who go to 121 wins! On a less positive note, since this Diary 19, in cribbage, a 19 hands means you get on points! 😞



Monday, July 13, 2020 sun the breaks through the morning clouds. It is a nice day, until a thunder storm hit. The Monday routine of Tai Chi and Nottingham Board of Selectmen is the order of the day. The Board is back to meeting in the Community Center. But, in my distancing mode, I will cover it from home on Channel 22. I actually miss its zoom meetings. The wheels of government move forward. The damaging thunderstorm foreshadows yet another global disaster. In came mail in the form of Time magazine. The cover warns “ONE LAST CHANCE:”. It features an article by Justin Worland entitled “This is the year”. It also talks about the climate at a crossroads. Often overlooked in the pandemic, on April 22, 2020 marked the 50th anniversary of Earth Day <https://www.earthday.org/earth-day-2020/>. That date and this issue reminds us of climate change and that is its real <https://www.britannica.com/science/climate-change>. They are calls to action.



Wow. With all that ominous events and news, we need to switch gears and find something to smile about.



Regular Humor

You never really learn to swear until you learn to drive.

Ever wonder what the speed of lightning would be if it didn't zigzag?

If a cow laughed, would milk come out of her nose?

Whatever happened to Preparations A through G?

COVID 19 Humor with a Yiddish twist.. From one of our readers

Sedate - adj. (tsuh-DRATE) All mixed up, confused.

Before the Covid-19 virus, tseydayte meant we couldn't remember if we promised to meet a friend for lunch on Thursday or Friday. Now we don't know what day of the week it is. These days, just getting the mail makes us tseydayte. Do we leave the letters on the floor for 24 hours? Do we wipe the package before we put it on the floor or wash our hands and then wipe the package? And what do we do after we open it?

Shpilkes - (SHPILL-kiss) Impatience, restlessness.

Before Covid-19, when our young kids had "ants in their pants," we'd tell them to go outside and play. Now, however, we have to mask them up first, and watch them carefully so they stay six feet away from all the other kids who are also trying to get their shpilkes out. We used to go out to a yoga class; now when our little ones have shpilkes, we watch Cosmic Kids Yoga and do downward facing dogs right along with them.

Shlub - n. (SHLUB) A slob; some who dresses sloppily.

All this self-quarantining has made shlubs even shlubbiier. Sweatpants and torn T-shirts have gone from weekend wear to all day, everyday wear — unless you're one of those people who dons business casual from the waist up for your Zoom conference calls. If we've learned any fashion sense while being self-quarantined, it's that a bra is optional.

Sekhel - n. (SEH-khul) Common sense; good judgment.

Advice used to flow downstream. Our parents would nag us: "Have a little sekhel; do you really have to fly when you're pregnant?" Now the tables have turned and we nag our parents: "Wash your hands. Wear a mask. You're going to the supermarket? You're old. Stay home!" And our kids? They have the computer sekhel we need: They've taught us how to complete the online school attendance form and how to limit our Facebook posts to "friends only" so we don't embarrass them in front of "the whole world!" They've also taught us that there's nothing wrong with eating ice cream twice a day.

Bubkes - n. (BUP-kiss) Literally beans, nothing.

Something that's worthless or that falls short of expectations. In this new normal, we're getting used to bubkes in the toilet paper aisle, bubkes in our fresh vegetable drawer, and bubkes in our checking account.



My 131th day of distancing

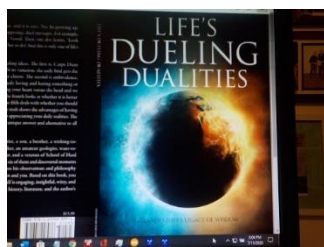
The Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner: Part XX
Steve Soreff, MD

With the Red Sox finally playing, I will use the favorite phrase of its radio announcer, Joe Castiglione, “would you believe!”. Would you believe it is Wednesday, July 22, 2020 and I am in my 131th, day, in the middle of my 21th week and toward the end of my 5th month of social and physical distancing. While I am still obsessed with numbers, 131 is a palindrome. Back to baseball theme, up until now, the Red Sox have not lost a single game in their season.. And while we are on the subject of baseball, did you know G-d was a baseball fan? Here is evidence, the Torah aka Pentateuch or five books of Moses, the Book of Genesis commencing “In the big inning”. It has been quite a week and one red letter day. Let’s look back on it.

It is Wednesday, July 15,2020 and it is time to relearn an old lesson. Remember, the tales of people, who keep on getting the same type of problem in their lives until they finally solve it. In these stories the person cannot grow, mature or advance until that individual has master that particular puzzle. Kind of like the movie, *Ground Hog Day* <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0107048/>. Which reminds me of the old joke. What the difference between US Treasury Bond and Men? The answer is bonds mature. My here is issue that I had forgotten I learned, when I had my own radio show, The Worcester Health Team on WCUW-FM 91.3 on your radio dial <https://wcuw.org/>. The station radio focused in the Worcester communities. During the week from 12 noon to 4 PM, it featured only Latino music. The lesson I learned then, was how diverse Latin American music was and how varied the different South American countries were from each other, The Puerto Rico group was a world apart from Mexican offerings.

But, and there is that but again, I had to relearn that lesson. I am exercising to lectures on African Mythology. This segment focused on creation stories. The speaker reviewed the two different types of gods; the de-nihilist one; e.g. the deity who makes everything from nothing and the other, based on the chaos notion; e.g. the gods who fixes the world. To illustrate these gods, he pointed out the how the many different countries, nations, regions and places in Africa

observed them. To say some one is from Africa is too vague and overgeneralizing. To say all African-America came from Africa is simply not specific enough. It is like saying all Asian-Americans came from China. It is important to see and appreciate our roots and routes to America. See the person; not the stereotype! Lesson relearned; stop generalizing.



Today also is a red letter day for me. How come? Because I finally sent my book off to be published!!! The book title is? (may I have the envelop please!) Life's Dueling Dualities A Grandfather's Legacy of Wisdom. It started out as letter to my two grandson's Westley and Foster, hence the grandfather's part. It is also begins with the saying "she was only a bootlegger's daughter, but they loved her still." Okay your turn to groan. The book distills what I have learned as a psychiatrist, a grandfather, a father, a partner to Peggy, a son, a brother, a wannabe golfer, a jogger, a sailor, and a hike as well as a veteran of the School of Hard Knocks. It grew into my discovery that life is composed of six dual messages and one transcendent notion. The first message involves either doing it right now or thinking about it—carpe diem versus contemplation. Remember, the early bird may get the worm, but the second mouse gets the cheese. The second identifies ambivalence as the key to all relationships. Ambivalence means simultaneously both loving and hating someone or something. As one of my colleagues once said about his wife, "Divorce, *never*, but homicide, maybe." The third one embraces the classic predicament of the heart versus the head. This is often portrayed as right brain versus left brain, or men are from Mars and women from Venus, or emotion and passion versus thinking and logic. In Hollywood movies, the heart wins. The fourth explores whether to work alone or as part of a group; to pursue activities solo, as an individual achievement, or to be part of a team, with its collective genius. Baseball offers an example of both. A player can win the game, but in reality, the team takes the series. The fifth presents the dilemma of whether to follow the rules or to go on your own initiative. A NASA astronaut once said that, in some situations, adhering to NASA procedures saved lives, yet at other times, breaking them saved lives. And the sixth focuses on striving for a one big goal yet also paying attention to the immediate objective or to everyday realities. For example, you may want to write the great American novel, but you need to earn money to pay the rent. Although life can be looked at through the lens of these six dueling, contradictory messages, they themselves are incomplete and insufficient to cover all situations. The answer lies in how one can transcend these quandaries. Transcendence is the book's last chapter.

Wow that is mouth full. I have been working on this for many years and now it is to independently published by October. I hope I'll will not be distancing by then!

On Thursday, July 16, 2020 was a creative day. I kayaked at a distance for 2 ½ hours visiting the entire length of Neal's Cove with a friend. The loons salutes us and the magnificent pine trees danced in the breeze. And, yes, as by the basic paddling principle, we kayaked into the wind. At night and since it was the third Thursday of the month I joined the Open Mic Coffee House, <https://forumhome.org/a-new-tradition-in-nottingham-coffee-house-open-mic-p32004-129.htm>. It is usually held at the UU Community Church but now by zoom because of COVID 19. Hosted by Craig Werth <https://forumhome.org/a-new-minister-for-nottinghams-community-church-p27891-129.htm>, various folks shared songs, ideas, poems and humor. It is great to see the artistic community continues to be active and alive even if is by zoom in the pandemic world. If you wish to watch the Open Mic or participate in it, please email Craig Werth, revcraigwerthATgmail.com to get the zoom link.. Remember it is always on the third Thursday of every month.



Craig Werth hosting the Open Mic Community Church Coffee House

Hello and good morning! It is Friday, July 17, 2020 and I am about to connect several dots: love, cucumbers and adoption. The whole thing started with the classic riddle-what can you give away and yet keep at the same time? The answer is love. What got me thinking about this was the cucumbers in our garden. First, they seemed to grown so quickly and so many. In my mind, I remember the Fall harvest and I had not paid attention that fruits and vegetables are growing and ripe all spring and summer. With the garden, we not only have been feasting on our cucumbers but also giving them away to friends and family. Hence, cucumbers connection to love. The quote by Elbert Hubbard. "Love grows by giving. The love we give away is the only love we keep. The only way to retain love is to give it away

While this was in my head, at Tai Chi, one member of the group had recently mentioned about her adopted children. Wow, instantly she grew ten times taller in my view. I am adopted. That was the biggest event in my life. If not for that, I am not sure what my life would have been like. Thank you, Becky and Lou, for adopting me! I am writing this today because I was adopted then. I feel an especially affinity to people who adopt children and those who have been adopted. Adoption is one great example of love. Love, cucumbers and adoption are all connected.



A cucumber from our cucumber plant in our garden in the hands of someone we just gave it to

Next is a touching subject. Admit it! With that start, I got you attention. Friday, also we had our first porch visit. Yes, in the pandemic and distancing era, we have only folks over for social distancing kayaking. Now, we had good friends over at a distance just to talk on the deck aka our back porch. It was great but, and there I go again with the but, in the old days we would greeted friends with a hug. Not now. It reminded me of the pain of loved ones dying alone. Touch is such an important of communication. We know infants need to be held. It is essential to their development . I have friends who will drive to Massachusetts just to see their grandchild through a window. The lack of touch almost palpable. The visit was good but it reminded me how much we are losing by distancing.

Saturday, July 18, 2020 I went to the far side of paradise. Wow-what an introduction! Hopefully, got you again. To be more specific, every year Peggy and I participate in the New Hampshire Annual Loon Count. On most lakes in NH, volunteers between 8 and 9 AM count all the loons on that date. It is coordinated by Loon Preservation Committee <https://loon.org/>. We and our neighbors, the St. Pierre's, traditionally do the entire South Lake of Pawtuckaway Lake on Gary's pontoon boat. This year because of distancing, Peggy and I did the large part of the lake by kayaks and he and his wife did the coves. The lines dividing the three sections was located on the far side (no, not comic, Far Side <https://www.thefarside.com/>) of an island called Paradise. We saw a total of 5 loons that morning. It is hoped the NH loon population is increasing. One reason I participate in this is because it allows me to be part of the great tradition of citizen scientists. Some of our founding fathers; e.g. George Washington and Thomas Jefferson did so. And with the garden, I can see and observe little things growing bigger daily. I am also member of of the USA National Phenology Network <https://www.usanpn.org/>.. For years I have been surveying the loons on the lake and common dandelions and American robins on my front lawn. This method offers individuals a way to contribute information which will help understate climate changes. Data continues to demonstrate a warming trend and earlier in the spring growing conditions. It one way we can all help make a difference. As many different folks have supposed to have said: "It is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness <https://quoteinvestigator.com/2017/03/19/candle/>.



Loon Preservation Committee

\ Sunday, 19, 2020 on a glorious too hot summer day, there is a piece of bad news which led to some good news. One of the signature summer events in Nottingham has been the annual Historical Society's blueberry breakfast in August at the DAR Building, Nottingham Square. However, it was yet another casualty of the COVID 19 pandemic <https://www.nottingham-nh.gov/home/news/blueberry-pancake-breakfast-cancelled>. It, as well as, the non-happening of the Deerfield Fair was another reminder how different this summer will be. But, and here is that but again, now in a good way, there emerged a new local blueberry source. Here is what happened. One of the blueberry pancake crew recently has learned of a secret local blueberry source. And blueberries represent the big attraction of the breakfast. The Historic Society suddenly, has the potential local place (no, not the secret location where Dick Cheney is hiding) to get them for next year. Thus, if every goes right, for the 2021 blueberry pancake breakfast, the blueberries will be truly be from our area. local!

However, there should be some quality control, right? That is where Peggy and I come in. Today we went to the clandestine spot and picked blueberries. We can now testify two things. One. blueberries are grand. They are outstanding! Two, they would be a great source for the blueberry pancakes and blue berry wine for next year.



Peggy Tucker doing quality control for the 2021 Blueberry Pancake Breakfast

Sunday afternoon proved to be an up-lifting experience in two ways. First, my son Barak who lives and works in Boston came for a visit. As with our friends, this was another porch visit. Only we met and ate on the back deck at social and physical distance. Again, I wanted to hug him. Also I wished to play our traditional Cribbage game with him. But COVID 19 said no. We lunched on the back deck under a huge umbrella. It was a hot and breezy day. Afterwards, we kayaked and explored the lake. As in the Loon count, we paddled to the far side of Paradise Island and then we circumnavigated Horse Island. Each part of the voyage we kayaked into the wind. Thus, preserving the notion "you always end up paddling into the wind! In the journey, breeze had pick-up and I wondered about the umbrella on the picnic table.

My worrying was not in vain. Upon returning to the house, we noticed the umbrella on the roof. Remember, I said it was an up-lifting day. The wind had lifted it up and it was now at

the top of the roof. Wow-what to do? On surveying the situation, we figured out the front roof had a much gentler slope than the back one. Barak to the rescue. He climbed up the ladder and came down with the umbrella as our version of Mary Poppins. Thus, ended our too brief opportunity for an audition for an All State insurance advertisement.



Umbrella on the roof

Monday, July 20, 2020 and the heat wave continues. One quick thought before I jump in the lake. At distancing Tai Chi, we mark the changing seasons by the foliage on the surrounding trees. Today, we observed the seasonal changes through another lens. Two different high school groups – one boys and one girl- we practicing soccer. A hint that fall is coming!

But the big news of the day is? May I have the envelope, please! The headline was “Neil Armstrong and Edwin 'Buzz' Aldrin became the first men to walk on the moon 51 years ago today” <https://www.cnn.com/2020/07/20/us/neil-armstrong-edwin-buzz-aldrin-moon-scen-trnd/index.html>. We all remember what he said: "That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind". In my life, this is one of the happy flashback memories I have. The definition of a flashback is that you not only recall the event but you also relive it! It is one of the features of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) <https://emedicine.medscape.com/article/288154-overview> Some of the common painful flashbacks are 9-11, Kennedy’s assassination and for the older generation the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Where was I when they landed on the moon? Great question. I was doing a Rotating Internship at Harborview Medical Center, Seattle, Washington, That weekend I was on the San Juan Islands off the Washington state coast. I recall when ‘the eagle has landed’, all the island’s churches rang their and people peeped their car horns. Later, on the ferry back to the mainland, I watched them climbing down the ladder and speech on a small, portable television. What a great day in the history of the earth!!



Tuesday, July 21, 2020 was doctor visit. It was good to see how to really practice social and physical distancing, Everyone wears masks. They take my temperature before I can enter the examining rooms. On the way back, I noticed a local Raymond store. Mr. G’s was empty. It had gone out of business. Perhaps, yet another casualty of COVID 19.

Enough of this, let’s have some jokes.



Regular Humor

I just burned 2,000 calories. That's the last time I leave brownies in the oven while I nap.

"A man in Milwaukee was arrested for trying to use food stamps to mail a box of macaroni",
George Carlin

Can February March? No, but April May.

I don't trust stairs because they're always up to something.

Smaller babies may be delivered by stork but the heavier ones need a crane.

My grandpa has the heart of the lion and a lifetime ban from the zoo.

A man sued an airline company after it lost his luggage. Sadly, he lost his case.

Yiddish COVID 19 Humor

Ongeblozen - adj. (un-geh-BLUH-zin) Sulky, pouty; a sourpuss.

Our kids used to get ongeblozen when we said we couldn't go out for pizza. Now everyone's ongeblozen because we spent all afternoon making dough from scratch... and we didn't have the right kind of cheese. "It tastes funny. It doesn't taste like Panzone's pizza. Why can't we go to Panzone's?"

Tsuris - n. (TSORE-iss) troubles and worries; problems.

We can't help worrying when our sister tells us she had a suspicious mammogram or our son hints that someone bullied him in school. But these days, instead of worrying about illness or money or school or our family or the future — we're worried about all of it. *Tsuris* has gone from personal to universal.

Oy - int. (OY) Perhaps the most popular Yiddish expression, *oy* conveys dozens of emotions, from surprise, joy, and relief to pain, fear and grief. Bubbe Mitzi used to say that just groaning "a good *oy*" could make you feel better.

So give a good *oy*, tie the *shmata* on your face — be sure to cover your mouth and your nose! — and try not to get *tsedrate*. Here's hoping all this *tsuris* will be over soon.

141

141 Days of Distancing

The Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner: Part XXI
Steve Soreff, MD

Today, Saturday, August 1, 2020 is my 141th day, 22nd week and 6th month of distancing. But there is more to more. It turns out the 141 is not only another palindrome as well as the number of my distancing day but also an Angel number. What's an Angel number? "Angel numbers are a sequence of numbers that hold a special message from your guardian angels." <https://numerologysign.com/numerology/angel-numbers/> As I got into Angel Numbers, I discovered every number has an Angel meaning. Wow! So here is my Angel Number for 141. "Number 141 is a combination of the vibrations and energies of numbers 1 and 4, with number 1 appearing twice/doubled, strengthening its influences. Number 1 brings initiative and instinct, tenacity and striving forward, new beginnings, achievement and success. Number 1 encourages us to step out of our comfort zones and reminds us that we create our own realities with our beliefs, thoughts and actions. Number 4 adds effort and will, patience and persistence, realistic values, ability and stability, service and devotion, practicality and responsibility, building solid foundations and achieving positive results. Number 4 also relates to our passion and drive. Number 141 a number of hard work and initiative, practical thinking, instinctual knowledge, construction, success and achieving abundance." <https://meaningsof.blogspot.com/2012/06/angel-numbers.html#:~:text=ANGEL%20NUMBER%20141.%20Number%20141%20is%20a%20combination,and%20striving%20forward%2C%20new%20beginnings%2C%20achievement%20and%20success.> I like my Angel number.

What a way to start the Diary! Let's take a look back on the week.

Time and the river rolls on. It is Thursday, July 23, 2020 and I am having a catch-up day. Don't you just relish that! Sorry, for that cheap pun. No meetings scheduled until 6 PM, so I picking up the loose threads of my many projects. And, yes, I do can do multi-tasking. One thought from last night's conversations with a group of friends was that the post COVID 19 worlds will never be the same. Yes, I know I have said this before. Each day I learned how the many different facets of society with change. So last night I heard with the increased number of

people working from home now and into the future, many companies will require less office space. That will change the entire urban and suburban workplace landscape. The down town will never be the same.

Many years ago, my daughter, Sasha, needle-pointed me a tapestry. It depicted Noah's ark with the following caption: "*Plan Ahead, It was not raining when Noah built the ark*". For years that framed message hung in my office. For reason am I talking about that today? Good question. Today, Peggy and I filled out our Absentee Ballots for both the NH State Primary, September 8 and the general E lection, November 3. Fortunately, the Governor has said concerns of COVID 19 would be enough to obtain an Absentee Ballot <https://forumhome.org/new-hampshire-state-primary-september-p33141-129.htm>. Here is a sample of the NH State COVID 19 ballot <file:///C:/Users/Steve/Downloads/Absentee%20BALLOT%20%20App%202020-COVID%20fill-in.pdf>. It is another way of saying distancing will be going for a while. We do not want the risk of COVID 19 by voting in person.



Friday, 24,2020 was partially devoted the medical education. The pandemic, through the use of zoom and other video-conferencing modalities, has made major changes in the healthcare, the workplace, education and just any meetings for organization in general. Now I want to highlight a revolution in the world of medical and healthcare providers textbooks. Online books and websites now offer instant up-date information. I am a contributor to two medical and allied healthcare websites. One is WebMD <https://www.webmd.com/>. "WebMD is an American corporation known primarily as an online publisher of news and information pertaining to human health and well-being. The site includes information pertaining to drugs. It is one of the top healthcare websites by unique visitors." The other is Statpearls <https://www.statpearls.com/>. "StatPearls publishes peer-reviewed eBooks, Apps, CME/CE, and an Online Learning Management System to help physicians, dentists, nurses, pharmacists, basic scientists, and allied health professionals identify education deficits and learn new concepts." These and other sites have altered how providers and patients learn and gain information.

Let's look at an example of a traditional medical textbook story. When I graduated from Northwestern Medical School, Chicago, in 1969, I did a rotating internship in Seattle, Washington. I put all my medical books into the car me when I drove west. After that year, we put all of our belongings into a moving van and we traveled to my psychiatric residency in Portland, Maine. In the process of boxing the medical books, we discovered just how heavy

books were and how expensive they were, too. Also, we found out the mailing the books at the book rate cost was significantly lower than if they went on van. The books went by the US mail to Maine. By the way, the Portland Post Office is still annoyed me for them having to hold the books until I arrived.

Fast, forward a couple of years and I discovered the books were out of date. Moreover, when I tried to sell and then give the books away, no one wanted them. This is a long way of showing rapidly medical information changes. As a result, text books are not only expensive but also out of date when they come out. Hence, the reason for the usefulness and value of these websites and the reason I contribute to them.

One neat fun thing I did Friday morning. Remember before I talked about love, cucumbers and adoption? It turns out I we had a delightful and bountiful batch of squash suddenly in our garden. I gave them to members of distancing Tai Chi group this morning. The gang does its two sets on a new pickle ball court. Please, note the picture. For one shining moment the pickle ball court was transformed magically into squash court!



The newest squash

In the afternoon we porched visited with friend and one of the and I kayaked for 2 hours into Mountain Brook Cove. Then, at supper time, I watched the PBS News Hour <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/> today. It had a long segment showing pictures and stories of individuals who that week had died from COVID 19. The people they presented were vital, of all ages and neat personalities. Just like Anne Frank put a person and personality in the millions in the Holocaust, that broadcast demonstrated the individual in the thousands of people.

After zoom Friday night services, I listened to the Red Sox home opener against the Baltimore Orioles. The Red Sox are winning and baseball has returned! In my baseball world of yesteryear, a good day consisted of the Red Sox winning and the Yankee losing. Better still, if the Red Sox beat the Yankees!



The Red Sox are finally playing at Fenway Park and winning-there is a future

Here is the back baseball story .This headline tells it all : “2020 MLB schedule breakdown: 60-game format puts emphasis on divisions, regional play”

<https://www.cbssports.com/mlb/news/2020-mlb-schedule-breakdown-60-game-format-puts-emphasis-on-divisions-regional-play/>. The season’s opening day was Thursday, July 23, 2020 with Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases throwing out the ceremonial first pitch prior to the game between the New York Yankees and the Washington Nationals at Nationals Park, in Washington, D.C. I will get ahead of myself with one early COVID 19 joke. *Why did Doctor Fauci threw the first pitch wild? Because he did not want anyone to catch it!*

The season will consist of only 60 games instead of the traditional 162 games. The playoffs will include 16 out of 30 teams making the playoffs. And like *Wait Wait Don’t Tell Me*, radio program, the games are played in front of live audience of no one and be accompanied by canned crowd sounds. The teams will play their games against their divisional rivals and their geographic counterparts (the National League East teams, for instance, will play against the American League East teams).

The actual games themselves will be played with a number of new rules. Here are some of those new rules. Pitchers will have a three-batter minimum. That means pitchers must to face at least three batters or pitch to the end of a half-inning. Both leagues will have a Designed Hitter. If the game goes into extra innings, the first team up has a runner on second base. There will be a zero-tolerance standard regarding arguments and bench-clearing fights. All MLB players, managers and coaches will be expected to maintain social distancing -- which requires there to be at least six feet between each person -- guidelines from all umpires and opposing players.. All these new rules although introduced because of pandemic are really designed to speed up the game.

Saturday, July 25, 2020 goes into the record books as it was bound to happen. For a number of months, people have been concerned with zoom bombing. Today it happened. I was at zoom annual meeting of the Pawtuckaway Lake Improvement Association (PLIA) when it was attacked. One statement appeared saying you’ve been hacked followed by a very offensive word. Next, a picture of naked man was shown. Then, the entire meeting was shut down. Finally, the zoom gathering resumed and proceeded without interruption. Yes, zoom bombing is real! It is

offensive, shocking and up-setting. Now, I understand the reason I have to register for some zoom meetings.



Zoom bombing

Later that night, I caught the following WMUR-TV news story: “More than 100 volunteers cart trash out of White Mountain National Forest”. I love hiking in the White Mountains of New Hampshire. I have done all 48 4,000 footers there. I particularly enjoyed the fact there was little or no litter on the trails. Sadly, with the popularity of getting outdoors in the pandemic, litter on the trails has become a major issue. I still adhere to the rules of leave no trace and *carry-in and carry out*.

Sunday morning before kayaking off to help to remove Milfoil from the South Channel, while exercising I watch a fabulous PBS program called When Whales Walked: Journeys In Deep Time <https://www.pbs.org/show/when-whales-walked-journeys-deep-time/>.. It made a number of neat points. It documented not only the evolution of elephants but also how they spread from Africa to most of the continents , It introduced to me the term **the Anthropocene** <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/age-humans-living-anthropocene-180952866/>. It is also known as the Age of Humans. In geologic time, it is what we are now living. It says for the last 6,000 years human activities are responsible for the earth changes! Wow, we are there times of the glaciers or the age of dinosaurs. It designates human changes to the environment through such activities as urban spread, fossil burning, and agriculture as the dominant factor altering the planet. It cites the many species’ extinction as a result of the humans actions.

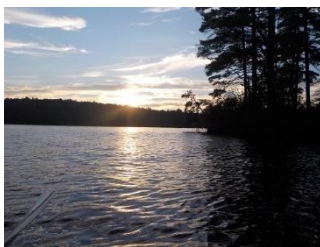
Today is Monday, July 27,2020 and as *Sesame Street* used to day, the word for today is uncertainty. There is great uncertainty about this Fall in going back to school. Students, parents, teachers and administrators wrestle with when and how to have classes. And then there will

remain the 64 thousand question, if the school reopens, will you send your child there? The notion of less than certain came up this morning as I watched the Tokyo News program. The head of Olympic Committee talked about the hope that the postponed games still could be held in Japan next year. One for the reasons to move it farther forward was that because of world-wide travel restrictions. These constraints have disrupted not only athletes' training but also interfered with scheduling qualifying matches for the Olympics. And this sign at a trailhead said even the neat idea of walking outside still requires physical distancing.



A hiking message

Tuesday, July 28, 2020 proves to be a mellow day. After reporting on the Board of Selectmen meeting and notifying folks of the Summer Concert postponement, I drove to the big city of Concord for a dental cleaning. It is almost a pleasure to visit a healthcare office. Why? It is because those settings, they do things right. Everyone wears a mask. Seating is 6 feet apart. They take your temperature without actually touching you. And I had ‘no cavities!’ With the sun setting, the air warm and a gentle breeze across the lake, I went for a social kayak. What is that? I visited a couple of neighbors from the water and chatted with a couple of folks on vessels on the water. I got to watch a glorious sunset over Pawtuckaway Lake. While I am writing the Diary, I had the Red Sox game on the radio in the background. One big difference now, the Red Sox are not only a losing streak but also they are playing like the pre-2004 team. As you will recall, that is when they broke the Babe Ruth’s crus and won the World Series. Sadly, they are still losing.



Sunset on Pawtuckaway Lake

Five things or discoveries or just neat items defined a beautiful, hot summer Wednesday, July 29, 2020. The first is the easy one. Today marks the 5th National Cribbage day since my prisoner-ship commenced. I celebrated by recalling that I had recently double skunked my computer game opponent, Bill. Then while doing the distancing Tai Chi, I observed 6 boys, all about 13 y ears old, playing basketball in the park. What made the scene so appealing was how nice and natural it was. The parents clearly had driven their sons to the park and left them there. They had assumed their kids would be safe-and they were. How many other children around the world have that a safe to play? Some urban parks are not safe. If you were in Israel, living near

the Gaza Strip, there would missile attack shelters nearby. Third is recognition that I am in better mood and more generous after I have exercised. I found when I am exercising, I am doing it for myself. It is selfish. But, afterwards I find myself to be a better person-more tolerant, giving and forgiving.

The other two things occurred when I hiked short trail through the woods to a neighbor's house. Remember, all those acorns and beginnings of oak trees in my driveway? On the trail, a dozen small oak trees are now growing. Those oak tree are persistent. Then, on the return route through the woods, I discovered this sign. It reminded me of Robert Fulghum's All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten rules https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/34760.All_I_Really_Need_to_Know_I_Learned_in_Kindergarten.

The sign said "Club rules, No fighting, No swearing, No stealing stuff, No breaking stuff, No fires Camping No kissing unless 18+". What great club to belong to!



Club Rules Sign

And by the way, to be internally consistent and connected, our NH Primary Ballots came in the mail today.

Weird attempt at humor to make point. In the Politically Correct (PC) world, a person of no particular age nor sex, of no known ethnic group and with a non-descript hair color is sitting exhausted in a doctor's office. The physician asks, "How come you are so tired?" The patient replies. "I just did what the prescription said. 'Take one a day and then skip a day'!" That is a long way to say, I did not write anything on Thursday. So, yes, I skipped a day.

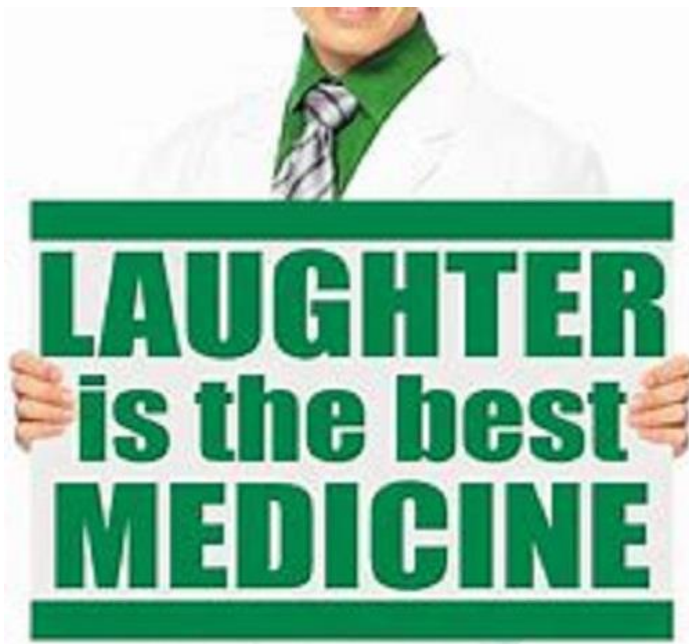
However, I have a lot to say about Friday, July 31, 2020. Back to would you believe, July is almost over! While observing a socially and physical distance with a friend visit to Dunkin' Donuts in Bedford, NH, I made one chance connection and had a moment of controlled annoyance. We were discussing our health problems. Yippee, at my age, medical conditions are a common topic of conversation. It came-up that I had had Hashimoto's disease aka Hashimoto's thyroiditis. This turns out to be an auto-immune disease which attacks the thyroid gland, As a result, I would be hypothyroid if not the thyroid medication I take daily. Okay, big deal but who was Hashimoto? He was Hakaru Hashimoto, 1881-1934 a Japanese doctor and medical scientist.

Ready? I was born on December 7, 1942. That is the first anniversary of the Japanese surprise attack on Pearl Harbor. As President Roosevelt said, “Yesterday, December 7, 1941—a date which will live in infamy—the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan.”
<https://www.history.com/topics/world-war-ii/pearl-harbor>. Two Japanese attacks were connected to me!

Now for the muted rage I felt at the Dunkin' Donuts. I could not believe that so many people were not wearing masks. Yes, the employees did and you could not use the bathrooms there. But, the number of folks coming in and going without masks to me was appalling. I go back the sign at the Epping Fire Station, “Wear a Mask Save a Safe”. We have a responsibility to not only keep ourselves safe but to protect others.

One quick bright spot in the day was distancing kayaking with friends on Pawtuckaway Lake. Peggy and I love to be able to the share with others. And while kayaking we saw 4 loons.

Wow- what a week-it better be time for some humor.



Regular Humor



How appropriate-this is my kayak logo. And, I have at least 120 puns to go.

Puns make numb; mathematic puns make me number.

A priest, a rabbit, and a minister walk into a bar..

The bartender asks the rabbit what he would like to drink.

The rabbit answers, "I dunno, I'm only here because of AutoCorrect."

I can't believe I got fired from the calendar factory. All I did was take a day off.

eBay is so useless. I tried to look up lighters and all they had was 13,749 matches.

. Don't spell part backwards. It's a trap.

"Doctor, there's a patient on line 1 that says he's invisible." "Well, tell him I can't see him right now.

COVID 10 Humor

If you see me talking to myself this week, I'm having a parent-teacher conference.

The spread of COVID 19 is based on two factors:

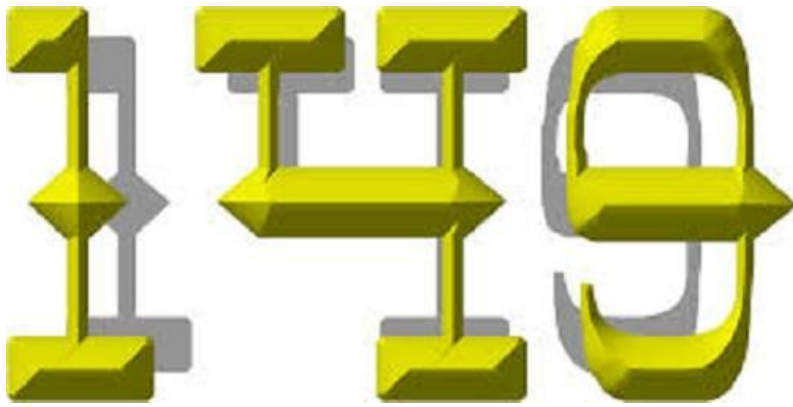
1. How dense the population is.
2. How dense the population is.

Half of us are going to come out of this quarantine as amazing cooks. The other half will come out with a drinking problem

I don't think anyone expected that when we changed the clocks we'd go from Standard Time to Twilight Zone.

Went to a new restaurant called "The Kitchen." You must gather all the ingredients and make your own meal. I have no clue how this place is still in business.

Struck up a conversation with a spider today. Seems nice. He's a web designer.



149 days of distancing

The Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner: Part XXII
Steve Soreff, MD

It is Sunday, August 9, 2020 and I am in my 149th day, 23rd week and 6th month of distancing. As the number 149 shows, it has a shadow behind each number. It is my way of saying this has been a reflective 8 days. Several things have produced a more contemplated account. I have been more emotional and several entries will show them. The hours of daylight are getting shorter. As Weber Law indicates, we have reached to the detectable mark in the ever shortening daylight. Since June 21, the actual amount of daylight has been decreasing. Meanwhile, some nights have been cooler than in July. And the few leaves on the trees have hinted at changing colors. These are all indication Fall is coming. Moreover, the Jewish New Year (it is the year 5781, so be sure to mark your calendars) and the Day Atonement is upon my horizon. Hence, another reason to be reflective about things. Let's look back and see what last week was about.

Back in the saddle again. After a wild (ha-ha) celebration of my Angel Number 141 yesterday, Sunday, August 2, 2020 came in with an overcast sky and a worried expression on my face. Time for a quick cute joke before getting serious. A horse walks into a bar. The bartender asks, "why the long face?" My worried expression is based on this pun. What is the river in Egypt called? Denial! I continued to be astonished that people deny the pandemic. Yes, I have been railing about that folks do not wear masks for 142 days. They are demonstrating denial and a manifestation of deeper notion that COVID 19 is either not real or that serious. States and nations down play or act as if it is a not issue. Wow- I feel better, I got that off my chest.



A quick praise of zoom. One organization I belong to, is conducting a search for an executive. I am on the search committee. Not only can the committee actually meet on zoom but we can do interview of candidates there too. In this pandemic, era face to face meetings and interviews are not possible. Not to mention, which I will, that people cannot travel here, too. Again, zoom to the rescue. We have talked with persons interested in the position from across the state, across the nation and across the world. One by-product of COVID 19 pandemic is that New Hampshire has suddenly become highly desirable as a place to live and work in. Quick disclosure-all of us who live here in New Hampshire knew that already!

In my routine of exercising while watching NHPS, I saw a show of by New Hampshire native who does travel shows around the world. It is called Samantha Brown's *Places to Love* <https://samantha-brown.com/episodes/season-3/new-hampshire/> However, in this episode Samantha discovered the Lakes Region and the White Mountains. She went around the globe to find that is great stuff in her backyard. Oh My Gosh, I am sounding like a cheerleader for New Hampshire! (And, I ready am!) She saw loons for the first time. Her guide at the Squam Lake Natural Science Center, <https://www.nhnature.org/> said the loon was a cross between an albatross and a penguin. Interesting, if correct.

Oh my gosh, I almost hurt myself. How so? In this era of attacking journalists and cries of fake news, I decided to fact check her loon information. A call to the Squam Lake Natural Science Center clarified things. The loon is classified as a different order of bird. It is a close relative to both an albatross and a penguin according to Squam Center.

In the program, her NH journey continued. She also rode the Cog Railroad to the summit of Mount Washington. She noted it was the first cog railroad in the world. She added, in the 1850's when the NH legislature granted approval to build it, they said it could be constructed all the way to the moon. I love learning new stuff every day. But and there is that but again, I also checked that one too. As the electronic computer voice says, "here is what I found." When Sylvester Marsh "applied for a charter from the New Hampshire State Legislature in 1858 to begin the process of bringing his visionary project to life, he was nearly laughed out of the State House. They referred to him as "Crazy Marsh", but awarded him the charter anyway, with the stipulation that once he reached the summit, he might as well keep going and build his 'railway to the moon'". That information comes a website entitled *Sylvester Marsh and the Railway to the Moon*, <https://www.thecog.com/our-origin-story>

Two things marked today, Tuesday, August 4, 2020—waiting for Tropical storm, Iasias, and a challenge to what I have been teaching. Let's take things in order. All the headlines today were talk about once a hurricane and now a tropical storm named Iasias racing up the east coast toward us. We need the rain, which makes it good news. The accompanying wind may be a different story. But and there is that but again, no one can pronounce the name of the storm correctly, remember its name nor know what it means. If you wonder about the name, you are in good company. "How unique is the name Iasias? Out of 6,028,151 records in the U.S. Social Security Administration public data, the first name Iasias was not present" <https://www.names.org/n/iasias/about>. That site says its origin are Spanish, 80%, African, 10% and Roman, 10%. The Catholic Encyclopedia says "The name Isaias signifies " Yahweh is salvation " <https://www.catholic.org/encyclopedia/view.php?id=6193> . As I writing at noon, we are still waiting for him. I did get up early for 'a calm before the storm' kayak, but a gentle rain cut that short. However, my radio weather alarm does keep on piercing the room with direr warnings. The storm finally arrived at about 6 PM with a few minutes of soaking rain and cooling big breeze. The garden's flowers, fruits and vegetables thanked the heavens. And speaking of them, tonight we feasted our spaghetti squash from the garden with beans and cheese along with roasted summer squash and zucchini, also from our patch. Furthermore, the lake appreciated the rain and said "the water helped it do its level best"!

Now for the challenge to my teaching. In my second career as a college and university professor (that sounds better than official title, adjunct faculty. Continuing on that theme, I augured we added value not added junk to education), I taught a number of psychology courses. The Psychology 101 and Human Growth and Development classes reviewed how one goes from an embryo to a fetus to new born to an infant and to a toddler. Many of you can recall hearing and learning about the developmental stages of a number of the key leaders in the field. These included Piaget's four stages of cognitive development, Erikson's eight stages of one's psychosocial development, Freud's five phases of psychosexual development, and Kohlberg's Three Stages of moral development. These offer a good framework on which to look at human development.

But and here is that but again, Peggy has a grandson who is on verge of turning 2 years old. During those two years, he has spent a great deal of time in our house. And during these occasions I had the opportunity to observe him and his development. I found the textbook descriptions inadequate and incomplete. He has demonstrated many physical and mental abilities which challenge what the books' portrayals of development. From watching him, I realized that infants develop faster than the textbooks described. For me, he is rewriting the children development books. By the way as a loose association, my generations of older citizens (yes, I get and demand my senior discount) are rewriting the books on aging, too.

He is smarter, has more physical abilities, bigger vocabulary, and comprehension than the textbooks presented. And, yes it is true that kids change, grow and gain skills every day.

And through Peggy, I get to experience the total joys of grandparenthood. She is working with him and helping him grow on each visit. A quick confession, I was so busy building my career that I missed and did not pay enough attention to the developmental milestones in my own children development. Being a grandparent offers one an opportunity enjoy what you may have

missed in your children's growing up. Also, it is great chance to spoil the grandchildren, too.



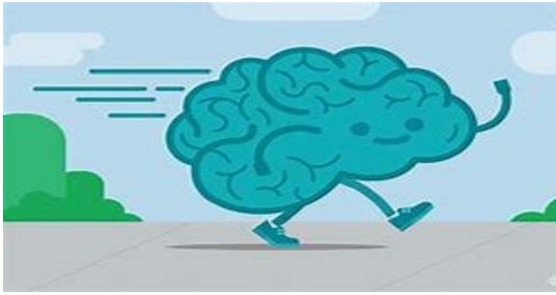
Some of grandson's toys

It is Wednesday, August 5, 2020 Iasias has gone to Canada and the sun caressed the land. I have a relevant riddle for you. How do you get water on the brain? The answer is brain storms! That is a long way of saying I had an idea I wanted to share with you. I should have offered it before, because it represents one positive way to thrive in the distancing era. It is called *A Pilgrimage of the Mind*

A Pilgrimage of the Mind offers an intellectually challenging, emotionally fulfilling and spiritually uplifting alternative to the traditional 'bucket list books. Although tempting and dazzling as these volumes are, they require a huge commitment of time and especially money. Our journey begins at home or at the very most it stays your own neighborhood. To go on it, you need only time, computer, a telephone and a curious mind. Anyone of any age with an adventurous mind can start on one of its many paths.

Here is what I mean by time and cost. Patricia Schultz's 1,000 Places to See in the United states & Canada Before You Die recommends a visit Zion National Park in Utah which she calls it "Heaven Set in Stone". However, the airfare from Boston, MA to Las Vegas round trip costs \$404-\$540, hotels at the park area range from \$116 to \$320 per night as well car rental fees at about \$11 per day. That is if you dare fly. But the pilgrimage of the mind offers a different type of journey. The adventure begins at your home and ends there. And you can share your experiences with others on the Pilgrimage of the Mind website (PMW). This website is in development, right now.

There are many of the routes that the pilgrim can take. These are options, not prescriptions and can be done in any order. The heart of the Pilgrimage experience is a solo armchair adventure. Do and hopefully complete, a Sunday a New York Times Crossword puzzle. Put together a 500 piece puzzle. Or read five classic books. What is a classic book? Goodreads offers one place to start. <https://www.goodreads.com/shelf/show/classic>. Then once read a book, you can share thoughts about the book and see others reactions (PMW). The PMW can serve as an online book club.



A Pilgrimage of the Mind

Or instead you wish to take an interactive interpersonal journey. These do require computer or telephone connections. Here are some examples. Talk to someone by phone and connect with a person online in each of the 50 States. Or do the same with someone in with every nation in the world or, at least, on every continent. The armchair pilgrimage provides an alternative to Mark Twain's declaration: "*Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness*". But this is home based travel.

Switching gears here are a number of routes from which can be solo and with someone in your home. It could be looking at movies, listening to music and viewing art. Watch five classic movies. For example, Rottentomatoes offers these suggestions.

<https://editorial.rottentomatoes.com/guide/100-best-classic-movies/> . There are many ways to obtain these films: Netflix, Hulu, Amazon Prime and your local public library. And once you have seen the film, share your thoughts on PMW. Keeping in the idea of individually or shared path experience and moving on to music, listen to five great symphonies from this list: the 10 best symphonies of all time <https://www.classicfm.com/discover-music/latest/best-symphony/>. Finally, view great paintings. To start, gaze upon five great paintings from 10 Most Famous Paintings In The World, <https://10mosttoday.com/10-most-famous-paintings-in-the-world>.

As you see the paths are many and varied. Here is list of other pursuits. Write a sonnet. Yes, follow the Shakespearean rules and compose your own poem. Write a short story. Both of these could be 'published' on PMW. Play and complete a moderate game chess online game. One site is <https://gameknot.com>. Or a more challenging task, on the PMW tell others who was Jack the Ripper or argue that Lizzie Borden was not guilty? Again, the PMW is *your* online platform and community. And the list of potential paths grows. Play and complete a moderate set on Sudoku online. <http://www.youplay.com/games/view/sudoku/BIG> Or simply walk a mile in each of the four seasons and write about your observations. Do some Meditation and Breathing Exercises. Once any of these are done share them with the PMW community.

The opportunities are endless. The pandemic offers a perfect time start your Pilgrimage of the Mind and continue it for a life time.

Good morning! It is July 6, 2020. The sun is bright and I have three things I want to share: flowers, maps and China. The first is yet another confession. I my joy of watching the garden's squash, cucumbers and zucchini grow and then with zeal eating them, I had neglected

to praise the glorious flowers which punctuate the garden. Peggy picked some of them, arranged them in a vessel, and placed them on the table. Now, these flowers not only watch over vegetables growing but also them consumption. And I love this quote by the Ralph Waldo Emerson “*The earth laughs in flowers.*” His idea highlights what flowers bring to the garden and table-joy!



Our garden's flowers

Now for maps. Recently, I renewed my subscription to National Geographic magazine. As a re-upping bonus, the publisher send a map of the world. Big deal. I'll explain. In that map the North and South Hemispheres were on the left and Europe-Asia and Africa were on the right. Now, here is the point. The old maps used to display the USA in the middle of them with Europe and Asia on either side. Is the US no longer the center of the world? Then again while exercising I saw the program which leads into the reason for China. Again, while exercising and watching the World Channel, I saw a disturbing broadcast of PBS NewsHour Presents China: Power and Prosperity <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/pbs-newshour-presents-china-power-and-prosperity> . It “explores the future of the communist country’s relationship with the U.S., which will help determine the new international order, the dominant technology supporting the world’s communications infrastructure, and the global economy.” It showed how China uses the constructions of high speed rail system in other countries to gain influence there. It illustrated how camera surveillance and smart phones in an integrated system can be used to control a population. For example, in a Chines city, if the crosswalk camera records a person jay-walking, then that individual’s picture is displayed publicly as a form of shaming and that one’s credit score is reduced! It also depicted the suppression and incarceration of an Islamic group in China. Wow-it was an eye opener. The program ended by noting that US and China are the two biggest economies in the world and asking what will the future relationship between the two? Perhaps, the map was showing this!



The world map

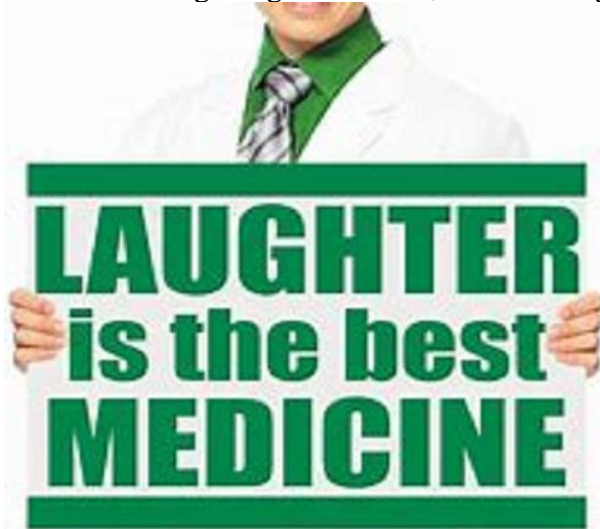
Friday, August 7, 2020 and I am back on the same theme. What is the river in Egypt called? Denial! I know I just said it before, but I want to make a point. I just watched two documentaries while exercising. One illustrated to world-wide destruction coral reefs due to the

oceans becoming more acidic and warmer. The other showed the Camp Fire in California and the obliteration of the town of Paradise due to a prolonged drought. Both programs demonstration of climate change. But some people deny it!!! That gets me concerned (a mild term for now).

Recalculating and good morning, it is Saturday August 8, 2020. After reflection, I want to return to two of my initial assumptions about the pandemic: stages of dying and duration. When I commenced Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner-hood on March 14, 2020 (which seems like a million years ago), I had these two ideas. The first I used the Elisabeth Kubler-Ross' 5 stages: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK507885/>. The point was then I had rapidly reached the level of acceptance. But, what I had neglected to point out in that model, it is that it is not a straight line progression. One can revert to an early stage. That is my explanation for my rage against people not wearing masks and denial of climate change. The bottom line, I am angry at COVID 19. I'll get over it but that's how I feel today.

Second, I had compared the duration of the pandemic to what people felt during World War I and II. They endured the sacrifice without an end in sight. It is now truer today. Now we hear bulletins about when the vaccine would be available. During those days, it was hearing news of battles, defeats and victories. The similarities are more apparent. It is clear when the COVID 19 pandemic will end!

This is getting too serious, time for laughing



Regular Humor

A guy sends a text to his next-door neighbor. "Bob, I'm sorry. I've been riddled with guilt and I have to confess: I have been helping myself to your wife when you were not around. I hope you'll accept my sincerest apology. It won't happen again."

Feeling outraged and betrayed, Bob grabs his gun, goes into the bedroom, and without a word, shoots his wife.

Moments later the guy gets a second text.:

"Really should use spill check! That should be 'Wi-Fi'."

My wife says I only have two faults. I don't listen and something else

Math Jokes

Why was the fraction apprehensive about marrying the decimal?
Because he would have to convert.

Why did the student get upset when his teacher called him average?
It was a mean thing to say!

Are monsters good at math?
Not unless you Count Dracula.

What do you call a man who spent all summer at the beach?
A tangent. (A tan gent.)

Why was the math book depressed?
It had a lot of problems.

COVID 19 Humor

**Paranoia has reached
absurd stages...**

**I sneezed in front of
my laptop and the
anti-virus started a
scan on its own**

Finland just closed its borders. You know what that means. No one will be crossing the finish line.



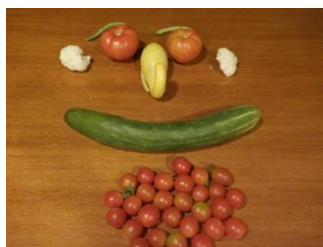
161

161 Days of Distancing

The Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner: Part XXIII
Steve Soreff, MD

Hello and welcome, it is Friday, August 21, 2020 and I have been distancing for 161 days, 25 weeks and 6 months. And I am no longer sure when I can see to light at the end of the tunnel. Or in another world or even perhaps our world, is that light at the end, a train coming toward us! There is always the talk of a second wave. I want to say good-bye to the first wave. The one good thing I can say about 161 is that it is a palindrome and I love them. Let's look back at the last week or so. Or so!

Good Morning, it is Monday, August 10, 2020 and I am over my funk of last week. The sun is shining, the breeze is refreshing and the birds are singing. Someone asked me over the telephone (yes, I am still distancing and in my bunker), how I was. I replied. "it is the best summer that I can recall but except for COVID 19". It terms of weather, the summer has been great. It was kayaking, and swimming. And the flowers and vegetables were growing like crazy. It is also favorable for golf; except I dare not play it. It would have been super for my neighbor and my annual Sunday afternoon game at Fenway Park, but there are no fans allowed. And I am sad to report the Red Sox are not doing so well. As you can see, I did get my garden products to smile.



The old man of the garden

Continuing the day, again while exercising I watched *The Gene: An Intimate History* <https://www.pbs.org/kenburns/the-gene/>. And I knew it was bound to happen. I had seen this program before. But, like a good book or movie, rereading or reviewing it, offers you a different perspective and new learning experience. I came away with a greater appreciation of Mendel, DNA and the Human Genome Project. I was starting medical school when the sequence of DNA was discovered. It was 1990 when the human genome was mapped. I say that there has never been a better time in human history to be sick! The advances partially through genetic breakthroughs now can diagnosis diseases and treat patients than ever before. Of interest, our DNA contains only 20,000 genes. Amazing. It turns out, there are a series of on and off systems which control these genes. More and more treatments are now based on your DNA. This called is called precision medicine.

I cannot leave the significance of the gene without several more comments. As much as genetic power has, it must also appreciate in the context of the environment. In psychology there remains the perennial debate of nature versus nurture. The real answer is both are important. For example, if one is born with a genetic preposition toward diabetes II.. However, by exercise, good diet and a low stress life style one may not that disease manifest itself. The interplay of nature and nurture is called the epigenetic model. But, and there I go again with the but, I must add, I like to people whose first name is Jean or Gene. Why? You ask. So, I can say hygiene!

Tuesday, August 11, 2020 I had a number of challenges. I lost my beloved hearing aids, more on that later. But I will get over it. I had problem with my land line telephone. Although in this case it is with Comcast, but the attempted solution fits into a generic pattern. First, I had to find the number to call. Often, these are hidden so you will only reach them by their websites. Websites means less people and more profits. Upon calling, I hear the initial message in English and Spanish. You are then told a million times to go to the website and because of “the Corona virus and the unusual call volume, you will experience a longer delay time.” They add, “your call is important to us and please wait for the next available operator”. Then you hear classical musical punctuated by “your call is important to us and please wait for the next available operator”, Finally around Christmas time, you talk to some person in the Philippines with a name you cannot pronounce. You explain your problem. That person reformulates it in a way that makes sense to him or her but is not the problem you are calling about. By the way, for time travel and the international dateline, you are conversing with someone tomorrow. Finally, after about a half hour of attempts, that person offers to transfer your call to another person who can better help. That other person is located in the United States.

I accept the transfer and now talking a nice woman in Delaware. She is pleasant and knowledgeable. She appreciates it when I sing, “Oh what did wear Delaware. Oh, what did wear Delaware. She wore a brand New Jersey.” She has not heard that song and thanks me. She tries very hard and is quite patient with me. In the end, she does not solve the problem but I find a way to live with it. I hope this scenario sounds familiar to you. I have been through it, many times with a variety of computer and appliance problems. Welcome to the world of global connections.

It is another beautiful day, Wednesday, August 12, 2020 and I just dodged another bullet. Remember earlier glossed over about my hearing aid problem. Yes, I wear them. Last year I bought a new model and it is terrific. The ad for them says, “hear the nuance”. With the new ones I could hear more subtle sounds. That is the good news. The bad is that I foolishly went

swimming with them in!!! aka stupid. One is in Pawtuckaway Lake and the other, I recovered and is out for repair. Hearing aids cost in the thousands. I was really worried about the replace cost. I had several nightmares about that. However, when I called Hearing Life in Barrington where I got them, they put the replacement cost at only \$400. I know that is high, but I was looking at thousands. They have a manufacture's 3 year warranty and replacement once policy. And I promptly notified my home owners insurance company to add hearing aids for my list. I did learn something from this episode, at least.

This morning I awoke shaken (not stirred) from a dream or rather more accurately a nightmare. It is Thursday, August 13, 2020 and appropriate to the dream, it is overcast. The dream had the themes of death and choosing to die. As psychiatrist I believe the only person who ultimately can really interpret the dream is the dreamer. So with that in mind, here is what that dream meant to me, I have been avoiding talking about death, most of the time. That subject is the elephant in the COVID 19 room. Ernest Becker in his book, The Denial of Death, talks about if you do not recognize death you cannot live. The key idea is acknowledgement and power of death. To not die is reason for all of our masks and distancing. We do not want to die nor have any of our loved ones die. That is major determinant of our behavior. That dream was a woke up call. For over 150 days of distancing I have forsaken many of many loved volunteers activities such as being an Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC) Information Volunteer and not even played golf! I do not want to catch COVID 19 nor transmit it. That is why. Yes, be safe, be well and not get COVID 19. Wow I am glad I got that off my chest and can move on!

Friday, August 14, 2020 and it time for yet another confession. I have been so preoccupied with the glory of watching garden's flowers, fruits and vegetables grow, that I have neglected to express my joy and delight about the toads, there. Many of them are tiny and a few looks more like big guys. They hop about, trying to get out of my way. They are brilliantly camouflaged in the mulch. Here is the toad website <https://www.nwf.org/Educational-Resources/Wildlife-Guide/Amphibians/Toads>. Its definition is "Like frogs, toads are amphibians. They differ from most frogs because they have dry skin, warts, crests behind the eyes, and parotoid glands. The parotoid glands produce a poisonous secretion that helps the toad defend itself from predators. This substance, called a bufotoxin, can cause death in small animals and allergic reactions in humans. Toads have other ways to avoid being eaten too. If they're brown or green in color, they can blend into their surroundings and escape detection."



Photograph by Peggy Tucker of one of our garden toads

This Friday also demonstrated another value of zoom revolution. In my mind because of COVID 19, there has been a revolution in work, meetings and worship created my online audio and video connections. Here is another example of how zoom has changed everyone's world. In Judaism, the anniversary of the death of a loved one, especially a parent called *yahrzeit*. One does a couple of things to observe it. One lights a *yahrzeit* candle. One goes to the synagogue and say a prayer called *Kaddish*. Today is the *yahrzeit* of m our mother's Rebecca Zoken Soreff. My sister lives in Chicagoland. In the Before COVID Era (BCE), each of us would have gone to our own synagogues and said *kaddish*. But through zoom she and I can attend my Derry synagogue, *Etz Hayim* and say *kaddis* together.

A date mostly unnoticed in the West was August 15, 2020. This marked the 75th anniversary of the date that the Japanese Emperor announced to Japan its surrender in World War II <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/japan-surrenders>. It is also known as V-J Day. There was a neat Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC) reference to that date by hiker, who summited Mount Washington and heard of the surrender upon getting to the top <https://www.outdoors.org/articles/amc-outdoors/v-j-day-at-75-a-hiker-recalls-a-mount-washington-hike-and-return-to-a-wars-end>.

I have two associations to that event. The first is when I was doing a rotating internship at Harborview Medical Center, Seattle, Washington 1969-70 after graduating from medical school. I got to tour the huge US naval mothballed fleet at Bremerton, WA. At that time, Battleship Missouri was there. It was on that ship that the Japanese signed the formal surrender documents <https://ussmissouri.org/learn-the-history/surrender/#>. I was there and stood on the very spot where General Douglas MacArthur spoke and signed the treaty.

The second connection to that date was several years ago when Peggy Tucker and I attended a talk in Newburyport, MA. The speakers were all survivors of the Atomic Bomb attack on Hiroshima <https://www.history.com/topics/world-war-ii/bombing-of-hiroshima-and-nagasaki> on August 6, 1945. The group described in detailed the horrors of the blast, their survival and the aftermath. I was surprised that one of the speakers was man who survived the blast spoke. He said that despite his personal mental and physical pain for the explosion, the bomb was the right thing to do. Many of us can recall, the continued debate of whether the

bomb should never have been used at all. So, his statement was unexpected. His reasoning was that without the two bombs, Japan would never have surrendered. Instead, many more hundreds of thousand soldiers and civilians would have died if the Allies had invaded Japan.



75th Anniversary of Japan's surrender in WWII

A look at the weekend, August 15-16, 2020, a quick check in. The glorious weather continues with hint of fall in the cooler nights and shorter daylight. Returning to a constant theme. Watching the news while exercising, it showed how in the Sahara Desert, the oases are decreasing and the sand is taking them over. Yes, it is yet another of example of climate change. As the program points out, in the northern hemisphere we look at the glaciers decreasing, and in the southern they are concerned with deserts growing.

On Sunday, August 16, 2020 the Jewish Federation of New Hampshire (JFNH) <https://www.jewishnh.org/> held its annual meeting. Yes, another example of annual meeting on Zoom as result of COVID 19. Again, the meeting was different than others. Besides the loss of the actual social gathering, much was gained by increase of state wide participation. In the meeting, the Rabbi noted that living in the COVID era was like being in the movie, *Ground Hog Day* https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/groundhog_day. It was a neat analogy. Yes, it is too easy to lose track of days. But there is another meaning of the movie that I want to focus on. The following story/joke sets the stage for the point I want make. What is the difference between men and US Treasury Bonds? The answer is bonds mature.

In the movie, finally Bill Murray playing TV weatherman covering the annual Groundhog Day festivities in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania matures. He stops being an egoist and becomes a nice individual. And he gets the girl! So how is this connected to COVID era? What I hope is, that people will not only endure the pandemic day to day but also as my mother used to say, "did you learn something from it?" We will emerge from the pandemic having learned something. When it over, we will be a better, more tolerant and kinder society and community. We will learn to appreciate our friends, families and neighborhoods.

Monday, August 17, 2020 and the more I got to think more about what I have learned from the pandemic. I have gained a much greater appreciation of my immediate surroundings. I love the woods, in detail, especially the white birch trees. I am in awe garden's flowers, fruits, vegetables and now toads. We have been dining on squash, cucumbers, zucchini, tomatoes, and egg plants from it. I value my relationships more. Perhaps, I did, at least, have something in common with US Treasury bonds. I did mature, at least a little.



The appreciation of garden joys

I had several thoughts for Tuesday, August 18, 2020. The first thought was that there has been another casualty to continual and continuous focus on COVID 19. We have not paid much or any attention to in the 2020 marks the 100th anniversary of the Nineteenth Amendment giving women the right to vote on today <https://www.history.com/topics/womens-history/the-fight-for-womens-suffrage> . It seems preposterous that it took so long. There is an old ad for Virginia Slims which said, “you’re come a long way, baby”. I counter that statement with this question, Why did take so long? And besides that, advertisement is quite demeaning, also. Furthermore, Africa-American, Chinese, and Native American women did not get the right to vote.

The second thought is about the local reaction to the Dolloff Dam <https://forumhome.org/stoplogs-pulled-at-dolloff-dam-water-released-p33275-129.htm> having 2 ½ stoplogs pulled to supply more water creators on Lamprey River because of the drought. Many of the folks, who live on the lake, expressed annoyance with the lake already at the current low water level would be even lower. Their concerns were valid. But what they did not see, was the big picture. That Pawtuckaway Lake is just part of the entire Lamprey River water basin <https://www.lampreyriver.org/aboutus> . Their responses mirror to global battle over limited supply of fresh water and its use. There are disputes about the Colorado River in the American southwest and the Jordan River in the Middle east. What is needed in all these situations is a more comprehensive approach to fresh water distribution and its uses. On a final note on the dam subject, the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services did offer an explanation for the water release <https://forumhome.org/des-explains-the-pulse-release-at-dolloff-dam-p33287-129.htm>,



Dolloff Dam with 2 ½ stoplogs pulled

Also, again while exercising I watched *NOVA: Inside Animal Minds: Bird Genius* <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt3531182/>. This program challenges many our assumptions about animal intelligence. I showed, dating back to the works of Jane Goodall and her chimpanzees, that animals not only used tools but could also make them <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Jane-Goodall>. The program show casted the amazing animal abilities to solve problems and use tools for the solutions. It questions many of the assumptions about the uniqueness of being human and our mental capabilities.

Good Morning, Wednesday, August 19, 2020 I can have something neat to report, In a sea of arts and athletic cancelations or event without audiences, the Nottingham Recreation offered an island of music entertainment. It had decided to go ahead with its Summer Concert Series <https://forumhome.org/the-nottingham-summer-concert-series-is-on-p33118-129.htm> but with precautions for COVID 19. It held its last concert Tuesday night featuring the North River Band <https://forumhome.org/north-river-music-band-closes-the-summer-concert-series-on-several-high-not-p33285-129.htm> . Live entertainment was not all lost in the pandemic. But what made the concert so noticeable was the appearance of a rainbow after a very brief rain shower. The brilliant and very appreciated rainbow covered the performers and audience. It was a refreshing and hopeful sign of nature's approval of the event.



A rainbow over the North River Music Band performance photograph by Tom Duffy

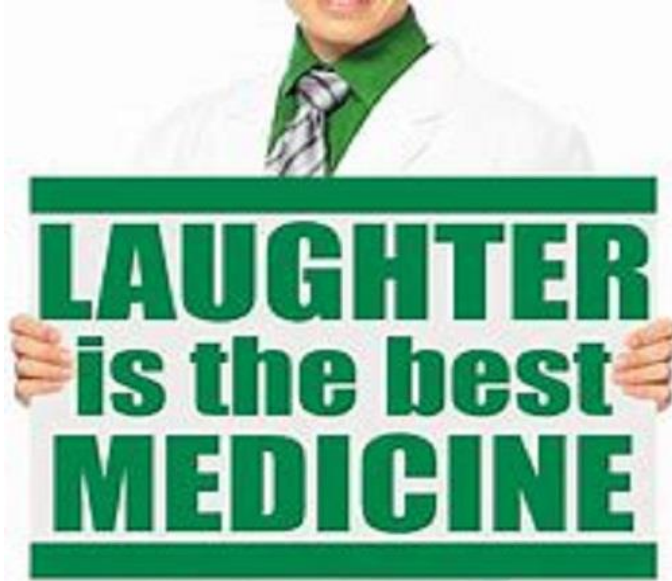
Next, I want to bring up a point to ponder. As I listened NPR's Morning Edition, a musician and song writer made the following observation. He said the murder of George Floyd would not have gained national and international attention and protests, had it not occurred in the midst of the pandemic. He argued several things contributed to the death gaining such traction. These included that of people had the time actually to watch and hear the full over 8 minutes of the officer's knee on Floyd neck, the stresses as result of social and physical distancing, and the major economic disruptions as well as many folks out of work. His idea was worth thinking about.

And since anniversaries are important August 15, 2020 marked the 51st anniversary of the Woodstock, New York Concert, "The Woodstock Music Festival began on August 15, 1969, as half a million people waited on a dairy farm in Bethel, New York, for the three-day music festival to start. Billed as "An Aquarian Experience: 3 Days of Peace and Music," <https://www.history.com/topics/1960s/woodstock> . Although I did not attend, it remains one epic event in American cultural history. What was such a peaceful celebration. In watching film about it, I was impressed several aspects of it. The orderliness of the behavior of those attending was noteworthy. Many local people pitched in and helped out when there a food shortage at it. And the outstanding quality of some of the music was memorable.

Today, Thursday, August 20,2020 was a day of relaxation, reflection and gratitude. The cool morning gave way to warm and productive day. My daughter had successfully escaped New York City and at distance got to see her nephews Westley and Foster in Connecticut. My son,, the marathoner, explained to me how he was able to continue running while distancing. Remember, I started by looking for the light at the end of the tunnel? Well, the light many assume will be a vaccine. Upon, further thought, I realized just how illusive that might be. Just, like the medical students, I talked about before, who deliberately got the virus so that they could develop antibodies to it. The jury is still out and the results ambiguous about how effective these antibodies are. So, there remain a million questions as to how effective the vaccine would be, would it work for people of all ages and who should get them. I sent in my NH Primary absentee

ballot, also. And finished the day by participating in Nottingham Community Church Third Thursday Coffeehouse/Open Mic via Zoom.

That is enough, let's find things to laugh about.



Regular Humor

And while before I was lauding toads, it reminded of this story. A couple of grandkids ask their grandfather to make a sound like a frog. He is dumbfounded and asks them, "Why should I make a sound like a frog?" They reply, "Grandmother says when you croak, we go to Hawaii".

If a cow doesn't produce milk, is it a milk dud or an udder failure?

My body is a temple ... ancient and crumbling. Probably cursed or haunted.

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175 Days of Distancing and Still Counting

The Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner: Part XXIV
Steve Soreff, MD

It is Friday, September 4, 2020 and I am in my 175th day, my 27th week, my 7th month and almost by 3rd season of distancing. I must say when I began this distancing, I did not anticipate it would be that long. And, as equally as challenging, I am not sure when the end is even in sight. I selected a New Hampshire route and road because e during these 175 days I have not left the state! My farthest road trip has been north to Concord, west to Bedford, south to Raymond and east to Epping. Wow- yes, it takes a long time to finish one of my library CDs. In my traveling, by zoom I have been to Israel, South Africa and California. Is 175 days just another mile stone or millstone? You be the judge. Last back at the last week or so.

Good morning, sun is out and I am in good mood. It is Saturday, August 22, 2020. I have three things to say: garden products, mountains and medical information.

First, I continue to be boggled and astonished by the garden. I never have been involved in growing cucumbers, tomatoes, zucchinis, egg plants, and squashes. So, I am amazed about all the things, which came from the garden. Perhaps, the garden might not have been that extensive, if not for the pandemic distancing. And while I am in the mind blowing mood, my spell check called tomatoes *love apples*. I have never heard of that term, before. I investigated its derivation. Here is what I found. The website *Why is a tomato called a love apple?*

<https://recipes.howstuffworks.com/tomato-called-a-love-apple.htm> offers this explanation. "The 1937 film "Shall We Dance" featured "Let's Call the Whole Thing Off," ...makes brief note of the fact that half of the couple prefers the pronunciation "tomato," while the other half prefers "tomahto." Now you know.



This week's products from our garden

Second, again while exercising I watched *The Andes: Kingdoms of the Sky* <http://www.pbs.org/kingdoms-sky/episodes/andes/> There were a number of points from it, that I came away. The program reminded me of American-Europe and Asia mountain centered we are. I mean, when you talk mountains and their ascents, most of us think of the Rockies, Switzerland and the Himalayas. This program reminded me about South America and especially the Andes. The show and the entire series *Kingdoms of the Sky* highlighted the ability of people and especially animals to adapt and thrive in such harsh, unforgiving environments. It is a testimony the powers of adaptations. And while I am on that subject, I marvel at how many of us have adapted to and, dare I say, continue to go and grow, in the distancing COVID 19 eras. Another fantastic aspect of that show and the series was the brilliance and clarity of the photography. The ability to capture the intimate life of the wildlife and the heroics of the mountain climbs was unbelievable. Finally, the program again how climate change is devastating the global environment, cultures and people.

My third idea is based on the Biopsychosocial Information Model: The New Disease Paradigm <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1924996/> . This says to understand an illness in a person you must look not only at its biology, its psychological effects and its social context but also the information available about. Let me jump to the point. In two instances n-n-medical friends of mine have used their research to find treatments for their loved ones. In both cases their physicians did not know of these therapies. In both situations, the approach they discovered worked. Their loved ones are alive and living better because of their diligent information pursuits. Returning to the cliché, curiosity killed the cat, information brought him back. Knowing more about an illness can lead to better and innovative treatments.

Hello, it Sunday, August 23, 2020 and I have three ideas. First, I recently asked my golf buddy when were we going to play golf again? Yes, not playing because of distancing in one of my sacrifices. He said, "when the pandemic is over". He added, "we'll play on Saturday morning". But, and there is that but again, we do not know when it will be over,

Second, over the category, post pandemic the world will never be the same, here is one change. Bicycling has been one of the great growth areas due to COVID 19. Now London, England is permanently changing the roads to accommodate more cyclists.

Third, I listen to Robin Wall Kimmerer, on the NPR On Being series <https://onbeing.org/> Robin is botanist professor and Citizen Potawatomi Nation. She has written *Gathering Moss: A Natural and Cultural History of Mosses* and *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants* <https://www.humansandnature.org/robin-wall-kimmerer>. The point she was making was that we should be connected with nature and have a reciprocal relationship with it. She says too often humans have had dominating role with it. She continued with not only do we love nature but it also loves us. And she states that love affair is seen through gardening. She was so right about myself and the garden!

Then, just after a kayak protection duty, for Milfoil finding and removal Team in the South Channel, thunder rumbled across the sky and rain pelted the lake and garden. We had a soaking shower for several hours. Wow, we needed the rain!

Monday, August 24, 2020 had a moment of giving and one of learning. One of my rules I live by is to give back and make the world a better place. Today, at the place where we do distance Tai Chi, the park people were putting up a new trail kiosk and posts for signs. Just like getting rid of milfoil, I want to participate. It was nice way to pay back the park for our Tai Chi. It feels good to give back.

Now for the learning experience. To put the posts in correctly we needed to use a leveler. But, we did not have one. Amazing, the cell phone came to the rescue. Remember I hate how people are dominated by the I-phones and also I have not mastered mine. I am still discovering how to text message. One of the volunteers used her I-phone, as a leveler. It worked; the posts are standing correctly. Will wonders never cease and the different applications of cell phones will apparently never end.



A cell phone doing its level best

Today. Tuesday, August 25, 2020ain while exercising, I watched Native America: New World Rising <http://www.pbs.org/native-america/episodes/new-world-rising/>. The program showed New “World Rising reveals Native American cultural continuity in the face of genocidal warfare and history’s worst demographic devastation. Native Americans tap 10,000 years of beliefs to fight and survive the forces of Conquest”. It chronicles the glories, brilliance and advances of the Native American both North and South America before the European destructions of them. It reminds me of Joni Mitchell’s song *Big Yellow Taxi* with the following lyrics: “They paved paradise, Put up a parking lot...Don't it always seem to go. That you don't know what you've got 'til it's gone?” Look at all we have done and do to civilize people!

Welcome to a bluster, cooler Wednesday, August 26, 2020. Today I have come to conclusions. The first is that I now have indisputable evidence that Fall is coming. There were many hints. These included shorter hours of day light, less warm and inviting lake water, schools beginning and cooler evenings. But, today. I saw that many of the leaves of a maple tree on my road had become vividly orange! The centerpiece of the New England Autumn foliage, the maple tree, has spoken.



A maple tree on my road proclaiming Fall is coming.

The second conclusion came when again while exercising on the World Channel, *American Experience: The Chinese Exclusion Act* <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/films/chinese-exclusion-act/>. As its website says, “Examine the origin, history and impact of the 1882 law that made it illegal for Chinese workers to come to America and for Chinese nationals already here ever to become U.S. citizens. The first in a long line of acts targeting the Chinese for exclusion, it remained in force for more than 60 years.” It details the prejudice, hatred, violence including lynching some American had. It shows another chapter in American zoophobia. In contrast, one of the speakers at the Republican National Convention stated that America was not a racist country. By, I wish that that were true.

In checking, the US Constitution’s Fourteenth Amendment <https://constitution.congress.gov/constitution/> says for all American s “ No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.” This is the promise and law of the United States. In the words of Robert Frost, “But I have promises to keep, And miles to go before I sleep.” America is wonderful country but we can do better.

Good morning, it Thursday, August 27, 2020 and it is another day of discovery. Returning to my daily tradition of watching while exercising, I saw *The Cordell Bank: A National Treasure* in the *Changing Seas* series <https://www.changingseas.tv/season-11/1101/> . The reason I liked this episode is I learned something new. My goal is to learn something new each. And today I did. It was about the phenomena called upwelling <https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/facts/upwelling.html>.. That website defines it as “Winds blowing across the ocean surface push water away. Water then rises up from beneath the surface to replace the water that was pushed away. This process is known as ‘upwelling.’” This is how it applies to Cordell Bank. Historically, at certain times of the year, a wind from the north blows down along the California coast. As it does so, pushes the water already farther down the coast. With less surface then, the cold waters on the bottom of the Pacific Ocean surges up along the coast to fill the space created by the wind. What is key here is that colder water brings with it

many nutrients. In turn fish, whales and even some birds from across the entire Pacific Ocean for this food. That is so cool.

What the program and series pointed out the there is less oxygen in the oceans and seas are becoming more acidic due to warmer oceans due to climate change, Oh, in the verse that Pete Seeger used to sing, “when we ever learn?”.

And the discoveries keep coming. Again, while exercising I watched *NOVA Wonders: What's Living in You?* <https://www.pbs.org/video/nova-wonders-whats-living-in-you-fnbfuy/> . It brilliantly showed the trillions of microbes that live in and on can cause diseases but also are necessary for our health. Our microbes landscape is the microbiome. It talked but fecal transplants for certain bacterial infection. It even linked the possibilities of some mental disorder to microbes. The entire program reminded me of the famous video *Powers of Ten* video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ww4gYNrOkkg> . Please, watch it. This is an amazing with a couple in Chicago and goes by 10s to the edge f the universe. Then, it returns to by 10s go inside the body all the way to atoms. It is brilliant demonstration of how we need to understand the world from our molecules to the edge of the universe. Wow, that is also the measure of religion that God is both inside us and in the heavens!



Powers of ten-looking in and looking out

It is the weekend of August 28-30, 2020 and I have a number of things to share. First, it is raining. Rain now is blessing the drought pained region. What is someone’s misery aka hurricane Laura which devastated the southern states has become a gift to our area. Second, school has begun for K through graduate level. Remember, when schools all started after Labor Day?? The point here is that should a happy event is now full of distress and stress. COVID 19 r remains the dominate force. Perhaps, in the future, all grade transcripts will have an asterisk on the year 2020. It would designate education and therefore learning has been impacted by the pandemic.

The third is my usual theme, while exercising I watched PBS special by Deepak Chopra based on his book, *Metahuman: Unleashing Your Infinite Potential* <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/45162648-metahuman> . In it he offers three phases of living: Understanding yourself, Mastering realty, and Going beyond existence. He then went on to say Phase III Going beyond existence involves 6 steps: Get a good night’s sleep, Manage stress, Exercise and breathing, Cultivate healthy emotions, Eat well and Be in touch with nature.

He also emphasized the need an attitude of gratitude. He concluded with the importance peak experiences which involve transcendence, emergence of platonic values and the loss of the fear of death. These offered neat ways not only surviving the pandemic but also for just living.

And, of course, the reality that on Saturday, August 29, 2020 I observed, while distancing, my 6th National Cribbage Day by skunking my computer opponent. On Sunday, we participated in a litter pick-up on NH Route 156 <https://forumhome.org/index249.htm>. Early in the pandemic the state had prohibited that activity. It was good to give back. We also, while distancing visited a friend. She has a magnificent flower garden. I want t show you t

It is Monday, August 31, 2020 and I am feeling the change of season. The poem and tune *Last Rose of Summer* by **Thomas Moore** sums it up.

“Tis the last rose of summer left blooming alone, All her lovely companions are faded and gone”. But, I do not lament the summer passing but instead I am grateful for it. Except the pandemic, it was glorious. Much sun so I could kayak and swim. I got the observe the flowers in the yard, eat the products of the garden, and yes, smell the roses even though they were really sunflowers. But, as the television ads say, that is not all. This summer people showed creativity and ingenuity in the face of the pandemic. We have distancing Tai Chi and pickle ball outside. The Nottingham Recreation Department kept its Summer Concert Series alive <https://forumhome.org/the-nottingham-summer-concert-series-is-on-p33118-129.htm>. People adopted and moved forward. The Nottingham Historical Society and the 300th.Anniversary held their meetings outdoors. It is like the Little Engine that Could!

It is a beautiful day, Tuesday, September 1, 2020. Sever al things on my mind. I do not want to let today go by without acknowledging it as the 81st anniversary of Hitler’s invasion of Poland. It was Europe’s Pearl Harbor moment. Again while exercising I watched a p bill 1 a on Joe McCarthy. Sadly, the press did give him too much attention but the show did illustrate how democracy can right itself. I believe America has problems but I also feel can and must address them. If we send people to the moon and back, we can send kids to better schools.

Wednesday, September 2, 2020 and I have an inner glow based on the simple idea of an attitude of gratitude. With all that is going on, I am still so grateful for what I and my family has. There is a prayer part of the Friday night service from the Psalm 96 called *Let the Heavens Rejoice* and it begins ,”Sing unto the Lord a new song, Sing unto the Lord, all the earth”. In either sung in Hebrew or English, it is stirring.

Regular Humor



There were two frogs sitting on a lily pad, when all of a sudden, a fly came along. One frog put out his tongue, ate the fly, and started laughing hysterically. Soon the other frog joined in the laughter. Later in the day, the other frog ate a fly and the two frogs burst out in laughter. As time went on, the frogs enjoyed the flies so much that the sight of a fly would cause them to laugh hysterically. A third frog hopped up to the first two and asked what was so funny. The first frog answered “Time.” “Huh?” responded the frog. The second frog explained, “Time’s fun when you’re having flies!”

Q: Why don’t ants ever get sick?

A: Because they have little anty-bodies!

COVID 19 Jokes

Why did the chicken cross the road? Because the chicken behind it didn’t know how to socially distance properly.

Two grandmothers were bragging about their precious darlings. One of them says to the other, “Mine are so good at social distancing, they won’t even call me.”

Who’s idea was it to sing “Happy Birthday” while washing your hands? Now every time I go to the bathroom, my kids expect me to walk out with a cake.

My husband purchased a world map and then gave me a dart and said, “Throw this and wherever it lands—that’s where I’m taking you when this pandemic ends.”

Turns out, we’re spending two weeks behind the fridge.

Being quarantined with a talkative child is like having an insane parrot glued to your shoulder

Day 121 at home and the dog is looking at me like, “See? This is why I chew the furniture!”

Boston is the known as the hub -center of the universe. Here how to understand and speak Boston.

The geographical center of Boston is in Roxbury.

Due north of the center we find the South End.

This is not to be confused with South Boston which lies directly east from the South End.

North of the South End is East Boston and southwest of East Boston is the North End.

There is no school on School Street , no court on Court Street, no dock on Dock Square , and no

water on Water Street .

Back Bay Boston streets are in alphabetical order: Arlington , Berkeley , Clarendon, Dartmouth , etc.

Bostonians: think that it is their God-given right to cut off someone in traffic. (It is!)

Bostonians: think that there are only 25 letters in the alphabet (No Rs, except in ideal.)

Bostonians: believe that using your turn signal is a sign of weakness. (It is.)

Bostonians: think that 63 degree ocean water is warm.

Bostonians: think Rhode Island accents are annoying.

Do not park your car in Hahvid Yahd. They will tow it to Meffad (Medford) or Summahville (Somerville).

How to pronounce these Massachusetts cities correctly:

Worcester: Wuhsta or Wistah.

Gloucester: Glawsta.

Leicester: Lesta.

Woburn: Woobun.

Dedham: Dead-um.

Revere: Re-vee-ah.

Quincy: Quinzee.

Tewksbury: Tooks-ber-ry.

Leominster: Lemon-sta.

Peabody: Pee-ba-dee.

Waltham: Walth-ham..

"Going to the islands" means going to Martha's Vineyard or Nantucket.

Send this to your friends who do not live in Boston! They won't believe it!

Baw-ston-ians will get a kick outta it, too!

COVID 19 Humor

Grocery shopping has become a real life version of PAC-Man. Avoid everyone, get the fruit, and take any route to avoid contact



I'll tell you a coronavirus joke now, but you'll have to wait two weeks to see if you got it.

Since everybody has now started washing their hands, the peanuts at the bar have lost their taste.

2020 is a unique leap year. It has 29 days in February, 300 days in March and 10 years in April.

Knock knock.

Who is there? Seriously, don't touch my door and get back 2 metres to social distance



The Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner: Part XXV
Steve Soreff, MD

189 days and still distancing

Today is Friday, September 18, 2020 and I am about to enter into the Ten Day of Awe aka the Jewish High Holidays. It is time to look back with reflection and plan forward with resolution. In many ways, that is exactly what I have been doing of 189 days, 29 weeks, and 7 months of distancing. In normal times, the blowing of the Shofar awakes worshipers to higher spiritual level and commitment. But this year many services are smaller in attendees or on zoom. Furthermore, the wind from the blowing represents a greater risk of spreading the virus. So, shofars have masks, too. One other point, since the first of Rosh Hashanah is on the Shabbat, it will be only blown on its second day.



The shofar with a mask

That being said, let's look back at the last week or so.

As I begin my 176 day of distancing, Sunday, September 5, 2020, I recognize that is this my 25th writing of The Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner: Work with me for a moment. If 25 were for an anniversary, then that would have mean silver. Using silver as starting point and yet another of my loose association, I will find some silver linings to the pandemic. I do not want to discount the misery, destruction and death of COVID 19. But

instead, I select the Monty Python approach, *Always Look On The Bright Side Of Life*. And, I will spare you my singing it.

Here is one example, of something good that came out of the pandemic. Due to the COVID 19, Susan Medeiros was furloughed for 10 weeks. She used that time, working for 40 hours per week for all ten weeks she produced a magnificent stain glass masterpiece window for the Blaisdell Memorial Library

<https://forumhome.org/blaisdell-memorial-library-gets-a-stained-glass-masterpiece-p33325-129.htm>.



The new stain glass window at Blaisdell Memorial Library in Nottingham 225a

Another example is people like myself gained a much greater appreciation of their own neighborhood wilderness <https://forumhome.org/patterns-in-the-neighborhood-wilderness-p32796-105.htm>. And in my neighborhood there stand some majestic pine trees. Recently, I focused on the top female cones <https://forumhome.org/index105.htm>. Lower male cones on the same tree send sperm in the form of pollen, The pollen fertilizes the female scales. Then the fertilized scales as an embryo enlarge and separate from the other scales. And that is what I observed today. The top female scales are huge compared to a week ago.



“Pregnant “scales on the top of the pine trees about fly off as seeds.

Another almost silver lining to the pandemic, has been the unprecedented sharing and cooperation globally to both deal with and find vaccines. Seeing how different nations handle the health crisis offers an international research method to best manage it. An interesting detail about international information comes out of the question-why was the 1917-18 Flu called the Spanish Flu? It was because World War I was occurring then. Many countries would not provide incidences and death data about the flu. However, Spain did. So, it became known as Spanish Flu.

Also, after zoom Torah study, a medical colleague and I set off on kayak adventure. We went from Pawtuckaway Lake’s south section all the way to the Nottingham town beach at one end of the north section. To reach our planned distant goal, the town beach, we set intermediate

locations to achieve. Like in the Wall Street investment ad, we did one island at a time. First, we went through South Channel, then we reached Hooker Island, then the Twin Islands, on to Log Cabin Island and finally in triumph we got to the town beach! Mission accomplished. We paddled for 4 hours, half the time against the wind. In this adventure, we recaptured the proud determination that got us through medical school, internship, residencies and our practices. We felt great at our effort-we did it! My medical friend called it “an epic journey”. Yes, it was.

Sunday morning, September 6, 2020 (I still cannot get used to writing September-where did August go?) I have two thoughts. Back to exercising and watching, this time on *Open Mind* the speaker made the distinction between representational and transformational change. He was referring to the remaking of America in response to the Black Lives Matter movement. His point that was that there should much more than just taking down Confederate statues. Society must transform itself in how its view race and poverty.

For the second idea, I watched in the PBS series Nature’s episode *The Whale Detective* <https://www.pbs.org/wnet/nature/the-whale-detective-5nsii3/20808/>. The story began with a humpback whale breaching on a kayak with two people in it at Monterey Bay, California. The nature photographer in the vessel not only survived but also through his research, he was ultimately able to identify the actual whale who smashed on to the kayak. He discovered humpbacks have a long history of protecting not only other sea life but also human beings. He pointed out how huge ships and fishing were harming these whales. Yes, a reminder on your to do list, add, save the whales. PS, I have a particular warm spot in my heart because over 7 ½ years I built from an 890 wooden piece kit a model of the Charles W. Morgan. That ship is the last of the whaling sailing barks and is now re-hulled at America’s Museum of the Sea, Mystic, Connecticut <https://www.mysticseaport.org/>. Times have changed. We used to hunt whales to extinction. Now as we try to protect them, they actually try to save us.

Also, today I found out why a Morning Glory plant has that name. Several beautiful bright blue Glory Morning flowers brilliantly blossomed on our two vines. But, and there is that but again, they were gone by that evening. Wow, they were only glorious for one day!



A Morning Glory in all its glory

After providing protection by kayak for the Milfoil Team and watering the garden, I had one more thought. Yes, in the semi-good news category. Many of us have been concerned at the many de-personalized aspects of insurance company driven medicine. Then, I heard of the *hero’s walk*. That is when the person about to be pronounced dead is being wheeled into the operating room to harvest the organs. On that final trip hospital staff as well as families line the corridor to honor and pay their respects <https://hcatodayblog.com/2018/11/20/caregivers-pay-respect-to-organ-donor-in-first-ever-honor-walk/>. It was great learning how healthcare workers have a heart and can show it. I silently cried watching and then writing this as doctor and a person. In the depths of despair, there can be care!

Welcome to Labor Day, Monday September 7, 2020. The sun is shining, the water dancing and it the last day summer. Not really- because **a.** it was hard to discern summer days of other seasons' days; **b.** school has already started; **c.** the labor movement is less popular then before; **d.** Monday is no different than any other day of the week; and **e.** Labor Day has no longer any meaning in America. The answer is all of the above. I admit I am showing my age, I lament the loss of meaning for that holiday.

Speaking as an old timer, I lean back in my chair, stoke my beard, which I do not have, and say, "In my day, Labor Day meant the official end of summer. We moved back home from our shore cottage. I got new clothes for the first day of school. It was immediately followed by the first day of school." That is my point.

By the way, I driving to and from distancing Tai Chi, I noticed the America flag at half-mast. It was because former New Hampshire Governor, Stephen Merrill died Saturday, September 5. The Governor had ordered all flags at half-mast in Merrill honor.

Returning to exercising while watching, I saw part of the PBD series Native America <http://www.pbs.org/native-america/home/> . It not only showed how all the native peoples of North, Central and South America have a common ancestor but also how advanced their civilizations were. It highlighted the common world view they all had based on 6 directions: north, south, east, west, up and down. Neat. Program emphasized their relationship of balance, reverence and connection to the land and nature. A, not so gentle reminder, on the topic of climate change, that some of the 'advanced and developed' countries have not accepted their responsibilities for the earth.

Stepping back and seeing a bigger picture. It is Tuesday, September 8, 2020. It is also a Primary Day-I have already voted by absentee ballot. My health comes first. After a zoom Talmud class, I called a local print shop. What I learned was an eye opener. He told me how the government stimulus check and a loan from the Small Business Administration has just kept him in business. The not holding public events as well as the canceling of the Deerfield Fair have nearly destroyed his company. That information provided yet another dimension of the pandemic!



Primary Voting Day 228

I jogged to get the mail and then watered the garden. It was warmer than I expected. Therefore, afterward I went for a quick swim. Yes, the water was noticeably cooler than several weeks ago. But, there is the but again, the colder water is setting the scene for the Fall lake turn over <https://www.nationalgeographic.org/media/lake-turnover/> . This is because of the changes in water temperature with the seasons. In the summer the surface water is warm. But as the daylight light gets shorter and air cooler, the surface water becomes colder and denser. Thus,

the dense top water sinks and the lower level comes to the top. This inversion helps to bring oxygen rich water to the lower levels.

Good morning, it is Wednesday, September 9, 2020. Here is the score: iPhone 2 and Steve 0. This is what happened. At 1:18 AM I had on my iPhone the Nottingham election results. An election official had sent me photographs of the results. But, I could not read them on my iPhone. It was too small. Yes, now I know how to enlarge them! Dumb. So, I wanted to email photos to the election central of the Forum. But, I did not know how to e-mail them. Dumb and dumber. I remember a training program for older folks at the Senior Center in Worcester called Cyber Seniors. It was designed for mature people could use the computer to connect with their grandchildren. Well, I need a course in how to use my iPhone. Oh, yes, we are all leaning.

At the end of the day, with by now familiar refrain, watching while exercising I saw on PBS program *Harbor from the Holocaust* <https://www.pbs.org/show/harbor-holocaust/>. It was the amazing story of how about 18,000 Jewish refugees escaped Nazi-occupied Europe to Shanghai. One particular moving part of the journey was how one Chinese diplomat saved so many of them by granting them visas to that city. This was when the nations including the United States had rejected them. It reminded me of Robert Frost's poem *The Death of the Hired Man* pronounced "Home is the place where, when you have to go there, They have to take you in." It also illustrated their plight during the Japanese occupation of that city. They helped each other to survive and in some ways thrive. The documentary not only offered another dimension of the Holocaust but also made me realize how relatively 'easy' I have it in my days of distancing.

It is Thursday, September 10, 2020 and with great relief the heavens released a gift. It rained!!!! To celebrate the rain, Peggy and I had a date night IN! Yes, in the pandemic we do not go OUT. We watched on Amazon Prime the weird movie *Paterson* about the person and the city with that name. But, and here is the point of but, it reminded me of the atomization of society that television has meant to movies. Cutting to the chase, the movie experience should be, in my opinion, a shared group theatre event. Watching films alone at home, although convenient, robs one of the entire "going to the movie" and "enjoy the show" moments. These are the things the sociologist David Riesman identified in the classic book, *The Lonely Crowd* https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/90697.The_Lonely_Crowd. And the group shared experience is the reason I love to teach in college like senior program called OLLI (Osher Lifelong Learning Institute) at Granite State College <https://olli.granite.edu/> a course, *Madness and the Movies*. In it, the class watches a movie depicting mental illnesses such as *A Beautiful Mind* and then discusses it.

It is Friday, September 11, 2020 and the 19th anniversary of 9/11. That is another moment in which the world will never be the same. For most of us, it is a flashback experience. This is also called in psychiatric terms an abreaction <https://www.wisegeek.com/what-is-an-abreaction.htm#>. The flashback involves not only remembering a past event but reliving and re-experiencing it with all the emotions and details right now. When I reminded friends that this is the 19th anniversary it, all said "I thought of it as more recent or just yesterday". Their reactions demonstrate the immediacy of a flashback. My own recollection and panic was trying to reach my two children who lived in New York City that day. I could not rest until I could find out that they were safe. What's yours? Here is a less known history of that day. Please, watch it, Boatlift - Tom Hanks Narrates "An Untold Tale of 9/11 Resilience"

<https://www.americanwaterways.com/media/videos/boatlift-tom-hanks-narrates-untold-tale-911-resilience>



9/11 NYC 2001

It is Saturday, September 12, 2020 and it time for reflection. The Jewish New Year, the Days of Awe and the Day of Atonement are about here. What I realized this year is that these holidays are very much related to the pandemic. The High Holiday themes focus on being accountable for your actions, forgiving, returning to traditional values, judgement about life and death. And that is what I have been doing for over 180 days. My actions have been geared to prevent COVID 19 and death.

Returning to exercising and watching, I saw a program about Louisiana. It visited the Whitney Planation <https://www.whitneyplantation.org/>. What made this planation unique was that it featured the slaves' life, culture and living conditions. In contrast, other plantation tours which now acknowledge slavery, focused on the world of their owners. The Whitney is centered on the lives of its slaves. Finally, yes slaves were people! One other quick note from a news show was the Governor of California called the forest fires, climate fires. He related the infernos to climate change.

Yippee, Friday the 13th was today (just kidding), Sunday, September 13, 2020, for those who like Triskaidekaphobia, the fear of the number 13, and I learned something about CRISPR. What does that mean? It stands for Clustered Regularly Interspaced Short Palindromic Repeats. And what does the mean? Cutting to chase. CRISPR is a technique of actually cutting the DNA at a precise point using RNA, Yes, complicated and I want to avoid the details. But, it has led to revolution if genetic treatment of some diseases. I learned all this of a PBS program called [NOVA | Human Nature | Season 47 | Episode 11 https://www.pbs.org/video/human-nature-preview-drq5du/](https://www.pbs.org/video/human-nature-preview-drq5du/). The program showed the history of CRISPR and it really work. That show was very satisfying because I have long been curious about CRI PR. And yes, I love learning new things. Another point, there has never been a better time in history to be sick because of all the new, innovative and creative treatments now available.

Monday, September 14, 2020, the first day of the work week and a day of discoveries.. The first discovery was getting the flu shot. I thought I would beat the crowd-wrong. Walgreens was like a clinic with large number of seniors patiently waiting for about an hour for shot. Why the rush? Because others and it was confirmed by the pharmacist,, there would be a shortage of

the flu vaccine this year. Stand-by, important public health announcement: get you flu shot early!.

Discovery number two was based on the old adage, “you never forgot how to ride a bike”. Well, I did. We went for a short bicycle ride on the rail trail between Raymond and Manchester. I must admit I had difficulty mastering the machine. It was embarrassing but I do it.

Discovery number three was the Emerson’s Mill & Patten's Mill Sites <https://foursquare.com/v/emersons-mill--pattens-mill-sites/5032b65ee4b01372d9646d4a>. in Candia just off the rail trail. A delightful private park made available by its owners to the public.. This was a delightful, beautifully landscape area with a pond and bike path.



Emerson's Mill & Patten's Mill Sites

Welcome, Tuesday, September 15, 2020 familiar theme- exercising and watching with new idea. I saw PBS’ *Lindy Lou, Juror Number 2* <http://www.pbs.org/pov/watch/lindylou/> . It showed “For 20 years, Lindy has lived with an unbearable feeling of guilt. Committed to fulfilling her civic duty, Lindy sat with 11 other people on a jury that handed down the death penalty to a Mississippi man convicted of a double homicide. An overwhelming feeling of regret compels Lindy to track down her fellow jurors. A conservative, religious woman from the South, she manages to tackle this topic with humor, an open mind and sincere curiosity.” This was particularly relevant as approach the Jewish High Holidays. This is a time to think of your actions and their consequences. Would you as juror vote for the death penalty? Profound program.

It is Wednesday, September 16, 2020 and I most grateful for my Monday-Wednesday-Friday distancing Tai Chi and pickle ball adventure as they offer a sense of structure to an out-of-the-house schedule less landscape. I also lost my Swiss Army knife, flashlight and compass. It was very upsetting since it is my survival kit. Even more troubling is my reluctance to go into stores to replace them. Damn, I’ll have to grin and bear it.

It is Thursday, September 17, 2020- a new day and new challenges. Last night again while exercising and watching I saw the beginning of a PBS series *Hacking Your Mind* <https://www.pbs.org/show/hacking-your-mind/> ..I had known since Vance Packard’s the landmark book The Hidden Persuaders how psychology could be used to influence people’s buying habits. But, with the Internet and Facebook, it has been taken to much higher level. This included in Presidential campaigns, Russian use of the social media and how much of our personal information is being harvested. Wow! Finally, I the spirit of atonement, I had up-set a friend of mine. I apologized and I was glad when she accepted it.

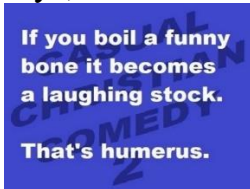
Enough-let’s laugh



Regular Humor

Time flies like an arrow. Fruit flies like a banana.

A crazy wife says to her husband that moose are falling from the sky. The husband says, it's reindeer.



Need an ark to save two of every animal? I noah guy.

My friend drove his expensive car into a tree and found out how his Mercedes bends.

Becoming a vegetarian is one big missed steak.

COVID 19 Humor

Remember when this was funny? A early pandemic joke.

Day 1: I have stocked up on enough non-perishable food and supplies to last me for months, maybe years, so that I can remain in isolation for as long as it takes to see out this pandemic

Day 1 + 45 minutes: I am in the supermarket because I wanted a Twix

Manuel: "Give me three Covid-19 jokes."

Eddie: Covid-19 joke, Covid-19 joke, Covid-19 joke. Easy, hahaha."

Coronavirus has been in the US for 1 day and people are already wearing masks. AIDS has been here for 59 years and fools still don't use a condom.

Anyone else's car getting three weeks to the gallon at the moment?

How do you blow out your birthday candles during a pandemic?

You don't. There is no cake. The party is canceled!

I heard this on the radio earlier today

Dr Fauci allegedly said that after the pandemic is over and done with we will have to wear masks for 2 months on the back of our heads so our ears will return to normal



200 days of distancing

The Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner: Part XXVI

Steve Soreff, MD

Today is Tuesday, September 29, 2020 and marks my 200 days, nearly 31 weeks, 7th month and 7th National Cribbage month of distancing. It is either a milestone or millstone, depending on you view. It is a grim remember of the over 200,000 Americans who have died from COVID 19 and therefore, the reason for distancing all these days! The glass is either half empty or half full or if you were an engineer, half a glass too much. In all cases, it is significant number. And I painfully acknowledge, I am not sure the end is yet in sight.

With that said, let us look back over the days that were.

Today is September, the first day of the Jewish year 5781. It is Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year. And it this time of distancing, my synagogue's services are all on zoom. And today was the first time since March that I wore a shirt and tie! With the synagogue now my office, I read from the Torah at what I call Etz Hayim north on Pawtuckaway. I have been doing that Torah portion for 7 years. I was recapturing what I should have done at my Bar Mitzvah. However, this year I did better than before. That was because Rabbi Levy, instead of me just rehearsing it with me, insisted I relearn the Hebrew letters and vowels. That was like the proverb, ***Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day. Teach a man how to fish and you feed him for a lifetime. The way the Rabbi taught me will be useful for a lifetime!***



Me reading the Torah with my grandsons looking on

Returning from the synagogue aka my office with its computer and going to the basement and elliptical machine, I watched *The Secret Mind of Slime* <https://www.pbssocal.org/programs/nova/secret-mind-of-slime-0a3w89/>. It showed a single cell organism, slime mold, can exhibit intelligent behavior. That is, they have memory, solve problems and totally sense their environment. The program challenges the notion that intelligence requires a brain and nervous system.

One other note, yesterday Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg died. She is one of my hero and a champion for many ideas I believe in. Thank you, judge for all you have done. Yes, the world will be a little more ruthless without you. And, yes, while we are talking about death, America is nearing the 200,000 deaths due COVID 19.

Wow, it is Sunday, September 20, 2020, the second day of the Jewish year 5781 and I have many things to discuss. Again, in my office synagogue I observed the second day of Rosh Hashanah. We live in the Jewish diaspora; in Israel it is celebrated on only one day. For the record, telephone calls from Jerusalem to heaven are local calls. As I prayed, a small armada of ducks gathered in our cove. I was not sure if they wanted to hear the prayers or remembered that I had cast some bread into the lake in an observance called *Tashlikh* <https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/tashlikh/>. This is ceremony of casting your sins in the form of bread from your pockets into running water. I did that yesterday in the kayak and perhaps the ducks had seen it. And perhaps, they thought I might do it again.



Ducks gathers while I was praying

Returning to the New Years' service, the Rabbi had spoken about the Holy Trinity. No, not that one. It was the past, present and future. He did so Friday, Saturday and Sunday-one part each day. It may sound a little like Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*- the ghost of Christmas past, present and future. I like the topic and approach. As a psychiatrist, I believe each one of us is made up of those three parts. Certainly, we are product of rearing, experiences and life events. Clearly, we are aware of that we are here and now. And, yes, I believe having future helps to

define us. Having goals, things to look forward to, and plans are vital aspect of our lives. Perhaps, the dicks were interested in hearing about the future as the colder weather reminds them and their plans to fly south.

Good day, this is Monday, September 21, 2020 and the beginning of new work week. But for me, it is just another week-one by-product of being retired. I sheepishly admit I stayed up late last night to watch the New England Patriots versus the Seattle Seahawks. I used to look forward to seeing the Patriots play. But somehow I have lost my passion for it. In fact, I missed their opening game. Perhaps, the dismaying performance of the Red Sox may have contributed. But, that all vanished when I actually watched the game. It could not have been more dramatic. No, the empty stadium did not bother me. For me, the game has been strictly a television experience. I did not mind the canned applause. What is made it so exciting was the game came down to the last 3 seconds. The Patriots had the ball and were at the Seahawks goal line. That one play would determine which team would win. May I have envelope, please. This Internet headline said it all. "Seahawks shred Patriots defense, stuff Cam Newton late to secure 35-30 thriller."

One more bite of learning for the day. I was listening NHPR's *Fresh Air*'s <https://www.nhpr.org/programs/fresh-air#stream/0> Terry Gross interviewing Oliver Sachs on his book about hallucinations. He talked about Bereavement Hallucinations. I had never heard that term before. I actually has had one after my father died. I heard his voice calling me. It was neat to make that connection.

Wow, it is September 22, 2020, the Autumn Equinox. In terms of the solar system and the earth, this means an equal amount of daylight and darkness on today, And yes, it also translates into ever diminishing hours of daylight! It signals the first day of Fall, which has been hinted about for the last month <https://forumhome.org/a-hint-of-autumn-p33393-1.htm>.



The Autumn Equinox

The first day of Fall has been a banner day for me in three ways. The first was, again exercising and watching, I saw the PBS program *Foreigners in Their Own Land. Season 1*

Episode 1 <https://www.pbs.org/video/latino-americans-episode-1-foreigners-their-own-land/> . It offered new perspectives on the Mexican-American War, 1846-48, the **Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo**, the California Gold Rush, the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway and the impact of barbwire. I knew that Henry David Thoreau was jailed for not paying his federal taxes. He had not paid them because he saw the war as leading to slavery into the future western states. What I learned how it and events led to oppression of Mexicans living in places which suddenly became part of the United States. It provided new dimensions to the seemingly romantic notion of Manifest Destiny.

The second was I get to speak on NHPR's Program, *the Exchange* <https://www.nhpr.org/programs/exchange#stream/0> . Laura Knoy's topic was *Zero Waste Efforts*. I got to brag about our vegetable and fruit raised bed garden products and our composting efforts. We practiced not *from farm to table* but from our garden to table. The third was a great discussion in our weekly Talmud study session <https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/talmud-101/> . The Talmud is an intergenerational discussion and interpretation of the Torah aka the First Five Books of Moses.. What made it so good was the chance to make that book's content relevant and current to our lives and times.

Hello, it is Wednesday, September 23, 2020 and I have 3 good news items and one really bad news to discuss. As the Forum's Nottingham reporter and a member of 300th Committee, I was glad to have my article of the 300th Cookbook posted <https://forumhome.org/nottinghams-th-anniversary-cook-book-on-sale-sat-sept-p33462-129.htm>. I am proud of the cookbook, a great achievement and I have pride in the Forum,. It does its job of informing Nottingham residents about local and regional events 24/7.

The second good news item was that my fleece pullover was still there. Wow, what does mean? Let me explain. On Monday, I stupidly left by pullover at the Little River Park in Lee. That is where we do distancing Tai Chi, on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Miracle of miracles, it was still there on Wednesday!! Yes, to be clear, I forgot it there on Monday-2 days ago! What is great is that there are some very honest folks in that town and in our region. I am not sure the story would same outcome would occur is some urban areas. And the third was some trees got the memo about the first day of Fall. One tree across from the Marston property exploded into glorious reds.



A tree celebrating that it is Fall

The bad news is that today the United States has more than 200,000 deaths https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#cases_casesinlast7days to Covid 19. What grim statistic. And, of 1,000 have been health care workers. Furthermore. Sadly, it is not over!

Hello and welcome to Thursday, September 24, 2020 and the topic for today is death. It began with exercising while watching a Great Courses' <https://www.thegreatcourses.com/> lecture on African Mythology. The focus of the talk was heroes trips to underworld. Its theme was the power of recognition of death was essential for living. All the distancing practice by everyone and myself, is predicated on not dying and how to find meaning to living.

This afternoon I met a psychologist friend He is both a clinician and college teacher. We had an outdoor distancing coffee and conversation. No matter how good zoom can be, I craze and miss in person conversations. The 3 keys to friendships are proximity, shared values and reciprocity and we had all three. The conversations was insightful, enlightening and engaging. We talked about the deep structures of life. By the way, I used to have a sail boat called *Deep Structures*. Back to today's topic, death, we shared many ideas relating to the end of life aka death. In addition, we talked about on near death experiences, suicide, assisted suicides, self-actualization, adoption, the state of our democracy and the pandemic. He mentioned the importance of stories in and of our lives. He said life is made of stories. From that conversation, I realized that by my "exercising while watching" were just part of my distancing stories. The exchange was energizing and refreshing. And by the way, on trip to Manchester on NH Route 101, I was treated to a magnificent display of Fall foliage-what glorious colors! Those trees had read the memo about the first day of Fall!

Hello and today is Friday, September 25, 2020, the cusp of the weekend. It is the day when a tree taught me a lesson. We do distancing Tai Chi in a park surrounded by a huge variety of trees. As we went through the set, one tree danced in a very light wind while the trees watched. I learned that tree is called a Quaking Aspen Here is the reason for its performance, "Quaking aspens, also called trembling aspens, are named for their leaves. Flat leaves attach to branches with lengthy stalks called petioles, which quake or tremble in light breezes." <https://www.nwf.org/Educational-Resources/Wildlife-Guide/Plants-and-Fungi/Quaking-Aspen#:~:text=In%20terms%20of%20height%2C%20quaking%20aspens%20are%20relatively,and%20Canada%2C%20all%20the%20way%20south%20to%20Mexico.>

The Quaking Aspen had this message. It was the same idea that Henry David Thoreau gave when he said, *"If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away". And what I learned was just as the trees differed in the way they handled the breeze, so individuals differ. In this era of discord, I need to pay attention to, listen to and appreciate each person and each one's uniqueness. Thank you, Quaking Aspen-I get it!*



The Quaking Aspen behind the soccer net.

A day of giving back and learning, Saturday September 26, 2020 is upon me. I went to the Recycling Center not just to bring debris of the week but also to buy 5 of the 300th Anniversary Cookbooks -<https://forumhome.org/nottinghams-th-anniversary-cook-book-on-sale-sat-sept-p33462-129.htm> . Buying them was a form of giving back. I am so proud of the book and how the town is going to celebrate its 300th anniversary. The books will make great gifts. And for bragging rights, I do have recipe in it, for Challah French Toast page 19, if you are looking. Then in Torah study I found out that both the book of Deuteronomy and the writings of Isaiah can be viewed through the historical lens of pre, during and post Babylonian exile. I completed the day by distancing kayaking with a friend on Pawtuckaway Lake. We went all the way to the end of Neal's Cove. I love that I can share the lake with others. And on our voyage, we saw more glorious evidence of Autumn's splendor.



One of islands in Pawtuckaway Lake saluting Fall

Good morning, it Sunday, September 27, 2020 and tonight will start Yom Kippur. But right now, returning to exercising while watching I saw the PBS program, *Islands of Wonder: Borneo* <https://www.pbs.org/show/islands-wonder/> . It showed the ingenious wisdom of its native people, the interdependence of the plants and animals and the survival techniques of both. Show featured the Pitcher Plant <https://www.britannica.com/plant/pitcher-plant>. It is a carnivorous plant which uses its pitcher-shaped leaves to trap animals., including bats. The program also illustrated how farming and timber cutting are endangering that ecosystem. In the spirit of the Days of Awe, of reflection and doing, Peggy and I participated in a Community Church's project to help clean up the grounds of a local senior couple who are house bound by illnesses. It felt good to being something and helping. There is the Jewish tradition of repairing the world. And, today we did just that.

I did do via zoom to Yom Kippur services with the centerpiece prayer called *Kol Nidrei*. A quick reminder, all Jewish holidays begin at sundown the day before and end at sunset the following day. Yes, I am fasting for Yom Kippur. The only good news is that is easier since I gave up caffeine. I used to get caffeine wicked (a Maine term) withdrawal headaches. The Rabbi and his wife did a neat thing. We all emailed photographs of ourselves to them. In turn, they put the pictures on the synagogue chairs. So, the Rabbi, his wife and the Hazzan looked out at pictures while conducting the services.



The synagogue services were on zoom and pictures of congregants were on the chairs

Hello, and good morning, it is today Monday, September 28, 2020, Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement and a day of fasting. Yes, all day at my synagogue computer screen. And for the record, the ducks, who came for the Rosh Hashanah service, have returned to hear the Yom Kippur one. The Lord moves in mysterious ways.

During the break in the services, Nick and I hosted a discussion on the topic: What the synagogue means to me? For myself, it has meant a several weekly landmarks in an often featureless COVID 19 world. These included Friday night services, Saturday Torah study and Tuesday Talmud. I pray and hope that I made it into the Book of Life for 5781!

Yes, distancing for being in the book of life, but enough for now. Let's laugh a bit.



Regular Humor

How did I escape Iraq? Iran.

I'm reading a book about anti-gravity. It's impossible to put down.

What do you call the security outside of a Samsung Store? A: Guardians of the Galaxy.

eBay is so useless. I tried to look up lighters and all they had was 13,749 matches.

I can't believe I got fired from the calendar factory. All I did was take a day off.

Did you watch that movie about the hot dog? It was an Oscar Wiener.

COVID 19 jokes

The world has turned upside down. Old folks are sneaking out of the house, and their kids are yelling at them to stay indoors.

I never thought the comment "I wouldn't touch him/her with a six-foot pole" would become a national policy, but here we are!

I washed my hands so much because of COVID-19 that my exam notes from 1995 resurfaced.

Chuck Norris has been exposed to coronavirus. The virus is now in quarantine for 14 days.

Today's weather? Room temperature.

There's a new COVID-19 vaccine delivered via an audio interface as music. It is hoped that this will lead to *heard* immunity.



216 days of distancing

The Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner: Part XXVII

Steve Soreff, MD

Today is Thursday, October 15, 2020. It marks my 216th day, 33nd week and 8th month of distancing. Wow-with that let's look back. I wish I could look ahead but the landscape is flat, featureless and uncertain. The summit goal is on the top of distant mountains.

By the way, last night, September 29, we watched the Presidential debate or boxing match or school yard fight. Or as my friend Donne called it, "horrendous debate fiasco". We are reaching ever lower levels in our national discourse. It was not Presidential!

Good Morning, it is Wednesday, September 30, 2020 and it is raining!! That is very good news. It is my daughter's, who lives in Tel Aviv birthday. It is hard to take her out to lunch to celebrate. With the pandemic, she said she'll us in 2021! It is a strange world we live in now. And she is now talking about the summer of 3021 😞

Today, also represents one of those *Ground Hog Day*, the movie, moments. Wow, how so? I woke about the realization that on September 30th, I faced the same situation I confronted on April 30. What was that? Here is problem and what I wrote then about it <https://forumhome.org/the-diary-of-a-reluctant-social-distance-extrovert-prisoner-part-ix-p32742-1.htm>. I have a wrist watch that automatically shows the date. But, and there is the but again, it is geared for 31 day months. So, for this month as in April and June I have to manually advance my watch. And I will repeat and complain that procedure in November-stayed tuned.

Whipppeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee it is the 1st of October,2020. It is official: this marks my eighth month of distancing! And since octo equals eight, so in a bizarre way, this all makes sense.

And speaking of making sense, I, while exercising and watch saw parts of two amazing PBS series. The first was called *Hacking Your Mind* <https://www.pbs.org/show/hacking-your-mind/>. As a sociology major and teacher, I loved how the series demonstrated how your social context unconsciously influences your decisions and behaviors. As the shows describes itself, "Follow host, Jacob Ward, from the farthest corners of the globe to the inside of your mind as he

sets out to discover we are not who we think we are. We imagine our conscious minds make most decisions but in reality we go through much of our lives on ‘autopilot’”. These autopilots are our sub-conscious minds. Hence, it also appeals my psychiatric mind.

It presents a compelling story of how they get the world’s best symphony orchestra musicians. To do so, one must only hear the candidate playing behind a blind curtain. Why? Because, that way you only hear the music! When you actually see the performer, your autopilot’s ideas about sex, race, age, and weight affect what you hear! The program also featured a terrific Rumi quote, “**every single one of us is a jackass, with wings of angels tacked on**”. The series urges us to use better selves to soar about and beyond our autopilots.

The other series was *The Roosevelts: An Intimate History* <https://www.pbs.org/show/roosevelts/>. It offered insights into both families as seen both publicly and privately. I ended up with a deeper appreciation of America, its history, Eleanor Roosevelt, and the United States’ balancing act during the interval between Hitler’s invasion of Poland and Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

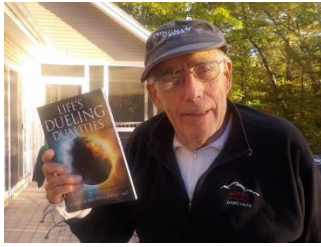
One final thought for the day-in the wish I had said that category. Bill Murray’s quote was “This pandemic will graduate a new class of war veterans. Health care, food supply, deliveries, community services, so many owe so much to these few.”

It is Friday, October 2, 2020 and all that people are talking about is that President Trump has the virus. Well, Donald to me and the rest of the planet’s world, that is why I and the world wear masks, practice socially and physically distancing and avoid situations where I could get the virus.

Back to exercising while watching PBS Great Performances: Ellis Island: The Dream of America With Pacific Symphony <https://www.pbs.org/wnet/gperf/ellis-island-dream-america-pacific-symphony-documentary/8481/>. A brilliant affirmation of the greatest of America, its immigrant and liberty traditions, the welcoming of the Statue of Liberty. Having been to Ellis Island, I appreciated the performance even more.

By the way, I am doing the Nottingham Recreation Department’s 100 Mile Challenge. <https://forumhome.org/the-nottingham-recreation-department-launches-the-mile-challenge-p33443-129.htm?smenu=129&mad=No>. The goal is to do 100 miles by January, 2021. Any activity such as riding a stationary bicycle counts. It is done by converting minutes into miles. Today with pickle ball, Tai Chi and exercise bike, I have done 9 miles!

And the proof copies of my book arrived today!!! One last editing to do before it goes to press,



Steve with his new book [Life's Dueling Dualities: A grandfather's legacy of wisdom](#)

Good morning, it is Saturday, October 3, 2020 and I have many things to report before going to MC the *No Fair Music Festival* <https://forumhome.org/no-fair-music-festival-is-on-october-p33504-129.htm> . Festival came about because the Deerfield Fair was canceled and the Community Church's annual Nottingham Food Pantry concert could not be held indoors.

A quick 3 three things I learned while exercising and watching as well as counting for miles for the 100 Nile Challenge. First, linking it the No Fair concert, the Topsfield, MA had also been canceled. But, they still held a biggest pumpkin contest <https://boston.cbslocal.com/2020/09/30/topsfield-fair-giant-pumpkin-contest-weigh-off/>. The winner was a pumpkin at 1,986 pounds! Second, I saw part of the *American Experience: The Vote* <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/films/vote/>. It was a reminder of how hard and long the battle was for what we take for granted: women vote. It chronicled the power of hunger strikes and the winning state by state to pass the 19th Amendment to the Constitution. The women's right to vote, will be revisited with the scarecrows later.

The second is that this week is the 70th Anniversary of the comic strip Peanuts <https://www.chron.com/news/article/Good-grief-Peanuts-celebrates-70th-anniversary-15615855.php>. I love Peanuts! Charlie Brown, Snoopy and the mental work by Nancy. It was celebrated by the Peanuts group giving to 70 children hospitals Peanuts murals.

And the third was seeing the Great Course lecture series. *Life Lessons from the Great Myths*. This episode focused on the Trojan War. It illustrated several ideas. One, there is great danger in hubris which the speaker callee *hybris*. Two, there is potential destructiveness of conducting preemptive war. And finally, the lecturer talked but how the Greek gods spoke to people through oracle. What I found this interesting parallel that n the Judeo-Christian tradition, God talked to people through prophets.

Hello and I having a great day, Sunday, October 4, 2020 because I discovered the *No Fair Music Festival* made \$2,208 for the Nottingham Food Pantry, It felt great because helped in the all-day event. I was the Master of Ceremonies from 10 AM to 7 PM. I almost ran out of jokes-remember; I did say ALMOST!



MC, Steve with No Fair Festival organizer Theresa Landry and the famous chicken

Then, yes again while exercising and watching I saw more about the Iliad. Boy, did that book hit a Homer! Sorry, cheap pun. It is the epic climatic story of the last of the 10th year of the siege of Troy. There was a plague. It showed in literature and history how plagues have changed events such as the Spanish Flu of 1917-18. And, that got me to thinking, the pandemic is totally altering our and the world's lives. Your turn-just think about it. And for me, this diary is one of the ways COVID 19 has changed my life. I closed the day with kayaking with a friend for over 90 minutes. The water was calm, the foliage neat and got another 4.5 miles in the 100 Mile Challenge.

Welcome, today is Monday, October 5, 2020 and has been busy one. Pickle Ball, Tai Chi and stationery bicycling for 9 miles-neat . Interviewed the retiring police chief. It was good to see a legal officer putting people ahead of prejudice and politics <https://forumhome.org/chief-gunnar-foss-retires-p33537-129.htm>. I watered the garden today . There still is drought and the tomato plants thanked me. About the President's health, I heard a new term. It is the VIP syndrome. This is where certain individuals because of their status basically receive special treatment. Among all the 'special' care these folks get are untested and high potency medications. These are administered because the person is important and famous. And, as TV commentator physician indicated, VIP treatment could result in actually worsening the patient's health.

A new day and new information, hello all, it is Tuesday, October 6, 2020. Question- what is the only word in the English language which has all the vowels in their correct order? May I have the envelope, please. It is *facetiously*. The reason for the inquiry is that I am about to be facetious. I have given up my mask, I am going to restaurants, hug my friends and celebrate. How come? The President says we should not fear COVID 19!. I have wasted over 200 days of distancing. NO, I fear the virus. I will continue in my now distancing life's routine. Franklin Delano Roosevelt said "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself". I still fear the virus-distancing continues.

Now, that said, it is back to exercising and watching. This time I saw the second of two episodes of the PBS NOVA series *A to Z: The First Alphabet and A to Z: How Writing Changed the World* <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/series/a-to-z/>.. It was amazing how pictures became letters, how paper allowed letters to be written, how letters make movable type possible, and how movable type made books available to everyone. The second part showed the genius of Gutenberg was not only did he invent movable type but also that his first book was the Bible. The book was a best seller allowed him to pay off his loans and make a profit. The written word allows humans to be unique and be able to transmit information across many generations.

Good morning-police action coming on Wednesday, October 7, 2020. I discovered on NH Route 156, while returning from Tai Chi, all the signs for Democratic state and federal candidates were bent down and all the Republican signs about 150 foot away were untouched <https://forumhome.org/signs-down-in-three-towns-p33545-1.htm> . I called the Nottingham Police. There I learned about two weeks ago, the Democratic candidate signs and Black Lives Matter (BLM) signs began to be either stolen or bent over in Deerfield. Northwood and Nottingham. This is affront to democracy. We pride ourselves about our ability to freely express our political opinions.



Sign down on NH Route 156

Hello and welcome to Thursday, October 8, 2020 and I found something to cheer about. Today, the Montauk daisies in front of Nottingham Historical Society's Van Dame Museum and School House were blooming. As Montauk daisies <https://www.gardeningknowhow.com/ornamental/flowers/montauk-daisy/growing-montauk-daisies.htm> website says, "In their native and naturalized ranges, Montauk daisies pick up the slack in late summer to fall." These daisies put a smile on one's face- thank you. As Ralph Waldo Emerson once said about nature, the "**Earth laughs in flowers.**" Enjoy.



Montauk daisies in front of Nottingham Historical Society's Van Dame Museum and School House.

Back to exercising while watching I saw *The Changing Same* <https://www.pbssocal.org/programs/pov/pov-shorts-the-changing-same-e8yvje/> . It painfully looked at the lynching of a black man in Mississippi in 1934. It is reminder of part of our national history, too often not remembered nor talked about. The film is a powerful message of Black Lives Matter (BLM). One more point is that my exercising while watching observation can be used for something beyond this diary. To be specific, I had watched the PBS program *The Vote* <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/films/vote/>. It was how 2020 marked the 100th anniversary of the adoption of the 19th amendment, women's right to vote. I used that information to suggest that the Nottingham Historical Society for the local scarecrow contest <https://forumhome.org/theyre-back-even-better-the-scarecrows-p33559-129.htm> it used the idea of a model scarecrow of suffragette. They liked it.

Wow, it is Friday, October 9, 2020. Remember TGIF? That translates into Thank God It's Friday. Being Jewish, that is easy since I attend via zoom now Friday night services. And that is what the prayers are all about! In fact, years ago, when I conducted as a kind of junior Rabbi, (quick aside-every Rabbi is a latent shrink; every psychiatrist is a latent Rabbi), my sermon that evening was based on TGIF.

And slightly switching from God to the subject nature, the radio this morning reminded me we are in a severe drought. With that prompt, I watered the garden. Yes, it is harvest time. But, as the Montauk daisies demonstrated and the tomato plants shouted, we are still growing. The garden plants thanked me.

GM, it is Saturday, October 10, 2020 and part of Indigenous Peoples Day weekend <https://people.com/human-interest/even-more-states-and-cities-are-celebrating-indigenous-peoples-day-2020/>. Thank you Bob Dylan – *The Times They Are A-Changin'*. Meanwhile, a quick look back. Last night I watched PBS *American Masters lennonyc* <https://www.pbs.org/video/american-masters-lennonyc/>. In the program, I learned that Nixon tried to have John Lennon deported because of John support of the anti-Viet Nam war and peace movement.

This afternoon was devoted to outdoor exercise. I hike the Northwest Passage aka the trail from Lamprey Road to Shore Road and then looped to get the mail, I really wanted to see the white birch corridor in Fall. The leaves were almost turning yellow.



The white birch corridor October 10, 2020

Then I kayaked to see the Fall foliage on Pawtuckaway Lake. I was not disappointed, Remember, the term COVID fatigue? I saw evidence of that on the lake. When we had the July

4th boat parade, one of the guidelines was “no rafting”. That means boats tied up together. Well, today there were 4 pontoon boats rafted together, not social distancing and no masks!

Great day, Sunday, October 11, 2020 because I spent the day working the Gnome Depot at the Bedrock Garden’s 4th annual Fairy and Hobbit House Festival <https://forumhome.org/fairy-hobbit-house-festival-columbus-day-weekend-p33466-120.htm>. At the Depot we provided kids of all the ingredients to create their own fairy houses. And they did just that. Amazing structures they made from natural material such as bark, acorn caps, stones, moss and flowers. The parents loved it when we could say to the children take what you want and it is FREE! It was also a delight seeing families working together and all wearing masks. One of the little girls said, “this is so much fun”.



Steve at Gnome Depot west

Later, listening on NHPR, I heard a program called *To The Best of Our Knowledge* <https://www.nhpr.org/programs/best-our-knowledge#stream/0>. This episode dealt with human brain plasticity and resiliency. It talked about how the brain is always changing, learning and adopting to new things. It pointed out that the pandemic has forced our brain to deal with new situations. And those new learning and adopting other ways of thinking are good for our brains. They help us to become more resilient.

Hello, and welcome to Monday, October 12, 2020. It was a very satisfying day in several days. I played pickle ball and did Tai Chi. Then I greeted folks at the Fairy Festival. Here what make it so neat. First, I did all the things I wanted to do. Yes, the glory of retirement is you can do what you want and sometimes when you want. Also, all the people at the Festival were there because they chose to be there. Attendees and volunteers alike-all voted with their feet to be there. That is so cool. Finally, with following CDC guidelines, life could go on a forward. In the words of the old newspaper line-“a good time was had by all!”

Made it to Tuesday, October 13, 2020. It was a painful recognition of the value of me and my families distancing practices for well over 200 days. Part of me wants to say, I told you so. News in New Hampshire, the nation and the world, tells a story of the second wave. Still in the tunnel without a light at the end. I did feel good about writing an article about the Fairy Festival-13 pictures in it- wow. Also, while exercising I learned that a twain is a fathom. And a fathom is a unit of length equal to six feet. In the old days the Mississippi River depth was measured in twains. The better river conditions for the stream boats were when the crew member would yell out mark twain! The 2 fathom depth was water that was half dangerous and half safe. Hence, that is the origin of the reason Samuel Clemens changed his name to Mark Twain. I love learning new things, And he changed to the new name on February 3,1863. And the record, I learned all this while exercising and watching a DVD of Ken Burns’ *Mark Twain*.

Today is Wednesday, October 14,2020 and I have done my M-W-F routine, outdoor pickle ball and distancing Tai Chi. It is my routine and I like it. I had one thought on the topic of Tsunami <https://www.britannica.com/science/tsunami>.. Yes this is also called an after seismic sea wave or tidal wave, catastrophic ocean wave resulting from by a submarine earthquake, an underwater or coastal landslide, or a volcanic eruption. I remember the tsunami which devastated Indonesia and countries on the India Ocean. One of the stories that came out of it, was that a huge wave crashed on the coast. It was very disastrous. As the water receded, people swarmed on to the beach. A second wave took them all out to sea. That is long was of talking about the destructive power of the COVIN 19 second wave.

And today, my book arrived at the grandsons' home. It was written as a "Grandfather legacy of wisdom. I hope they can use it to do as their parents say all the time "make good choices".



Grandson Foster with the book.



Regular Humor

A woman in labour suddenly shouted, "Shouldn't! Wouldn't! Couldn't! Didn't! Can't!" "Don't worry," said the doctor. "Those are just contractions."

Why did the chicken go to the séance? To get to the other side.

What sits at the bottom of the sea and twitches? A nervous wreck.

What do you call a parade of rabbits hopping backwards? A receding hare-line

What do you call a pony with a cough? A little horse.

Why did the yogurt go to the art exhibition? Because it was cultured.

COVID 19 Humor

Why did the chicken cross the road? Because the chicken behind it didn't know how to socially distance properly.

My mom always told me I wouldn't accomplish anything by lying in bed all day. But look at me now, ma! I'm saving the world!

Yesterday I ran out of soap and body wash and all I could find was dish detergent. Then it *Dawned* on me.

I finished Netflix today.

Knock knock. Who is there? Seriously, don't touch my door and get back 6 meters to social distance.

What's the best way to avoid touching your face? A glass of wine in each hand.



230 days of distancing and still counting

The Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner: Part XXVIII

Steve Soreff, MD

Wow and hello. Today in Thursday, October 29, 2020 and marks by 230th days, almost 35th week, 8th month and 8th National Cribbage day of distancing. Boy does time fly went you commute from the office to kitchen. With that is mind let's look back on the last 14 daya,

Hello and help!, I know that today is Friday, October 16, 2020, but things happened yesterday that I want to share. On Thursday, October 15, 2020 I put in my absentee ballot. I brought it, myself to the Town Clerk's Office. Not only did I save on the price of postage stamp but I also was confident it would there on time. And because Thursday was such beautiful day, like a temperature at 70 degrees, a friend and I kayaked for 2 hours on Pawtuckaway Lake. The fall foliage was spectacular!



Pawtuckaway Lake all its Fall grandeur

This Friday is also in my life a **red letter** day? Let me explain in my typical indirect way with story aka joke. Tarzan comes home apparently very up-set. He says to Jane, "give a drink!". Then, he says, "another drink!". Jane is worried. She asks him, "what is wrong?" He replies, "give me another drink". Again, she is concerned and pleas with him for an answer. He

finally speaks, “Jane, it is a jungle out there!” When I think of jungle, I see the Amazon. My book is now on Amazon. https://www.amazon.com/Lifes-Dueling-Dualities-Grandfathers-Legacy/dp/1645448975/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=life%27s+dueling+dualities&qid=1602868646&s=books&sr=1-1 . Wow!!!!!!

Besides that, I have been hearing a new word lately. It is super-spreader. Yes, in large groups there can be a one infected person who spreads the virus to the entire group. Hence, I avoid crowds, wear mask and keep distancing.

Good morning and it rained all night! Praise the Lord and enjoy the needed water. It is Saturday, October 17, 2020. October 17 is an important date? Why? I always remember that that date October 17, 1777 as the Battle of Saratoga <https://www.history.com/topics/american-revolution/battle-of-saratoga> in the American Revolution. I vividly recall my Cheshire Academy senior year American History teacher, Mr. Robert Slaughter said “you must know for an important date 5 things the who, what, when where and its historical significance”. So, on that date, the American Army defeated the British Army coming down from Canada at Saratoga Springs, New York. But, what made it significant, was that Benjamin Franklin as a result of that victory persuaded France to support the American Revolution. Without France’s help, we would have not won the war and our independence from England.

Connecting the dots, while exercising and watching PBS *Mark Twain*, it showed the power of Adventures of Huckleberry Finn. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Adventures-of-Huckleberry-Finn-novel-by-Twain>. The story put a face, a person, and a personality on an escaped slave, Jim. Dot one is the program linked it the Homeric epic The Iliad. Dot two, the person, Jim, represents the whole message and meaning of the Black Lives Matter movement.

Remember the joy and bounty of our garden? It keeps on giving, here is what Peggy picked just yesterday!



From the garden

There occurred a weird coincidence today. I walked down to get the mail. Two junk mail aka advertisements used the same word cozy in their lead. What does that mean? I think it reflects nobody is traveling anywhere these day. Hence, best to be cozy at home and therefore, their use of that word.

Hello, Sunday, October 18, 2020. Again, while exercise connected another dot to connect to Mark Twain. He was a strong and vocal advocate for the women's right to vote. Yes, that links back to the 100th year anniversary of white women in USA getting the right to vote.

Today was also one for the record book. I actually left New Hampshire for the first time in 8 months!! Peggy and I went to the Dinosaur State Park <http://dinosaurstatepark.org/>, Rocky Hill, Connecticut to see my son's family- Ben, Heather and my two grandsons. We needed an outdoor location and the site was perfect. Wow, I have not seen that family in 8 months!!! COVID 19 takes a toll. The buildings were closed because of the pandemic but the grounds were open. That is what we wanted. We tossed a Frisbee around the dinosaurs. The kids have really grown, Great to see the whole family.



The grounds of the Dinosaur State Park

In a weird way the park visit had 44 year ago connection. How so? I'll tell you. One day while Ben was watching television, I had just come home from work. I asked him what he was viewing? He said dinosaurs. Neat! Later in the day, I wanted to know what type of dinosaurs, he had seen. It turns out, he was watching a program with Dinah Shore <https://www.thefamouspeople.com/profiles/dinah-shore-32399.php> ! The apple does not fall far from the tree.

Since we were out of state, we had the opportunity to stop a McDonalds. Since, one of the reasons for the Diary is to document the pandemic, visiting the McDonalds was quite an event and adventure. Inside the building, it was empty. Most people preferred the drive-through opportunity. Prominent were the where to stand here 6 foot apart floor markers. If you ordered something inside, it was at distance.



Ordering at McDonalds during the pandemic

Beautiful day, for a Monday, October 19, 2020. The mist left the lake, the sun kissed the earth and I played pickle ball and did distancing Tai Chi. In the afternoon I decommissioned the 1 horsepower pumper that watered the garden from the lake all summer and into the fall. I raked

2 billion pine needles from the shoreline beach. The bottom line is, I am getting ready for the winter! Yes, my denial has been breached-time to batten down the hatches.

Today, Tuesday, October 20, 2020 is both a dilemma and a revelation (not divine). First, the dilemma. I believe in the cornerstone of democracy is an informed electorate. Hence, I am journalist and cover the Nottingham Board of Selectmen meetings. Good. Political public debates are a neat vehicle to see and hear the differences between candidates. Great. But this morning NHNPR's *The Exchange* had a debate between the Democratic and Republican candidates for governor. Because I working on newspaper article, I did not listen. The reason is simple. I have already voted! Yes, if I do change my mind, I could change my vote by going in person to the poll on November 3. But, and there vs that but again, in Nottingham as of today more than 1000 voters have already sent in their ballots. The bottom line is skipped the informative debate because I had already voted!

Now for the revelation. Last night I checked my VISA bill. There I found 3 items that were not supposed to be there!! The culprit in each case. was a credit card number company had on file. Fortunately, each item not only had the billing amount and company but also a number to call. I did. Each one place I called was pleasant and somewhat helpful. It was like they expected to be caught with "their hand in the cookie jar". It was a clear and painful reminder of the danger of giving your credit card number for anything. In many cases, having your credit card number into an automatic renewal account can be dangerous. Buyer beware!!

Hello, Wednesday, October 21, 2020, a day of pickle ball, distancing Tai Chi, and exercising while watching PBS *History Detectives* <http://www.pbs.org/opb/historydetectives/>. It was a neat reminder the value and importance of documents and the need to preserve them. Three cheers for the Nottingham Historical Society !!! I closed the evening with a neat conversation with folks of different political views. Yes, the key to a good dialogue remains actually listening.

Good morning, it is glorious warm Thursday, October 22, 2020 and before I go distancing kayaking with the distancing Tai Chi, I have a few things to talk about. Again, exercising while watching, I saw a Japanese news show featuring a Starbuck's coffee in Japan where all the staff were deaf. It demonstrated the great rehibition idea of turning disabilities into abilities. Then I took a Mediterranean cruise with Joseph Rosendo as part of his Travelscope <https://www.pbs.org/show/joseph-rosendos-travelscope/>. To circle back, he always closes the travel adventure program with this line by Mark Twain "**Travel is fatal** to prejudice, **bigotry**, and narrow-mindedness". Then, the distancing Tai Chi gang reassembled on Pawtuckaway Lake for distancing kayaking It was a gorgeous day with glorious foliage. I was so glad be to able the share the lake with others.



The gang doing Tai Chi in kayaks

Today, Friday, October 23, 2020 has been dominated by death. Wow, that's a downer. Besides all the losses of life due to the pandemic, several dear friends have serious medical illnesses and one other person I knew has recently suddenly passed away. And to complete the circle back to Mark Twain, in his Ken Burn's biography of him, Twain also dies. Yes, and the often interesting detail was that he was born and died on the passage of Halley's Comet <https://www.grunge.com/263234/heres-why-mark-twain-was-linked-to-halleys-comet/>. As a believer in psychosomatic connections, I could see the link.

How to make sense of the topic of death? I will fall back on my intellectual defense from the days I taught college courses call Death and Dying. I liked this quote by the suicidologist Edwin Shneidman, "**to grieve is to pay ransom to love.**" It does say love leads to grief. True, but who wants to give up love? Still without an answer, I can fall back on one the ideas from Twain's biography program. It ended with this idea- Mark Twain's writings influence the future by their affects society's conscience. His works are important today. That leads to the idea that words do matter, the origin story of the alphabet, and the reason for the diary. Hence, I will keep writing. (Please, keep on reading! Thank you)

It is now Saturday, October 24, 2020 and deliberately sought the white birch corridor to get metaphorically beyond the doom and gloom of yesterday. I selected the word deliberately because Thoreau used that word in Walden to explain his actions. And the white birches did not disappoint me. They had still had some of their fall foliage yellow.



The white birch tree corridor October 24, 2020

But, then two things disappointed me. One was that someone had dumped trash next to the road. What made it even worse, if possible, was that the litter was deposited right in front of a “NO DUMPING” sign [https://forumhome.org/a-sign-and-the-reason-for-it-p33645-129.htm!](https://forumhome.org/a-sign-and-the-reason-for-it-p33645-129.htm) The second was that another home was being constructed in the woods that I hike in. Yes, the town is growing and the balance between progress and nature is challenging.

Back again and hello, Sunday, October 25, 2020 and returning to the same old drum beat, exercising while watching. This time it was on NHPBS *Communities And Consequences II* <https://nhpbs.org/schedule/summary.aspx?progId=CommunitiesandConsequencesII0>. The program does emphasize the need for things to keep younger folks (at my age, most people are younger) in state. A quick aside, on NHPR’s *The Exchange* it has called the aging population of New Hampshire “the silver tsunami.” The show talks about Stay, Work, Play in NH. Some of the solutions it offers include more jobs for young adults, affordable housing, more civic involvement of younger individuals. Good points, and I pleased to say we have welcomed several young families to our neighborhood. Perhaps, at safe distance we will actually have trick or treaters this year!!

Two quick notes. Last night while bored I did channel surfing. There I discovered the World Series was on. After the dismal play of the Red Sox this, I had forgotten all about baseball. For the record, if any one cares, it is the Los Angeles Dodgers vs Tampa Bay Rays, Next, we had the fall outside clean-up at my synagogue. I got to use an electric self-propelled lawn mower. It was sweet, effective, and started every time. I also loved looking back on the lawn just mowed. It gives me such a feeling of accomplishment. For a brief moment, the grass obeyed my commands!



The crew cleaning up the grounds of Etz Hayim Synagogue

Hello and welcome to Monday, October 26, 2021. It is a day of realization and discovery. First, I discovered the summer-fall honeymoon was rapidly drawing to close. What happened? Today, with the rain, no pickle ball and the distancing Tai Chi was held in the pavilion. But it was cold. Gloves on, three layers of clothing on and I was still cold. Thus, the realization of the distancing activities of the good weather were going away. The escapes of kayaking were less and less possible. Winter meant curtailing my outdoor ventures and adventures.

Now, for the discovery. In talking with a teaching colleague, I became aware of mental and emotional changing brought on by instructing all day via zoom I am now working on what I call the Zoom Teaching Syndrome (ZTS). Here is one article

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/science/2020/04/coronavirus-zoom-fatigue-is-taxing-the-brain-here-is-why-that-happens/> that discusses some of its facets. More, as I research it.

It is Tuesday, October 27, 2020 and back to exercising while watching. I saw on the World *Tightrope: Americans Reaching For Hope* <https://www.pbs.org/wnet/chasing-the-dream/stories/tightrope-americans-reaching-for-hope/>. It explores the “Disappearing jobs, weak education and a lack of adequate health care have forced generations of working class families into a balancing act that many are failing to master.” It looks at the addiction crisis as resulting as much from socio-economics conditions as well as personal choses. As a minor sociologist, I appreciated the role of one’s social context as a significant factor in one’s life. The program highlighted the sad situation of the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer, which has been amplified by the pandemic.

One other funny story for today is this. I called a person in Epping, NH. Epping calls itself the *Center of the Universe* <https://scribblesfromschreiber.blogspot.com/2008/08/why-is-epping-center-of-universe.html#:~:text=As%20more%20and%20more%20bumper%20stickers%20were%20sold%2C,center%20of%20the%20universe%20to%20outsiders%20as%20well..> I wondered what would happen, if my son who lives in Boston, MA which calls itself the *HUB of the Universe* <https://www.wgbh.org/news/2017/08/30/local-news/beantown-hub-how-did-boston-earn-its-nicknames>, phoned him. What would happen the two universes connected? Would they collide, bounce off each other or become parallel.

Enough of the two universes and it is Wednesday, October 28, 2020 and I am officially depressed. No, not clinically depressed but annoyed. What’s bothering you? First, it rained so pickle ball did not happen. Second, I made the mistake of actually watching the news. COVID 19 is roaring is ugly worldwide. I’ll get over it, but I had to vent! As a shrink, I know it is good to express one’s feelings but not act on them.

But, and there is that but again, I close with the good news today. One it was the LA Dodgers who won the World Series. And, I just received an email that a good friend just got a job. I told you, I would get over it.

Now for some humor.



Regular Humor

I saw a man that used different cuts of steak to create portraits of people. It was a rare medium, but well done.

The devil whispered to me, “I’m coming for you.” I whispered back, “Bring pizza.”

I’m at that age where my mind still thinks I’m 29, my humor suggests I’m 12, while my body mostly keeps asking if I’m sure I’m not dead yet.

Marriage Counselor: Your wife says you never buy her flowers. Is that true?

Him: To be honest, I never knew she sold flowers.

COVID 19 Humor

At what point can we just start using 2020 as profanity? As in: “That’s a load of 2020.” or “What in the 2020.” or “abso-2020-lutely.”

I’m getting tired of being part of a major historical event.

Coronacoaster a *noun*: the ups and downs of a pandemic. One day you’re loving your bubble, doing work outs, baking banana bread and going for long walks and the next you’re crying, drinking gin for breakfast and missing people you don’t even like.

If 2020 was a math word-problem: If you’re going down a river at 2 MPH and your canoe loses a wheel, how much pancake mix would you need to re-shingle your roof?



245 days of distancing

The Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner: Part XXIX

Steve Soreff, MD

Numbers count. Today is Friday, the 13th. The spirit of Halloween and horror movies lives on. The scary Pandemic continues to grow. And that connects to Triskaidekaphobia, the fear of the number 13. Or if you go with numerology it has this meaning. “The numerology energy represented by the number 245 resonates with relationships. There is a companionship resonance and a focus on the future. The 245 energy also resonates with diplomacy and conscientiousness. It is imbued with an expression of a personal sense of freedom” <https://affinitynumerology.com/number-meanings/number-245-meaning.php>. Or in my world, this is the 245th day, 37th week, and the 9th month of my social and physical distancing. And what an amazing last 15 days this has been. We had an election, remembered *Kristalinacht*, had brief snow storm and enjoyed a stretch of summer weather. Let’s look back on them.



Friday, November 13, 2020

It is Friday, October 30, 2020 and it snowed last night! Yet another foreshadowing of the coming winter. It is no longer a hint. But, and there I go again with the but, I want note several things that happened yesterday. One number, again while exercising and watch, I saw two things that caught my attention. The first, as a PS show on homeless college students. Wow, it hard enough to just go to college, never mind adding to its being homeless. The second one dealt with the sticking power of miss information aka fake news. The mythical city of Atlantis was a creation by Plato's imagination and writings. Yet, to this day, many believe it was actual place.

Still, on yesterday, October 29, in honor of National Cribbage Day-remember-the 29th of the month, Peggy and I played a cribbage game during breakfast. As the game progressed we were both in the dead hole. Quick joke-did you hear of 2 silk worms that had a race? The contest ended in tie! We decided to end that game that way, with both of in the dead hole.- a tie. How cool was that.

Back to today. The snow is gently drifting down. It is magical and neat. The falling snow looked like one of those glass bubble simulator desk weights. But, there is that but yet again, in the words of Robert Frost, "The woods are lovely, dark and deep. But I have promises to keep, And miles to go before I sleep, And miles to go before I sleep" <https://poets.org/poem/stopping-woods-snowy-evening>." I am off to distancing Tai Chi and beyond. And the beyond, I dropped three copies of my book at the Water Street Bookstore in Exeter. I'm now in a bookstore!! ☺



The first snow of the season

Good morning, it is Saturday, October 31, 2020; the sun is shining. It is melting the snow off the tree branches and the remaining fall foliage. The sunshine off these leaves is almost poetical. Again, the while exercising and watching, I saw the PBS program *Love Wins Over Hate* <https://video.kenw.org/video/love-wins-over-hate-crgmbe/>. It shows the remarkable transformation of individuals who once were Nazi and white supremacists. They changed through contact with their victims. It illustrates the power of interpersonal contact to change people and the importance of forgiveness of others and ourselves.

The program reminded me of my favorite movie, *Remember the Titans* <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0210945/>. According to my daughter, Matana, I showed it in all my college classes. The film depicted in the era of school desegregation, what happened when an African-American high school and a white one were merged. It dramatically demonstrated how the students of different races, through contact of being together on one football team, overcame prejudices and stereotypes. There, too they learned to like each other. That is a great message in these polarizing times.

There are two more things for Saturday. First, we had our first trick or treaters today in our 13 years living here . BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO In the last year, several families with youngsters moved into our neighborhood. Yippee. Three kids came at a distance to our house. Second, Peggy and I hiked around the Wagon Hill Farm https://www.ci.durham.nh.us/boc_conservation/wagon-hill-farm in Durham.



Our first ever trick and treaters

Good morning and welcome to November, specifically November 1, 2020. I have two quick thoughts from exercising/watching/listening. The first came from lecture on [constitutional convention in Philadelphia, 1787](#). It highlighted the genius of the concept of check and balances. But, it also pointed out the now eternal question of states' rights versus federal

ones and the rise political polarity. Both of states' rights issues and the gap between the two parties are so evident in the pandemic and election.

Second, I heard the Epic of Gilgamesh <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Epic-of-Gilgamesh>. What was so striking was the story's parallels to the Bible with the serpent stealing human immortality by eating Lotus flower and the flood. It ends with the message we all die but how we led our lives matters. Interesting message, as we all are distancing to avoid death.

Welcome to Monday, November 2, 2020, a day with high winds, white caps on the lake, and snow showers interrupted by brilliant sunshine. I now can report the successful winter south migrations of our flamingos.



The flamingos in their winter quarters

I, also received this ominous email this morning. “ If you are planning to hold signs at the polls, you should be aware that there are reports of armed people who are planning to ‘march’ in the area. Apparently, there is no way to prevent it even on school grounds. I don't know any details about when it might happen or how large a group it could be, but I understand the police department has been notified .” I remember, when I went to medical school in Chicago, that there were several thugs hanging around the polling places. They were very menacing. It was a time when a few candidates were challenging the Major Daley machine, Intimidation has no place in the election process.

Tuesday, November 3, 2020 and so it begins. Bidens swept Dixville Notch, NH <https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/politics/biden-sweeps-board-in-tiny-new-hampshire-village-dixville-notch/ar-BB1aEmsr>. I have a particular interest in the Balsams resort where the voting there was done. I had spoken there once and visited the famous Ballot Room where the actual voting took place. There is heightened attention to the national election this year. Here an email I received this morning about Nottingham voting. “At 9:30 640 people had voted, and there are around 1400 absentee ballots. Should be big lines tonight from 5-7. “



MSN online photograph

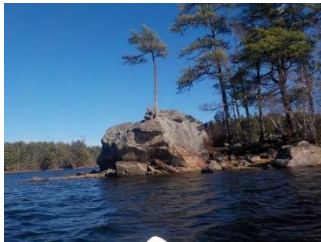
I also had a zoom class with a Quinsigamond Community College Paramedic Training Class <https://www.qcc.edu/academics/healthcare/emt-paramedic-certificate>. It was great and fun. In the past, I have practiced emergency psychiatry in an Emergency

Department at teaching hospital for many years. It was neat to work with a receptive and appreciative group who deal with psychiatric emergency patients. Working with them was like coming back home to emergency psychiatry roots.

Welcome, today is Wednesday , November 4, 2020, the day after the election. This morning, a flock of wild turkeys invaded the remanences of the garden. They looked fatter than earlier in the season. The election is undecided, but I feel good that my team won big in New Hampshire. All my telephone calls on its behalf were not in vain! And, as the day dissolves into night, the electoral tide appears to moving toward Biden.

Hello everyone, it is Thursday, November 5, 2020 and am dealing with a series of mixed emotions. On one hand, I find myself checking the location election needle all the time. Biden is sooooooooooooooooooooo close. On the other hands, I did check in with the Town Clerk and found out my delight 80% of eligible Nottingham voters voted <https://forumhome.org/nottingham-voted-on-november-p33699-129.htm>!! It shows how important felt the election was. But, I will also suffering from post-election let-down. The months of election activities abrupted halted. I could not call for my candidates anymore.

Remember the old Dodge truck ad which said, “when the going gets tough, the tough get going”? What to do with all my pent up emotions? The answer was go kayak. With the temperature at 60 and a manageable breeze, I launched my trustee kayak and paddled for 2 ½ hours on the lake. There, now I have done something! And now waiting to see the election needle advance.



Turtle island, Pawtuckaway Lake

The day ended with again exercising while watching. This time it was a PBS *Secrets of the Dead: World War Speed* <https://www.pbs.org/wnet/secrets/world-war-speed-full-film/4436/>. It showed how all side in WWII used different forms of stimulants such as amphetamines. It revealed how British General Bernard L. Montgomery gave benzenes for his troops in **the** Battle of El Alamein in the fall of 1942. Having taught several college courses called Drugs and Society, I found the program both fascinating and confirming about the use of stimulates in WW II.

Wow, what a day-historic! It is Friday, November 6, 2020, A quick moment of exercising while watching, I saw a PBS *Poetry in America Hymmn and Hum Bom!* <https://www.poetryinamerica.org/episode/hymmn-and-hum-bom/> . This dealt with the

works of Allen Ginsberg focusing on Hymmn [from *Kaddish*]. It was neat and shows the power of poetry, words and tradition, It reinforces my writing this Diary to document the pandemic.

Now to current events. As the Biden tide slowly moves the needle in his favor, I am reminded with this election, we are living in historic times. The attempts to call the vote illegal and invalid will be in the records books. My confidence of democratic institutions to take their responsibilities for a fair and accurate election has been bolstered.

Hello and welcome to Saturday, November 7, 2020. Two themes define today in America: polarization and uncertainty. The .polarization has reached the level of demonization. Each side sees the others as devils and evil! I'll come back to that idea in a moment. The uncertainty is based on the lack of clear and decisive winner of the national election. And, the uncertainty is also based on COVID 19. The two combined have led to a high level offer American stress.

Switching gears for a second, in this case the stress does not result in the mislabel word, 'anxiety'. What is the difference between fear and anxiety? If someone aims a gun at you, you feel fear. Your blood pressure goes up, your heart races and you are scared. Your life is threatened! It all makes sense; you are in real danger. Now imagine your blood pressure goes up, your heart races and you are scared, but there is NO current danger. This is what anxiety is.

Therefore, I say polarization and uncertainty are related to fear! With COVID 19, I am afraid of getting sick and dying. With polarization and the election, each side fears the devil is going to win. Wow-that how I see the American scene right now. It is dominated by fear, not anxiety.

At about 11 AM today the needle turned, the tide came in and Biden won. As Obama said it was "historic". But that is not all, it was the first a woman was elected as US Vice President. What a great way to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the women getting the right to vote!



The mapped told it all

We ended the day by watching, yes while exercising, the Harris-Biden victory speeches. The crowds were joyous and I was more thrilled and felt more elated than I expected to be. It was indeed historic!

GOOD MORNING, it is a new day in so many ways, Sunday, November 8, 2020. Pawtuckaway Lake showed that is much to reflect upon with the election results.



Lake Pawtuckaway November 8, 2020

And back to exercising and listening to I heard on NHPR *On Being*, the work of the group called Facing History and Ourselves <https://www.facinghistory.org/>. This organization promotes reconciliation by making folks aware of the past and how that influences our views of others and ourselves. As a card carrying shrink, that the past is part of the present, is one of my bedrock concepts. The radio show talked about how families posed wearing their Sunday best with lynched person for postcards. And, yes, those cards went through the US mail. It features that people with a full know of its history can follow the avenue to healing and moving forward. It cited the example of Germany which acknowledged in Nazi history. Reconciliation represents an important message for our times.

Good day, it Monday, November 9, 2020 and the joy of the weekend has been eclipsed by a painful remembering of *Kristalinacht* - The Night of Broken Glass <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/kristallnacht>. It marked a dramatic acceleration Holocaust. This year we will something different to remember. My synagogue, Etz Hayim, as well as other synagogues and churches and homes will keep our lights on all night to link us to it and remember <https://forumhome.org/kristalinacht-the-night-of-broken-glass-p33715-1.htm>. I attended a remembrance service at the synagogue via zoom. I heard many survivors first person accounts of that day; It was painful and un-setting to listen to. It was 6 million INDIVIDUALS who were killed. We keep saying, “never again”, but it still happens! The lights will be on all night in our house. We remember.



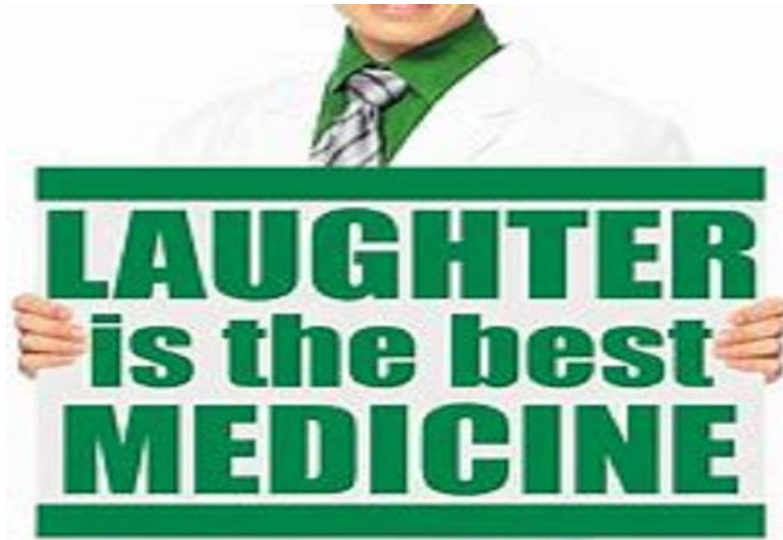
A German synagogue burning on *Kristalinacht*

Hello and good morning, a new day and a new thought, Tuesday, November 10, 2020. While exercising and watching, I saw the PBS program *Swamp Ghost* https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swamp_Ghost. I suspect it was shown today because Veterans' Day is tomorrow. It details the recovery a bullet-riddled B17 bomber that crash-landed, in a swamp on Papua New Guinea during the Second World War, It was returning after a raid on Japanese-occupied New Britain on February 23, 1942. That plane initially began its Pacific career at Pearl Harbor and it now displayed there at [Pacific Aviation Museum](#). The stories of the crew's survival and the effort to get and recover the bomber are vivid testimony to determination and perseverance. The program also dealt with two things very dear to me. It was about Pearl Harbor and I was born a December 7, 1942 ! And, it lionized the B-17 bomber called the Flying Fortress. As a kid, I had made a model of that plane. For years, my B-17 was hanging from the ceiling in my bedroom as I was growing up.

Today is Wednesday, November 11, 2020. It was the 11th hour on the 11th day of the 11th month that guns fell silent on the Western Front. I remember on this Veterans' Day, my cousins Sidney and Stephen. Both served in the US Army. Also, I note how now we honor our soldiers and how badly we treated them in the Vet Nam War era. Switching gears, I now see us in a perfect storm- a second wave of COVID 19 and Thanksgivings gathering.

Hello and almost good morning, on Thursday, November 12, 2020 and we are circling the wagons. Nottingham's Community Center, aka Town Hall, is in 'lock down' as the town website says "Office Services Available by Appointment Only" <https://www.nottingham-nh.gov/home/urgent-alerts/office-services-available-appointment-only>. Like in a tsunami, the second wave can be more disastrous than the first. I see more people wearing masks. The news is full of escalating numbers and problems. I have the sense "battien down the hatches" is watch word of the day, We are heading into a storm. Who would have thought your child returning home for Thanksgiving would pose such a family dilemma.

Enough of this, let's laugh,



Regular Humor

Charles Dickens walks into a bar and asks for a martini. The bartender asks, "Olive or twist?"

Moses had the first tablet that could connect to the cloud.

A recent study has found that women who carry a little extra weight live longer than the men who mention it.

I bought some shoes from a drug dealer. I don't know what he laced them with, but I've been tripping all day.

All men are animals; Some Just Make Better Pets.

POLITICIANS & DIAPERS BOTH NEED TO BE CHANGED, AND FOR THE SAME REASON

I'm great at multitasking. I can waste time, be unproductive, and procrastinate all at once.

What do you call the security outside of a Samsung Store? A: Guardians of the Galaxy.

Atheism is a non-prophet organization.

Today a man knocked on my door and asked for a small donation towards the local swimming pool. I gave him a glass of water.

The first computer dates back to Adam and Eve. It was an Apple with limited memory, just one byte. And then everything crashed

COVID 19 Humor



Bill Gates said the pandemic won't be over until the end of 2021 And he has a lot of Intel

How do you blow out your birthday candles during a pandemic?

You don't. There is no cake. The party is canceled!

In order to stay healthy during this pandemic, I've been dancing in public while insulting people. I practice social diss dancing.

If you have to cut your own hair during this pandemic, do it on the porch.

The haircut will still look terrible, but cleanup is a breeze.

The government in Egypt has asked the city's taxi drivers to drive around Cairo sounding their car horns. It is hoped that the familiar sounds of the city will induce a return to tranquility and normality following the recent pandemic. Operation Toot 'n Calm 'Em will last for the rest of the week.

Since the USA is suffering from the COVID19 pandemic, the largest unemployment since the Great Depression and the country wide protesting, rioting and looting, The Mexican President calls Trump. He says: OK, you win, the wall gets built, by us and we will pay for it! Just stay on your side

Pandemic has led to another type of shortage: Social skills

Finally, an okay yo mama joke! Yo mama so ugly. The world created a pandemic so she'd have to wear a mask



255 Day of Distancing

The Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner: Part XXX

Steve Soreff, MD

Hello, it Monday, November 23, 2020 and the Pac-Man is in pursuit of an elusive Thanksgiving meal. It is my 255 day, beginning of my 39th week and toward the end of my 9th month of distancing. The jury is still out about Thanksgiving with plans to celebrate it on Sunday, November 29 as that is best for the family. We, as the nation, and, if they celebrated Thanksgiving the rest of the world, will curtail of plans and travels. It is has said in the Chinese proverb, “may you live in interesting times”. Well, we done. The pandemic rages, the election results have as of yet not bring closure, and Thanksgiving dilemma looms. With that in mind. Let us look back on the last week. But., and there is that but again, a happy Thanksgiving to all of you. In the face of the pandemic, social and political turmoil we have much to be thankful for.

Good morning, it is Saturday, November 14, 2020. It is the day after Friday, the 13th. That day is associated with nightmares, horror movies, chain saws and massacres. I link it to something Viktor E. Frankl wrote in his book, Man's Search for Meaning https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/4069.Man_s_Search_for_Meaning. Frankl was a psychiatrist who survived the labor and death camps. He describes the scene where of one of the other prisoners in his barrack was having a nightmare. He reports under normal circumstances, he would awaken that person and comforted him. But, the horror of the camp was so much worse than any nightmare he might be experiencing, Frankl did nothing. The point here is that,

the horror of this pandemic is so much worse than any Friday, the 13th movie. Go ahead and watch the horror.

A quick note, I am haunted by the Holocaust. So, the mere mention of Frankl connects me to the Holocaust. When I woke up in a cold morning, I immediately think of what it was like in Auschwitz. In the idea of Jung's collective unconscious, I feel related and connected to them there.

Hello, it is Saturday, November 14, 2020 and I have two things on my mind. The first is the ominous attention in the news about the COVID 19 surge. Yes, it is real and frightening. People are looking for explanations for the rise of cases. Remember, the KISS idea, for every complicated, difficult problem, there is one simple, direct answer. PAUSE And, that conclusion is wrong. The current attributed notion for the number of COVID 19 cases and deaths is pandemic fatigue. That cause, may be true, but it is incomplete. I see the reason as the change in the weather. In the spring-summer and early fall- we could be outside, together and yet apart. The more indoors, the more increased in transmission. More on the Thanksgiving dilemma, later.-

Second, back to exercising and watching, this time I heard a lecture on the Books of Genesis and Exodus. It emphasized the power of monotheism. The easy message was that it emerged from the consolidation of many gods into one supreme being. For me, the movement of bringing things to together into one unit is one of the major determinants to understand the world's history. For example, New York City came about through the merger of five boroughs as did Boston and Los Angeles experience the same consolidation. That happens to banks, supermarkets, drug stores, restaurants and many other industries. That is how we have the United States of America from 50 states. Perhaps, that insight is not necessarily a profound thought, but it is interesting.

With all this talk about pandemic surge, I again sought the glory of my white birch corridor. With a brisk walk, I gained the grove. There they were standing tall and ready for the winter. They reassured me. Onward, I go.



The white birch corridor Nov. 14, 2020

And I completed Saturday by exercising and watching to see PBS NOVA *Petra: Lost City of Stone* <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/video/petra-lost-city-of-stone/>. As the website says, "More than 2,000 years ago, the thriving city of Petra rose up in the bone-dry desert of what is now Jordan. An oasis of culture and abundance, the city was built by wealthy merchants whose camel caravans transported incense and spices from the Arabian Gulf. They carved spectacular temple-tombs into its soaring cliffs, raised a monumental Great Temple at its heart, and devised an ingenious system that channeled water to vineyards, bathhouses, fountains, and

pools. But following a catastrophic earthquake and a slump in its desert trade routes, Petra's unique culture faded and was lost to most of the world for nearly a thousand years. Now, in a daring experiment, an archaeologist and sculptors team up to carve an iconic temple-tomb to find out how the ancient people of Petra built their city of stone. Meanwhile, scientists using remote sensors and hydraulic flumes uncover the vast city and its sophisticated water system. The race is on to discover how these nomads created this oasis of culture in one of the harshest climates on Earth.” Having been to Petra with my sister and my son, Barak, it made the program even more fascinating. But, and there I am with the but, to circle back to the pandemic, Peggy and I were scheduled to visit Petra in March, 2020. Then first Jordan closed its border , next Israel and then world said not to call travel. We hope to get there someday.



Our visit to Petra, 2011 picture taken by Barak

Welcome to Sunday, November 15, 2020 and it back to exercising while watching, I saw a lecture about the *Aeneid* by **Virgil** <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Virgil>. What I found interesting was that the epic story was commissioned by Emperor Augustus Caesar to tell the story and mission of Rome and himself. . The talk was in the context of the roles and purposes of myths. Myths can dramatize and highlight the values of a religion and a country. What we need now is a new unifying, hopeful American myth. Perhaps it could be a version of the *Little Engine that Could*. Maybe a tale of someone (either sex, of any religion and any ethic group) from poverty, educated, exhibits wisdom, wears a face mask, gets people to talk across the aisles, has individuals working together, defeats COVID 19, restores the economy and returns America to democracy. Such a mythical hero will invigorate the nation, lifts our spirits in the face of a long hard COVID winter. I can dream, can't I?

It is Monday, November 16, 2020 and a new week. But, does a new week really matter? My schedule landscape has been unchanged for the last 9 months. I soldier on. Time is for a new issue here. And, back to exercising while watching, I saw the PB NOVA program, *Making North America: Origins* <https://www.thirteen.org/programs/nova/nova-making-north-america-origins/> The show featured “The epic 3 billion-year story of how our continent came to be. From the palm trees that once flourished in Alaska to titanic eruptions that nearly tore the Midwest in two, discover how forces of almost unimaginable power gave birth to North America”. Having loved taking geology at Tufts University and having taught it at the collegiate level, I am thrilled by its perspectives of time. Geology deals in millions of years. That perspective helps me to accept the restrictions of COVID 19. They will not last forever.

Welcome to Tuesday, November 17, 2020 and it is a day to see inter-connections. It began with Talmud class in the morning. The Talmud offers ways to interpret the Torah, But, in

the session, the ultimate way to understand both the Torah and the Talmud is how to apply it to one's life. It is back to walk the talk and practice what is preached. Connect what you know, read and think to what you do!

The second connection came while exercising and watching. I saw the PBS series [Power Trip: The Story of Energy-Food](https://powertripshow.com/episode/food/). That program highlighted the interconnections among the energy from sun, importance of water to not only be the vital factor in plant and animal life but also to power food producing factories, the global population surge, advent of refrigeration, and vast transportation network. Additionally, the show emphasized the issue of food wastage. The linkages are amazing.. As shows website states, "The miracles of energy enable a stable supply in our global food system. But when food goes from farm to table to landfill, that embedded energy is wasted. How do we harness energy to feed our growing population without the downsides of industrialization? FOOD traces a centuries-long journey across Europe, Asia, and the United States to show us the energy it takes to bring us our food." The program made me much more aware of what I eat, how it got to me and even more appreciate our garden. .

Welcome to Wednesday, November 18, 2020 and a number of semi-random thoughts and connections. First, I did pickle ball and distancing outside on a 28 degree windy morning. We all did it for bragging rights. And with the soaring virus infection rates, we did it because we not dare to do it inside. Second, back to exercising and watching, this time another in the PBS series *Power Trip: The Story of Energy-Transportation* <https://powertripshow.com/episode/transportation/>. It showed the inter-connectiveness of cars, freedom, life styles, production, progress and pollution that results in climate change. It advocates solar-water-and wind power converting into electricity. It offers a hopeful notion that technology has some answers to improve the planet! It was done in Nottingham when the town installed solar panels on the Community Center's roof in October, 2018 <https://forumhome.org/solar-panel-ribbon-cutting-event-october-p30131-129.htm>. One small step for Nottingham; another step for the planet.



Solar Panels installed on Nottingham's Community Center roof 2018

Third, yet again to exercising and watching, this time a PBS program on the south during reconstruction. It was called *Reconstruction: America after the Civil War* <https://www.pbs.org/weta/reconstruction/>. It painfully demonstrated how the African-American lost so much after the hopes for the Union victory. It reminded me how the roots of Black Lives Matter (BLM) are not just in the history of slavery. It is was there during and after reconstruction.

Good morning, it is Thursday. November 19, 2020 and I began my day in the middle of the night. How so? Throughout the night I had recurrent image or dream of the eagle in front of

a fire truck or fire station. The picture was not sharp. It was more like a Monet painting with the images were blurred. But, what was important was, that I experienced them several times throughout the night. As believer in Freud's dictum: dreams are the royal road to the unconscious, I spent the rest of the night trying to figure these images out. Here's what I came up with. The eagle was America; it is our classic, historic and enduring symbol. The fire truck or station represents a fire; e.g. crisis, danger, damage and destruction. Yes, America is in trouble. I am vexed in the face of the common enemy, COVID 19, how we are deeply divided we are. Wow, things were easier with a common foe like in World War II or even in the Cold War, there was common enemy or the Evil Empire. In the face of the economic catastrophe, Washington cannot agree on a stimulus package! Yes, we have had major divisions before which included the Civil War and the War in Vet Nam. Our history does say "we shall overcome". I hope so we shall not someday but now!

Now that I have that out of my system, back to exercising and watching, I saw the PBS program Jonathan Scott's Power Trip <https://www.pbsocal.org/programs/independent-lens/jonathan-scotts-power-trip-bmrkzf/>. Just as it was clear the great opportunity to save the planet through harnessing solar power, this show outlined all the obstacles just that.. The program illustrated forces to oppose solar energy including the utility monopolies and coal industries. As my son says, "nothing is easy".

My day ended with an amazing zoom aerobic act. I attended a committee meeting, then attended a shiva prayer service for a friend's sister and then participated in the Open Mic of the UU Church. WOW And I did so all by staying in the same room and sitting in the same chair.

Today is Friday, November 20, 2020 and NH Governor finally has issues a mask in public mandate <https://forumhome.org/sununu-issues-statewide-mask-mandate-p33780-1.htm>. It was long overdue, but at least it was finally done. In recognition of the order, our distancing Tai Chi group wore masks.



Distancing Tai Chi with masks

And today began my book tour . It started at 1:10 PM at Nottingham's Blaisdell Memorial Library. Library director, Liz Bolton [Nottingham Welcomes New Library Director \(forumhome.org\)](https://forumhome.org), interviewed me with Dan Bunker recording the session. I was delighted not only with the neat questions she asked but also that she had read the book and liked it!! Writers can be so vain. But not only that, but the interview will on the library's website in December. How cool is that! Furthermore, the interview ended on an astonishing note. It turns out the Liz was a relative of several of my journal articles co-author, Patricia Bazemore, MD. It's a small world!! And to complete the day before Friday night services, Peggy and I went kayaking. Yes, we did it in November!



My Book Tour's start, an interview with Liz Bolton photograph by Dan Bunker

Good morning and welcome Saturday, November 21, 2020 and I began the day with a very sobbing moment. Yes, back again to exercising and watching, this time I saw the PBS program entitled *Sand Creek Massacre* [Colorado Experience | Sand Creek Massacre | Season 2 | Episode 210 | PBS](#) as part of the series the Colorado Experience. The show painfully tells this story from its website. “What would lead approximately 675 volunteer soldiers to attack a peaceful settlement of Cheyenne and Arapaho Indians in southeastern Colorado Territory? On November 29, 1864, Colonel John Chivington led a group to do just that, resulting in the deaths of over one hundred men, women and children. This episode revisits the horrific events and uncovers the history 150 years later”. If it is important that the Holocaust be part of the school curriculum (and it is), then we should know about our national history. We have to learn how we dealt with Native Americans. This is key now because of the Thanksgiving week. We love story of the harmony of the Pilgrims and the Wampanoag Indians. As that the program illustrates, knowing history can promote healing.

Wild thought. I remember there is a group of Spring skiing enthusiasts, who pride themselves on making the last ski run of the year in Tuckerman's Ravine. And since, we kayaked yesterday, I wonder who might last one to kayak on Pawtuckaway Lake for 2020?

In the afternoon, Peggy and I raked of the 8 million oak leaves in the yard and used them to over the garden for the winter. That is my [reiki therapy](#) lol! We followed that by observing our Saturday tradition of playing Mexican Train. Then, Peggy and I traveled to the White Mountains in two ways, both via New Hampshire Public Television. We watched *The Merrimack: River At Risk* [NHPBS Presents | The Merrimack: River at Risk | NHPBS](#). It showed “The Merrimack River at Risk looks at one of the country's most threatened watersheds and the towns and cities that have relied on it throughout history. The film spotlights what's at stake if the surrounding communities don't continue to protect the river and its forests” It showed how the forests of the White Mountains National Forests purifies the Merrimack River at its origin. It also featured an interview with Ted Diers of NH DES. I have worked with him about issue about Paw tuckaway Lake. Like in the library interview, it is a small world. We then saw *Mt. Washington Auto Road To The Sky* [Mt. Washington Auto Road to the Sky | Mt. Washington Auto Road to the Sky \(Preview\) | NHPBS](#). It was how “Determined dreamers built a road through the clouds, clear to the summit of the tallest peak in the Northeast. Experience the year-round adventures of the ‘Rockpile’ with a new documentary from NHPBS.” The title came from the NH legislature view of the project to build a road up to the summit of Mount Washington. In its vote, it called the venture ‘a highway to the sky’. The program showed great history. And, it particularly satisfying to watch as both of us I have climbed Mount Washington.

After getting of the Mexican Train and before going to the White Mountain, Peggy trimmed my hair for the second time. For the record, I have not been to barber shop in 10 months, And yes, I still look like Bernie Sanders!

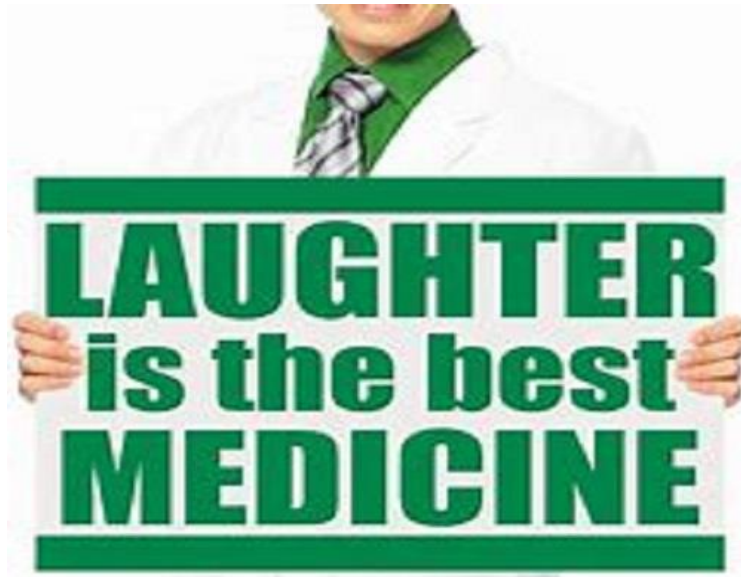


The Mexican Train Dominoes Game

Sunday, November 22, 2020 brings with a powerful, painful memory. On this date, 57 years ago was assassination of John F. Kennedy [assassination of John F. Kennedy | Summary, Facts, Aftermath, & Conspiracy | Britannica](#). I have flashbacks to that day. The official psychiatric term for ta flashback is an abreaction. Its definition is that you not only remember but also relive or re-experiencing the event in present. I recall, while I was living at West Hall as a senior at Tufts University, when I heard the news. I walked out of the dormitory, and like many of my classmates, wandered around campus dazed, in disbelief and shock. I knew he was dead when the radio program reporting events in Dallas switched to Walter Cronkite. He told the nation that President was dead. That event was one of the defining moments in the nation's history and my life. Wow, I talked about it, time to move on.

I zoomed into a discussion of the effects of COVID on work and life. The easy answer remains, "life will never be the same". An Internet-media-zoom new world is emerging. And as the day slipped into night, I heard on NHRP *The Folk Show* the original recording of *Alice's Restaurant* by Arlo Guthrie [Alice's Restaurant - Original 1967 Recording - YouTube](#) . Today marked the 53th anniversary of its release. Hearing that for many of us, is a Thanksgiving tradition made me feel good and things were going to be all right.

That is some heavy stuff. Time to laugh. Remember but Friday, November 27, many of you will go cold turkey!



Regular humor

People who take naps are the real heroes of our time. It takes courage to wake up twice in one day.

I'm on two diets. I wasn't getting enough food on one.

A cold seat in a public restroom is unpleasant. A warm seat in a public restroom is worse.

Don't irritate old people. The older we get, the less "Life in prison" is a deterrent.

Aliens probably fly by earth and lock their doors.
I really don't mind getting older, but my body is taking it badly.

I miss the 90's when bread was still good for you and no one knew what kale was.

Do you ever get up in the morning, look in the mirror and think "That can't be accurate."

Confuse your doctor by putting on rubber gloves at the same time he does.

My wife asked me to take her to one of those restaurants where they make food right in front of you. I took her to Subway.

I picked up a hitchhiker. He asked if I wasn't afraid, he might be a serial killer? I told him the odds of two serial killers being in the same car were extremely unlikely.

I went line dancing last night. OK, it was a roadside sobriety test... same thing.

COVID 19 Humor



30 days hath September, April, June, and November, all the rest have 31, except for March, 2020 which was infinite.

Two grandmothers were bragging about their precious darlings. One of them says to the other, "Mine are so good at social distancing, they won't even call me."

Yesterday I ran out of soap and body wash and all I could find was dish detergent. Then it *Dawned* on me.

[I finished](#) Netflix today.

I never thought the comment "I wouldn't touch him/her with a six-foot pole" would become a national policy, but here we are!

I [washed my hands](#) so much because of COVID-19 that my exam notes from 1995 resurfaced

Chuck Norris has been exposed to coronavirus. The virus is now in quarantine for 14 days.

Today's weather? Room temperature.



267 days of distancing and still counting

The Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner: Part XXXI

Steve Soreff, MD

Hello and welcome to Sunday, December 6, 2020. Today is the 267th day, entering into the 41st week and into the 10th month of social distancing. As the mosaic of the above number, these have been mixed days of new and old, excitement and boredom, and good and bad. Last week, we all went through a different, yes, weird and unusual Thanksgiving. The COVID casualties soar, while the hopes of a vaccine cautiously grow. And in keeping with the cribbage tradition, the number 267, becomes $2 + 6 + 7$ equals 15 for 2! With that out of the way, let's take a look back.

Good morning, a new day and a step forward for American democracy. It is Tuesday, November 24, 2020. Wow, what an enthusiastic greeting. How come? I woke to that "The General Services Administration has informed President-elect Joe Biden that the Trump administration is ready to begin the formal transition process, according to a letter from GSA Administrator Emily Murphy sent Monday afternoon and obtained by CNN" <https://www.cnn.com/2020/11/23/politics/transition-biden-gsa-begin/index.html> . Finally, an orderly transfer of power can occur. The unprecedented delay in the transfer of the federal government's powers is finally coming to an end.

One of the goals of this diary remains to record and document life in the pandemic. Whenever one goes to the bank, library, town hall and the post office, all transactions are conducted by masked workers behind plastic or plexiglass shields. Also, gyms have reopened but with many restrictions. This outside poster illustrates the COVID 19 rules at the Planet Fitness in Raymond, NH. .



Planet Fitness is open with rules

Now, let us return to looking at the Thanksgiving holiday and week in two ways. First, is the Turkey day dilemma, Cutting to chase, or the wish bone, across the nation is shelter-in-place or just eat with only your immediate family message. . We are urged to forgo the traditional gatherings,. And, that translates into what our family will do for Thanksgiving?

The second issue is what is the real Pilgrims' story? The actual Pilgrim story is told in a captivating manner in the PBS's *America Experience -The Pilgrims* <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/films/pilgrims/> . Much of this portrayal challenges the popular myths about the holiday. In the program William Bradford details the pre-colony and colony saga. As the website says, "Arguably one of the most fateful and resonant events of the last half millennium, the Pilgrims journey west across the Atlantic in the early 17th century is a seminal, if often misunderstood episode of American and world history. *The Pilgrims* explores the forces, circumstances, personalities and events that converged to exile the English group in Holland and eventually propel their crossing to the New World; a story universally familiar in broad outline, but almost entirely unfamiliar to a general audience in its rich and compelling historical actuality." The show talks about how the holiday came about during the American Civil War in 1864. Prior to that, there were two competing stories of English origins of America: Jamestown and Plymouth. That the designation of the holiday by Lincoln settled that question by codifying Pilgrim as the nation's founders. In a final note about program, William Bradford, in his later years become more religious. So, he started to learn Hebrew. He wanted to be able to read the Bible in its original Hebrew.

As the day dissolved into night, I attended via the annual interfaith Thanksgiving service. I have grown more the appreciate and enjoy the connectedness of Judaism and Christianity. My synagogue and the Derry Episcopal church constitute an interfaith campus. Our joint trip to Israel in 2017 further strengthened the relationship.

Hello and semi-welcome to today Wednesday, November 25, 2020. The day began with a schedule, pickle ball and distancing Tai Chi. All good, But as the afternoon set I, I will report of new and perhaps nationally shared feeling. It can be summed up by the expression: "It just does not feel like Thanksgiving". Please, note that statement does not end with a "!" . There is a reason. The explanation for that is that this year the holiday is experienced with blandness and resignation. The 'normal' moorings of the holiday have been eclipsed by the pandemic. There was a similar reaction in the Spring with the Passover seders. However, the novelty of the restrictions and dictates of the observance ritual made it more bearable. The lack of a big family celebration, an attenuated Macy Thanksgiving Day Parade and the bleak COVID statistics have contributed to the apathy of the day.

As I almost descended in a pity-party over lack of joy about Thanksgiving, I found an explanation. I had majored in Sociology at Tufts College and have even taught a collegiate "Soc" class. So, my answer came from my within. One of my sociology heroes was **Émile Durkheim**. He observed that when many people lost their jobs, the suicide rate increased. But he also found, perhaps surprisingly, that when the employment rates were *higher*, the taking of one's life also increased. **He coined the term Anomie** <https://www.britannica.com/topic/anomie>. The website talks about a society which has "a condition of instability resulting from a breakdown of standards and values or from a lack of

purpose or ideals”. Everything is changing. The traditional celebration of the holiday in so many ways impossible. The family maybe zooming Thanksgiving dinner, but it will not be the same. This holiday represents uncharted waters and many of the ‘normal’ norms, patterns, and schedules are in flux. That is how I am feeling tonight.



Thanksgiving 2020

Welcome to Thanksgiving Day, Thursday, November 26, 2020. My bleak prediction was greeted by a rainy, overcast morning. But I rallied by taking a walk to get the mail. Yes, I know there is no mail delivery on the holiday! But, I did not get the mail yesterday, so I went this morning. I find motion either walking or jogging lifts my emotions. I had the idea of connecting with friends from years ago. So, this year’s Thanksgiving event was calling friends. The conversations were quite satisfying and we all made plans to actually meet face to face in the spring. Then for the sake of tradition, I did tune in and watch part of 94th having of the Macy’s Parade <https://parade.com/1113334/alexandra-hurtado/macys-thanksgiving-day-parade-2020/>. They worked hard to keep the tradition alive. The parade began with its traditional and signature turkey float. It features bands and huge inflated characters. It included cuts away to parts of current Broadway productions. However, much of the ‘Parade’ was a thinly disguised series of ads. But, I gave them credit for having the event in the face of the pandemic.



The signature and tradition turkey float leading the Macy’s parade. Photograph from the website

I rounded out the day by exercising and watching, the PBS *The Rise of the Nazi* <https://www.pbsocal.org/programs/rise-of-the-nazis/episode-3-night-of-the-long-knives-oj9icq/>. As its website states, “See how Hitler finds himself caught between Germany’s president and the Nazis’ power base. His advisors persuade him to destroy the Nazi stormtroopers and their leader

– one of his oldest friends – to make the SS Germany’s only paramilitary force. “ It is sober reminder of the ruthlessness of tyrants and the need for checks and balances to people in power.

Hello and it is the day after Thanksgiving, Friday, November 27, 2020. My traditional joke for today is that everyone goes cold turkey. A quick pause so you can smile. But, and there I go again with the but, we celebrate Thanksgiving today and now. Thus, we enjoyed and dined hot turkey along with all the fixing.



Our Thanksgiving turkey following government guidelines

And continuing on the subject of food, NPR uses the term *food insecurity* <https://www.npr.org/2020/10/05/920314166/millions-of-americans-cant-afford-enough-to-eat-as-pandemic-relief-stalls-in-d-c>. I find myself annoyed by that phrase. It is a euphemism for people do not have enough food. They are hungry and, in some cases, starving. Although many regions report food problems, I did check with Chelli Tennis, the Head of the Nottingham Food Bank, <https://forumhome.org/nottinghams-best-keep-secret-its-food-pantry-p28384-129.htm>. She said “thanks to the generosity of the people of Nottingham, our food pantry is a good shape”.

Good morning, I’ve been in England this morning, Saturday, November 28, 2020 with the Royal Family. Again, exercising and watching this time with PBS’ s [Lucy Worsley's Royal Photo Album](https://www.pbs.org/video/lucy-worsleys-royal-photo-album-p8t4uc/) <https://www.pbs.org/video/lucy-worsleys-royal-photo-album-p8t4uc/>. Through the show you “explore how the royal family has shaped their image with photography, from Queen Victoria to Princess Diana to Prince Harry. From official portraits to tabloid snapshots, the camera has been the Crown’s confidante, messenger — and nemesis”. Although fascinating, the program reminded me of how hard it is to get a ‘good’, natural photograph of a person. The show illustrated how many of the Royal family portraits captured the individuals’ personality, emotion and compassion resulting empathy of the viewer. The show made be recall the neat technique the photographer at my son’s, Barak, Bar Mitzvah. He would always say ,”happy, happy, happy” and then take the picture. He said the key was “to catch the person right *after* the smile”. -This was a neat idea.

I have a Saturday schedule, Get up, exercise and watch an education program, eat with Peggy while listening to NPR program <https://www.npr.org/podcasts/344098539/wait-wait-don-t-tell-me> *Wait, Wait, Don’t Tell*, and then zoom into a Torah Study. Having a daily and weekly schedule has sustained me during the pandemic. Scheduled events become landmarks in an often flat activity landscape.

In the afternoon, we had a Soreff Family Gathering via zoom, It was neat to see and talk to each other. We also played computer-cell phone combination games via Jackbox TV <https://jackbox.tv/>. Wonder and uses of the cell phone keep on expanding and totally bewilder me. These games worked from grandkids through senior citizens. As in so many ways, it is my

kids (now adults) and grandkids who are teaching me.



A tee shirt and slogan contest games using Jackbox

Then, I walked to mail box for the mail and picked a significant amount of litter on Dolloff Dam Road. It has been said that the pandemic has led to as shortage of many things. These include social and civic skills. And Peggy and I returned to our Saturday night tradition of playing Mexican Train.

Good morning, it is Sunday, November 29, 2020. The sun is shining and this is my 9th National Cribbage Day doing distancing. I won my computer game of cribbage this morning against my online rival, Bill. I started the day while exercising and listening to NHPR *On Being* <https://onbeing.org/series>. The program talked about gratitude with two neat take home messages. The first is that giving to other and practicing gratitude is great for your physiology. It lowers blood pressure and makes you feel good, too. The second is that wisdom is applied knowledge. It means information leads to actions.

Then, we had a family walk at Emerson Mills. It is a place where we stroll about with distancing and masks. For Peggy and I, it was a return since we biked there in September <https://forumhome.org/the-diary-of-a-reluctant-social-distance-extrovert-prisoner-part-xxv-p33447-1.htm>. This time I had a chance to appreciate a stone statue, named Scott. Here is what his plaque reads: “my name is Scott. I was built on this ground to watch the pond and the woods all around. I make no special meaning. No truths do I hold. I just stand in the sun, the wind, and the cold. ‘So’, you may be wondering. ‘Why was this done?’ And the answer is just for fun!” What a nice message for today. I, also observed the first ice of the winter on parts of the pond Scott was watching.



Scott at Emerson Mills, Candia

Hello and welcome to Monday, which should be the start of a new week, November 30, 2020. In last Diary’s COVID Humor section, there was this statement: “Thirty days hath September, April, June, and November, all the rest have 31, except for March, 2020 which has an infinite number”. But today the ‘joke’ takes on yet another meaning. It translates into the last month of 2020 that I will have to manually advance the date on my wrist watch. Yes, I am

old school and still wear a wrist watch: it is non-digital; and it has no Internet connection. We got pickle ball and distancing Tai Chi in before it started to rain.

We dodge two bullets today also. First, I got home with enough time to complete a yard project before the rain started. Then, the second was just as the Nottingham Board of Selectmen Meeting, which I cover for the Forum by zoom, was getting under way, the forecasted high wind storm materialized. There were gusts up to 50 mph! Three of the board lost power and their zoom link. At that point 84% of Nottingham households with our electric company lost power. The meeting was recessed. We (knock on wood) did not yet lose power. ☺

The knocking on wood worked and we had electric power through the night. So, hello, it now Tuesday, the first day of December 1, 2020. Before going to the dentist, while exercising, I watched Scott Galloway the author of the book, Post Corona: From Crisis to Opportunity <https://www.pbs.org/wnet/amanpour-and-company/video/scott-galloway-we-should-have-protected-people/>. He made several potent and painful observations. 10% of the population was benefitting from the pandemic while 90% were hurting. It echoed the theme of the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer. He argued that Federal government funds be made available now for now for the people. Instead, he cited government funds have favored profits over people. He talked about the dramatic gap in education because of COVID 19 and distancing education between the rich and the poor. This would ultimately lead to the loss of diversity in the work place and in innovation.

Next, I went to my regular dental cleaning. It is good to go to place because it is health conscious and promoting. They asked for my health history and took my temperature before I could even enter the building. Everyone there wears masks and those doing direct patient care also wear shields. In the waiting room, I sat in an assigned number seat. It was number 2 for the record. Chairs were arranged so they were six feet apart, And, good news-no cavities!



Distancing dentist's office waiting room.

To round out the 60 degree day, I went for a kayak. The first part of the kayak was pleasant but on the return to home, I had to battle a strong southerly breeze. I was hard but good exercise. Once home, I checked the Blaisdell Memorial Library website and I was delighted to posted my local author interview with Liz Bolton <https://nottinghamlibrary.org/on-going-library-programs/>. That is neat.

Good morning, the sun is shining. It is Wednesday, December 2, 2020 and it is time to make some connections. The first link is with my dental hygienist session yesterday. I will admit, I was in a silly mood, And hygienist, Heather, appreciated my humor. Even between her 'water boarding' me with water jet, she laughed at my jokes! My best one was about the office

having a Snellen Eye Chart <https://www.verywellhealth.com/snellen-eye-chart-3422168> on the wall to test the vision of my eye teeth. We both laughed at that one. By-the-way, the eye teeth are really another for canine teeth. But, and here is that but again, the pandemic message here was this. We are all so isolated and missing interpersonal contacts, that we both appreciated the face to face connection moment.

For the second connection, remember in my Carpe Diem moment of kayaking yesterday? Part of my motivation was to investigate the origin of the loud, annoying, persistent, day long noise coming from across the lake. I found that its origin was from several landscaping workers leaf blowing. The leaf blower's racket has become the signature sound of this Fall. So much so, that it was one of the 'joke news' items on NPR's *Wait, Wait, Don't Tell Me*. On the show they cited its noise was as a major disturbance and disruption when people at home are on zoom conference calls. Score another for the pandemic.

The third connection deals with family dynamics in making decisions. That sounds a bit pompous. Let me explain. For some families the process of how to rear children, where and when to go on vacation and other such subjects can be convoluted and complex. What I am saying here is that different members of the family have various opinions as to how much and when to do social and physical distancing. Families wrestle how to define their 'bubble. Who is actually in it. The family's decisions about distancing usually comes about by consensus. But, it can also change over time and with different circumstances. This is particularly challenging for all of us, we are in our 10th month of distancing. Over simplified, each family unit deals with the pandemic in its own unique ways. And, sometimes, that cannot be easy!

Finally, here is some good news. Listening to NPR this morning, I heard this report- "Adding Red Seaweed To Cow Feed Could Cut Bovine Flatulence" <https://www.npr.org/2020/12/02/941030964/adding-red-seaweed-to-cow-feed-could-cut-bovine-flatulence>. It turns out the cow gas with its methane content is a huge contributor to climate change. Yippee, here is a simple and effective, almost natural, method to reduce that source by 98% of their flatulence's methane. This represents a promising answer to a global climate change cause. Yes, that is good news.

Hello, welcome to Thursday, December 3, 2020 and the sun is still shining I actually began the day by calling into the NHPR Program, *The Exchange* <https://www.nhpr.org/programs/exchange#stream/0>. That show gives a radio voice to the people of this state. That show was devoted to a discussion of NH homelessness in NH. I commented on how each homeless person is unique. I wanted challenge the usual homeless person stereotypes.

After that, I moved into a day of consolidation. What does that mean? It is a day to catch-up on things. Don't you just relish that term and it is clever in Heinz sight. Sorry, my pun center is always working. I did some housekeeping on my website and reworked my synagogue adult education program. Also, I came upon, yet again, to the painful realization that the pandemic is here for a lot longer time than most of us anticipated. We are looking at possibly of finally being in the synagogue by September for the High Holidays. Again, while exercising, I watched the PBS program, *The Brain Revolution* <https://apnews.com/article/entertainment-science-television-television-programs-public-television-8b43850738e9d3da9caf3fa8089f1f92>. The

program reinforced the idea that physical exercise was not only good for body but also for the brain. It also trumpeted the idea of brain growth and improvement were possible, regardless of your age. Good, I'll keep exercising, marching and learning.

A surprise for today, Friday, December 4, 2020. My distancing Tai Chi had a surprise early birthday party for me today. My distancing Tai Chi group is such an integral part of my mental, social, physical and spiritual life. Wow, thank you, gang 108 times. 108 in the number of moves in our Tai Chi set.



Wow- nice to have friends

Hello all, welcome to Saturday, December 5, 2020. I, New Hampshire and, New England are on the verge of crisis in the form of a Nor'easter bearing down us. It is predicted to produce 8-12 inches of snow and high winds. It means WINTER is really here! Snow translates into halting of some outdoor activities such as Prickle Ball. This storm has prompted me to link a number of things together-my birthday, Pearl Harbor, the pandemic, and Torah study.

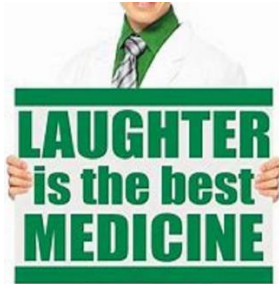
Let me take them in order. The cat was out of the bag about my birthday December 7th with the surprise Tai Chi party. The next link is easy. On that date the Japanese attacked on Pearl Harbor. Or as I often say, "I was birth Pearl Harbor day, a year later". Thus, I have always been trying to understand and to explain that event. The answer is founds in this question: what is the difference between strategy and tactics? Strategy is the act of winning the war and tactics are the methods of winning the battle. Or as Sun Tzu said "Strategy without tactics is the slowest route to victory. Tactics without strategy is the noise before defeat." Applying that idea to Pearl Harbor, it was tactical defeat and strategic victory. How so? Before that attack, there was a giant naval debate as to which was more important battleships or aircraft carriers. Dramatically, that battle said decisively it were the aircraft carriers! Furthermore, none of the repair facilities in Hawaii had been hit so the base could return to operation relatively swiftly. None of the huge fuel depots had been hit. The fuel was totally intact for other missions. And most importantly, none of the US aircraft carriers were in port at the moment of the attack. As result three US carriers the *Enterprise*, *Hornet* and *Yorktown* launched planes against the four aircraft carriers of Japan as they were attacking the island of Midway. They sunk all four Japanese carriers while the US did lose the *Yorktown*. The fact the US carriers had escaped the battle of Pearl Harbor set-up the naval turning point in the Pacific off Midway. Thus, Pearl Harbor represented a tactical lose but a strategic victory.

One quick other connection is that I am officially a "War baby" aka born during WWII; not a baby boomer. The attack led the US declare war, which meant I was born during the war.

Now the link to COVID 19. Not playing Pickle Ball outside represents a tactical loss. But, distancing and wearing masks constitutes a strategic victory because I do not get COVID 15 and keep alive! But that is not all. With the snow could come snow shoeing. All is not lost 😊

And, now for the link to my Torah study class. The real message of studying the Torah is not just to understand it but also see how to apply to our lives.

That is all so heavy, let's laugh a bit before I go off to shovel.



Regular Humor*

*Since this the Thanksgiving week Diary, I want to thank both Valerie Chapman and Elaine Shtetlach for their contributions to humor section.

There was an Irishman whose name was Enda May. Everyone called him June for short.

My son kept chewing on electrical cords so I had to ground him. He's doing better currently and conducting himself properly.

My girlfriend accused me of stealing her thesaurus. Not only was I shocked, but I was also aghast, appalled and dismayed!

Today at the bank, an old lady asked me to help check her balance. So, I pushed her over

My dog used to chase people on a bike a lot. It got so bad, finally I had to take his bike away

I just wrote a book on reverse psychology. Do *not* read it!

I ate a clock yesterday; it was very time consuming

COVID 19 Humor



If Covid 19 has forced you or a loved one to wear a mask with your glasses,

You may be entitled to condensation.

I just don't understand it when people create puns about Covid 19

Is there some sick joke that I'm not getting here?

I can't believe Comic Con 2020 got cancelled because of COVID-19!

It was the one group of people who were 100% guaranteed to wear masks.

Covid 19 has been really stressful for Flat Earthers

They fear that quarantine could push people off the edge

Do you know how when you go to college you gain the freshman 20lbs?

Well, I've got the COVID 19



279 days of distancing with a hint of light way at the end of the tunnel

The Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner: Part XXXII

Steve Soreff, MD

Hello, welcome and join with me as I enter my 279th day, the end of my 42th week (yes, 42 in [The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy](#) by Douglas Adams it is the **Answer to the Ultimate Question of Life, the Universe, and Everything, and Jackie Robinson's number, and the middle of the 10th month of social and physical distancing. It is Friday, December 18, 2020. Hanukkah is just over and Christmas is soon. Many family birthdays around now. The last few days have been game changers. Let's look back and see how.**

Good morning and welcome to Monday, December 7, 2020. Quick, join me is a chorus, "It's my birthday and I can be ambivalent =, if I want to". Truth, I enjoy and I am thrilled that people noticed it. But, and yes back to the but again, I am also embarrassed the attention.

Moving on, I want to demonstrate that you can teach an old dog a new trick. Here is what happened. At distancing Tai Chi, one of woman cite how well her husband knew and acted on her preferences. For example, he put the toilet paper on the spool in the correct pull direction. I relayed this story to Peggy, my partner. Peggy added that she too has a preference. So, this weekend, I replaced the toilet paper correctly!

The old dog can not only do a new trick but also he can learn information, too. While exercising and watching, I saw in the Great Courses series *Life's Lessons from the Great Myths* <https://www.thegreatcourses.com/courses/life-lessons-from-the-great-myths.html> a lecture about the great Roman poet, Virgil. The lecturer, Professor J. Rufus Fears cited Virgil as a proto-Christian and showed how he though his poem, *Eclogue 4*, predicted the coming of Jesus. I found that fascinating.

I celebrated my birthday by doing distancing Tai Chi in the snow, getting my car inspected and its 6,000 oil change. That was my morning celebration. I am 78 years old. And in

the cribbage tradition on that is a good number. How so? $7 + 8 = 15$ for two? Heard from my family, zoomed with friend, and covered the Board of Selectmen meeting on the computer screen. The meeting went over the next year's town budget. I have to admit something. I would make a terrible organization's treasurer. I'd rather get physical exercise rather than look at a fiscal report.



Distancing Tai Chi in the snow! Way to go for 108 moves equaling one set.

Welcome to Tuesday, December 8, 2020 and the party is over in many ways. I am metaphorically picking up all the wrappings and dishes from yesterday's birthday party. Not so, but sounds cool. The storm and cold have definitely announced winter. The pickleball nets are down, So, no pickleball, as I know it, until spring, :-).

However, since it is a mellow day, I did want to share this with you. Recently, exercising and watching, I saw Rick Steves' The Story of Fascism in Europe <https://www.ricksteves.com/watch-read-listen/video/tv-show/fascism>. I have always enjoyed his enthusiastic travels show but this was a different type of European journey. As its website says, "In this one-hour special, Rick Steves travels back a century to learn how fascism rose and then fell in Europe - taking millions of people with it. He traces fascism's history from its roots in the turbulent aftermath of World War I, when masses of angry people rose up, to the rise of charismatic leaders who manipulated that anger, and the totalitarian societies they built. In addition, Rick chronicles the brutal measures the leaders used to enforce their ideologies, and discusses the horrific consequences of genocide and total war. And yet despite all this, inspiration can be found by those who resisted. Along the way, Rick visits poignant sights throughout Europe relating to fascism, and talks with Europeans whose families lived through those times. The goal of the RICK STEVES SPECIAL: THE STORY OF FASCISM IN EUROPE is to learn from the hard lessons of 20th-century Europe, and to recognize that ideology in the 21st century." It was a powerful reminder how fragile democracy can be. It showed how dictatorship can come about in times of economic up-evil along with marked social and political divisions. It illustrates the need for a free and independent press. The show was an important lesson for our times.



RICK STEVES SPECIAL: THE STORY OF FASCISM IN EUROPE

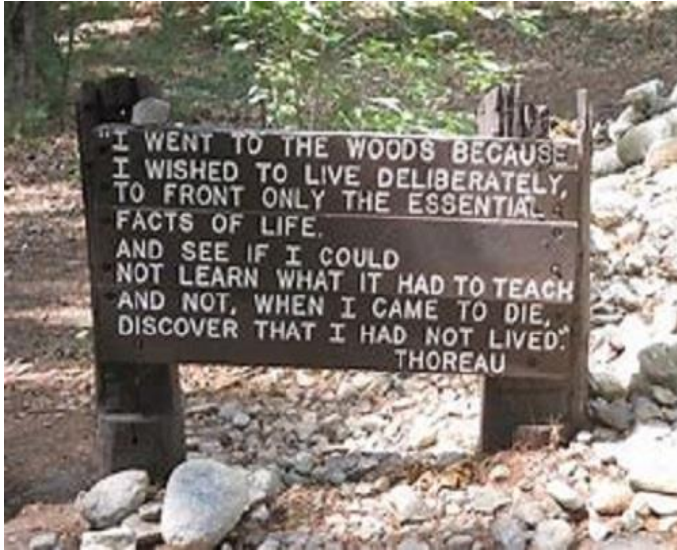
Good morning, it is Wednesday, December 9, 2020. And it proved to be a good morning. How so, just as the sun was peeking through the clouds as we distanced Tai Chi in the snow, a couple of the members cited several good things that happened because of the pandemic. They all centered around zooming. These included family gatherings, connecting with college friends, chatting with old friends and talking to support group members. The bottom-line is that the pandemic is not the end of the world nor civilization. Social distancing does not mean the end of social contact.

Today, Thursday, December 10, 2020 I come to the Diary with a feeling of joy. Wow, how so? The joy answer has two components-Henry David Thoreau and New Hampshire Division of Motor Vehicles. Okay, that response is even more bewildering. Let me explain both starting Thoreau. But, first I make a quick confession. It was last night, again while exercising, I watched on the PBS *Henry David Thoreau: Surveyor of the Soul* program <http://www.filmsbyhuey.com/films/henry-david-thoreau-surveyor-of-the-soul/>. The show was so meaningful to me, that I wanted to devote more time to write about than I had last night. That is why I talking about it today.

Henry David Thoreau remains one of my heroes. I began my Thoreau phase of my life back while I was in college, Tufts class of 1964. Then, as of now I admire his life, his writings and philosophy. When I hike the Crawford Path in the White Mountains, I metaphorically feel I walk with Thoreau and Emerson. I applaud his ideas in Civil Disobedience and his opposition to slavery. The show as its website notes, “Made over the course of 13 years, Henry David Thoreau: Surveyor of the Soul tells the story of Thoreau in his time and the story of the impact Thoreau’s writings and lifestyle have in our time.” Through the program I learned about his work as surveyor, as teacher and a resident on Staten Island.

His quote, “I wished to live deliberately”, has guided my life. I wrote that quote in Appalachian Mountain Club’s (AMC) Zealand Falls Springs Hut’s journal. That journal entry

helped to lead with my lifelong partnership with Peggy Tucker. I write this Diary “deliberately” in the Thoreau tradition. Furthermore, I take support and encouragement from Henry’s journal writing. .



A sign at the site of Thoreau’s cabin on Walden Pond

Moving on, after I say again thank you to Henry David Thoreau, to the DMV. I had visit to the Concord DMV to renew my driver’s license. My personal encounter was brought about because my on online attempts had failed. As a result of the Internet connection failure, , for several days I was actually driving with an expired license. But I did travel in the car with my appointment notice for protection if stopped by the police. The joy came from having renewed it, thus driving kosher, and because of the efficiency, effectiveness and proper pandemic precautions done by the DMV. I watch to praise how they managed social and physically distancing.



Evidence of NH DMV taking the proper COVID 19 precautions

Hello and happy Friday, December 11, 2020 and I am I a good mood. Last night I came to an exciting realization. With all the talk about vaccines, I had a hint about the light at the end of the tunnel. Based on my renewed hope, I started to envision a life and world after COVID. I

translated by new optimism by submitting a proposal to teach Madness and the Movies VIII in OLLI OLLI (Osher Lifelong Learning Institute) at Granite State College <https://olli.granite.edu/> for the Fall, 2021 semester! I love the class. We show the whole movie which has a mental health aspect and then discuss it. People are there because they want to be there. It is a professor's dream. And, I am beginning to plan ahead.

One historical note for today, I went to the Post Office this morning. A footnote, going there is a bit of weird irony, since I already am the United States male. You are supposed to laugh or at least smile. There I learned that seasonal mail volume was double since last year, Employees attribute the huge increase to two reasons. There is more online shopping, buying and shipping. And since there are only small family gatherings, people are mailing gifts than delivery them in person.

The second night of Hanukkah proved to be terrific, too. First, my partner, Peggy Tucker, did a series of Hanukkah and holiday songs for Southern New Hampshire Ukulele Group (SNHUG) <HTTPS://www.facebook.com/SNHUG/posts/3445788688803321> She did a super job. Then, via iphone facetime, I joined my grandsons and their family to light the Hanukkah candles. They opened my presents and I opened the BEST ZAYDE EVER shirt they gave me. Zayde means grandfather in Yiddish. We also played dreidel long distance, Wow, I am s till glowing.



My grandsons Hanukkah gift

Good morning, it is Saturday, December 12, 2020. Two pieces of good news from yesterday. First, European Union agreed to cut emissions by 55% by 2030, The fact of climate change is leading to action! Second, the Supreme Court refused to hear the Texas challenge to the 2020 election. The check and balances does work. Then, we had a good Torah study in the morning. The story of Joseph's dream and his brothers selling him is much more complex than we teach in Sunday school but also for more interesting.

Then, again while exercising, I watched the PBD show *Ornament of the World* <https://www.pbs.org/show/ornament-world/> . As its website proclaimed , “Traveling through Cordoba, Granada, Seville and Toledo, we retrace the 800-year period in medieval Spain when Muslims, Christians, and Jews forged a common cultural identity that frequently transcended their religious differences. This remarkable story reveals what made this rare and fruitful collaboration possible, and what ultimately tore it apart. The program offered a refreshing view of different faiths working together and appreciating the others. Later, we had a zoom Soreff Family Hanukkah party. We laughed and again played Jackbox.tv. This time I had figured out how to use my iPhone and I played, too. It was fun.

Hello, it is Sunday, December 13, 2020. I started off with exercising and watching PBS DW Global 3000 <https://www.dw.com/en/tv/global-3000/s-11487> program about the pandemic. It made and demonstrated a number of powerful points. 1. COVID 19 has dramatically exacerbated the gap between rich and poor in many countries. 2. In countries where the gap between wealth and poverty is small those nations were most resilient in the pandemic. It cited Finland and Uruguay as examples of this. 3. Nations with national health coverage in place and public education fare better in the pandemic. 4. Many women have unplanned pregnancies during the pandemic both because husbands and wives are home more time together, e.g., social isolation, and birth control medicines were not available.

Then, the Jewish Federation of NH <https://www.jewishnh.org/> had its Super Sunday telethon. Neat entertainment and information for which I made calls during it. Next, as the day dissolved into night two powerful things seen while exercising. First, very exciting, the evening news dramatically showed the COVID vaccine leaving the Michigan factory in route to hospitals. Tomorrow, healthcare workers will get the first shots in USA!!!! Yippee, I hope the beginning of the end. Especially, as today the COVID death toll neared 300,000 in America. And, while I am on the vaccine topic, the first man to get the COVID vaccine in England was named William Shakespeare <https://nypost.com/2020/12/08/william-shakespeare-first-uk-man-to-receive-covid-19-vaccine/> .It was referred to as the Taming of the Flu! The second, was the program. *Three Faiths, One God: Judaism, Christianity, Islam* shown on PBS. It was a thoughtful show featuring the many ways the three are similar. In this world of polarization, it was refreshing to emphasize our commonality.



The vaccine 😊

Hello and today is all about the first shot of vaccine against COVID 19, hence *the first shot told around the world*, Monday, December 14, 2020. A friend, said that event was equal to the Berlin wall coming down! It is said that “Success Has Many Friends, Failure is an Orphan!” So that was true today with many claiming to be responsible for vaccine. I love to quote [Winston Churchill](#), “ Now this is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning.” Or as Robert Frost wrote, “ we have miles to go.....” It is a big day. And one more key event of today, the Electoral College confirmed the election of Biden. It is time to move on and run the country.

Good morning and it is a good morning. The sun is shining ; it is cold and a Nor’easter is heading our way. But, today, NH healthcare workers are getting the vaccine. Today, I hit the trifecta, the term for a horse-racing bet in which the first, second, and third place finishers are chosen in the correct order. I finished my article on the Nottingham Select Board meeting,, talked on the NHPR’s *The Exchange*, and learned neat things at the Talmud class. Also, I walked to the mail box. What a life!

It is cold with a Nor’easter coming, this is Wednesday, December 16, 2020. We did distancing Tai Chi in 22 degrees Fahrenheit with the sun shining and no wind. Time to connect more dots. First, I interviewed Nottingham’s new police chief, Fawn Woodman. The Board of Selectmen made it public on Monday night. Next dot came on zoom connection with a colleague. He cited the book, [The Great Influenza: The Story of the Deadliest Pandemic in History](#) https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/29036.The_Great_Influenza by John Barry. In the volume, the author not only chronicles the devastation of the flu.100 million dead, but also shows how research on it ultimately led to the discovery of DNA and RNA. And that scientific breakthrough, in turn, is the basis for the current COVID 19 vaccinations which just began this week!

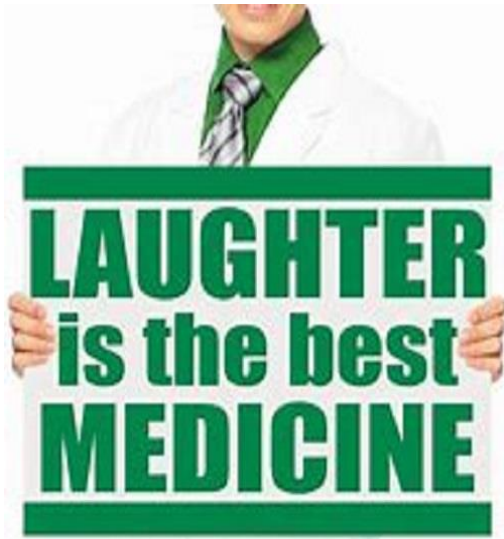
SNOW, it is Thursday, December 17, 2020. The Nor’easter has found our home.



The back deck and the lake

And with shoveling, I also watched with exercising the PBS Nature's program, *Animal Odd Couples* <https://www.pbs.org/wnet/nature/animal-odd-couples-full-episode/8009/>. The neat show made several points. Relationships especially physically, between animals, thus including human beings, lower cortisol and increases oxytocin. These help to deal with stress and promotes connections. Hence, one of the major problems . caused by social and physical distancing. Animals have emotions. And, amazingly, with many fascinating examples, it showed inter-species couples such as a duck and turtle, a dog and a fawn, and goat and blind horse.

Enough, let's have some fun!!



Regular Humor

The devil whispered to me, "I'm coming for you." I whispered back, "Bring some pizza."

Having plans sounds like a good idea until you have to put on clothes and leave the house.

It's weird being the same age as old people.

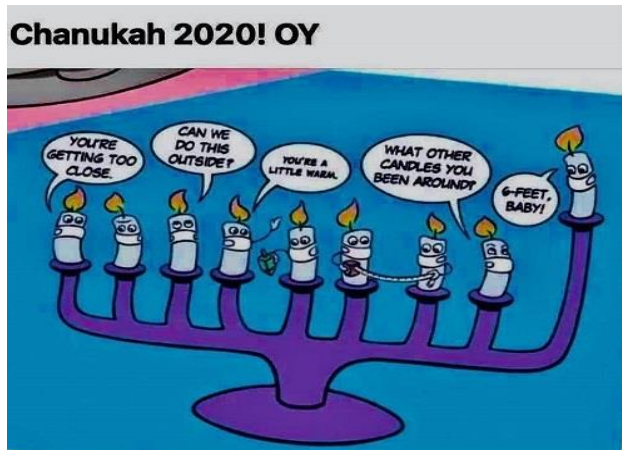
When I was a kid I wanted to be older...this is not what I expected.

Life is like a helicopter. I don't know how to fly a helicopter.

Chocolate is God's way of telling us he wants us to be a little bit chubby.

It's probably my age that tricks people into thinking I'm an adult.

COVID 19 Humor



Wear a mask Disney Version

https://youtu.be/ltjBT_TuUVA

[Before I agree to 2021, I', gonna need to see some terms and condition.](#)

This Isolation is Making Some People Crazy <https://www.ba-bamail.com/jokes/tag/covid-19/>. .
 “ I've heard some people are really going crazy from isolation. I'm glad I'm not one of those. I've just been talking about this with the microwave and toaster while drinking coffee and all of us agreed that things are getting bad. I didn't mention anything to the washing machine as she puts a different spin on everything. Certainly not to the fridge as he is acting cold and distant. The sink just said everything is going down the drain. In the end the iron calmed me down as she said everything will be fine, the situation isn't that pressing. The vacuum was very unsympathetic. Told me to just suck it up, but the fan was more optimistic and felt it would all soon blow over! The toilet looked a bit flushed when I asked its opinion and it didn't say anything, but the door knob told me to get a grip. The front door said I was unhinged and then.. The curtains told me to pull myself together!”



My 295th day of distancing

The Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner: Part XXXIII

Steve Soreff, MD

Wow, it is a new year, a new day but the same old distancing location, Sunday, January 3, 2021. This marks my 295th day, the beginning of my 46th week, entering into my 11th month of social and physically distancing. With the new year comes the same issues, I nor my family and friends do not want to get COVID 19. Although we live comfortably, the danger is there. We are passed Hanukkah, some significant family birthdays, Christmas and the New Year. We are, someday, inline for the vaccine. The weather forecast for last year and this year remains the same “room temperature”. I soldier on, take a Tai Chi ‘empty step’ and move into 2021. Tomorrow, I go to Israel on a virtual tour. So today let’s look back on the rest of December and very early January. But, before go back, it is time for a loose association riddle. It is inspired by the fact this is my 33th diary. The Riddle: How many grooves does a 33 1/3 record have? The answer is one!! Younger folks wonder, what is a phonograph record? Now, let’s look back.

Wow, it is now Saturday, December 19, 2020 and I have much to catch you from yesterday. My distancing Tai Chi group abandoned our Grasp Bird Tail move for snow shoes. As one of them said, it was “virgin snow” we got to break trail in. It was neat to snow shoe, again. That is one of the joys of winter. Later that day, a friend gave us a rock Hanukkah menorah she built. One of the classic Hanukkah songs is Rock of Ages. How appropriate is a menorah built from stones!

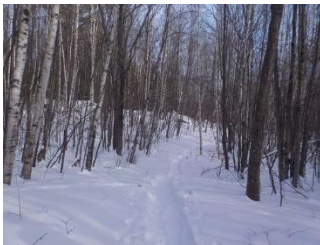


Tai Chi on snow shoes



A Hanukkah Menorah out of stones lit for the last day of Hanukkah

Welcome to a sunny, bright Sunday, December 20, 2020. It has been a good day. I began by writing about the coming Solstice. Next, I went to Torah study by zoom. Yes, we go through the entire Torah every year. We are in the Book of Genesis now. We are discussing Joseph, dreams, his brothers and prophecy-neat. Each time, yearly, we look at the story, we find new insights. Then Peggy and two members the distancing Tai Chi gang went snowshoeing, We got to and marveled at the white birch corridor. It was great to share my neighborhood wilderness.



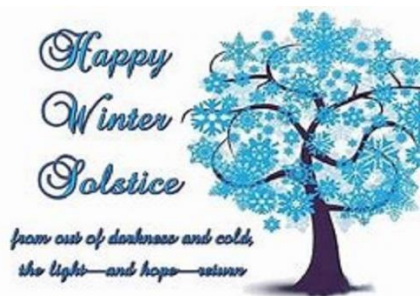
The white birch corridor on December 19, 2020.

Two quick cribbage notes for today. A ‘19 point hand’ equals no points in that hand for you. And today is the 19th, hence the loose association, However, of interest, the computer website where I play cribbage has changed my opponent from Bill to Santa. So, for the record, I beat Santa today !! Hohhot.

Good morning, it is Sunday, December 20, 2020 and finally some good news out of Washington-a Stimulus might just happen. The goal of government is to protect and help the people. Remember, in Lincoln’s Gettysburg address <https://www.britannica.com/event/Gettysburg-Address> - *“that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.”* The people need protection from COVID 19; they require financial help to survive distancing. But, and forgive me. I shall now recite the entire Lincoln’s Gettysburg address: Abraham Lincoln, Gettysburg National Military Park, 1195 Baltimore Pike, Gettysburg, PA 17325. Even if that not that humorous, I am at least consistent.

Here is another thought for the season. Usually, mental health practitioners almost lecture about the Holiday Blues. In fact, a local minister's sermon was about a "blue Christmas". However, I found when I did Emergency Psychiatry, that there were dramatically less psychiatric emergency patients coming the Emergency Department in December. Instead, what I observed people held it together for the Holidays. Then, in January, all hell broke loose! I wonder if the isolation of the pandemic will change that pattern?

Good morning and welcome to Monday, December 21, 2020 and the Winter Solstice. 'The December solstice <https://www.newsweek.com/winter-solstice-2020-shortest-day-year-1555956> this year will occur at 5:02 a.m. ET on Monday, December 21, marking the shortest day of the year and the beginning of astronomical winter in the Northern Hemisphere.' It is one of four bookmarks in our solar year-the Winter solstice, Spring Equinox, Summer Solstice and Fall Equinox. These are governed by the earth's tilted axis and its 365+ days orbit around the sun. Thank you, Copernicus for pointing that out.



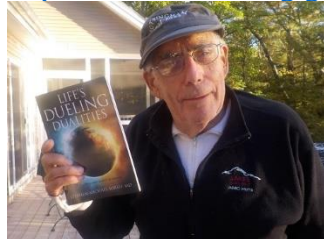
Yes, that day is the shortness amount of daylight in the year. And, the corresponding longest amount of the darkness of the year, too. Some folks celebrate it by doing certain activities. These include lighting lanterns, candles and yule lanterns as well as hiking. In the past, a group of us attempted to climb Cannon Mountain that day. And, for me, I celebrate that day because my grandson, Foster, was born date, 8 years ago.

But, for me, the day also represents hope. Why the hope? The answer is that every day after December 21, the daylight slowly but definitely is getting longer. It is now time to invoke Weber's Law <https://www.britannica.com/science/Webers-law>. The law represents one of the first fundamental theories in psychology. It means that the amount of daylight does increase but it is not enough to be appreciated nor noticed. Then a certain amount of increase, you notice it. For most people toward the end of January and early February, they start to see that the actual day light is really longer. You start to think about spring, the Red Sox and gardening. To be scientific, Weber found this noticeable change also occurs with other senses too, such as adding weights or molecules in the air that you smell as well as temperature changes. But, for me the solstice means that every day therefore, the daylight will increase, more people will get the vaccine, and better days are coming. There will be an end to the pandemic!

As if on cue, when in the afternoon, I walked down to get the mail, it seemed to get really dark, early in the afternoon. I guess they are right, the Winter Solstice is the shortest daylight of the year!

Good morning, the sun is shining; it is slightly warmer than yesterday. It is Tuesday, December 22, 2020. Again, while exercising, I watched *The Many Storeys and Last Days of Thomas Merton* <https://weta.org/tv/program/many-storeys-and-last-days-thomas-merton>. “During the last year of his life, Catholic writer and Trappist monk Thomas Merton travels to Asia to meet with the Dalai Lama and other spiritual thinkers.” I found the story fascinating about this monk and mystic life. As an extrovert, I marvel at his inner devotion and connection to God. I loved his message that are many ways and many faiths up the mountain to the same God.

Now, very exciting news, my book got reviewed!! [Life’s Dueling Dualities](https://forumhome.org/george-bozeman-on-dueling-dualities-p33933-120.htm), <https://forumhome.org/george-bozeman-on-dueling-dualities-p33933-120.htm>



233 Steve with the first copy of my book

The Nor’easter last week deposited a significant amount of snow. In Yankee terms, it was shovel able and plow able. But, in my terms, it meant snow shoeing. Twice I have done it with my Tai Chi gang. But, today, it was my solo adventure, I broke trail, wander about and used my compass to snow shoe in the right direction. In the hike, I had a Robert Frost moment. As he wrote in his poem, *The Road Not Taken* <https://www.robertfrost.org/the-road-not-taken.jsp> “Two roads diverged in a wood, and I -I took the one less traveled by, And that has made all the difference.” At the fork in the trails, I snowshoed on the one less traveled. I hiked along that old trail then using my compass, bush wacked north to gain the trail more traveled.



I snowshoed the trail on the right

Or, I can’t believe I am doing this, but from the Muppet Movie

<https://www.quotes.net/mquote/64877>, Kermit said, “Hey, Fozzie, turn left when you come to a fork in the road.”

Yippee, the minutes of daylight are increasing and it Wednesday, December 23, 2020. We did Tai Chi outdoors in the cold-we are persistent group. The big event was family zoom birthday call for my sister, Linda, who turned 80 today. Through the magic of zoom, we from around the nation and the world we came together to wish her a happy birthday. On turning 80, she felt “disbelief and gratitude”. -

Welcome to today, Friday, December 24, 2020 and it is about to be Christmas eve. I am

still coming to terms with the idea, that Jesus was actually born in the Spring <https://carm.org/jesus-christ/on-what-day-month-was-jesus-born> . That event was later moved to Winter Solstice time.

Moving on, two ideas of things coming full circle are intriguing me. The first is people with and the people who have died from COVID 19. Since, the being of the pandemic, I have praised the PBS *News Hour* <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/> program for its every Friday presenting the lives of individuals who have died from the virus. It puts a person on a statistic. Until now, I have not known personally one who have contracted the virus. That has now changed. A friend from Peggy's church contracted and survived COVID 19 and is now in a rehab facility. A synagogue friend just lost his mother from COVID 19. This is all very sobering and puts makes the numbers much more real.

Second example of wheel turning making a complete circle happened as I yet again while exercising, I watched PBS *Independent Lens: Rumble: The Indians Who Rocked The World* <https://www.pbs.org/independentlens/films/rumble>. As the website says, "RUMBLE traces the melodies, rhythms, and beats of traditional Native music as they took different forms across the spectrum of 20th-century American rock (it was part of the work of these stars)... Robbie Robertson and Buffy Sainte-Marie ...Jimi Hendrix, who was part-Cherokee, Jesse Ed Davis...George Clinton, Taj Mahal, Slash, Jackson Browne, Taboo, Buddy Guy, Quincy Jones, Derek Trucks, Tony Bennett, Iggy Pop, Steven Tyler and Stevie Van Zandt." This program illustrated the amazing connections between native American music and what we hear today.

However, as we moved into Christmas eve and the hope of "peace on earth", a couple of things happened. There is news about another African-American was killed by a white police officer in Columbus, Ohio. The President has not signed the Stimulus Bill. On a positive note, everyone, except for one man, was wearing a mask at the Recycling Center when I went there today. , People are finally getting the message!

Hello, it is Christmas Day, Friday, December 25, 2020. As the local minister said, "this is like no other Christmas". We are in small family bubble and having a very, very quiet day. There is big rain today with flood warnings and it washed away the all snow. No snowshoeing today 😊. I did continue my Thanksgiving Day tradition of calling old friends. It was great to get reconnected and hear their voices and laughter. And, because my old friends are old, there was many person health issues discussed. All of them were practicing distancing. Also, my sister gave us a 1000 piece puzzle of a sea village. What a great way to deal with distancing!

Good morning, it is Saturday, December 26, 2020. This morning I connected some more dots. It came through while exercising and watching I saw the PBS program *Your Health: A Sacred Matter* <https://www.pbs12.org/watch/documentaries/health-wellness/your-health-a-sacred-matter-1/>. It talked about medicine and healthcare as being Sacred Calling. It linked faith to health in many ways. Health workers, who have a faith, have less burn-out than others who do not. People, who go to weekly or more religious services, live 8 years longer than those that did not. It showed Tai Chi as a mediation practice. And mediation helps people deal with stress. The program reminded me of the neat moment in my medical school called the White Coat ceremony! That when you get a white coat signaling you will become a doctor and a healer.

Then, I had tears of joy , yes, again exercising and watching on CBS, the Musial Awards <https://musialawards.com/>. “Since 2005, the nation’s best sports have come together in St. Louis for the Musial Awards®, the most important awards in sports. Named for baseball hall of famer Stan Musial, the Musial Awards honor the year’s greatest moments of sportsmanship and the biggest names in sports who embody class and character”. The show highlighted incredible and remarkable acts of kindness and sportsmanship. It featured a recovering, from a traumatic car crash, a future national basketball star, being allowed to score a basket by both teams. This one basket allowed him to be on his team’s roster. I cried during that segment. It praised a NASCAR driver who got NASCAR to ban the Confederate Flag at its events. It awarded an Ireland Lacrosse Team, who gave up its spot (there are only 8 spots) to an Iroquois team in the international lacrosse tournament. It honored referees and gave a life-time achievement award to Hank Aaron. Score one for doing the right thing!



The Musial Awards

Hello and welcome to Sunday, December 27, 2020. I have several simple ideas for today. The first, is what have we learned from the pandemic? The easy answer is many things including an appreciation of family, friends and neighborhood as well as discovery of what can be accompanied by zoom. Second, will the lessons learned in the pandemic change the world, when the pandemic is over. The answer is yes, the world will never be the same. And third, can you thrive in the face of distancing. The answer is yes. The human spirit can triumph!

Finally, it is Monday. December 28, 2020 and the President has, after a needless drama, signed the Stimulus Bill. People need the help. It is the role of government to help. We had distancing Tai Chi this morning. What a relief to get reconnected with others. Also, I did netless pickleball and it was fun.

Good morning, it is Tuesday, December 29, 2020 and the day began with a provocative idea. Again, while exercising I heard about Robin DiAngelo’s book, White Fragility <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/white-fragility-definition#summary>. It asserts the basis of racism is that white folks need the black people to feel superior to. It is an interesting premise. It speaks to racism and other ism around the world, where one groups likes to see itself superior to another. It is the source of racial, ethnic, religious, professional, regional and national poor taste humor. The basis of all those jokes is my group in better than yours. It important lesson, there! And for the record, this is my 9th National Cribbage Day observed while practicing distancing. My computer rival, Bill, who is temporarily called Santa, beat me this morning. I’ll get him again before he retreats to the North Pole.

As the day ended, exercising and watching I saw on PBS *A Place to Stand* https://www.imdb.com/title/tt3914262/plotsummary?ref=tt_ov_pl. It showed the inspiring story of Jimmy Santiago Baca. He while in prison became a published poet and on released, he

also has a career as a teacher, novelist, and screenwriter. He describes his life's calling to write poetry. I feel his passion for writing and find it validates my work.

Today is Wednesday, December 30, 2020 and I am dealing with death. Two close friends have just died both after a prolonged, painful siege of cancer. Another, recently passed from COVID. I seek support from Robert Louis Stevenson's [As Triplex](https://bookcents.blogspot.com/2018/11/aes-triplex-by-robert-louis-stevenson.html). He wrote "The changes wrought by death are in themselves so sharp and final, and so terrible and melancholy in their consequences, that the thing stands alone in man's experience, and has no parallel upon earth. " Whether expected or not, death is profound, indelible experience.

Welcome to today, Thursday, December 31, 2020 aka New Year's eve. Besides reflecting on the year and thinking about the next, Peggy and I face a major decision- how to spend the evening. The choices are the dining room or the living room. I suspect we'll start in the dining with Mexican Train and later migrate to the living room and watch the ball drop at Times Square. Stay tuned!

Good morning and happy New Year, it is Frida, January 1, 2021. Wow, the first entry for 2021. We did stay up and watched the ball drop in Times Square, The music on the television was dreadful but the scene there was historic. There were very few folks present. Many of them, who were there, were healthcare workers-thank you. People were boxed in and all wore masks. The theme of the night was hope. Every one wished for a better year.

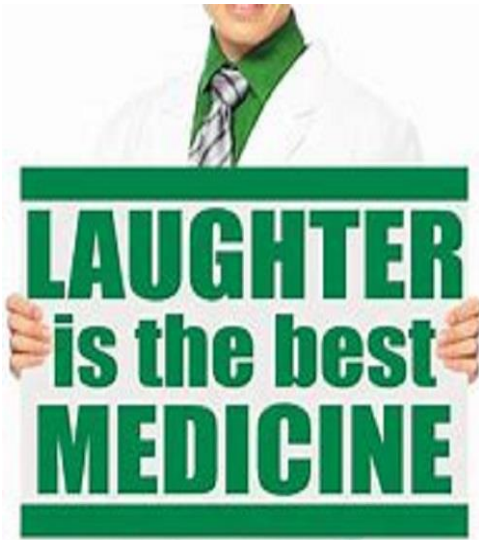


Would you believe, Times Square empty?!

The rest of the day was engaged in pickle ball, Tai Chi and a long walk. Be active; be involved; be committed. Those are my new year's resolution.

Hello, shalom and welcome to Saturday, January 2, 2021. I have done by Saturday morning routine- exercise, breakfast with Peggy while listening to *Wait, Wait, Don't Tell* and zoom into Torah study. It snowed last night and again, it looks like winter. There is a new spirit in the home and across land because of the new year. Yes, 2020 was bad; 2021 will be better. Hope, springs in our hearts. And yes, the time of daylight is going longer each day. Forward!

Enough, let's laugh for the first time in 2021.



Regular Humor

What do you call a dinosaur with an extensive vocabulary? A thesaurus.

I dropped out of communism class because of lousy Marx.

I got a job at a bakery because I kneaded dough.

Velcro - what a rip off!

Don't worry about old age; it doesn't last.

I got some batteries that were given out free of charge.

A dentist and a manicurist married. They fought tooth and nail .

A will is a dead giveaway.

With her marriage, she got a new name and a dress.

Police were summoned to a daycare center where a three-year-old was resisting a rest.

I recently learned sign language so I can tell jokes nobody has ever heard.

COVID 19 Jokes

What jokes are allowed during quarantine? INSIDE jokes!

Where do sick boats go to get healthy? The dock!

They said that a mask and gloves were enough to go to the supermarket. They lied, everyone else has clothes on.

If I get quarantined for two weeks with my wife and I die. I can assure you it was not the virus that killed me.

Nail salons, hair salons, waxing center and tanning places are closed. It's about to get ugly out there.

What's the best way to avoid touching your face? A glass of wine in each hand.

I'm not talking to myself, I'm having a parent-teacher conference.

If I keep stress-eating at this level, the buttons on my shirt will start socially distancing from each other.



307 days of distancing and still counting

The Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner: Part XXXIV

Steve Soreff, MD

Hello and happy Friday, January 15, 2021. And since it is the 15th of the month, I am in a good mood since 15 represents my lucky number. How did the happen? Thanks for asking. I had “under the B, 15” call on my BINGO card, allowing me to win the cover all game of BINGO. It was the last game of the day and was for the big money! Back today, it is my 307th (note we broken 300!) day, end of my 47th week, middle of my 11th month, and into my second year of distancing. And what the last weeks have brought! Entering the new year with viral surges, people surging, and from the Peach State to impeachment. Wow, join me, as we look back.

Good morning, it is the first Monday of the New year, January 4, 2021 and I have some unfinished business based on the turning of new year. The first up, to prove I am not listless, here is my 2020 list. I want to look back at the year’s top events. I plan to do it in the David Letterman’ tradition <https://wibx950.com/top-10-list-of-the-funniest-david-letterman-top-10-lists-of-all-time/> by picking the ten key events of 2020. But, and there I go again with the but, I want to dice in, what the former Speaker of the United States House of Representatives Tip O’Neill book title said: All Politics Is Local: So, I combined my personal events along with local. National and international activities.



1. The COVID 19 struck as a global event-the pandemic
2. Peggy and my Interfaith Tour of Israel including a visit to Petra was cancelled. We lost thousands of dollars.

3. I started The Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner as my way to both deal with and document and chronicle the pandemic.
4. George Floyd's death proved the Black Live Matter, yes, they do! The nation started to appreciate the impact of its racism and began to reverse the harm it does. NASCAR banded the Confederate flag at its events.
5. Israel develops working relationships with 4 Arab nations. .
6. My book was published
7. Bedrock Gardens is opened and held its 5th Fairy Festival
8. The election happened. Biden won. The Constitution works, checks and balance remain in place.
9. The vaccine was developed and deplored-light at the end of the tunnel.
10. Neither me nor Peggy nor our families has had COVID 19. We have been in our own bubble, wear masks, practice social and physical distancing. Precautions work!.

Also, on New Year's Day, we walked the rail trail in Raymond. We welcomed with new year with activity. These pictures represent metaphorically the past confinement and tunnel of the last year and the emergence and hope of the us for the new year.



2020

2021 photographs by Liz Rostowski

On more thing. I mailed a package to my daughter in New York City on December 11, 2020, It was finally delivered today. A former head of the Atomic Energy Commission once said something like if I had sent the atom by the US post office, it could have be smashed much earlier. At least, it did arrive in one piece and in the same century, As my Post Office said, with all the huge volume and personnel sicknesses, the mail this December was really backed up.

I completed the day by going to Israel! I'll be there all week on a virtual tour by the Jewish National Fund (JNF) <https://www.jnf.org/visit-israel/jnf-virtual-tours-to-israel>. After landing at Ben Gurion, we went to the Ayalon Institute, - Tel Aviv, Netanya, and a Desalinization plant. The guide, who was very knowledgeable and provided great information, told with passion the moment in 1948 when Israel declared its Independence.



Ben Gurion Airport and picture of new air terminal

Good morning and hello, it is Tuesday, January 5, 2021 and I will travel to the edge of the universe and to Israel today. Exercising and watching, I saw *Genius by Stephen Hawking- Where are we?* It brilliantly illustrated how we could calculate earth, solar and cosmic distances. It also showed the ancients did so. It does make you see how small we are in the scheme of the universe. On the Israel tour, we traveled to Acre, the Crusader City, Tsfat one of the four Holy Cities of Judaism, Kiryat Shmona and the Hula Valley .

Wednesday, January 6, 2021 is like no other day in American history. It began with the results of the Georgia election where 2 democratic candidates won. Then, pickle ball and Tai Chi. All good, then the day turned dramatically historic. The news headlines said it all. A mob stormed the nation's Capital building, stopped the voting on the results of the Electoral College, and forced the evacuation of both Houses of Congress. It was terrifying to watch. America has always prided itself on its transfer of Presidential power. That was not today.



The storming the nation's capital building January 6, 2021

A quick break for a visit to Israel. We climbed Mount Masada, floated in the Dead Sea, saw products growing in the desert, and visited Be'er Sheva. But, our minds and hearts were in Washington. I am pleased to report that the police are finally removing the crowd with a 6 PM curfew there. And good news, the Congress indicates it will return and continue its Constitutional responsibility to certify Biden election.

Good morning, and it is a good morning because the country has been preserved today, Thursday, January 7, 2021. It happened at just after 3 AM, when the Congress fulfilled its Constitutional responsibilities and certified the Electoral College vote electing Biden as the 46th President of the United States. America has survived McCarthy and Nixon. And on my Israel tour this is what happened. We went to visit Jerusalem including the Old City, the City of David, Western Wall, Ammunition Hill, Yad Vashem the Holocaust Museum. We ended the trip at the Machaneh Yehuda Market (Shuck) before which boarded the bullet train to return to the Ben Gurion Airport and flew home to Boston.

Hello, and a pained welcome to Friday, January 8, 2021. The word for today is overwhelming. All the news stations presents a cascade of ugly (a Maine term) reports. In America, we have gone from a Democratic victory in the Peach State to many cries for impeachment. There are record number of COVID deaths in the USA, 4,000 and those record number of deaths were broken in England and Brazil. Finally, 2020 tied 2016 as the warmest year in history. The globe continues to warm! Furthermore, there raged a debate about vaccine when and whether to give the first shot based on the ability to have enough vaccine for the second. I also said shalom to mt Israel tour and vowed to go back to Israel.

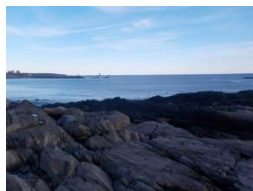
Good morning, the sun is shining on brisk day, Saturday, January 9, 2021. I still recall the old adage, “things could never get any worse”. It is so wrong. First, the pandemic, then killing of George Floyd, next the resurgence COVID 19, and now the insurrection in Washington. And to add another cliché, the opera is not over to the fat lady sings”. Listening to the news is scary venture. You never know when and where the next catastrophic event will occur.

In the midst of rising tensions in America, while exercising I watched two important programs on the World Channel. The first s called *Across the Pacific* <https://www.acrossthepacific.net/>. “Across the Pacific is a three-hour documentary series about one of the great milestones in aviation history: the 1935 crossing of the Pacific Ocean by a Pan American Airways flying boat known as the China Clipper”. This series is a dramatization which weaves together the rise of Pan American Airways, the Monroe Doctrine, the importance of the radio in the history of flight, Lindbergh, Igor I. Sikorsky and Washington lobbying. A great glance of the history of aviation. The other program was *Jazz: Gumbo (Beginnings to 1917)*. It trumpeted jazz as a truly American music and enriched my appreciation of it.

One more bit of good news, my daughter, who lives and works in Tel Aviv got her first vaccine shot this week with the second one due January 31. Israel has been very effective and efficient in the vaccine administered.

Good morning, sun is shining, it is Sunday, January 10, 2021 and I and the nation move forward. There is a rising cacophony of competing cries. One screams for impeachment. The other argues for national healing. The one voice, I liked, said “this time is a stress for institutions”. And, yes, democracy is both fragile and has been stressed before. The ultimate test is how we handle the stress, We passed one challenge by holding the Congressional certification after the storming of the Capital.

One way, to deal with these raging situations, is to go to the Atlantic Ocean. Peggy, Michael Koester and myself went Odiorne Point State Park <https://www.nhstateparks.org/visit/state-parks/odiorne-point-state-park>. With the tide out, we walked along the beaches, saw and heard segals, watched and smelled the ocean. We felt calm and good.



This is the Atlantic as seen from Odiorne's Point

Welcome to a new day, a new week, Monday, January 11, 2021. The national mood is apprehension, close to verging on fear. The storming of the Capital has unleashed doubt, suspicion and uncertainty. What was to be a symbol of our democracy, the peaceful transition of power, has been shattered like the windows in the Capital building. Many people do not trust the White House. Either the 25th amendment or impeachment is on the House of Representatives' floor. Many Americans still do not believe the results of the election. Yes, back to Robert Frost, our country has many miles to go before we sleep!

Another thought in different direction. I am working on a first ever conference on the topic, Is there a unique New England Jewish Identity? In discussions, one idea surfaced. Because of Zoom, people could "attend" and perhaps join synagogues not just in their area or even state. My sister's synagogue in Chicagoland has its Rabbi in Providence, RI. Cutting to the chase, under the category, "the world will never be the same", religious affiliations may never be the same.

It is Tuesday, January 12, 2021 and I am back to thinking about the impact of the pandemic. Two areas concern me now. One is suicide. The psychiatric literature <https://academic.oup.com/qjmed/article/113/10/707/5857612> cautiously predicts an increase in suicides during and after the COVID 19 crisis. "Stress-related psychiatric conditions including mood and substance use disorders are associated with suicidal behavior. COVID-19 survivors may also be at elevated suicide risk. COVID-19 survivors may also be at elevated suicide risk.". All the risk factors are not only there but also amplified. The second area is dating. I have heard that isolation has made people want to move in with someone. Hence, the dating scene has become different than before. Now some persons propose moving in together after the first date!.

Hello, and good morning, it is Wednesday, January 13, 2021. Yes, it is Friday the thirteenth and it is the day of the other shoe dropping. Specifically, one week ago the mob occupied the Chamber of the House of Representatives in the nation's Capital building. Today, in the same place and almost the time. the House passed by a vote of 232 197,an Impeachment Resolution of President Trump for "incitement of insurrection". The Congress and the nation remain deeply divided as whether Biden won the election. Now the Capital is surrounded by over 6,000 National Guard troops with many more coming. . Meanwhile, the virus continues to surge; the number of person vaccinated lags; and the Inauguration is a week away.



House voting to impeach the President a second time

Hello and welcome to Thursday, January 14, 2021. As the political battles rage in Washington, the Corona virus continues to ravage our bodies. And this turns out that virus not only attacks us in the acute phase but afterwards. This is getting serious, so it is time for a quick diversion. Did you hear about the fire in the reupholster factory? No, what happened? Much damage but the chairs recovered. Okay, back to the topic. New series of ailments are now appearing in those who have recovered from COVID 19. The term for these patients is long haulers <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/coronavirus/in-depth/coronavirus-long-term-effects/art-20490351>. As that website notes “COVID-19 symptoms can sometimes persist for months. The virus can damage the lungs, heart and brain, which increases the risk of long-term health problems.” That virus is dangerous. The more we learn about, the more we must apprehensive about it. It mutates; it kills and its victims even if ‘recovered’ have serious symptoms.

I wanted to move to a more positive place. Again, while exercising I watched the PBS NOVA program *Cuba's Cancer Hope*. The show made a number of points. First, there have been break throughs in cancer therapy using the body’s own immune system called immunotherapy. The program provided a nice review of the biology of cancer and the immune system. Which leads to the second point, there are amazing and hopeful news ideas in understanding and treating cancer. Three, the show illustrates one of the fundamental principles of scientists, that is they are working together across geographic, political and ethnic backgrounds to solve cancer and climate change problems. .Yes, some people can work together!!!

Wow, what a historic time since turning 2021! Time to smile, or attempt to.



Regular Humor

How many times can you subtract 10 from 100? Once. The next time you would be subtracting 10 from 90.

A woman in labor suddenly shouted, “Shouldn’t! Wouldn’t! Couldn’t! Didn’t! Can’t!” “Don’t worry,” said the doctor. “Those are just contractions.”

A bear walks into a bar and says, “Give me a whiskey... and a cola. ”Why the big pause?” asks the bartender. The bear shrugged. “I’m not sure. I was born with them.”

Did you hear about the actor who fell through the floorboards? He was just going through a stage

Why did the chicken go to the séance? To get to the other side.

What sits at the bottom of the sea and twitches? A nervous wreck.

Why can't you explain puns to kleptomaniacs? They always take things literally.

COVID 19 Humor

Why is coronavirus like Groundhog Day? (The actual day, not the film)

If you stick your head outside and encounter another person, you get 6 more weeks of quarantine.

There's a new COVID-19 vaccine delivered via an audio interface as music. It is hoped that this will lead to *heard* immunity.

I never thought the comment "I wouldn't touch him/her with a six-foot pole" would become a national policy, but here we are!

Chuck Norris has been exposed to coronavirus. The virus is now in quarantine for 14 days.

Quarantine has turned us into dogs. We roam the house all day looking for food. We are told "no" if we get too close to strangers. And we get really excited about car rides.

Airlines have been sending me a lot of "we're in this together" emails. But when my suitcase weighed 52 pounds, I was on my own.



320 days of distancing

The Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner: Part XXXV

Steve Soreff, MD

Hello, it is Thursday, January 28, 2021 and it marks my 320th day, the 50th week and completing my 11th month of distancing. I am doing it today, because as you read, Chris is working on my computer. My hard drive is corrupt or has parts not functioning correctly. That sounds better than corrupt! And, at least the green color is cool. It also suggests Spring and hope. **Meanwhile, tomorrow will marks the 11th National Cribbage Day in distancing. It has been an historic January. Let take look back. Ready?**

Good morning, it is Saturday, January 16, 2021. I am into my Saturday early in the day routine: exercise while watching something educational, breakfast of French toast Challah with Peggy while listening to *Wait, Wait, Don't Tell*, and Zooming into Torah study. Three things are on my mind, today.

First, this is my 308th day of distancing! And you know love numbers, 308 was the manufactures number for my Pearson 26 foot sailboat, I sailed it out The Portland Yacht Club on Casco Bay. The vessel boat name was *Deep Structures*. My wife then came up with the name based on the 'deep structures' of life. She was right. Distancing is based on the deep structures of life now meaning survival, not getting COVID, getting the vaccine, and keeping loved ones safe and healthy.

The second idea came as while exercising, I watched *Frontline: United States of Conspiracy* <https://www.salon.com/2020/07/28/frontline-united-states-of-conspiracy-alex-jones-pbs/> . It chronicled the words and ideas of Alex Jones. It was a painful reminder of why you are told to never discuss religion and politics at a cocktail party . It is also a link to the teaching in

psychiatry that you do not challenge a delusion. The definition of a delusion is a false belief held against all logic. The program underscored and highlighted the very deep divisions in America.

The third idea is based on again exercising while watching, I saw the Frontline: Growing Up Poor In America. It showed poverty through the eyes of children. It was another reminders of the problem of food and shelter 'insecurity'. These are too polite terms for not enough money for food and no place to live. The show made me feel very graceful what I have.

The evening proved to be an innovative, clever and meaningful experience. Today is Peggy's birthday. No, I will not tell which birthday it is! I did get her a dozen roses. We wanted to do something special. We knew she liked musical theater. But with COVIN, that was not an option. Instead of going to the theater, the show came to our home via the Internet. Her daughter, Mandy, selected a British pantomime called *Aladdin*

<https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/whats-on/staffs/rugeley-rose-theatre/aladdin-pantomime/e-kajzql>

in the London, England's Rose Theater. It was funny, entertaining, and brilliantly involved the audience. But that is not all. Besides that, we all dressed for the show. Mandy not only brought pizza for dinner and a birthday cake but had by Google laptop video have friends and family join us to celebrate.



Peggy birthday party left to right son Jeff, Peggy and daughter Mandy

Good morning, the sun is shining, the wind is blowing for Sunday, January 17, 2021 and I have many things to discuss. Again, with the exercising, I saw in the Nature program, *The Alps* <https://www.pbs.org/video/the-high-life-the-alps-zjvyxc/>. As its website says, "In Europe's highest mountain range, discover how Eurasian lynx, griffon vultures, ibex, marmots and more face extreme seasonal fluctuations, from volatile thunderstorms and landslides of summer to avalanches and frozen temperatures of winter". The program made several neat points: the interdependence of the entire plant and animal ecosystem, how the animals protect their 'cute' babies, and the major alterations there because of climate change.

America is facing a perfect storm: the Coronavirus (nearing 400,000 virus deaths here), the huge economic displacements (worst one since the Great Depression), needed changes stemming from the Black Lives Matter movement, global warming and now the insurrection. The more one views the footage of the storming of the Capital, the more devastating and upsetting it becomes. And coupled with threats against the Inauguration and state capitals, watching the news is an uncomfortable adventure.

In the midst of turmoil, rage and uncertainty, I had a grounding, sobering experience. I attended a graveside ceremony, which the minister called a celebration of a life, for a dear and

cherished friend. It, again, points out the issues of death globally in this pandemic. Yes, we all wore masks, kept distances, offered reflections, sang appropriate songs- The songs were [Jim Croce's](#) *Time in a Bottle*" and *What A Wonderful World*. And poems were read. We said good-bye. But, we could have not visited the friend in decline, nor could we hold that person's hand. We could not hugs each other at the ceremony nor could break bread together afterwards. This is life and death in the pandemic.

Good morning, America-wow that sounds like the beginning of the folk song, *City of New Orleans* sung by Arlo Guthrie. It is Monday, January 18, 2021. And, with the Presidential inauguration, it will be busy and historic. A quick confession, in all the national turmoil and my now 'normal' COVID schedule of pickle ball and distancing Tai Chi, I had forgotten that today is also Martin Luther King's Day. He showed a Black Life Can Matter. I remembers hearing in real time on the radio his *I have a dream* speech. I knew then and still believe it was one of the greatest speeches of all time. A recovery for almost missing MLK Day, by two things. First, because of the pandemic and threatened violence, the national observance has been muted with even the King Memorial was closed! Second, while exercising, I watched the PBS program, *African Americans, the many rivers to cross: rise!: 1940-1968*. Henry Louis Gates Jr. narrated the chronicle of King, the non-violent movement and black power.

Good morning, it is Tuesday, January 19, 2021. I have two things ringing in my mind. The first is the words of a song by Phil Ochs, *Here is to the State of Mississippi* which says "Mississippi go find another country to be part of". The other is the riddle from the movie, *Mississippi Burning* What has four eyes and cannot see? The answer to the riddle is Mississippi. And yes, you guessed it, when exercising, I watched the PBS program *1964: The Fight for a Right*. The show painfully documents the plight of African Americans for over 150 years of living and dying in Mississippi for the right to vote in that state. And, indeed, the now national turmoil is based on the right to vote and which votes count. The program highlights what many of us take for granted and as cornerstone of democracy, the right to vote. It illustrated life and death under Jim Crow, there. It captured the sentiment that there "black lives did not matter".

Time to get out of this national funk and do something. I went for a hike in the woods on my Northwest passage and visit the White Birch Corridor. Even with the unexpected loss of snow, I found the birches glorious and invigorating. But that is not all. As noted in Weber's Law, today I noticed that the hours of day light were indeed seemingly to actually increase. . Hope, springs eternal and the color green for 320 days.



The inspiring White Birch Corridor

Welcome to Wednesday. January 20, 2021, a historic day in so many ways. It began as a palindrome 1/20/2, which so neat. The centerpiece of the day stands the Inauguration of Biden (Number 46) and Harris. Watching it, I have very emotional and moved. It happened on the very steps and balcony that just 2 weeks ago a mob stormed it trying to halt that very election of Biden. A loose association, I have used the very three times in the last two sentences. That is very poor writing. The reason is that indeed, the day and the drama was full of feelings for me. I was again proud of what, I believe, America stands for. I witnessed both political parties together!

The oldest President and the youngest National poet, Amanda Gorman delivered inspired and inspiring words. There were themes of resilience and moving forward. The singing of *Amazing Grace* added a prayer element. I loved that they included the Woody Guthrie's song, *This Land is Your Land*. I, also got to see other facets of the Inaugural ceremonies that I was not aware of before. One was when the new Vice President bid good-bye to the out-going Vice President. Usually, this is done by the new President saying good-b ye to the leaving President. I watched the wreath-laying ceremony at "The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier" <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Tomb-of-the-Unknown-Soldier> That site is now called the Tomb of the Unknowns. This is because "additional unidentified combatants from later wars— World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War —were interred in the shadow of the original sarcophagus". That ceremony was attended by three former Presidents. I heard the words "relief" said by several commentators as well as speakers talking about "our better angels". It was a moving day.



President Biden delivering his Inaugural address

But that's not all. In the face of COVID 19, the traditional parade could not happen. But, and there is that but again, the Inaugural Committee came to the rescue. Instead, it held a Virtual 'Parade Across America' <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/20/us/politics/parade-across-america-inauguration.html> It featured dancing, drumlines and dogs. It had clever, feel good, and hilarious acts from each state. As the Inauguration was billed as a triumph of democracy, so this cavalcade entertainment and joy in the face of many woes. And the day was completed by the *Celebrating America* broadcast hosted by Tom Hanks.

Good morning, it is Thursday, January 21, 2021 and there is a major change in my weekly schedule. I am in the 1 B group for the COVID vaccine. As a consequence, I have to try to get on the list on Friday morning. Hence, it did pickleball and distancing Tai Chi today.

But, and yes there is that but again, I wanted to reflect back on the Inauguration and the events afterwards. In the *Celebrating America*, past Presidents Bush, Clinton and Obama talked together. They ‘walked the talk’ in terms of showing national unity. Remember when Andrew Jackson became President? <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/jackson-holds-open-house-at-the-white-house> He invited all the people to the White House. With COVID, the big Washington’s evening parties or balls were canceled. But, with *Parade Across America*’ and *Celebrating America*, I felt, we, the American people were allowed into these often restricted events. I liked that. The Inaugural concluded with fireworks which were spectacular. The glowing evening sky gave the feeling of what a great country America is!



Fireworks celebrating the end of the Inauguration day

Good morning, seniors aka those of New Hampshire 65 and older, awoke to the COVID 19 Vaccine Phases screen or scream on Friday, January 22, 2021. There we were, thousands of grayed haired Granite Staters posed at our computers waiting for the magic hour of 8 AM. It was a modern form of the Oklahoma Land Rush. Then, the moment arrived and we scrambled to get in and next get registered to get vaccine. Good news is that the system did not crash, but my own computer had a mini-tantrum. Peggy and I both were registered and now we have to wait for the email telling us when and where to get the vaccine. Perhaps, a hint of the light at the end of a tunnel.

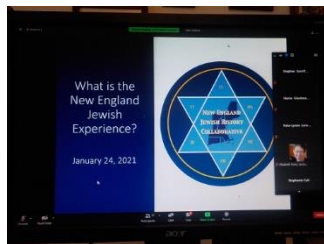


The computer screen on Friday morning

Welcome to Saturday, January 23, 2021 and I have much excitement and much to share. My Saturday routine began with exercising. I watched *Kites of the Dead In Guatemala* as part of the In The Americas with David Yetman <https://intheamericas.org/> series. It was enlightening to learn about Mayan civilization and its use of kites to honor the dead. It also gain insights in the Day of Dead observance in many South American countries. And speaking of the dead, I next saw on WMUR <https://www.wmur.com/article/new-hampshire-town-by-town-covid-cases/34879297> that in COVID 19 “Nottingham: 19 active; 152 total (1 new)”. Furthermore, NHPR noted 10 COVID state deaths today. And that nearly 150,000 seniors had been registered on the January 22 website opening.

Then, I checked my email. I had just received an e-mail from the Vaccine Administration Management System (VAMS) <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/reporting/vams/index.html>. VAMS is part of the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](https://www.cdc.gov/) (CDC). After verifying that the link was ‘kosher’ from Torah Study group, I filled it out. My appointment is March 2 in Exeter. Wow!!!

Good morning, Sunday, January 24, 2021. A windy, cold, shining busy day. First, while exercising, I watched about climate refugees. Those are folks who seek to live in an area free from the results of global warming: floods, hurricanes, rising sea levels, drought and forest fires. In the afternoon, I participated conference entitled, *What is the New England Jewish Experience?* It addressed the question Do New England Jews share a common experience? And, if so, What resources are available for studying New England’s Jewish history? It was developed and sponsored by Wyner Family Jewish Heritage Center at New England Historic Genealogical Society <https://jewishheritagecenter.org>. An online collection of historians, archivists, genealogists, and others interested in Jewish history attended. The culmination of the program was the launching of the New England Jewish History Collaborative website <https://www.nejhc.org/> which is devoted to address New England Jewish experience.



What is the New England Jewish Experience? Program

Afterward, still Sunday, I did watch the Brady win his trip to the 54th Super Bowl!

Hello, it is Monday, January 25, 2021. The sun is shining on a cold but pleasant day and I many things on my mind. First, this week marked a grim anniversary as Time website proclaimed <https://time.com/5932412/wuhan-lockdown-anniversary-china-covid19-coronavirus/> says “China Marks the Wuhan Lockdown Anniversary Amid Spiraling COVID-19 Cases and With Risky Holiday Travel Looming”. Although clearly there were earlier cases, at least there is one marker in the pandemic.

My second thought deals with watching both the last two National Football League (NFL) games on the road to the 54th Superbowl on Sunday, January 24. . I have heard an NFL quote to the effect, “we own Sundays”. And in terms, of Fall television audience, it is accurate. But I want to focus on the role of NFL in the pandemic. I admit I did watch both play-off games, But, and there is the but again, I viewed them for their pure their entertainment quality. I did not have a horse in the race, since the New England Patriots were eliminated. I saw the games to observe several legendary quarterbacks in action. Catching to the chase, the NFL plays the role of the United Service Organizations (USO) <https://www.uso.org/> during war time. That is to entertain our troops. Yes, I remember Bob Hope’s shows in World War II, Korea and Vet Nam. Right now, we are the troops in the global war against COVID 19.

Final thought, I saw a new New Year’s Resolution for the NH Electrical Co-op, “Get the Covid 19 vaccination”!



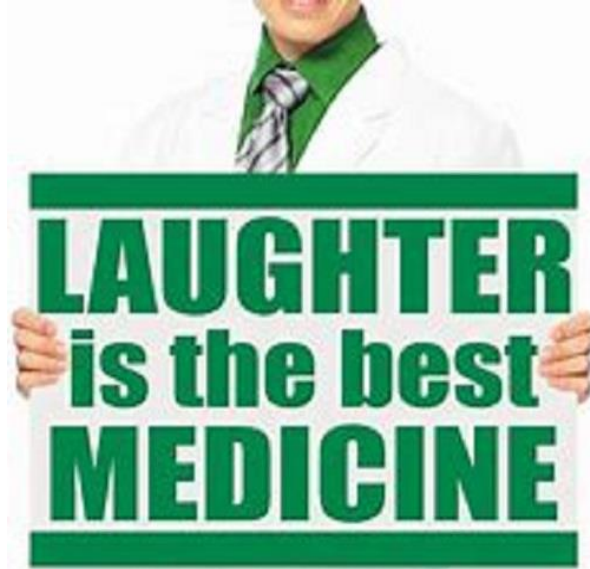
NFL Playoffs Sunday January 24, 2021

Wow, it is Tuesday, January 26, 2021 and my generation has only one question. It is what is your date. No, this is not e-Harmony advertisement; it is not that type of date. They are asking on what date are you getting your first COVID vaccination shot. The stampede began at 8 AM Friday, January 22, 2020 as thousands of folks termed by Laura Knoy of the NHPR *The Exchange*, ‘the silver Tsunami’, went to New Hampshire State website for vaccine registration. Once that was complete, they waited for the Vaccine Administration Management System (VAMS) <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/reporting/vams/index.html> email. The form was tricky, confusing and weird. Most got appointments. Other did not receive the VAMS follow-up. Vaccination, when and where, now takes centerstage.

Good morning, today is Wednesday, January 27, 2021. It snowed last night. Finally, it at least looks like winter outside. I am in race against the disc. My hard drive is dying and I hope I can work until then. My high anxiety is reminder of how my much computer is central to my life. Even more especially during the pandemic. Good news, the IBM technician called and said he

will at my home Thursday. Meanwhile, we did do distancing Tai Chi and pickle ball in the face of the neat little snow cover. Wish me luck with the computer.

Time to laugh!



Regular Humor

The past, the present, and the future walk into a bar... It was tense.

My boss yelled at me the other day, "You've got to be the worst train driver in history. How many trains did you derail last year?" I said, "Can't say for sure, it's so hard to keep track!"

I lost my job at the bank on my very first day. A woman asked me to check her balance, so I pushed her over.

I had to clean out my spice rack and found everything was too old and had to be thrown out. What a waste of thyme.

6:30 is the best time on a clock... hands down.

The public safety officer came up to a large mob of people outside a department store and asked, "What's happening?"

A mall officer replied, "These people are waiting to get the new Barbie doll." The public safety officer shook his head and muttered, "Who can resist a Barbie queue?"

COVID 19 Jokes

Today's work from home tip: Blowing on the wine in your mug will help convince your Zoom meeting that your tea is hot.

What should you do if you don't understand a coronavirus joke? Be patient.

So many coronavirus jokes out there, it's a pandemic.

Finally, introverts experience a world that is suited for us. All events cancelled; we don't even have to go thru the trouble of flaking. No one is making random small talk or physical contact. Everybody minding their business.

If I get quarantined for two weeks with my wife and I die. I can assure you it was not the virus that killed me.

Definition of Irony - When the [Year Of The Rat](#) starts with a plague.

I sneezed in the bank today, it was the most attention I have received from the staff in the last 10 years.

Never in my wildest of wild dreams did I ever think I would go up to a bank teller and request money with a mask on.

During self-isolation..

Dogs: "Oh My god, you're here all day and this is the best as I can love you, see you, be with you and follow you! I am so excited because you are the greatest and I love you being here so much!"

Cats: "What the hell are you still doing here?"

I don't know why my fishing buddy is worried about Coronavirus; he never catches anything.



331 days of distancing, counting and moving on

The Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner: Part XXXVI

Steve Soreff, MD

Welcome to today, it is Monday, February 8, 2021, the start of another week. . This marks my 331th day, the beginning of my 52nd week and the 12th month in which I have be practicing physical and social distancing. We have a new President and Vice President, the Punxsutawney ground hog has seen its shadow, it snowed again so winter looks like winter and Superbowl 54 is history as well as a second impeachment is about to begin. It is time to look back the last week. If I look ahead it means another major trip from my office to the kitchen-wonders never cease.

Hello and welcome to a very cold Friday, January 29, 2021. I want go two ways at once: the number 321 and my computer saga. Starting with the number 321, that is the number of days I have been distancing today. Part of my appreciation of that numerical sequenced comes from the following story. An elementary grade student in Florida was asked to count to ten. He did so this way- "10-9-8-7-6-5-4-3-2-1". The surprised teacher ask the reason for that 'count-down". The pupil replied my parents work at Cape Canaveral, The reason, I like that number is that it appears to lead to a blast-off or some sort of an event. In this case, with the vaccine becoming available, the daylight time getting longer, and some of the COVID statistics plateauing, there is a hint, I said only hint, that there is an end to the pandemic is just over the horizon!

My computer saga continues. The Lenovo, part of IBM, did come to the house on Wednesday. That's the good news. The company did send the new disc. But, and this is a painful but, it was the wrong piece. Now, it gets complicated. It turns out the Lenovo computer, which I had purchased, manipulated by a second party, another company, in route to my house. That company switched discs. So now the computer works "on a wing and prayer"! In other words, my computer story continues. Film at eleven!



Chris, the IBM the technician making a house call

On a more positive note, today is my 11th month in which I have observed national Cribbage day being the 29th of January. I did loose badly in the middle of the night to Bill, my computer opponent. Time to sing "we shall overcome!".

Good morning, it is Saturday, January 30, 2021. I am into my Saturday schedule: exercising this time I was in Guatemala with its volcanos and earthquake terrain, then breakfast with Peggy listening to *Wait, Wait Don't Tell* and playing Mexican Train, and Torah study. However, I also have another thought to share.

A quick step back to yesterday. A reader of the Diary XXXV commented that I had missed the mark when I was writing about the historic Inquartation. I had not emphasized and failed to talk about the amazing and truly historic moment of the first woman elected as the Vice President. Kamala Harris <https://www.npr.org/sections/inauguration-day-live-updates/2021/01/20/958749751/vice-president-kamala-harris-takes-the-oath-of-office> "has been sworn in as vice president of the United States, becoming the first woman, first Black person and first Asian American to hold the office. [She is also the first graduate](#) of a historically Black college and the first member of a Black sorority to do so. Justice Sonia Sotomayor administered the oath. Sotomayor, the first woman of color to serve on the Supreme Court, previously administered the vice presidential oath to Biden in 2013". And one more detail, she was sworn in with her hand on Thurgood Marshall's Bible! Furthermore, 2021 mark the 101st year since women fought for and got the right to vote. Go Harris, it about time!



Kamala Harris being sworn in as Vice President of the United States

After my omission was pointed out, I did some sole searching. I realized just as the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement highlighted mine and the national ‘blind spot of white privilege’, I had overlooked the roles in history and society of male privilege. Too often I have taken for granted all that has been accorded to me because I white male. As I told the above cited reader, “we are all learning, thank you”,

I completed the day exercising and watching the film *Your Shared Legacies: The African-American Jewish Civil Rights Alliance* <http://povmagazine.com/articles/view/shared-legacies-review>. Although movie chronicled the long relationship between the Jewish community and the rights for -Americans, it focused on the strong and inspiration relationship between Martin Luther King Jr. and Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel. It highlighted the shared legacy of both Jewish people African-Americans to the destruction and the oppression of the Holocaust and 400 years of slavery.

Hello, it is Sunday, January 31, 2021 aka the last day of the month. Once we enter February, it will mark my 12th month of distancing. This morning I went via Zoom to my Rabbi’s talk on Jewish mysticism. He talked about how drop of water becomes part and one with the ocean. It was a fascinating exploration. Afterwards, I realized that I had been out of the home in 2 ½ days. Yes, I had a mild case of cabin fever. I hiked into my woods to do something outside. I rediscovered the web of hidden stonewalls in my woods. A quick joke, what do you call a sleeping bull? Answer is a bulldozer. I found a bulldozer sitting in the middle of the forest. It was clearing an area for 3 homes to be built there. This was yet another message that Nottingham is growing and our woods are shrinking.



The billdozer is says houses coming here and forest going away

One final note, for a few moments people have stopped talking about COVID 19 and Washington. Why? And the reason is, may I have the envelope, please! A Nor'easter coming this Monday. Something to look forward to, after shoveling perhaps back to snow shoeing.

Hello, it is Monday, February 1, 2021 and I have a couple dots to connect. The first, again came when exercising, I watched *Mr. Civil Rights: Thurgood Marshall and the NAACP*. It showed his life, his brilliant legal strategy to challenge the separate but equal Supreme Court ruling, and perseverance for justice. Also, it highlighted his courage in the face of many attacks on him and a couple of attempted lynching of him. To connect the first dot, it is now so clear and beautiful that Kamala Harris took her oath of office on Thurgood Marshall's Bible. Dot number two is the long anticipated snow storm finally arrived. It is a very slow moving Nor'easter. That means the slower the storm, the deeper the snow. Let's see if that is right. More to come, in the next few days. Finally, I went to see my podiatrist. My hammer toe is hammering my foot and painful. He applied some mechanical devices. I hope they work.

Happy shoveling! It snowed and welcome to Tuesday February 2, 2021. Today is momentous for a number of reason. First, the long hyped Nor'easter did deliver snow. Snow fell through the night and a foot of snow welcomed us at day break. It looked like winter again. We had Planet Fitness of the yard with a variety of snow removal exercises. The snow not only covered the ground but also helped to define the trees as sat on it branches.



And with the snow storm came the welcomed relief from the television cavalcade of COVID 19 doom. Each day, on WMUR across the bottom of the screen, it scrolls number of cases of COVID by towns, by counties and the state. Today, it only displayed school closings. And, for the record, it Groundhog Day. To keep with my tradition, here is my appropriate riddle <https://forumhome.org/riddle-of-the-week-of-february-p34122-1.htm>. What did the groundhog's trainer tell him before the Olympics? May I have the envelope, please. And, the answer is Gopher gold. Spoiler alert, he did see his shadow. I, also learned that the date February 2 has some history to it. From the History website <https://www.history.com/news/groundhog-day-history-and-facts> "Falling midway between the winter solstice and the spring equinox, February 2 is a significant day in several ancient and modern traditions." Besides liking the movie, *Groundhog Day*, I too often have found that in the distancing world of the pandemic, that everyday can seem like the day before. They are just like in the film!.

Good day, it is Wednesday, February 3, 2021 and I went snowshoeing. The snow storm not only made the outdoors congruent with the season but also offered many opportunities for winter activities, such as snowshoeing. With snowshoeing, I

get to exercise, have conversations at 6 feet apart, look at great scenery and enjoy being out of the house. Yes, it felt good to be exploring the woods on snowshoes.

Welcome to Thursday, February 4, 2021 and I want to go two ways at once. One is snowshoeing and the other is an origin story of COVID 19. Since this Diary serves to document distancing, it is appropriate to look at the cause of it all. Again, while exercising I watched The Frontline documentary *China's COVID Secrets* which offered "a Timeline of China's Response in the First Days of COVID-19" <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/article/a-timeline-of-chinas-response-in-the-first-days-of-covid-19>. It recounted in great detail who knew what and when. It also provided a starting point for the pandemic by identifying both time and place. It started in Wuhan, China on December 1, 2019 with one man admitted to a hospital. This was the first case of a person with COVID 19 symptoms. The story shows the early efforts to understand the virus and contain it. It also portrayed the official Chinese government's actions to suppress information about it. At least, I now have a beginning for the pandemic. But the end is only hinted at and not really in sight!

Now for snowshoeing, I love it. We had friends over to do some distancing snowshoeing. It was great. We hiked the Northwest Passage and observed many patterns in the neighborhood wilderness. We saw snow snakes! What is that? It is snow on a branch or fallen tree that has fallen off but somehow managed to stay together. Here, let me show you. And I have been observing patterns in the neighborhood winter wilderness <https://forumhome.org/patterns-in-the-winter-wilderness-a-photo-essay-p34147-105.htm>.



A snow snake in my woods

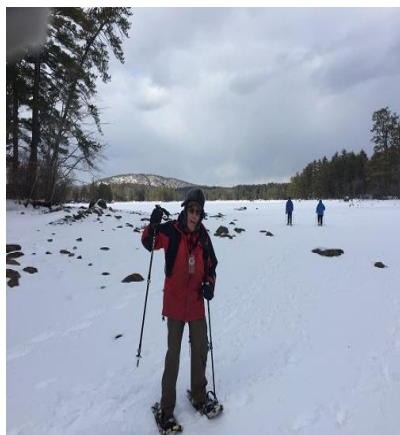
To complete today's adventures, Peggy cut my hair for the third time in 12 months. Before the haircut, I looked like Bernie Sanders without the mittens.

Hello and welcome to Friday, February 5, 2021 and I find myself in a reflective mood. What comes to mind is Dicken's *A Christmas Carol*, <https://www.charlesdickensinfo.com/christmas-carol/>. No, it is not Christmas in February, but a three part message of that tale: past, present and future. As I look at my life in the pandemic and actually anytime I ponder on living, I come back to this triad. My past is important. It not only led to my retirement but also shaped my personality and values. My present is determined by distancing to stay alive and my home and its settings. It is good and I am thankful. But, and

there is the but again, I need one more thing. That is a future. I and am working with others on a Purim Spiel as well as planning educational program. Life consists of the past, the present and the future. Life is especially great when all three are synchronized and balanced.

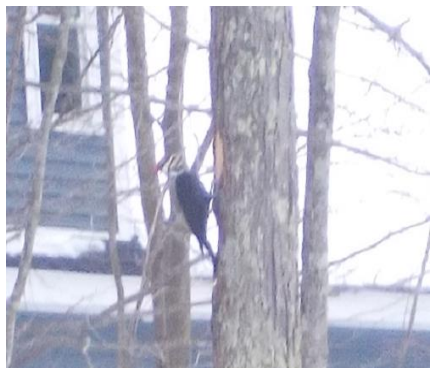
Good morning, it is Saturday, February 6, 2021 and the sun is shining. After my Saturday routine-exercising while watching, breakfast while playing Mexican Train and listening to *Wait, Wait, Don't Tell*, with Peggy and Torah study with learning, we went snowshoeing on the lake. Quick step back, I saw In The Americas with David Yetman program *Drought and New Realities in the Southwest* #809 <https://intheamericas.org/>. It was yet another reminder of the local and global water shortages, the prolonged regional drought, and climate change. It highlighted the impossible task that the Colorado River has to supply water 40 million people!

But, now to the lake. We snowshoed across it. How marvelous it is that Pawtuckaway Lake is fun and available for all seasons. The sun crowned Mount Pawtuckaway as we made tracked across the lake.



Steve snowshoeing in the shadow of Mount Pawtuckaway Photograph by Cindy Rasmussen

And, when we “came ashore” and headed for the woods, we observed a pileated woodpecker <https://www.nps.gov/articles/pileated-woodpecker.htm>. The bird was busy working at a tree and ignored us. The whole adventure outdoors was invigoration and inspiring. With the snow winter had returned to ‘normal’. Life does go on.



Our pileated woodpecker

Good morning, it is Sunday, February 7, 2021 and it is a day of waiting. No, not on waiting on tables but waiting for a snow storm and the 55th Superbowl. In the meantime, while exercising and watching, I saw a cavalcade of events around the state, nation and world. Here is a sample. The number of COVID hospital admissions are dropping but another 8 folks died of it in New Hampshire today. In many nations around the world, the governments have been oppressing, arresting and killing peaceful people engaging in political rallies. Except for Washington on January 6, I am glad, I live in America. In Netherlands, climate change has twin problems. Rising sea levels have threaten homes and cities. And, the drought has led to lowering the water tables. As a result of the decreased water table level, houses and building are now sinking into the ground.

I have one thought about the Superbowl. One newscaster called it “a national distraction”. It is one, but is also pleasant event. It is time of an older person’s lament. I regret the loss of the national shared experiences. What does that mean? When I grew up, yes in the time when dinosaurs roamed the land, most folks watched certain televisions shows such as for adults the Ed Sullivan Show or as for children the Howdy Doody Show. As a result, the next day, everyone would comment on the program. The Superbowl will allow us to return to one of those moments. Cable television and the Internet have divided the national experience.

Enough, is enough, let’s laugh!



Regular Humor

Hey, did any of you see the joke we made here about a chiropractor? We can’t find it, but it would’ve been about a week back...

Two cowboys are lost in the desert. One sees a tree that’s draped in bacon. “A bacon tree, we’re saved!” He shouts. He runs to the tree but is immediately shot dead by hundreds of bullets. It wasn’t a bacon tree. It was a ham bush

Homographs are words of like spelling but with more than one meaning. A homograph that is also pronounced differently is a heteronym.

This is the creative work came to me from Elaine Schmottlach, thank you.

- 1)The bandage was *wound* around the *wound*.
- 2)The farm was used to *produce produce*.
- 3)The dump was so full that it had to *refuse* more *refuse*.
- 4)We must *polish* the *Polish* furniture.
- 5)He could *lead* if he would get the *lead* out.
- 6)The soldier decided to *desert* his dessert in the *desert*.
- 7)Since there is no time like the *present*, he thought it was time to *present* the *present*.
- 8)A *bass* was painted on the head of the *bass* drum.
- 9)When shot at, the *dove dove* into the bushes.
- 10)I did not *object* to the *object*.
- 11)The insurance was *invalid* for the *invalid*.
- 12)There was a *row* among the oarsmen about how to *row*.
- 13)They were too *close* to the door to *close* it.
- 14)The buck *does* funny things when the *does* are present.
- 15)A seamstress and a *sewer* fell down into a *sewer* line.
- 16)To help with planting, the farmer taught his *sow* to *sow*.
- 17)The *wind* was too strong to *wind* the sail.
- 18)Upon seeing the *tear* in the painting I shed a *tear*.
- 19)I had to *subject* the *subject* to a series of tests.
- 20)How can I *intimate* this to my most *intimate* friend?

Let's face it - English is a crazy language. There is no egg in eggplant, nor ham in hamburger; neither apple nor pine in a pineapple

COVID 19 Jokes

Since everybody has now started washing their hands, the peanuts at the bar have lost their taste.

When this whole Covid saga is done and dusted, I still want many of you to stay away from me.

I just finished a titanic washing load of PJ's. Now I have enough clean work clothes for the whole week.

Chinese doctors have confirmed the name of the first person to contract Coronavirus. His name is Ah-Chu.

During self-isolation..

Dogs: "Oh My god, you're here all day and this is the best as I can love you, see you, be with you and follow you! I am so excited because you are the greatest and I love you being here so much!"

Cats: "What the hell are you still doing here?"



The Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner: Part XXXVII

Steve Soreff, MD

A quick admission, I went to “press” on Sunday, February 7, 2021 before the Superbowl 55 aka LV happened. Thus, I am playing a little catch-up ball. Not to be confused with Pickle Bal, which I relish! I have a number of the thoughts about the big game. First, it prove to be a national distraction only in the initial quarter and a half. Then, it was a huge bore. As a New England Patriots fan, it was the same old Brady- Gronkowski duet. The best part of the event was when President Biden and the first lady christened the day with greetings and a moment of silence for the nearly a half million Americans who have died from COVID 19. It felt the show *Father Knows Best*. It was like daddy and mommy are in charge of the country.

The long awaited Superbowl ads with lavish and featured people that I did not know. The half-time show was incomprehensible and not entertaining. The climbing of Paramount Mountain by a diverse group of past stars 2was designed to introduce yet another streaming service. It was yet another nail in the movie theater coffin.

Hello and welcome to Tuesday, February 9, 2021 and I am back on track. And for the record, it is my 333th day of distancing. At least, today is a palindrome. As you can read, I am playing catch-up with the Superbowl. Still, looking back, I recently saw while exercising Joseph Rosendo’s Travelscope episode entitled *Bhutan’s Gross National Happiness* <http://travelscope.net/episodes/season-7/bhutan-gross-national-happiness/> . What I found so

delightful in the show was that a country's leader should set as a national goal's happiness. Neat. Remember, the Declaration of Independence trumpets "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness".

The center stage today reigns the second impeachment trial of Ex-president Trump. I remember taking a college course in Public Speaking. It was taught by a lawyer. He emphasized that a good lawyer could argue either side of the case. Listening to the impeachment debate, I am impressed by both sides position. As the Bill Clinton's impeachment was a boon to teaching human sexuality, so this trial highlights a meaningful study of the US Constitution. I remember one rule in public speaking- when talking before a group and you are wearing a jacket, make sure the coat is bottomed. At least, those arguing both sides in front of the Senate had their jackets bottomed. The trial remains a great lesson on the Constitution.



Trump's second Senate Impeachment

Good morning and hello, it is Wednesday, February 10, 2021 . The sun is shining after a quick snow fall yesterday. There is an air of expectancy in the air. How so? Expecting to get my vaccine. Expecting the second impeachment trial. Expecting an end to winter and a return to a less COVID 19 world. That is all!

Enough of the expecting talk, time to get up-beat. What does that mean? I am a Sagittarius. That translate into being brave, naïve and optimistic. Back to Monty Python's song "Look on the Bright Side of Life". I offer this picture of the first sign of spring.



The first sign of spring

Instead of feeling a like victim, I made this discovery. While exercising and watching, I saw a news program from Japan. Yes, just, yet another reminder that is a pandemic. The program

emphasizes building up your immune system to deal with COVID 19. It highlighted the role of exercise, good sleep, and healthy diet to boost your immune system. I feel better now since I am doing those things now! In fact, this afternoon Peggy and I went snow shoeing on the lake and into the woods. My immune system thanked me.

Throughout the day, impeachment trial was broadcast. Yesterday, it had been determined that it was Constitutional to impeach an ex-President. The testimony was riveting and detailed. The nation was reliving the events before January 6 and the moment to moment of the horror of that day.

Good morning and welcome to very cold day, it is Thursday, February 11, 2021. In this cold weather, all I could think about was-What was it like at the Auschwitz concentration camp, in the Battle of Bulge, in the Korean War or simply be homeless in New Hampshire. Yes, we are distancing. But we have heat, shelter, safety and hope. I am thankful.

Good morning and it is still cold out. How cold is it? Thank you, Ed McMahon! It is so cold that we did distancing Tai Chi by Zoom since it was too cold to be outside. It is also Friday, February 12, 2021. One of the Tai Chi moments is called, "Carry tiger to the mountain". Here, we could actually do it!



"Carry tiger to the mountain".

In the afternoon we snowshoed the Marsh Woods Trails. Led by Celia Abrams of the Trails Committee of the Conservation Commission, we hiked to 3 possible sites for benches and carding <https://www.historiclondontown.org/post/carding-wool> mill. It was great exercise and fun. Snowshoeing, distancing, being healthy, exercising and breathing fresh air represent a winning combination.



One of possible bench sites and its view.

Welcome to Saturday, February 13, 2021. The sun is shining on the cold snow. My Saturday routine began with exercising and watching about Korla Pandit <https://finance.yahoo.com/news/pbs-social-presents-korla-mysterious-161500694.htm>.

As this point, you should asking as I did, who is Korla Pandit? He was an African-American entertainer who wore a turban with a gem in front who said he was from India. Quick funny here, for what reason did Jewish people get interested in India? Because there was a new Deli there! He did so because he would have not been accepted as African-American entertainer then. The show was aired for February as Black History month. Sorry, second ethnic story aka joke. There was a bumblebee flying around wearing a yarmulke. The queen bee calls him over and asks him, "how come the yarmulke?" He replied, "I do not want to be mistaken for a WASP=White Anglo-Saxon -Protestant." To return the program, Too often to accepted and succeed in America you have to be WASP. As the film pointed out Tony Curtis birth name was Bernard Schwartz.

^^ To continue, we next had next breakfast and played Mexican Train while listening to the second Trump impeachment. Spoiler alert, to no one's surprise, later in the afternoon, the Senate voted 57 to 43 not to convict. Seven Republicans' voted that Trump was guilty. Then on to Torah study, we are in the Book of Exodus. We had a very lively discussion about slavers and freedom.

Cabin fever hit again, so we drove to the coast. We wanted to see the ocean. We went to Wallis Sands State Beach and walked a long way along the shore. The tide was going out. We hiked to a distant wall. As we strolled along the ever widening beach, we were amongst half of New Hampshire there walking their dogs.

Good morning, it is Sunday, February 14, 2021 and Valentine's Day. I did give Peggy a singing Valentine via the Internet. Today is one of reflection and catching up writing. Again, exercising and watching, I saw the same painful message: climate change is destroying the earth. There has been the 40% loss global coral due to warming more acidic oceans. The program illustrated the collision between our economic growth and appetite for things; e.g., cars, computers, and housing and that earth's limited resources. That dilemma highlights the global trend of deforestation and overfishing. It is yet another reminder of the need to worldwide responses.

Time for a quick admission. With the protracted cold wave, my outdoor activities have been curtailed. For example, the Zoom Tai Chi was due the cold temperature. As a result, I am getting cabin fever. My big trip has been from my office to the kitchen, yippee! I did go for a short neighborhood walk in the late afternoon. The fresh air and ambulation helped. And, I had more spooof that the length of day was increasing. It was not really getting dark until way passed 5 PM.

Hello and welcome to Monday, February 15, 2021. It is Presidents Day, but it does not feel like a holiday. The New Hampshire grade school student are at their desks. No holiday day for them nor a vacation week either. This is because Massachusetts schools traditionally have the Presidents Day week off. As a result, NH wants them to up and ski now. We will get the following week off. In the exchange, NH has the Commonwealth's money. We did preserve a did Pickle Ball practice out in the snow cleared court and then distancing Tai Chi. It was better than the Zoom experience.



Neither snow nor rain will stop the Pickle Ball practice

I just finished an hour long conversation with a good friend. It was very satisfying in this time of distancing and isolation. The talk reminded me of the Friendship Triangle. This is the three legs of a good friends relationship. It is based on proximity, values and reciprocity. Here are the definitions. Proximity, although literally means geographically close, in the era of Internet, telephone and Zoom the physical distance dissolves. Values translate into shared values, such focus on learning, family, and people. Reciprocity involves each one not only wants to hear and listen to the other but also one idea or thought of either leads to another. In other words, there is true back and forth. Apply this to your world friendship relationships. Sorry, I got a bit of the lecture in here.

Enough, I'm back from Mars. Let's laugh!



Regular Humor

Did you hear about the guy who fell into the well? I found out why it happened. He couldn't see that well.

Why do bees stay inside their hives all winter? 'Swarm!

I saw an ad for burial plots, and thought to myself this is the last thing I need.

A courtroom artist was arrested today for an unknown reason... details are sketchy.

eBay is so useless. I tried to look up lighters and all they had was 13,749 matches.

I have a fear of speed bumps. But I am slowly getting over it.

I hate Russian dolls... they're so full of themselves!

Talk is cheap? Have you ever talked to a lawyer?

COVID 19 Humor

I've been stress-eating so much, the buttons on my shirt are now socially distancing from each other.

I ran out of toilet paper and had to start using old newspapers. Times are rough.

Every few days try your jeans on just to make sure they fit. Pajamas will have you believe all is well in the kingdom.

What's the difference between COVID-19 and Romeo and Juliet? One's the coronavirus and the other is a Verona crisis.

Nail salons, hair salons, waxing centers, and tanning places are closed. It's about to get ugly out there.

My friend suddenly became interested in golf during the pandemic lockdown. He kept saying that he wanted to see the US Open.

Smallpox, the Spanish Flu, and the black death have already done the whole global pandemic thing. What COVID is doing is just *plaguerism*.



358 days of distancing and nearing the Diary's first anniversary

The Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner: Part XXXVIII

Steve Soreff, MD

Wow, we are marching into March on this Thursday, March 4, 2021. Why the colorful numbers? Great question! These last two weeks have offered moments of hope and joy. Joy? Yes, during the last two weeks, the Jews celebrated Purim with spiels and humor and in New Orleans had a muted but still creative Mardi Gras. The hours of daylight are both increasing and notable. Maple trees are sporting sap collecting buckets. More and more folks are receiving their first and now second COVID vaccines, too nationally we have lost over 500,000 individuals to virus. Today, I have been distancing for 358 days, 55 weeks and 13 months. With that, let's look back on a couple of eventful weeks.

Catching up from XXXVII. I have once again fell in love with jazz. The reason is that I have been watching while exercising Ken Burns' *Jazz* series. Jazz represents a unique and original American musical contribution to the world. The series chronicles not only the roles of African-American and Jews in the development of jazz but also the oppression of these groups in the process. The [Greek philosopher, Heraclitus](#) said, "You can never step into the same river; for new waters are always flowing on you. **No man ever steps into the same river twice**, for it's not the same river and he is not the same man." Jazz music is like that. Each time the same song is performed, it's different. Furthermore, jazz musicians are highly individualistic.

Still reviewing the last weekend's discoveries, again exercising while watching, I saw on PBS *Firing Line* an interview of Dr. Michael Osterholm <https://www.pbs.org/video/michael-osterholm-kigtv4/>. He made a number of points. He noted the UK variant has a name B.1.1.7. and it will lead to a surge in cases in the United States in March. He advocated everyone over 65 years

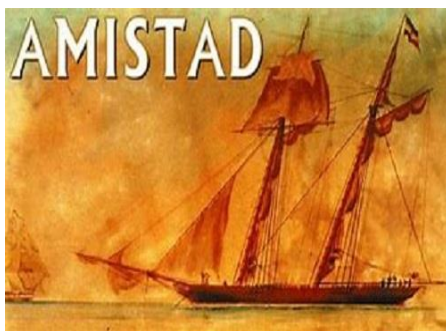
of age get, at least, the first dose of the vaccine. When I visit my son's family, he notes we are on the grandchildren's time. Doctor Osterholm said the world is on COVID-19 time!

Welcome to Monday, February 22, 2021 and I am getting back to my 'normal'. This means distancing pickle ball and Tai Chi. It is still mind blowing what you can do outside in the Winter because of COVID 19. Back from those activities and into exercising while watching, I saw on PBS *Beyond Barbados: The Carolina Connection*

<https://www.barbadoscarolinas.org/the-connection-1> . The program showed how much people of the British colony of Barbados influenced the culture, the architecture, the language and the history of the precolonial and colonial future state of South Carolina. It highlighted how events in the Caribbean has affected American history. Having visited South Carolina a year ago, I was delighted to learn more about it. You can teach an old dog, new tricks.

Today marked another grim COVID -19 milestone with more than 500,000 <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/u-s-reaches-500-000-deaths-coronavirus-n1257992> virus deaths.

Good morning, the sun is shining, the outdoors calls, it is Tuesday, February 23, 2021.I have much to report. First, while exercising, I watched *Ghosts of Amistad: In the Footsteps of the Rebels* <https://www.ghostsofamistad.com/>. "Ghosts of Amistad chronicles a trip to Sierra Leone to visit the home villages of the people who seized the slave schooner Amistad in 1839, to interview elders about local memory of the case, and to search for the long-lost ruins of Lomboko, the slave trading factory where their cruel transatlantic voyage began." The program revealed many lesser known facts of the sadly very lucrative slave trade. It showed how King there worked with the some of the European nations to provided slave for Cuba, Brazil and the United States. It talked about how the slaves on the Amistad not only took over the ship but also rebelled before being forced on that vessel. It also taught us the two of the slaves on the Amistad ultimately having won their freedom twice-<https://www.ghostsofamistad.com/>he ship and in the courts-returned to their African villages.



The ship Amistad

Next, remember how I was overjoyed with sun shining and outdoors calling? Peggy, Michael Koester, Cindy Rasmussen and I went on a 3 hour snowshoeing quest. It was great exercise, company and views.

And, to mark the grim COVID milestone of 500,000 deaths in America, President Biden ordered flags at half-staff until Friday. Here is what he said. “PRESIDENTIAL ACTIONS [A Proclamation on Remembering the 500,000 Americans Lost to COVID-19](#) As of this week during the dark winter of the COVID-19 pandemic, more than 500,000 Americans have now died from the virus. That is more Americans who have died in a single year of this pandemic than in World War I, World War II, and the Vietnam War combined. On this solemn occasion, we reflect on their loss and on their loved ones left behind. We, as a Nation, must remember them so we can begin to heal, to unite, and find purpose as one Nation to defeat this pandemic.

Gentleman for a moment of silence at the White House this evening. I ask all Americans to join us as we remember the more than 500,000 of our fellow Americans lost to COVID-19 and to observe a moment of silence at sunset. I also hereby order, by the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, that the flag of the United States shall be flown at half-staff at the White House and on all public buildings and grounds, at all military posts and naval stations, and on all naval vessels of the Federal Government in the District of Columbia and throughout the United States and its Territories and possessions until sunset February 26, 2021. I also direct that the flag shall be flown at half-staff for the same period at all United States embassies, legations, consular offices, and other facilities abroad, including all military facilities and naval vessels and stations”.



Nottingham’s flag at half-mast on February 23, 2021

Hello, and welcome to Wednesday, February 24, 2021. It is a quiet day of catching -up. What does that mean? After outdoor pickle ball and distancing Tai Chi, I did office work. Correspondence and paperwork were the order of the day. Later, Peggy and I watched *Borat Subsequent Moviefilm* https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/borat_subsequent_moviefilmstarring starring Sacha Baron Cohen and his daughter. I had heard about it on NPR’s *Fresh Air* and that interview of him had peeked my curiosity. The movie was bizarre, weird, almost pornographic, and both funny and upsetting. As in the original *Borat*, the film points out some of the absurdities of American. It is a tribute to free speech.

Good morning, the sun is shining and the wind is blowing. It is Thursday, February 25, 2021. What a way, to start the day (note the rhyme) I heard good news. While exercising, I saw the amazing and inspiring tipping war happening in Cincinnati, Ohio <https://abcnews.go.com/US/cincinnati-tip-war-raises-34000-restaurant-staff-hometown/story?id=75731421> “A rival ‘tip war’ that’s been escalating for nearly a month has now generated over \$34,000 for Cincinnati restaurant workers struggling during the [COVID-19](#)

pandemic” the headline read. Here is the story. “It all started on Jan. 9, when a Xavier University alum in town to show his daughter the school ate lunch at Cincinnati staple Zip's Cafe. After chatting with his server, a fellow Xavier alum, the man left a \$1,000 tip on a \$54.59 bill and a note on a napkin that said: ‘Please share this tip with all of your employees as they work so hard and are dealing with COVID. Go Xavier’. The restaurant shared news of the generous tip on Facebook -- unbeknownst to them, inspiring two University of Cincinnati fans to one-up the Xavier tipper.”

In the afternoon, I returned to Mars. Again, while exercising and watching, I saw the NOVA program, *Looking for Life on Mars* <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/video/looking-for-life-on-mars/>. I was able to relive the excitement, joy and celebration of the team as the rover, Perseverance, landed in Jezero Crater. That location represents an ancient river delta where scientists’ hope to find evidence of life. The program showed all the amazing work done in a germ free environment in preparation for the launch. And, all their efforts were done while distancing because of COVID-19. Also, the program showed how on our planet, you can find in rocks evidence of micro-organisms. They planned to compare these geologic signs of life to what they discover on Mars.

Welcome and hello, it is Friday, February 26, 2021. I left the house for the first time in 2 days-wow! Yes, I did have moments of cabin fever tempered by the chilling wind which loudly said, “stay home”. For my maiden voyage was to the neat city of Exeter. First, I went there for joint distancing outdoor Tai Chi session. I am still a novice at Tai Chi but I felt I keep up the group. Then, I walked to Water Street Bookstore. It was nice to see shops open with restrictions on entrance and everyone in town wearing face masks. At least, the residents and the town of Exeter get the importance of face masks. I went to the bookstore to see if my book was there and if it had been properly displayed. After a short hunt, the book was located. Then, I helped to strategically position it. Yippee, I have a book in a bookstore! This marked another small step in my book tour.



Water Street Bookstore owner, Daniel W. Chartrand with my book

My last stop in the ‘big city’ was the Bank of America bank. There, I applied my Insights for a Better Mental Health: June 2020 entitled *Making Every Encounter Count!* <https://forumhome.org/insights-for-a-better-mental-health-june-p32908-149.htm> message to the teller. She was originally from Somerville, Massachusetts. This gave me an opportunity to demonstrate my “Somerville Rule”. What is that? Here, is the back story. Years ago, I was doing some telemarketing. Yes, I was one of those dreaded, meal interrupting and annoying persons on the telephone. In one call, the person was not interested in my company’s product,

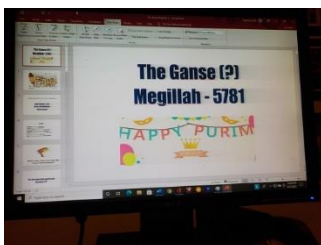
but nevertheless we had a great conversation. As we chatted, she said she lives in Somerville, Massachusetts. I added, that I too, while attending Tufts College had lived in Somerville. She then uttered the Somerville Rule. She declared, “In everyone life, there is Somerville”. Furthermore, as more proof of this rule, Obama once lived in Somerville while adding Harvard. See how often will you encounter another person from you home town. Geography is a great way to relate to another. Tyr it. And, there is a correlating idea based on this rule Here it is. When, meeting a new person, instead of asking “what do you do?” instead make inquiry of “Where are you from?” It is great way to connect and relate. In leaving the bank, I, also took a picture of the distancing floor markers and shields to document the economic changes and impact of the pandemic.



A bank interior in the pandemic-shields, distancing and masks required.

Good morning and welcome to Saturday, February 27, 2021. It is snowing. And thanks to COVID-19, in contrast to Robert Frost’s poem *Stopping By Woods on a Snowy Evening*, “miles to go before I sleep”, I do not have miles to go. Yes, I have things to before I sleep. But, and there is that but again, thanks to my computer and Zoom, I will do many things but only will travel electronically miles before I sleep.

In the evening I participated in my synagogue’s Purim spiel entitled *The Ganse Megillah 5781*. It was another example of creativity in the face of distancing and how people can raise to the occasion. All the characters aka performers were in their own homes as was all the large appreciative audience. This was yet another Zoom triumph. And, as the newspaper would report, “a good time was had by all”.



Power points as part of the Purim’s spiel’s production

Later that night, again while exercising, I watched the *American Experience- Voice of Freedom* <https://www.wgbh.org/program/american-experience/voice-of-freedom>. The program chronicled the life and the amazing voice of Marian Anderson. The show keyed on her historic

open air concert at the Lincoln Memorial on Easter Sunday, 1939. The event took place there because the DAR's Constitution auditorium refused both negro performers and black audiences. Her voice was stunning and the concert was a triumph in the Civil Rights movement. It took place in the Washington, DC which was then dominated by Jim Crow restrictions. Watching it, made me proud to be an American and my mind I was singing, *We shall overcome*.

Welcome to Sunday, February 28, 2021. Tomorrow will be a problem. How come? This is a non-leap year year. This means tomorrow is March 1, instead of being February 29th. February is the only month of the entire year without a 29th or a National Cribbage Day except every 4 years. Besides that, while exercising I learned three things. First, sexual harassment is a global issue. Second, light pollution is real. Constant light and night light interferes with our **melatonin** production. The less melatonin one has results in sleep trouble and health issues. Parts of the solution include that outdoor lights are only focused down, that lights have automatic timers and that they are turned off lights when not in use. And third, brains can grow even as we age. Neurogenesis and metroplasty can occur throughout the life. These can be facilitated exercise, learning, solving new problems, proper diet, and creativity. It was reassuring to know that you can teach an old dog new tricks. And, as dog learns them, its brain improves!

Hello, it is Monday, March 1, 2021. We have marched into March with mixed results. This marks my distancing Diary anniversary month. There is an old saying, March comes in as a lion and goes out of lamb. Well, today came in as lamb and is going out as lion, with a fierce wind and a dropping temperature. I am always looking for signs of spring and hope. I found it today with the maple tree with their sap buckets. Exercising I watched the PBS program, *Great Yellowstone Thaw*. I took seeing show, as yet another or hope for spring.



Tapping maple tree: A sign of the coming spring

Good morning, America! (sorry, a quick shout out the ABC's GMA)), it is Tuesday, March 2, 2021 and a lot is happening. First, let me tell you about this morning and later today I hope to share my big news. Three things happened this morning. First, the weather took center stage. March did live up to reputation by coming in like a lion. It came in with the arctic blast with winds gusting up to 50 MPH. It was so windy that we were for that morning trapped by trees down on NH Route 156. And the weather was so disruptive that on WMUR the school closing announcements replaced COVIN town, county and state cases statistics. Second, I fell in love again with geology. I started to watch the Great Courses' *The World's Greatest Geological Wonders: 36 Spectacular Sites* by Michael E. Wusession, PhD,

<https://www.thegreatcourses.com/courses/the-world-s-greatest-geological-wonders-36-spectacular-sites>. I loved taking a geology course in

college and in turn have also taught it on the collegiate level. It was great to see the sites, hear about their geologic origins and discover their impact on human history. Finally, ABC will offer series called *The Soul of America*

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/entertainment/tv/2021/02/11/abc-news-series-soul-nation-showcases-black-life-america/6709121002/>. It spot lights the black experience in America. This is a great way to honor Black History month!

Drum roll, please. And now, I will announce my big news.. I got my first COVID vaccination this afternoon. Peggy and I drove to Exeter. Sadly, they would not include her for her first shot. It was Pfizer Manufacturing Belgium NV. I was impressed by the size, scale, coordination and organization of program. Long lines of cars funneled into rows with many folks checking on each phase of the operation. First, we had an initial screening. Then, we were directed to a numbered parking spot and told to put the hazard lights on until the nurse came by and gave me the shot. However, before she administered it, she landed me my appointment for the second shot. After I received the injection, we were told to wait in the car for 15 minutes to make sure I did not have a bad reaction to it. Finally, before driving off, a last person checked to make sure I had date, time and place for my second dose. And, with that, I joined my fellow seniors in the vaccine bragging club.



Steve just after he got his first vaccine shot at Exeter High School holding his second shot appointment card Photograph by Peggy Tucker

Hello and welcome to Wednesday, March 3, 2021. I want to talk about a person crisis today which was a by-product of COVID -19. When I awoke, I discovered to my horror the left lens of my eye glasses was gone!!It was an OMG moment with panic to follow. After a hurried, frantic unsuccessful search of the bed room and house, I was about to figure out how to get a replacement lens. Then, I remembered I had recently put my spectacles in my parker's packet. Here is where the pandemic was the cause. I had taken off my glasses and put them in there because my face mask made them fogged up. And, I wore the mask is because of the virus. One more embarrassing part of the entire episode is that I went almost 2 days before I noticed the lens was missing!! Go figure?

I experienced immediate relief and joy when I found them in that packet. But, and there is that but again, I wanted to make sure the lens I had just put in, was done correctly. I went to the eye glass shop in the Epping's Walmart. The person there adjusted my glasses. While in the store, I photographed the turned off water fountain with its accompanying sign.



The Walmart water fountain.

This is just one more way to document life during the pandemic.

Enough, is enough, let's laugh!



A New Department: Did you know?

The international distress call "MayDay" originated in the 1920's, and is a contraction of the French "venez m'aider" (Come and help). It was adopted as a simple radio call because of the relatively "heavy" air traffic at the time between London and Paris. It was suggested by a French airport employee.

Same idea as did you know?

I have a book recommendation. The book is Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents by Isabel Wilkerson <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/51152447-caste>. As Goodreads says about the volume, it "examines the unspoken caste system that has shaped America and shows how our lives today are still defined by a hierarchy of human divisions". The book is very current and provides insights about the United States now and the origins of our caste system.

Okay, I get it-now to the humor!

Regular Humor

A bear walks into a bar and says, "Give me a whiskey... and a cola." "Why the big pause?" asks the bartender. The bear shrugged. "I'm not sure. I was born with them."

Did you hear about the actor who fell through the floorboards? He was just going through a stage

My wife got so mad at me when I told her she had no sense of direction. She packed up her bags and right!

What do you call a train carrying bubblegum? A chew-chew train.

What did the Tin Man say when he got run over by a steamroller? "Curses! Foil again!"

No matter how much you push the envelope, it'll still be stationary.

If you don't pay your exorcist, you can get repossessed.

I didn't like my beard at first. Then it grew on me.

Did you hear about the cross-eyed teacher who lost her job because she couldn't control her pupils?

COVID-19 Humor



If you've ever used the same sponge to wash your dishes for more than a few days, don't worry about what's in the vaccine.

These social distancing guidelines have really killed the pitchfork and torch wielding mobs

I'm not breaking up with you, I'm just social distancing.

New words thanks to COVID-19

COVIDIOTA

This Spanish term was coined online, according to the experts at Babel, and can apply “to anyone who isn't following lockdown rules, such as those who are still meeting friends, having parties, or sharing drinks—and everything else in between.” In English, you'd say *covidiot*.

ON-NOMI

Bars are closed, but friends are still finding a way to enjoy happy hour—only now, they do it via video chat. The Japanese have created a word for this new coronavirus activity: *on-nomi*, which literally means “drink online.”

ZOOM BOMBING

This term refers to the unwanted presence of a person on a video chat, usually in the meeting program Zoom. “It’s the *photobombing* of the coronavirus age,” the Babel experts explain. “Whether you use this term to describe a complete stranger entering your work’s video meeting, or the friend you didn’t want to see inviting themselves to your digital get-together, is up to you entirely.”

SPENDEMIC

This word—which was, the Babel experts say, coined by *The New York Post*—refers to the increase in online shopping during the pandemic.

CORONIALS

According to the Babel experts, *coronials* is the term being used for the babies who will be born after lockdown: “*Coronials* began trending on social media when social media users wondered if the pandemic could cause an increase in birth rate since more time spent in the home could lead to slightly bigger families in the future.”



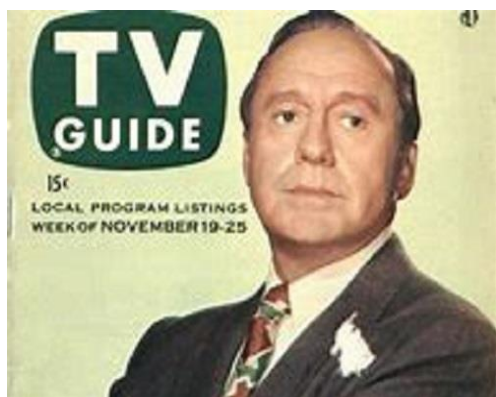
368 days of distancing and now I am into its second year!!!

The Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner: Part XXXIX

Steve Soreff, MD

Today, in Sunday, March 14, 2021 and it my 368th day, the start of my 57th week (which is for Heinz sight, so you can catch-up 😊), and 13th month of social and physical distancing.

This is the 39th issue of the Diary (note, for me, the term *the Diary* has taken on a life of its own). Yesterday, marked its first anniversary. Taken together these represent a moment to pause for reflection. Sorry, remember, this one. A bear walks into a bar and asks “for whiskeyand shelter”, the bartender inquires, “why the big pause”. The bear replies, I was born that way. The actual reflecting will be done when I get to the events Saturday, March 13, 2021-the official start date of the Diary. Furthermore, when I think of the number 39, Jack Benny always comes to mind. H was always 39 years old. Also, remember TV Guide? And, wow, it cost 15 cents once!



Remember the TV Guide?

Enough of that, let us look back for the last 10 days.

Hello and welcome to this cold, windy Friday, March 5, 2021. Yes, March roars in with its chilly breath. It wants to remind us that it is still winter. It was cold. How cold? Cold enough to cut distancing, outdoor down to one set and precede pickleball. Two quick ideas. First, I have been informed that dogs can be trained to smell COVID in an infected person <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-020-03149-9>. The jury is still out on this, but perhaps you'll see dogs smelling out people as they enter a sporting event. Second, March marks New Hampshire and my first year anniversary with COVID-19 and distancing. Yes, in March, 2020 NH registered its first case of COVID-19.

Hello again, I just returned metaphorically from writer's heaven. Are you crazy! Let me explain. While exercising, I watched on PBS the Library of Congress National Book Festival: Celebrating American Ingenuity <https://www.loc.gov/item/prn-20-039/library-of-congress-celebrates-american-ingenuity-and-takes-2020-national-book-festival-online-for-readers-everywhere/2020-05-28/>. The 20th Festival focused on the theme of American Ingenuity. How appropriate is that. The COVID world has led to the flowering of ingenuity. Due to the pandemic, it was virtual event. So, I got to see the cream of the crop of American authors where they work in their homes. As an author, I loved seeing and hearing them. They are inspiring. Many equated ingenuity to curiosity, imagination and connecting dissimilar things.

*Speaking of reflection, before Zooming to Friday night services. I attended a New Hampshire Humanities lecture entitled *Plague: Stories of Epidemics* given by Dr. Katherine Gaudet. She pointed out the many names for the plague. Some of the names included disease, sickness, bubonic plague, pneumonic plague, the Black Death, contagious disease, contagion, epidemic, pandemic, pestilence, and the pest. She noted the long history of plagues going back to the Biblical 10 plagues visited upon Pharaoh. Back to reflection, she offered several underlying themes of all of these afflictions. People thought that plagues would be over quickly. Public health measures helped to contain them. And societies blamed other countries and immigrants for them. Sound familiar?*

Good morning, it is Saturday, March 6, 2021. The sun is shining; it is cold and the wind blowing. Keeping to my Saturday schedule, while exercising I watched PBS' *Unladylike2020* <https://nhpbs.pbslearningmedia.org/collection/unladylike2020/>. The program "honors the

centennial of women's suffrage. These digital resources present the rich history of 26 little-known Progressive Era women, diverse in profession, race, ethnicity, geographical and class backgrounds, sexual orientation and gender expression, who broke barriers in then-male-dominated fields such as science, business, journalism, exploration, and the arts. Touching on topics such as the labor movement, immigration, politics, civil rights, and women's suffrage, these resources develop students' historical thinking skills and help them make connections between past and present." It was a powerful reminder of our nation's history of lynching, racial, ethnic and religious oppression, anti-immigrant sentiments, segregation, and anti-Native American elimination activities. Sorry, it does bring to mind the old saying, "You've come a long way". And, It serves as a wake of call for things we have to still do for equality for everyone.

Continuing, Peggy and I had breakfast and played Mexican Train while listening to *Wait, Wait, Don't Tell Me*. Then, I Zoomed off to Torah Study.. The morning Shabbat prayer service was just finishing up. The Hebrew school students had been participating in it I was impressed by how they could learn through their Zoom classes. The school had been remote for a year. . Their learning this way was another example of American ingenuity.

Good morning, the sun is shining, the temperature rising, the outdoors calling and the anniversaries coming. It is Sunday. March 7, 2021. First, the good news, the Senate passed yesterday the 1.9 Trillion Relief Bill. Washington hears the people and has finally responds. It is signal of help and hope. Now to the morning's media features on March's one year anniversary of COVID. While exercising, and watching, the shows made these retrospective points. First, there had been too slow recognition that the virus is airborne. Second, we are not doing enough to sequence the virus' mutations in their DNA. The fact is that viruses mutate. This heightens the importance of the total elimination of them.. Third, virial transmissions and deaths can be attributed in economic and social inequality both national and globally. And fourth, the need to looks at the individual stories and people instead of just statistics. That is what Dan Barry of the New York Times in his piece called "*The Epicenter*" <https://bdnews24.com/health/2020/12/04/the-epicenter> did. He told the story of several people in a swatch of Queens, New York during pandemic in March and April, 2020. Then, at its Elmhurst Hospital <https://bdnews24.com/health/2020/12/04/the-epicenter> 13 patients died of COVID on one day.

As promised about the call of the wild, Peggy and I along with some of our Mexican Train gang hiked part of the rail trail between Raymond and Manchester in Candia. There were many folks walking or even jogging. The trail was that unique New Hampshire seasonal combination of ice and mud, We did see some evidence of spring. That is good news,



A swamp with water, ice and snow along the rail trail

Monday, March 8, 2021, a new day, a new week and a discovery. With the sun shining and the weather warming, our Tau Chi distancing gang went hiking and pickle balling before doing the sets. The group's Linda made a remarkable find as the group bush wacked in the nearby woods. There, suspended from a tree was small Styrofoam square box. When she retrieved it, she discovered a plastic 'return to sender' envelop, It was to be mailed to Missouri, to the NOAA National Weather Service (NWS) <https://www.weather.gov/>. Upon further investigation, the box contained a radiosonde <https://www.weather.gov/upperair/factsheet>. [What is a radiosonde? Here is what the website says.](#) "Since the late 1930s, the NOAA National Weather Service (NWS) has taken upper air observations with radiosondes. The radiosonde is a small, expendable instrument package (weighs 250 to 500 grams) that is suspended below a large balloon inflated with hydrogen or helium gas. As the radiosonde rises at about 300 meters/minute (about 1,000 feet/minute), sensors on the radiosonde transmit pressure, temperature, relative humidity and GPS position data each second. These sensors are linked to a battery powered, 300 milliwatt or less radio transmitter that sends the sensor measurements to a sensitive ground tracking antenna on a radio frequency typically ranging from 1676 to 1682 MHz or around 403 MHz Wind speed and direction aloft are also obtained by tracking the position of the radiosonde in flight using GPS or a radio direction finding antenna. Observations where winds aloft are also obtained from radiosondes are called "rawinsonde" observations. The radio signals received by the tracking antenna are converted to meteorological values and from these data significant levels are selected by a computer, put into a special code form, and then transmitted to data users. High vertical resolution flight data, among other data, are also archived and sent to the NOAA National Climatic Data Center." That is so cool.



Linda with the white square box

HELLO!, did you hear me? I yelled because today, Tuesday, March 9, 2021 and warming sun was glowing. Yes, spring was in the air. And, on the ground, I went for walk. Suddenly, my icy road turned into mud season.



Instant mud season

I also, went to Israel today. How is that possible? I joined a program called Israel Connect <http://www.israelconnect.today/>. I has folks like me mentor Israeli high school students to become more proficient in learning and speaking English. They are already have had classes at an early grade on in English. But, this programs helps them to better understand and pronounce it, They have to pass national English test to qualify for the universities. The universalities English textbooks. It is quite a satisfying experience helping a student to master English. And, I became more appreciative that English is a difficult language is to learn.

Hello and welcome to Wednesday, March 10, 2021. All is forgiven. How come? The sun is shing and it is warm. Yes, did you hear me? It is short sleeve shirt hot. The mind is amazing. One glorious day can make you forget the entire winter. Okay, almost. And yes, it will change again. But right today, parents and kids are outdoors; the birds are singing, I was also pleased that the 1.9 Trillion Relief Bill was finally passed by both houses and is on the way to be signed.

Welcome, to Thursday, March 11, 2021. Today was one of venturing out. Peggy and I went for blood work in Concord. In terms of chronicling the pandemic, medical facilities and doctors' offices get an A in following CDC guidelines. And to document it, here is a picture of the waiting room. It was not only sterile but also lacked the outdated magazines often found in doctors' waiting room. And, as you can see there is strict prohibition about moving furniture aka chairs. You will sit 6 feet apart! I did tell the pleasant and efficient phlebotomist that her work was in vein!! She, at least, smiled. Later, Peggy and I hiked on some conservation land in Concord along the Merrimack River. The water was calm. There were many folks walking their dogs as the sun attempted to shine.



The waiting room for my blood to be drawn

Good morning, it is a windy Friday, March 12, 2021. I am marching toward the big first year anniversary of the he Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner. It looks hopefully that there will not be a second anniversary. And, I am not sure it should be for the first year, a celebration or reflection or a memorial service. We needed something to celebrate

with the warmer weather, so the Tai Chi gang wore Hawaiian outfits to greet the coming spring.



Tai Chi moves as we move into spring Photograph by Donne Marchetto

In the evening, I watch the ABC's World News. I was dismayed to see how the few minutes of actual news were sandwiched between a cavalcade of cute new medications with a long list of side-effects. But, and yes, here is that bit again, the program closed with a collage of grandparents, after their second vaccinations, were reuniting with their grandchildren. They had been separated for a year. Seeing their joy and emotions were inspiring and tear-jerking. Yes, I miss my grandsons. Dam you COVID 19!

Today is Saturday, March 13, 2021, and before getting to the first year anniversary, I wanted to get my daily exercise in. Yes, it is very important for my health and mental health that I get a work-out in (neat, note the out and in together). While exercising, I watched programs on neurogenesis and the Grand Canyon. The first one emphasized the need for physical exercise to enhance neurons reproduction and synaptic connections. The other featured not only the beauty of the canyon itself but also how it was formed, It was an amazing origin story and my love affair with geology continued.

Now for the real significance of today, March 13. This is a day that I have both dreaded and looked forward to. Why, you ask? There is a term sailors and more recently aviators have used to describe circumnavigating the world. It is called *tying the knot*. That means they cross their starting lines and thereby, have completed their full circle of the planet. For me, March 13 represents my crossing the one year line of this voyage called "The Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner".

Here is part of that first day's Diary <https://forumhome.org/the-diary-of-a-reluctant-social-distance-extrovert-prisoner-p32507-1.htm>, " To be exact this self-imposed prison sentence of an undetermined sentence began on Friday night, March 13, 2020 (Friday the thirteenth) at 10:12 PM. Upon returning home from attending Friday night services at Etz Hayim Synagogue and struggling with the toilet paper hoarding crowds in the supermarket, my partner greeted me with a request aka ultimatum. She suggested, we immediately commence a strict social distancing program for the next two weeks. Her rationale was correct and still annoying. She is the part time

caregiver for her delightful and brilliant 16-month old grandson, Emerson. So, if she were to become ill, then she could not fulfill her childcare duties. Plus, it is clear that locally and nationally self-isolation is the right thing to do.”



To be honest, I never thought it would take this long. And, the distancing is still going on, as will this Diary, too. I'm in it for the duration. With this first year mark, it calls for moments of reflection. I made a number of predictions when the pandemic all began back seemingly decades ago. I thought the confinement would lead to increase divorces. In fact, the divorce rate has decreased. One of the big reasons is the very slowness of the courts during COVID-19 crisis. But, what has accelerated rate in the incidences of domestic violence. In contrast, the urge to couple after the first date has sky rocketed. I had wondered what about the effects of isolation would have retired individuals. I know of some folks who came out of retirement to take jobs, because they were bored. I would have not predicted wearing a face mask would be a political statement. Nor, could I have forecasted Back Lives Matter (BLM) movement. But, I agree with its message and that is yet another wake-up call about conscious and unconscious racism.

One easy answer in predictions is that the work world will never be the same. When and if the pandemic is over, more work will be done from home. Period! School is altered and colleges and universities will never be the same. And, in looking back, I have not been physically to synagogue in a year. But, I have been there via Zoom for a year. Amazingly, we have done outdoor distancing Tai Chi for a full year despite snow, rain and some very hot days. And, thanks to the ability to keep the snow and ice off the outdoor pickleball ball courts, we have played the game, again for a full year.

The best news of the entire year is that it has worked. What does that mean? I nor my partner nor my and her family has got COVID-19. We are alive!! I am glad for vaccinations. I have had the first shot and expect the second one on March 31. But, I do not see that really

changing my distancing life for some. I have hope for future and pride in how we have weathered the pandemic.

With all that, let's take a deep breath, smile and laugh



Regular Humor

I bought myself a locket today and I put my own picture in it. I am now independent.
The person who invented “Knock Knock” jokes certainly deserves a “No Bell” prize!

A backward poet writes inverse.

In a democracy it's your vote that counts. In feudalism it's your count that votes.

When cannibals ate a missionary, they got a taste of religion.

If you jumped off the bridge in Paris, you'd be in Seine .

A vulture carrying two dead raccoons boards an airplane. The stewardess looks at him and says, 'I'm sorry, sir, only one carrion allowed per passenger.'

Two fish swim into a concrete wall. One turns to the other and says, 'Dam!'

Two Eskimos sitting in a kayak were chilly, so they lit a fire on the craft. Unsurprisingly it sank, proving once again that you can't have your kayak and heat it too.

Two hydrogen atoms meet. One says, 'I've lost my electron.' The other says, 'Are you sure?' The first replies, 'Yes, I'm positive.'

Did you hear about the Buddhist who refused Novocain during a root canal? His goal: transcendental medication.

The fattest knight at King Arthur's round table was Sir Circumference. He acquired his size

from too much pi.

I thought I saw an eye doctor on an Alaskan island, but it turned out to be an optical Aleutian .

COVIN-19 Humor

John Travolta Coronavirus joke

As see on the CNN John Travolta was hospitalized for a suspected Coronavirus. But doctors soon realized that it was only a Saturday Night Fever and he will be Staying Alive.

Being quarantined with a talkative child...

-is like having an insane parrot glued to your shoulder

You know being self-quarantined isn't even that boring

-But I am surprised that there are 7884 grains of rice in one pack, and 7892 in another.

So many coronavirus jokes out there,

-it's a pundemic

I'm not talking to myself;

-I'm having a parent-teacher conference.

If I keep stress-eating at this level,

-the buttons on my shirt will start socially distancing from each other.



Since this the first anniversary, here is classic old one



380 days of distancing -moving into the second uncertain year of this

The Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner: Part XXXX aka XL

Steve Soreff, MD

It is Friday, March 26, 2021. It represents my 380th days, the end of my 58th week, and nearly completing my 13th month of social and physical distancing. To go one step more, this the 13th day of my second year of distancing. And, as the number 380 on the windows indicates, I am looking into an uncertain future. Yes, soon Peggy and I will have been vaccinated. But and there is that nagging but, will our lives really change? Furthermore, this marks my 40th Diary. 40 have many Biblical meanings. Perhaps, with Passover and the first seder happening, Saturday, March 27, those connotations start to be more relevant. The Israelites wanders for 40 years in the desert. In the days of Noah, it rained for 40 days and nights. Metaphorically, are we reaching a new promised land or world after the flood. Wow, my head is spinning. Instead, let us look back at the last 2 weeks.

Before getting to start on Monday, March 15, 2021, I want to catch you up on the weekend that preceded it. Remember, it was the anniversary weekend with events, tributes and recollections are over it. And the march into March will call for more moments of reflection. The weekend offered the end of winter mixed messages. We had a snow shower and then the sun came but out. Sorry, no rainbow was seen to complete the hoped for ending. And, so is the pandemic, it just goes on. I did exercise and watch Dick Proenneke's <https://adventure.howstuffworks.com/survival/wilderness/dick-proenneke.htm> amazing solo life

for over 30 years living in Alaska. I saw as he sawed trees to build his own cabin in the wilderness. Talk about social distancing and self-reliance, and Henry David Thoreau. Plus, I experienced a vexing problem of not being able to get on the Forum website. Go figure?

Hello, it is Monday, March 15, 2021 and I have much to report. I wanted to start the new week off with exercising, I watched an interview with NPR social science correspondent [Shankar Vedantam](#). He hosts the NPR program, *Hidden Brain* <https://www.npr.org/2015/09/03/437264048/about-hidden-brain>. He was explaining the futile ground from which demagogues grow. These individuals proclaim the glory of the nation's past, in contrast to its current struggles. This message is coupled with that they as leaders will restore each country's greatness. History is full of examples of what these dictators such as Hitler and Mussolini exactly did. The point he was marking was that the soil which promoted the rise to power of these individuals was the people's high anxiety. When persons are anxious, full of uncertainty and fearful, they are much more susceptible and accepting the autocratic solutions. This is appropriate understating of the uncertainty of COVID of our times.

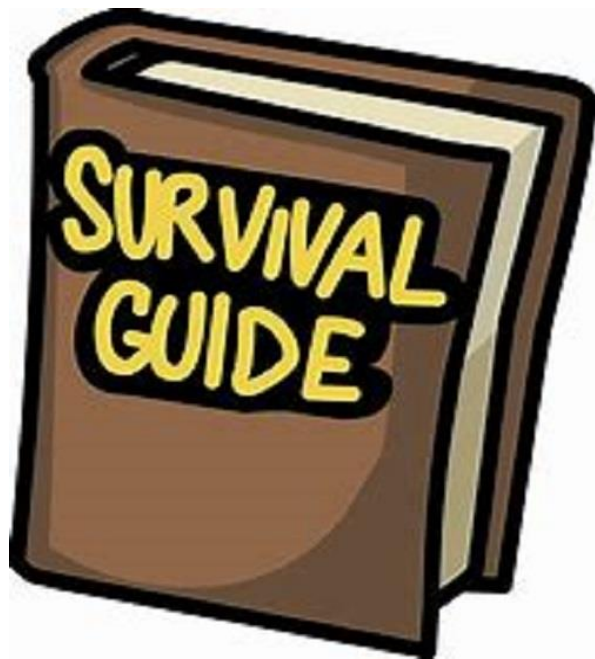
And since this a month of anniversary reflections, I want to give a shout to both national public radio and public television. These have been life sustaining for me. Except during their pledge weeks, they are free of the pesky, too long and too frequent advertisements. Their programs have been both entertaining and educational. Thank you. Moreover, for the record, I did put my money where my mouth is. And, in terms of full disclosure, I am a sustainer of both New Hampshire Public Radio and Television.

Then, in the face of bitter cold, gusting wind, we did our Tai Chi. We have gone from the Hawaiian theme and weather on Friday to an Alaskan winter today. As we did our sets, we thought we had earned Bragging Rights or were perhaps candidates for the Darwin Awards <https://darwinawards.com/>. That done and/or survived, I went to the Subaru dealer for my semi-annual car clock change. This is a product of the day light saving time change on March 14. Despite what should an easy adjustment, it is not. However, today was my lucky day. What could be more appropriate since 15 is my lucky number. As I drove into the dealership, the tire pressure warning light can on. The cause of the low pressure proved to be nail in the tire. I was in the right place, at the right time. Furthermore, remember, one of the reasons for the Diary is to document the pandemic. To do that, here is yet another example. The service desk put my car key in a plastic bag. This was done to minimize people actually touching the key.



My car key placed in a bag plastic to reduce possible viral transmission

Good morning, welcome Tuesday, March 16, 2021. Since March 2021 constitutes a COVID-19 anniversary month, I am looking back on some of my predictions. This is from “The Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner: Part Two Day three Monday March 16, 2020” <https://forumhome.org/the-diary-of-a-reluctant-social-distance-extrovert-prisoner-part-iii-p32566-1.htm>. Then, I wrote a piece entitled “Survival Guide”. Here are survival tactics that I thought I would employ. In *italics*, I describe what I done in each category during this year.



The picture from The Diary III March 16,2020

Now for the tactics. The following tactics are designed to help one survive and thrive day to day while practicing diligently social distancing. Remember, not one size does not fit all and over time be prepared to switch tactics.

1. Use the telephone to connect with others. Call any and all of these: an old classmate, someone living alone who is really isolated because of social distancing, relatives you have not talked to in years, a friend out-of-state or out-of-country, someone from your wedding party.

I have called many family and friends throughout the years. But these calls were particularly of importance as couple of friends had serious illnesses. What made them so significant was because of COVI I could not actually physically visit them and sadly they passed during the year.

2. Bring back the old board games. Yes, it is time to play Risk, Monopoly and OMG Candyland.

Peggy and I did continue to play Scrabble, Up-word*, King’s Cribbage, and Cribbage. But we have added especially on the weekends two people Mexican Train. Before COVID, we usually played it with our little group of four couples. We discovered how much fun it is for just two. Peggy has kept a rolling tally of our scores. The winner is To-be-Determined.*

**For both Scrabble and Up-word, we violate the usual convention. We do not keep score but enjoy the voice play involved.*

3. Work on a 1,000 puzzle.

My sister, Linda, did give us 1,000-piece New England scene puzzle. We planned to open it, soon. Even though, hopefully we both will get vaccinated, our distancing 'bubble' will continue for many more months. Hence, we get to the puzzle in the near future.

4. Remember those boxes you had from when you moved in years ago? Time to unpack them. Huge flea markets opportunities await you when the crisis is over.

Peggy has been cleaning out her office.

5. Do yard and garden work. One benefit, no black flies and mosquitos about.

Peggy constructed wooden raised gardens and garden house. There she grew a bounty of fruits and vegetables from the spring into the fall. We totally are locally.

6. Watch a movie and many films. Make them funny ones. Remember, laughter is the best medicine.

We rarely watched films. I did a lot of PBS programs while exercising.

7. Watch over several days or weeks one of the amazing multi-segment shows on Netflix, Hulu or Amazon Prime.

We ended up only watching a couple of PBS Masterpiece series- All Creatures Great and Small and Miss Scarlet

8. Convene a family meeting to discuss options. Kids may have some great ideas.

Sorry, empty nest, kids launched and only adults here.

9. Finally, organize your stamp or coin collection or whatever you have been collecting for years.

Great idea, but it did not happen. Early in pandemic, hurricane Peggy helped clean, clear out, and organize my office. It was a great move since for a year I have metaphorically not left my office.

10. Start a diary. You are living and participating in historic times.

What you are reading is proof of that is what I have done. I write something every day. Thanks for reading it. 11.

11. Write a letter to an old friend.

Instead, I call old friends on my landline. Done especially, on holidays like New Years

12. Take a walk, hike, visit the beach but only solo or with your social distance family. Painfully, I say this as an extrovert, these are not to be social occasions.

Many hikes and snowshoeing while keeping physical distance. Especially, enjoyed walks on the beaches on the coast of New Hampshire.

13 Meditate. Watch or listen to mediation CDs, DVD or Podcast.

Peggy plays meditation programs for sleep promoting. When I do Tai Chi, I have had moments like mediation.

14. Use your home exercise equipment.

We have and use regularly an elliptical machine and a stationary bicycle. Both are set-up so we can both exercise and watch something educational.

15. Read a book

I am part of a synagogue book club and read at least a book every month and a half.

16. Find sometime humorous about the situation. Peggy greeted me today with ‘good morning, fellow prisoner’. Or perhaps are we in “Is it too soon to laugh” phase? Here are two COVID 19 jokes.

Why would COVID-19 won't do any harm to Hollywood actor Tom Hanks? Answer: He has already survived a World War, being stranded on an island, being stranded at an airport, a failed moon landing, an emergency flight landing on the river and a ship hijacking.

This is your pilot speaking. I'm working from home today”.

I use Regular Humor and COVIN-19 Humor as treat to readers at the end of each Diary

After these reflections, the real star of the day was Zoom. How so? Let me show my typical Tuesday. First, I Zoomed to Talmud Class in Derry, NH. Next, I Zoomed to Israel to tutor my student there. Then, by Internet I attended a 4-part lecture series entitled *Freedoms and Challenges: America's Earliest Jewish Communities, 1650–1840*, presented by Professor Ellen Smith. She made a number of points. First, that the American Jewish experience was far different than it in Europe. The key was the freedom and most often acceptance in the United States. She added, with that freedom came intermarriage. Still, later in the day, I Zoomed to a meeting planning Nottingham's 300th anniversary.

Good morning, it is Wednesday, March 17, 2021, Saint Patrick's Day and if not, Irish eyes are smiling than, at least the sun is shining. And with the sun warming the day and the wind abated, all seems good again. But and there is that but again, I got to wondering, how come everyone both tries to wear green today and likes to celebrate the day. For Trivia Pursuit fans, in Boston the home of the Kennedys and in basketball, the Celtics, March 17 had a different reason to celebrate. On March 17, 1776, General George Washington from his army's position on Dorchester Heights forced the British forces to evacuate Boston. For years, in Beantown, it had used Evacuation Day to cover its observation Saint Patrick's Day. And to answer my original question as to the reason we all like St Pat's Day, here are some answers. It is the lovable quality of Irish humor, stories and legends, inspiring aspects of their songs and dances and the island history of rebellion.

In the afternoon, while exercising, I watched parts of *The War*, directed and produced by Ken Burns and Lynn Novick. It was a reminder of the long period of uncertainty, unknowing and death that people lived with throughout the war. It was also, a painful chronicle of America's history of racism while at the same time we were fighting for democracy and equality. It, also provided a perspective to our living in the pandemic. With the vaccine, there is a hope that in will end in less time than World War II.

Hello, and welcome to Thursday, March 18, 2021 and the word for today is hope. Let me approach it several ways. Starting with exercising, I watched on PBS *Newsroom Tokyo*. It showcased a Japanese school program which had students record their reactions to the pandemic. It was neat and paralleled the work being done here in Nottingham. In the Nottingham School, teachers are collecting pupils' reactions, stories and art work to the COVID-19 world. The Nottingham Historical Society is doing the same thing for adults. This article, *Today is Tomorrow's History—Life During the Pandemic* appeared in the Forum <http://forumhome.org/today-is-tomorrows-historylife-during-the-pandemic-p34283-129.htm>. These activities validate this Diary. Next, I saw Direct Talk, also from Japan. It featured Sarah Al-Amiri. She was in-charge of HOPE. HOPE is the name of the United Arab Emirates's mission to Mars. It is the name of the satellite which achieved orbit around Mars on February 9, 2021. <https://www.cnbc.com/2021/02/09/mars-probe-uae-attempts-to-become-first-arab-country-to-reach-mars-with-hope-probe.html>. Finally, I viewed *In the Name of Peace: John Hume in America*. This told the story of the legendary Irish politician and Nobel Prize winner John Hume. He employed American Civil Rights non-violent tactics to ultimately led to the Good Friday Peace Agreement, April 10, 1998. What was particularly gratifying to see the important role that America, played in making it happen. It specifically cited the work done by its Irish-American politicians, and the US Presidents in that achievement. Seeing it, made me very proud moment for America.

The final part of my hope story is about my Comcast aka xfinity saga. For a week, I have been plagued by not being able to the Forum website aka its home page on my computer. After a million hours on the phone without results, went to Manchester to get a new mode. Once gained I encountered several hours of phoning hell attempting to get it to work. Good new, it finally did. In the process I discovered another casualty of COVID -19. The Mall of the New Hampshire were restricted its hours of operation. The sign testifies to that.



Hours COVID 19 Restrictions Mall of New Hampshire

Hello and welcome to Friday, March 19, 2021. The sun is shining and the teasing hint of spring hangs in a cold wind. But and there is my but again, I did see more evidence and signs of spring <https://forumhome.org/signs-of-spring-p34284-105.htm>. There is a patch of open water along our beach. Perhaps, if I dared, I could kayak about 150 feet and claim to be the first one paddling in Pawtuckaway Lake for 2021. But I think not. While exercising, I watched a program about traveling in Portugal. It showed the huge extent of that nation's once empire which stretched from Africa to South America and from India to Indonesia. It reminded me a poem I once read. The poem tells of the sun's westward journey over once mighty empires of the world- China, Persia, Greece, Rome, Spain and England. Poet described the sun over America and moving toward China. There are two consequences of this poem. The first, if painful, it offers a moment of reflection into the rise and fall of nations., And, second, I cannot find the actual poem and its author. Could someone help him, please? If you know it, please tell me. Then, we celebrated our distancing Tai Chi gang's first anniversary. It is a wonderful, supportive group. We used food and good cheer to mark the occasion.

Hello, it is Saturday, March 20, 2021 and it is WARM out! We are on the cusp of Spring and the weather cooperated. In the morning, I followed my Saturday schedule. Exercising and watching, the big messages of the programs were violence against Asians and against women. The tipping point was the killings of Asian women in Atlanta, Georgia. Some of anti-Asian sentiment was attributed the emphasis of the China as the origin of COVID-19. Next, I wrote. Then while having Challah French toast, Peggy and I listened to *Wait, Wait, Don't Tell Me* and played Mexican Train. Completing the morning, I Zoomed to Torah Study and there we began the book of Leviticus.

In the afternoon we had two activities. The Pawtuckaway Lake Improvement Association (PLIA) teamed up with the Trails Committee of Nottingham Conservation Commission to plan a bridge on the Marsh Woods Trails <https://forumhome.org/the-marsh-woods-trails-adventure-p34211-105.htm>. Then, Peggy and I kayaked on the partially still frozen Pawtuckaway Lake. It was neat-before ice-out, we had kayaks in!



Peggy Tucker kayaking on partly frozen Pawtuckaway Lake

Good morning and welcome to the first day of spring, Sunday, March 21, 2021. Here is a quick thought. Listening and exercising to NHPR's *On Being* with Krista Tippett, [Christine Runyan](#), Clinical psychologist, talked about [What's Happening in Our Nervous Systems?](#) because of COVID-19's social and physical distancing. It highlighted how that we are all social beings and need each other. Yes, it says touching, being together and holding each other are critical. They are important part of not only our mental health but also our physical wellbeing.

In the afternoon, while exercising, I was treated to cavalcade neat ideas Rick Steves talked about *Why We Travel*. It was reminder how much travel does to expand the mind and shrink the world. This program also, underscores that this has been a full year without travel! Dam., I miss it. Next, *Deepak Chopra explained The Spiritual Laws of Success*. These included practicing detached involvement, helping others, that creativity can be born from chaos, embracing uncertainty and finding one's life purpose. He was inspiring in this pandemic world.

With the temperature in the low 60's, just like yesterday the lake called, so the woods summoned me. I went in search of evidence of spring. I found a few small green leafed plants amongst the millions of decaying oak leaves on the forest's floor. I, also encountered a man bicycling on my snowshoe trail. And, there was no snow, anywhere. I did reach white birch corridor. The trees stood tall, saluted me and shouted," spring".



The white birch corridor

I completed the day with watching members of the Israeli Olympic bob shed and skeleton team. It was inspiring and exciting. They noted the specter of the Israeli athletes of the Munch games in 1972. But their pride and determination were amazing!!!!

Good morning, another glorious spring day, Monday, March 22, 2021. It was warm and great for pickle ball and Tau Chi. I got wear shorts today! Hope is eternal. The later morning was marked by a quest. I went to 4 stores in Raymond in buy Passover cards. I looked at Dollar Store, Ben Franklin's, Walgreens and Hannaford's. All had a million Easter cards and many spring occasions cards such a Boss' Day and for Nurses Week, but none had any Passover cards. My explanation to them was that without Passover, there would not be an Easter did produce one result. I'll just have my matzo by myself. However, the spiky wheel gets the attention. After I complained to the manager at Hannaford, later he called me. After a hunt, he did find a few Passover cards. Praise the Lord and get the cards.

Also, while at Hannaford, I was pleased to be greeted by Kim. She was dispensing face masks to anyone who needed and wanted on.



The new greeter at Raymond Hannaford offering masks

Wow another warm, glorious spring day, it is Tuesday, March 23, 2021. I have a reflection. I went kayaking again with a calm, beautiful day there. What I am thinking about the very recent massive killings my guns in my country. This time it was in Boulder, Colorado We have learned nothing from Sandy Hook, Pittsburgh, Charleston and Atlanta. I love this nation, but our violent past and, sadly today, present gives a different view of America. I am sicked and heart broken. I recall the words Peter Seeger sang, “when we ever learn?”



Reflections on Pawtuckaway Lake

An adventure on Wednesday, March 24, 2021 is the order of the day. It began when I went to the Nottingham Post Office 03290 to mail the finally obtained Passover cards from Hannaford (see Monday’s card wanderings). In the Post Office, I heard a rooster cry. Others heard it, too. Then, a man came in and picked up 6 boxes. Each box contained one live ‘crowing’ rooster. Apparently, you can ship via the US Postal System some live animals. Will wonders never cease. After pickle ball and Tai Chi, I went to Concord to meet with my tax return accountant. It turned out, both he and his wife had and survived serious COVID-19 infections. He slept a great deal and lost the sense of smell and taste, Again, putting a face on statistics is very important. Every place I went to Concord masks were required. People are getting it. In a way, it is like wearing seat belts. In the beginning, few put them on when getting into a vehicle. Now, it is just part of the routine,

Welcome to Thursday, March 25, 2021. It is overcast and the news while viewed exercising offered a mixed bag of global events. The Suez Canal is blocked by a run-aground cargo ship. This highlight both the fragility of the world's international trade and our utter reliance upon it. A companion item is the shortage of semi-conductor chips. Yes, chips are controlling the economies and our lives. Next, I went to Myanmar two ways. First, I witnessed the repression by the military of the people there and their violence toward journalists reporting it. It makes me proud to call myself a journalist. Our job is to report the truth. Second, via Joseph Rosendo's travelogue filmed before the pandemic, I was able to see the beauty and the people of Myanmar. It showed the glory of Buddha, his ideas and his pagodas. Then, back to repression, I watched the world's reactions to the Chinese oppression of the Muslim Uighurs population. Finally, to end on a positive note, I saw the Olympic torch being run through the site of the devastation area from the Tōhoku, 2011 earthquake and tsunami. It offered hope that slowly people were returning to that region and the promised excitement of the Tokyo Olympics, 2021.

The afternoon proved to be very eventual. Peggy and I went the site of Exeter High School for our vaccine shots, she for her first, and I hopefully for my second. We both were successful. Neat, in fact, President Biden today, in his first press conference, announced that in excess of 100 million American had received at least one COVID vaccine shots. We proudly joined that number. Personally, I felt a moment of satisfaction having now my second shot. On the superficial level, I have entered fully vaccinated club of many of my friends. On the deeper level, I felt like Winston Churchill' said on **November 10, 1942** *"This is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning". I can start to see a future beyond distancing-meeting old friends who have been vaccinated in person, perhaps going back Planet Fitness, and seeing my grandsons, face to face. The idea of vaccination linked to liberation which is the key of Passover. Free at last; free at last.*



Peggy getting first COVIN vaccine

Wow, that is enough. It is time to smile, laugh and look forward to.



Did you Know: Neat interesting Facts

It is perfectly legal in Las Vegas to drink alcohol while walking down the sidewalk - but only if it is in a plastic container.

The first executive order was issued by George Washington to his department heads instructing them to "impress him with a full, precise and general idea of the affairs of the nation".
The most famous executive order is probably Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation

In the United States, the term flying the flag at "half-mast" only applies to naval vessels. On land, the correct term is "half-staff".

Regular Humor

I ate a clock yesterday; it was very time-consuming.

A perfectionist walked into a bar...apparently, the bar wasn't set high enough.

If we shouldn't eat at night, why do they put a light in the fridge?

A fire hydrant has H-2-O on the inside and K-9-P on the outside.

Never criticize someone until you've walked a mile in their shoes. That way, when you criticize them, they won't be able to hear you from that far away. Plus, you'll...

Did you hear about the semi-colon that broke the law? He was given two consecutive sentences.

My doctor asked if anyone in my family suffered from mental illness. I said, "No, we all seem to enjoy it."

Just once, I want a username and password prompt to say: "close enough."

Being an adult is the dumbest thing I have ever done.

I'm a multitasker. I can listen, ignore and forget all at the same time!

Went to an antique show and people were bidding on me.

COVID-19 Humor

Since March stands and falls as the first anniversary of distancing, I thought we should look at some of now classic earlier COVID jokes. If you recall, one of the big topics the was toilet paper.

Why did the chicken cross the road? Because the chicken behind it didn't know how to socially distance properly.

Two grandmothers were bragging about their precious darlings. One of them says to the other, "Mine are so good at social distancing, they won't even call me."

Whose idea was it to sing "Happy Birthday" while washing your hands? Now every time I go to the bathroom, my kids expect me to walk out with a cake.

My husband purchased a world map and then gave me a dart and said, "Throw this and wherever it lands—that's where I'm taking you when this pandemic ends." Turns out, we're spending two weeks behind the fridge.

Ran out of toilet paper and started using lettuce leaves. Today was just the tip of the iceberg, tomorrow *romaine's* to be seen.

My mom always told me I wouldn't accomplish anything by lying in bed all day. But look at me now, ma! I'm saving the world!

After years of wanting to thoroughly clean my house but lacking the time, this week I discovered that wasn't the reason.

If I keep stress-eating at this level, the buttons on my shirt will start socially distancing from each other.

Every few days try your jeans on just to make sure they fit. Pajamas will have you believe all is well in the kingdom.

Yesterday I ran out of soap and body wash and all I could find was dish detergent. Then it *Dawned* on me.



393 days of distancing and the number appears open ended!

The Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner: Part XLI

Steve Soreff, MD

Welcome to Thursday, April 8, 2021. It marks my 393th day, the end of my 60th week and 14th month of social and physical distancing. One good thing about 393 is that is a palindrome. As well as, I am well because of my isolation, this also the 41st Diary and 26th day into my 2nd year of being Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner. Wow, time flies when you are measuring the days. It is also Yom HaShoah aka Holocaust Remembrance Day. My oldest daughter and son's great grandparents were murdered by the Nazi. We must never forget.

It is time to look back the weeks of Passover and Easter and yes, look forward with hope.

Hello, and let me please, resolve an issue which a reader brought to my attention for the last Diary. It turns out that the correct Roman Numeral for the 40th Diary for the 380th distancing day March 26, 2021 should be XL instead of my XXXX. We are all learning. Thank you, reader. Now one more housekeeping item.

Since one of the purposes of this Diary continues to document the pandemic, here is other evidence that it spawned many local and national businesses. In our area, a distillery changed to producing hand sanitizers. A recent visit to Staples and revealed an entire store section devoted the COVID preventing items. These ranged for plastic gloves to face masks and from face shields to sneeze shields. This is evidence of how both people rise to the occasion and profits in the pandemic.



At Staples on the floor pointing to where the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)



Just part of the Staples' PPE products

These are reminders of what Japanese Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto is alleged to have said after the attack on Pearl Harbor, “**I fear all we have done is to awaken a sleeping giant and fill him with a terrible resolve.**” When President Biden announced on March 25, that America have vaccinated in excess of 100 million people, he was demonstrating what happens when the United States aka the sleeping giant focuses upon solving problems.

Good morning, it is Saturday, March 27, 2021. I have done my Saturday schedule: exercise, breakfast with Peggy while playing Mexican Train and listening to *Wait, Wait, Don't Tell Me*, and Torah Study. While exercising I watched the PBS's *Independent Lens: Coded Bias* <https://www.wbur.org/artery/2020/11/18/documentary-coded-bias-review>. It documents how algorithms not only can govern our lives but also shows that they contain gender, race, and economic group biases. It exposes the hidden prejudices involved with artificial intelligence (AI) and facial recognition programs. It illustrates the power of these algorithms in determining such things as who gets mortgages, it determining criminal sentencing and performing teacher evaluations.

This afternoon for us, Passover begins and we will have the first seder at our house. Traditionally, the seder commences with blessings, candle lighting and the asking of Four Questions. Again, by custom, the youngest child recites them. The first question is “Why is this night different from all other nights? Historically, this inquiry is about the reason the seder is not the same as any other evening meal. But, and yes, here is that but again, in this more than a year of the pandemic, it has so many more meaning than ever before. For example, this is our second first night seder by Zoom. Go figure. However, having more than a year of distancing under our belt, we are prepared for it. Our seder by Zoom brought together Soreff Nation from Israel, New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Illinois, and New Hampshire. It was wonderful having all my children (now

adults), grandsons, sister and Peggy on the same gallery Zoom view. Not the same as in person, but it was great!!

Then Peggy and I kayaked and had our own private second day together. That was meaningful and wonderful, too.



The seder plate Peggy prepared.

Good morning, the first day of Passover, the first day of matzo for week and it is Sunday, March 28, 2021. While exercising, I learned 2 neat things. The first was a woman in England has her goats participating via Zoom in many companies' conference calls and other more personal conversations as a pleasant diversion and entertainment. Yes, another example of innovations in the pandemic. Second, there is project called the *Red Sea to the Dead Sea* to save the Dead Sea. It pumps water from the Red Sea to the Dead Sea to stabilize the shrinkage of the Dead Sea. What makes it really neat is that highlights an area of cooperation among Israel, the Palestinian Authority and Jordan that works..

This morning Peggy and I did semi-seder via Zoom as part morning worship at the Nottingham UU Church. It was nice to spread the joy, meanings and message of Passover,



Peggy showing and explaining by Zoom the seder plate

That afternoon, we went by Zoom to my synagogue 's second seder. Then, Peggy prepared a super Passover meal. On to eating more matzo for the next week!

Good morning, the winds blowing but the sun is out and welcome to Monday, March 29, 2021. Today marks my 13th month during my distancing world in which I observed National Cribbage Day, Right now my computer opponent, Bill and myself are in the middle of huge duel. But, today there is starting another dual. This is the tale of two cities. The one which is the center of global media is the trial of the Minneapolis police officer who was on George Floyd's neck for over 8 minute leading to his death. That will offer one view of that city. That picture shows racism and led to the Black Lives Matter (BLM)

movement. The other view of that city comes from seeing it as the home of the [Minnesota Orchestra](#). And that orchestra made this dramatic and ground breaking tour of South Africa entitled MINNESOTA ORCHESTRA MAKES HISTORY IN SOUTH AFRICA WITH ‘MUSIC FOR MANDELA’ <https://www.tptoriginals.org/musicformandela/>. As its website says “MNO Presents Music for Mandela: Minnesota Orchestra in South Africa. This one-hour [Minnesota Original \(MNO\)](#) special follows [Minnesota Orchestra](#) on its historic tour through South Africa during the summer of 2018, which earned the organization the distinction of becoming the first major US orchestra to tour the continent of Africa. The film features the love and the glory that music can bring to people and to bring them together.

Despite the brutal wind, we did Tai Chi, Then, as a newspaper reporter, I interviewed folks in advance of my town’s first ever deliberative session, The goal of journalism is to get the facts to the people, Today, I did that job.

Hello, it is Tuesday, March 30, 2021. The sun is shining. It is warming outside and the wind abated. I saw a Facebook posting showing the ship called the Evergreen being freed in Suez Canal in Egypt during Passover. It was cute and bizarrely appropriate message of freedom. And I am, in the spirit of Passover, am starting to feel free. With my second shot done, I am now imagining more opportunities beyond my office.

The lake called in the afternoon. I kayaked for 2 ½ hours. It was great. I passed over a bridge with a smiley face on it. That made my day. Both the smiley face and I came from Worcester, Massachusetts, Therefore, I claim bragging rights about the smiley face. Here is its back story <https://www.cnn.com/style/article/artsy-smiley-face-origin/index.html> or origin tale . In 1963, an insurance company there asked Harvey Ball to design something that would lift employee morale. Ball, a graphic designer, rose to the occasion and created the smiley face in 10 minutes. He did not trademark it and only received \$45 for his work. However, the figure quickly became a global success and remains as a universal icon. As a result, Worcester is not only considered the home of American rocketry and the birth control pill but also the birthplace of the smiley face. When Harvey Ball died on April 12, 2001, the marquee at the Worcester Historical Society showed a smiley face frowning.



The smiley face on the bridge to Horse Island, Pawtuckaway State Park

Good morning, it is Wednesday, March 31, 2021. Good pickle ball and Tai Chi was followed by moments of reflection. A number of programs watched while exercising promoted me to think about two things. The first was President Truman. The more I find out about him the deeper my appreciation of him has grown. Not only did he recognize Israel a few minutes after it declared its independence but also he led the way in getting civil rights changes. He desegregated the armed forces. Second, the geology programs, that I watched, have impressed on me the amazing dimension of time.. Things happened over

millions of years. Makes me realize how we are participants on a long playing global record. What is now on the top of a mountain was once on the bottom of the sea. What is now dessert was once lavish vegetation.

Hello and welcome to Thursday, April 1, 2021. And the weather played the April's fool joke. After a teasing several mild days, it turned cold, rained and then snowed. The message was clear-too early for spring fever! And speaking of signs of spring, I confess I missed the elephant in the room-baseball and the Red Sox. The season opener was today but was rained out. At least, they did not lose. Last year they were dreadful. But, and there is that but again, as long time Red Sox fan, I still believe this year will be better. I hope?

The big event of the night was a NHPBS special which was taste of Ken Burns and Lynn Novick's HEMINGWAY to Premiere April 5, 2021 <https://www.pbs.org/about/about-pbs/blogs/news/ken-burns-and-lynn-novicks-hemingway-to-premiere-april-5-2021-on-pbs/>. It offered parts of each of the 3 two hour episodes. Then, talking head writers attempted to capture Hemingway's essence and staying power. They missed the mark. The truth is in his name, Ernest. He was an earnest, authentic, androgynous, complex, and disciplined writer. The program did its job as it was one long advertisement for the series next week.. I'll watch it, then.

Hello and welcome to Friday, April 2, 2021. Just back from dental cleaning, and I have no cavities to report. As I write, I am listening to the Red Sox home opener. Perhaps, things might yet return something like normal. If feel moments of mental liberation with my second shot. I can start to imagine meeting with others who also have had their shots.

I have several connections that I want to share. First, exercising and watching, I went to Thailand via Joseph Rosendo Travelscope and visited the Death Railway <https://theculturetrip.com/asia/thailand/articles/the-story-behind-the-death-railways-horrendous-past-in-thailand/>. This was the railroad built by the Japanese through to Burma in World War II. Over 116,000 Asians and allied prisoners died making it. Remember, the movie, *The Bridge on the River Kwai*? What was impressive was a cemetery and memorial to them there which had their names and ashes. Like Yad Vashem <https://www.yadvashem.org/> in Jerusalem, these names not only testify to human's inhumanity but also say these were individuals are remembered and are not just statistics. Think about the over 500, 000 COVID deaths in the USA. Each is a person, a face, with a friend and friends.

And speaking of death, I have not reported the now daily news of murder trial for the police officer in Minneapolis. The last time I recall such national and international attention was the trial of O.J. Simpson. The coverage keeps on asking the question: George Floyd was under police control, so why not just put him into the cruiser rather than the knee on the neck? Listening to the witnesses continues the national trauma.

Circling back to exercising and watching, I saw the NOVA program, *Mystery Beneath the Ice*, <https://www.pbs.org/video/nova-mystery-beneath-ice/>. It opens with the observation that there has been dramatic reduction of the krill population in Antarctic waters. Krill are shrimplike small [crustaceans](#) creatures which are pivotal in the food chain. They feed on [phytoplankton](#) and in turn whales, seals, penguins, squid, and fish eat them. Their decrease endangers all who eat them. Again, it looks like global climate changes disrupts their

reproduction. And, the Red Sox lost the home opener 0 to 3. This was the first home opener in which they were shutout for 44 years. ☹️

Good morning, the sun is shining, the day warming, it is Saturday, April 3, 2021. I am back to Saturday routine. Exercising and watching. On PBS *Independent Lens: What Lies Upstream*. This film by Cullen Hoback exposes real back story behind the Elk River spill in 2014 in West Virginia and the Flint, Michigan lead in the water in 2016. In both cases, it shows company a government on all levels local, state and nation doing a number of troubling things. These include not following regulations, fabricating data, changing laws, misleading the public, putting profits before people. The movie has been called unsettling. And, it is. In both incidents, it was physicians who sounded the alarm. It makes one appreciate clean water and the need for regulations.

Then breakfast-fried matzo-the joy of Passover, *Wait, Wait, Don't Tell Me* and Mexican Train with Peggy. Next, Torah Study and on we are on the road to Sinai. Yes. Passover is celebration of freedom. But, and there is that but again, is one step of to two step routine. The second foot lands up on Mount Sinai. A quick riddle. Like on the show Jeopardy, here is the answer-Mt. Everett, Mt Washington and Mt. Sinai. What is the question? Name two mountains and a Jewish Hospital.

At Sinai, we got the Ten Commandments and Torah. What is significant here and for now. What have we learned from our COVID distancing and isolation? And can we apply them to our future? Readers, it your turn to address both questions. As for me, I am cautiously moving forward in my post vaccine life and will addressing in the Diary.

Good morning and hopeful, welcome to Sunday, April 4, 2021. It us Easter. I feel the connection amongst Passover, Easter, Spring and a possible end to the pandemic. All mean birth, rebirth, freedom, liberation and hope. And one more thought. It is the idea of love. All are connected, not by romantic love, but the love of a spiritual nature. That is powerful.

To celebrate the new hope, in a strong wind, we went kayaking. This time, the wind was at our backs as we paddled home. Reminded me of the lyrics of *Devil Knows You're Dead*- "May the wind be always at your back, And the sun shine warm upon your face...Before the devil knows you're dead, May you be in heaven, my friend".

Hello and we start another week. It is Monday, April 5, 2021 and we cautiously enter the future. On one hand the number of folks vaccinated grows daily. That is great news-a system seems to be working. On the other new cases are also increasing. Globally, nationally and in the state, the number verge on a fourth wave. We seem to fallen into a patten. A surge, flowed by a lock down, leading to relaxation. Then, there is another surge.

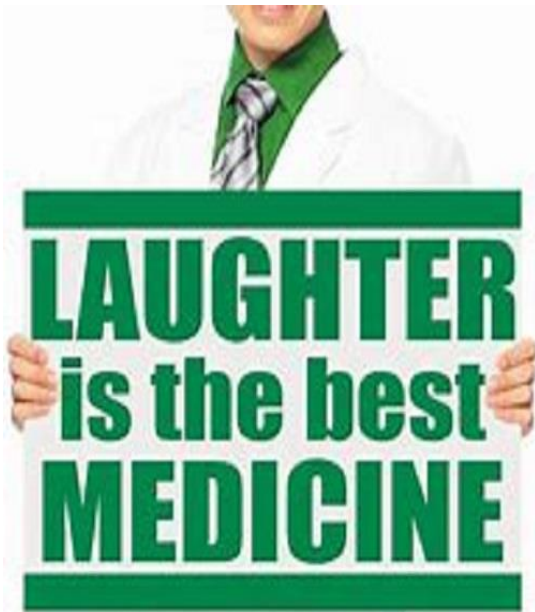
Good morning, the sun is shining, the day awaits and it is Tuesday, April 6, 2021. I have done my job reporting on the Nottingham Select Board meeting and attended Talmud class. The computer is behaving and Louis Armstrong is singing *What a Wonderful World*. With the day warming, the woods called and I went. My white birch corridor is about to erupt into leaves.



The white birch corridor April 6, 2021

Good morning, it is Wednesday, April 7, 2021 and things are coming together. Several projects are reaching a conclusion. One such thing are new tee shirts for the Weed Watchers. They arrived today. In America, all events are consecrated with tee shirts. And my Weed Watch Team is no exception. The nets are up for outdoor Pickle Ball-another sign of spring. And, I finally found my yellow windbreakers. For months, I have been trying to figure out where it was. Egg on my face, I had left it at a meeting place in Bedford. It is warm out. Green stuff is coming-up in the garden. With all members vaccinated, our Mexican Train gang can finally meet in person again.

With that, let's laugh



Did you know *

The Suez Canal was begun in 1859, and for the next five years work on the canal was done primarily by means of "corvee" - forced peasant labor. Forced labor was prohibited after 1864.

Mere "princes" never become kings. The heir apparent to the throne is generally given the title of "crown prince" He does not officially become the monarch until his coronation. In past times

this would occur quite quickly upon the death of the king so as to solidify the claim to the throne. Nowadays, in England, a more proper interval intervenes.

Although there was always much controversy through the centuries as to who exactly places the crown on the "weary head", in England today to crown is bestowed by the head of the Anglican church - the Archbishop of Canterbury.

The literal translation of the name "Napoleon" is "Lion of or from Naples".

*Thanks to Bill Garnett for these

Regular Humor

Why is your nose in the middle of your face?
Because it's your scenter!

Whatever you do, always give 100%... unless you're donating blood.

I've finally told my suitcases there will be no holiday this year. Now I'm dealing with the emotional baggage.

If you're not supposed to eat at night, why is there a light bulb in the refrigerator?

CLEVER WORDS FOR CLEVER PEOPLE

ARBITRAITOR

A cook that leaves Arby's to work at McDonald's.

BERNADETTE

The act of torching a mortgage.

COUNTERFEITER

Workers who put together kitchen cabinets.

HEROES

What a man in a boat does.

PARASITES

What you see from the Eiffel Tower.

PARADOX

Two physicians * my favorite

RELIEF

What trees do in the spring.

RUBBERNECK

What you do to relax your wife.

SELFISH

What the owner of a seafood store does.

COVID 19 Jokes

New this time, a lot of vaccine jokes have emerged

We should train all Amazon delivery drivers to give the vaccine. The whole population would be immunised by Saturday. Thursday if you've got Prime.

I have a vaccine joke.....but a lot of people won't get it.

So, I went into get a flu vaccine today.

The nurse that was administering the Vaccine asked me the prequalifying questions. Have you had a flu vaccine before? Yes. Have you done your research on the vaccine? Yes. Do you understand the possible side effects? Actually, I am quite excited about the side effects. She looks at me confused. I say, I am excited because I can't wait to be able to paint really well. The nurse looked at me still confused and I say, you know, because I am going to be artistic. (that is very subtle, cute!

I already got vaccinated with the Russian COVID-19 vaccine

And I can tell you not to worry! I still don't see any side effects secundarioski и меня зовут Лопес Обрадор, и я коррумпирован и лжец и почему я даю чистые прямые награды

I'm not sure that Pfizer's Covid-19 vaccine will work, but it's worth a shot.

The vaccine's trial should be done on politicians first

If they survive the vaccine is safe, if they don't the country is safe.

If Bill Gates makes a COVID-19 vaccine what will it be called?

COVID-19 Defender XP.

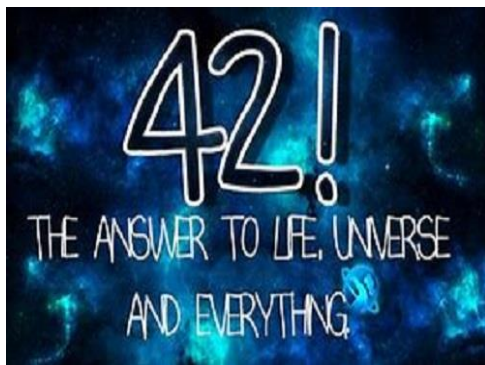


408 days of distancing

The Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner: Part XLII

Steve Soreff, MD

With Diary number 42, I have entered into a new galaxy. It connects me to The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy, by Douglas Adams "the meaning of life, the universe, and everything". And, I am also Jackie Robinson's number. Along with this as the 42nd Diary, not 43rd Street, it is Friday, April 23, 2012. Today marks my 408th day, the end of my 62nd week and end of my 14th month as well as into my 2nd year of social and physical distancing. And, yes, we have broken the 400-day mark.



The Power of 42

With that introduction, let us look back at the last two weeks.

Welcome to glorious, gorgeous and great Friday, April 9, 2021. The sun is shining, the flowers are blooming and the trees are about to explode into green leaves. Several warm days can make you forget the winter, the isolation and the pandemic. Yesterday, Peggy and I hiked Fundy Trail in Pawtuckaway State Park. Despite the beautiful day and neat path to explode,

COVID was there. At the head of the trail was a map and a CDC warning.



Hiking in the COVID era

Today, it was Pickleball and Tai Chi, followed by clean-up garden work at Bed rock Gardens <https://www.bedrockgardens.org/>. It is part of a “hands in dirt” program. It felt good to not only help things grow but also complete a project there. And, I just heard from my daughter in Tel Aviv. She and her husband just got a new apartment, they had been seeking. Apparently, getting good apartment there is very competitive. I am thrilled for them.

Good morning, it is Saturday, April 10, 2021. My morning began with exercising and watching the news. There is a giant battle being waged throughout the world. It is between a huge push to get everyone vaccinated. In New Hampshire, vaccines are available for all adults. And it is working, more and more folks are getting vaccinated. That is the good news. The other side of the battle is those demanding immediate reopening or simply closing in the first place. Meanwhile, the number of new cases is surging. This can be attributed to the newer viruses and the reopening.

After playing Mexican Train and listening to *Wait Wait Don't Tell Me*, I Zoomed to Torah Study. There we tackled a troublesome pariah which dealt with Aaron's sons being destroyed because they performed a not sanctioned sacrifice. The G-d of the Torah has many facets. Then, after participating in a Zoom Weed Watch Training, I kayaked for 2 hours. I saw one loon and retrieved one golf ball on the bottom of the lake. And, for the first time this year, I was able to circum-navigate Horse Island. In the face of drought, the lake is only very slowly coming up.

Hello, it is Sunday, April 11, 2021. I began with listening to *On Being* while exercising. It featured *Theater of War* project <https://theaterofwar.com/>. It brings the Greek tragedies and other classic works like the Book of Job, to now via Zoom a global audience. The stories show how complicated things are and the truths they tell. As the producer says. stores “these comforts the afflicted and afflicted the comfortable”.

In a cool afternoon, I listened to the Red Sox play. All is forgiven. They just won their 6th straight game as well as sweeping 2 series. The order in the universe has been restored and the number 42 reigns I was so excited with the win, I went out hiked in my neighborhood wilderness. I rediscovered an amazing pasture pine and stonewalls in my wandering in the woods.



Treasures in the woods

Welcome to Monday, April 12, 2021. It begins a week of hope. There is warming trend in the face of inefficient rain. I got to thinking about time. Several things contributed to my pondering on that subject. First is the pandemic. We are in our second year of it. That alone would make one conscious of time and how and where to spend it. Second, seeing the stonewalls on both the woods wanderings on Sunday and the Fundy hike on Thursday, reminded me of the people who lived there and built them in another time. Watching while exercising, *Prehistoric Road Trip* <https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/technology/for-prehistoric-road-trip-tv-series-emily-graslie-roamed-through-time-and-her-native-west/ar-BB15usu4>, series focusing on dinosaur fossils in the American Midwest West, made me aware of geologic time. Hiking on the Fundy Trail, we witnessed glacier time. We saw a huge glacier erratic. Like in the Boulder Fieldes of another section of Pawtuckaway State Park <https://www.nhstateparks.org/visit/state-parks/pawtuckaway-state-park.aspx>, there are giant many stories high rocks deposited by the glaciers. And then realizing that PBS was recirculating the same programs for the second time, like *Eyes on the Prize*, made me see another time dimension of the COVID era. Time, whether geologic, Biblical as in the Torah Study, or now during the distancing world is ever moving forward. And we are part of time and living it.

Good morning, it is Tuesday, April 13, 2021. Today I was greeted a cacophony of depressing news. It included a surge of COVID in Michigan, another African-American man killed by police, and COVID can be detected in fecal material. Let me stop to explain these three news items and the reason they were upsetting. First, it is yet another example of the loosening of restriction followed by surges in COVID cases. Second, in that most recent death, again Driving While Black (DWB) was linked to Black Lives Matter (BLM). And in the third, I had heard that the University of New Hampshire was going to monitor dormitory fecal material as an early detection for COVID infections. Therefore, on hearing that report, I decided to check it out. As the computer voice would say. This is what I found. “the use of SARS CoV-2 monitoring in wastewater as an early warning system for increased infections in communities” <https://www.astho.org/COVID-19/Detection-of-COVID-19-in-Wastewater/>. This is a neat way of tracking and detection COVID-19 in areas.

In the afternoon, watching and exercising, I saw the PBS *American Experience Chasing the Moon* <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/films/chasing-moon/>. Seeing it, I was reliving my experiences of the Mercury Program, our going to the Moon and the Cold War. The American part of the space race was done openly. That program related to COVID 19 world in this way. In the face of the pandemic, our nation had the courage to televise the entire George Floyd murder trial. It illustrates how democracy can be transparent.

Hello, and sour welcome to Wednesday, April 14, 2021. The sun is brightly shining, and my computer is dying. Hence, the gloom mood. Great pickle ball and Tai Chi, followed by major computer issues and an attempted computer sham. Trying to solve both. One trip to get

computer help, I saw a British flag at half- staff. It was for Prince Phillip. Perhaps, I should lower the flag for my computer, too. Globally, perhaps all the flags should be that way to signify climate change.

Welcome to Thursday, April 15, 2021. Yes, today is a taxing day since I filled my taxes. Although the federal government delayed until May returns, NH did not. Then, Peggy and I went to do trail work on our adopted trails in Crawford Notch behind the AMC's Highland Center <https://www.outdoors.org/lodging-camping/lodges/highland>. It was great to return to the woods. We cleaned water bars, cut down obstructing trees, and trimmed bushes along the path. We did see and picked up much more trash on the trails than in past years. We saw an amazing number of very small, plastic whisky decarded on the trails. As another landmark in distancing, today marks my 400th day of isolation. I never thought it would be this long.



Peggy clearing a water bar

Good morning, it Friday, April 16, 2021 and it is raining and snowing. It is great news for the drought and for filling the lake. Computer problems persist with help on the way. Since I am documenting the pandemic, here what my Medicare Summary Notice said. "Be Informed! Feeling lonely or isolated? Technology may be able to help! During this time of social distancing, you can still stay in touch with friends and family. Besides calling, you can text, email, or video chat. Don't know how? Just ask a friend or family member for help!" And there was yet another mass shooting, today as well as 2 other stories of police having shot a male person of color. Meanwhile, the governor lifted the mask mandate while cases of COVID are surging. Taken together they show the too many common themes of our pandemic America.

Hello, and welcome to Saturday, April 17, 2021. I began with exercising and watching on PBS, *W.S. Merwin: to Plant A Tree*. William Merwin was US poet laureate and environmentalist. He loved words and trees. He planted both. I found that very inspiring. The body of the day was spent covering Nottingham's first ever Deliberative Session, which replaced its traditional town meeting. Some good debates were had. but, in the end, only the vote in June will be decisive.

Good morning, it is Sunday, April 18, 2021 and since 18 in Hebrew numerology means life, I am getting hopeful. My repaired computer is now restoring my files-yippee but it will take 2 days to complete. This morning, while exercising, I saw several things which I could connect. There is a new film out called, *Surrender on the USS Missouri*. It is moored next to the

Battleship Arizona in Pearl Harbor. The two represent the two book ends of WW II for America. Here are the links. First, while I doing a rotating medical internship in Seattle, WA, I actually toured the Missouri and walked on the “surrender deck”. That battleship was part of a mothballed fleet in Puget Sound. Neat! The film was to honor and document the people who survived WWII. Their stories of their living through the war are relevant for us in the pandemic. And I discovered the reason for surrender to be on her deck at that historic moment. Remember, I had talked about how my appreciation for President Truman, in an earlier Diary? Well, was another dot to connect. He was the US President at the end of WWII and he was also from Independence, Missouri. He wanted the Missouri name, the ship and the surrender linked throughout history. Interesting.



The Japanese delegation leaving surrender table on the deck of the USS Missouri

Later Edith Morgan, my friend, 90 years old friend from Worcester, MA, joined my synagogue’s Book Club. She was linked to the book, which we read for this month called, The World That We Knew, by Alice Hoffman. Edith and her Jewish family lived in Berlin, Germany in 1933. They escaped the Nazi by moving Paris, France by way of Switzerland. When the Nazi invaded France in 1940, they fled to Free Southern France. Then, they traveled through Portugal and ultimately to America. Her survival story was not only inspiring but can help us deal with COVID, also. As in the message of the movie, *surrender on the USS Missouri*, it is important to hear the stories of the WWII generation.

Hello, it is Monday, April 19, 2021 and in another time, this would be Patriots’ Day and the running of the Boston Marathon. But and there is that but again, these are COVID times. Historically, it marks the Battles of Lexington and Concord. To preserve my spirits while my computer is taking 2 or more days to get my backed-up material retrieved, let me try a joke/pun. Did you hear that they took a group of cattle from Vermont to **Cape Canaveral**. From there, they were put into earth orbit. They became the herd shot around the world! Thus, MA

celebrates Patriots Day today. However, quick question. Besides Mass, which other state observes Patriots Day. The answer is Maine. That is because until 1820 Maine was part of Massachusetts. With the Missouri Compromise, Maine entered the union as a free state and Missouri as a slave state. How about that for a neat loop into history. And, I managed to connect it back to Missouri!

These are array of random thoughts from exercising and watching. Seeing again the PBS series *Eyes on the Prize*, I am reminded the courage it took for the participants to change the South by getting voting rights for all its citizens. I want to sing, *We Shall Overcome*. And, they did. Back Lives Matter (BLM) tells us that we have still have a long way to go. And, on that subject, I was able to view the closing arguments in the George Floyd death trial. Being able to see it scores one point for a free and open society and press. I also marvel at lawyer's ability argue for their clients or causes. The job of the jury is not easy. Finally, I heard of a driverless car hitting a tree and two of its occupants died. Just as technology takes over more and more of our lives, it is reminder about the value of human control. But and there is that again, I also heard that NASA got a helicopter to fly on Mars. It is called Ingenuity. What is so cool is that it contains on its frame a small piece of fabric from the Wright Brother's first flight plane.

Good morning and I am hopeful to restore my computer today, Tuesday, April 20, 2021. The back-up has been going on for 2 days. I feel like singing from Monty Python the lyrics "Look on the bright side of things" Three major events occurred today. First, I went to Concord and had lunch with a friend. This marks the first time in over 400 days in which I actually met a person outside my bubble in person! Yes, we both wore masks and were 6 feet apart. It was wonderful to have a good conversation. Wow, there is an end in sight, to the pandemic. And, yes, again, a good conversation leads to gaining some neat insights!!!!

Second, I got my computer back. It was difficult for me to write on a laptop computer. And, I am a writer. Praise the Lord and pass the credit to having my computer work all backed-up. My hero is Carbonite www.carbonite.com. Third, *Breaking news*: A jury has found former Minneapolis Police Officer Derek Chauvin [guilty of all three charges in the murder](#) and manslaughter of George Floyd.. It is a turning point in how juries handle actions by police. The blue curtain of police protecting them own was broken. Justice was done. BLM



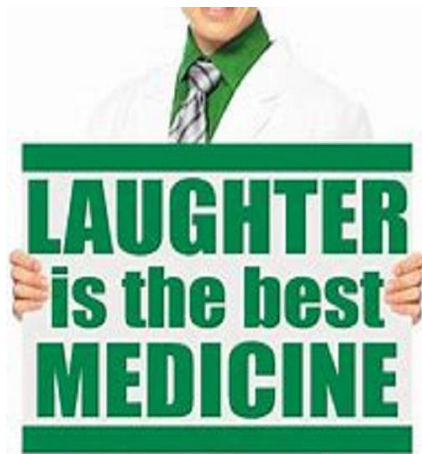
Hello, it is Wednesday, April 21, 2021. It was sunny int the morning and rained in the afternoon. Before Tai Chi, our group hiked through the surrounding woods. There, I heard the term. Forest Bathing <https://time.com/5259602/japanese-forest-bathing/>. The idea came from

Japan and it means totally with all the senses involved with the forest. As we walked, we heard the birds, saw the trees, and smelled wood's aroma. Looking back, it's what Peggy and I experienced when we did our trail work. In either scenario, being in the wilderness is both stress relieving and invigorating. I am starting to see the light at the end of tunnel of my distancing, isolation. I am starting to imagine playing golf again.

Welcome, it is Thursday. April 22, 2021. It is Earth Day. Yes, a good day for us work on climate change and saving our planet. I began the day by exercising and watching on PBS Independent Lens: Bedlam <https://itvs.org/films/bedlam>. The film depicts the protracted plight of those with serious, persistent mental illness in America. It chronicles the hopes of deinstitutionalization with the medication revolution and the side-effects of those helping drugs. It is indictments of our present systems to address the issues of these patients. It was a reminder of in their treatment, we have miles to go before we sleep.

With Earth Day, I feel a growing recognition of climate change and ways to address it. And. As I approach by 408th day of distancing, I feel more optimistic. I and Peggy have been vaccinated as is most of our families. A new day is dawning.

With that, let's laugh.



Did You Know

It was believed that, in the 19th century, the Merrimack River powered more looms than any other river in the world.

In Panama there exists the only point in the world where the sun can be rising from the Pacific Ocean and setting in the Atlantic.

The largest crowd ever to attend an event at Fenway Park is believed to have occurred in June of 1919, when Irish president Eamon de Valera held a rally in support of Irish independence. The crowd was estimated at over 50,000.

The American Memorial Chapel, dedicated in 1958 at St. Paul's Cathedral in London to the memory of American servicemen based in England who gave their lives in WWII, lists in alphabetical order the names of 28,000 men and women. One page is turned each day, but there is a second copy where any name may be looked up.

Vermont was the fourteenth state admitted to the union in 1791. Kentucky was admitted in 1792 as a slave state as a means of re-balancing the number of slave and free states. Bennington, Vt. was named for Benning Wentworth, governor of New Hampshire.

Regular Humor

What did the bald man exclaim when he received a comb for a present? Thanks— I'll never part with it!

A bald man got a great deal on a wig today – only \$1! It was a small price toupee.

What did the left eye say to the right eye? Between you and me, something smells.

What do you call a pony with a cough? A little horse.

Why did the yogurt go to the art exhibition? Because it was cultured.

Once my dog ate all the Scrabble tiles. He kept leaving little messages around the house.

Did you hear about the two people who stole a calendar? They each got six months.

Time flies like an arrow...Fruit flies like a banana.

Why did the Oreo go to the dentist? Because he lost his filling.

COVI-19 Humor



Do It Yourself COVID Test

1. Pour a glass of wine and smell it
2. If you can smell it, then taste it
3. If you can both smell it and taste it, you do not have the Covid virus

Just to test it out, I did the test 19 times last evening and, thank God, all the tests were negative. But I'll have to repeat them today, as I woke up with a headache and a bit disoriented this morning

If Covid 19 has forced you or a loved one to wear a mask with your glasses, you may be entitled to condensation.

Knock knock. Who is there? Seriously, don't touch my door and get back 6 meters to social distance

What did the astronauts say to NASA when they notified them that their mission was complete and they could return to earth? Thanks, but no thanks.



422 Days of Social and Physical Distancing

The Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner: Part XLIII

Steve Soreff, MD

Hello, it Friday, May 7, 2021 and I am in my 422th day, end of my 64th week and the middle of 15th month of distancing. It marks my 44th day since I received my second shot of the Pfizer vaccine. There have been a number of hints that things are getting better. The flowers are blooming. Trees are bursting out their green leaves. There has been some rain and the Pawtuckaway Lake level is slowly rising. We played Mexican Train with more than two people. And, I played golf again. Let's look back at the last two weeks.

The big news from yesterday is that I am doing my OLLI <https://olli.granite.edu/> Course, again. As its website proclaims, "OLLI (Osher Lifelong Learning Institute) at Granite State College is a member-driven, volunteer-based membership program offering an open invitation to adults age 50 and better to enjoy lifelong learning, social events and volunteer opportunities in accessible and safe locations. Come for the classes, stay for the friends!' For over a decade, through 7 iterations, I have taught a class called Madness and the Movies. We view the entire movie to see how it portrays mental illness, how it works cinematically and what are its clinical implications. I love it because students are there to learn, share and discuss the film, mental illness and the relationship of those two. Yes, there are no tests nor term papers. To me, it is the joy of teaching and a class in sharing and engagement. And, it is yet another sign, the end of the pandemic is coming.

Good day, it is Saturday, April 24, 2021 and the spirit of Earth Day is alive and well. How so? This morning, the Pawtuckaway Lake Improvement Association (PLIA) <https://pawtuckawaylake.com/> did a road clean up on its Adopted Section of NH Route 156 in Nottingham. I was proud to do my share in helping to clean, better and improve the planet. It was amazing the amount of litter on a small stretch of an active highway. I picked up about one million cigarettes butts. These are one of the many forms of micro-trash

<https://keepnaturewild.com/blogs/journal/the-impact-of-micro-trash> on the road. And, yes there were a lot of beer and soda cans and just plain trash. New Hampshire in the spirit of its slogan, “Live Free or Die”, does not have any remuneration program for turned in bottles or cans. What was new in this year ‘s clean-up was that were able to separate the trash from the aluminum cans. We were getting closer to the meaning and message of Earth Day. And, it did show- we left the road better than we found it. Repairing the earth one road at a time.



Cleaning the Earth one road at a time

Taking a step back, before the clean-up, while exercising, I watched one in my geology lecture series. This episode focused on the rock of Gibraltar both its geologic and human histories. While seeing it, I leaned about Operation Tracer. I never of it. What is it? During WWII, the Nazi attempted many times to tale the fortress. The British planned to entomb 6 officers alive in a secret chamber within the Rock, if the enemy took Gibraltar. These hidden folks could spy on the Nazi operations. Wow, we are still discovering things about WWII. And I am glad to fulfill my goal to learn new things every day.

After road clean-up, I attended Torah Study. Keep learning. Then Peggy and I went kayaking. It is great to have Pawtuckaway Lake as our front door. A yes, I heard and saw a loon.

Hello and welcome to Sunday, April 25, 2021. I walked down to get the mail. I discovered you can do Forest Bathing even while walking down a dirt road. I heard the birds sing, saw the trees sway in the breeze, and inhaled the woods fragrance. I am entering a new world called 2 shots and 2 weeks. It translated into the CDC guide getting together with others who have been vaccinated. Another small step forward, while the COVID world is surging.

Good morning, it is Monday, April 26, 2021 and it is very windy. I have two pandemic thoughts for today. Easy question, what is the effect of COVID-19 based on your economic class? The answer is that it has accelerated the old adage: the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. This represents a painful global realty. For example, the part of some American cities will determine your life expectancy. Look at the Texas city of Houston <https://www.houstonpublicmedia.org/articles/news/harris-county/2019/03/04/323859/life-expectancy-in-houston-can-vary-up-to-20-years-depending-on-where-you-live/> Life Expectancy In Houston Can Vary Up To 20 Years Depending On Where You Live. COVID-19 has made the gap worse. And, the all too familiar pattern continues worldwide, relaxation of restrictions followed by surging of new cases and deaths.

As I take cautious steps beyond my distancing world, I am start to reflect on the lessons learned from my 411 days isolating. In that idea, I walked to get the mail, and bushwhacked my home through the neighborhood wilderness <https://forumhome.org/patterns-in-the-neighborhood-wilderness-p32796-105.htm>. The setting sun in the west provided my guiding point as I worked my way home. And that hike represents my first lesson. It is an appreciation of my own immediate environment. I am lucky to live with the lake as my front lawn and the woods behind me. I got see in detail the changing of the seasons.

Spring feels here today. Tuesday, April 27, 2021. We all know that by the calendar on March 20, 2021 Spring began. April, 2021 did not pay too much attention to that date. That month also knew that April showers brings may flowers. And, yes, what do May flowers bring? The answer is Pilgrims. This one of my favorite puns/jokes/riddles. Back to talking about April. Instead, it unevenly pursued a series of cold days and neglected to provide the necessary rain, to the drought plighted region. However, on the afternoon Tuesday, April 27, 2021, Spring finally arrived. I hiked to my beloved White Birch Corridor and found the trees' leaves have exploded into green.



Green leaves on the White Birches 😊

Returning to the theme of what did we learn from the pandemic, my next vote is for an appreciation of Zoom and other Internet video platforms. And, yes, here too, you can rightly add to lessons this refrain: the world will never be the same post COVID-19. In my life Zoom has been a lifeline, sustainer and adventure. It has allowed me to attend meetings, go to synagogue and go to classes like Torah Study and Talmud sessions. It has also meant I could have a family Passover seder with family around the world. I will use Zoom in the future as I slowly rejoin some activities.

Hello and good morning, we were back to April showers and it is Wednesday, April 28, 2021 and the forecast is for rain for the next 2 days. That is good news since with drought we need the rain. But like in Camelot, the weekend looks like great spring weather.

I continued my quest to find lessons from the pandemic with my Tai Chi gang. I had given them a homework assignment to reflection on what they had learned from their distancing. Spoiler alert-they all said having survived and not having got the COVID-19 was their reward and lesson from practicing distancing for over a year.

Here is what they said. One member cited the appreciation of just being with others. Yes, things like what we had always taken for granted such as being with others, are now treasures. Another member cited the joy of solitary reading. She noted just having the time to just read books was very important. She said the volumes transported her to other worlds. It reminded

me of a quote in Emily Dickenson’s poem,” There is no Frigate like a Book, to take us Lands away...”. A third member talked about how important a real hug was. She indicated a good hug for 20 second or more not only makes you feels good but also rises your level of oxytocin <https://www.pennmedicine.org/updates/blogs/health-and-wellness/2018/february/affection>. Oxytocin is called cuddle hormone and promotes maternal -infant connection.

Here is one more thought for today. Next week marks the 50th anniversary of National Public Radio (NPR) and the program called “All Things Considered”. I am a radio person and love it. I prefer to listen the Red Sox on radio than watching the game on television. In Worcester, I had my own radio show called the Worcester Health Team and produced a radio-television called Senior Speak: Worcester’s Mature Voice. And, I am listening to NHNPR as I am writing. Three cheers for radio and NPR.



Its 50th Anniversary

Good morning it is Thursday, April 29, 2021 and my 13th observance of National Cribbage Day. Right now, my computer adversary, Bill, is winning now but if he does, I’ll challenge him again. Here are two thoughts for today. Last night I watched Biden 100th day speech before Congress. Even before he spoke, he made history because behind him for the first time in America history seated were the first women Vice Present and Speaker of the House of Representatives. And, he noted this would not be the last time it would happen. He talked about the “America is back”, outlined his accomplishments such as over 2000 million Americans had at least one vaccine shot and his ambitious plans for the future. As I listened, I heard echoes of the FDR speeches in the depths of the Great Depression. It was history repeating itself. Then, as now we faced a national crisis. His and Biden answer was federal government intervention. It was a challenge to Ronald Regan’s ideology that Washington was the enemy.



Biden first 100th day speech April 28, 2021 before Congress

The other thought came from a new PBS Frontline two-part series entitled, *The Virus that Shock the World* <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/the-virus-that-shook-the-world/>. It describes itself as “The epic story of how people around the world lived through the first year of the coronavirus pandemic, from lockdowns to funerals to protests. Filming across the globe and using extensive personal video and local footage, FRONTLINE documented how people and countries responded to COVID-19 across cultures, races, faiths and privilege.” Its painfully chronicles through individuals around the world the impact of the pandemic. It puts into a global context what this Diary hopes to accomplish.

Hello and it is Friday, April 30, 2021 and I have mixed news to share. As a sign that things are slowly returning to what was once called the normal, Disney Land re opened after a year of being closed. Yes, only 25% of capacity and for only California residents. That is the good news. Two sad news. The stampede in Israel. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/30/world/middleeast/israel-stampede.html>. What should have been a festive holiday turned to tragedy. There 50-day period between leaving Egypt and the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai is called the counting of the Omer <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/30/world/middleeast/israel-stampede.html>. On the 33 day of that sequence, there is festive day called Lag Boomer <https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/lag-baomer/>. As the website says, “This minor holiday — known for bonfires, weddings and haircuts — takes place about a month after Passover”. In the midst of joy there was such pain. And India COVID cases and, deaths are dramatically rising and system of care is overwhelmed.

Good morning, hello and some hope. It is Saturday, May 1, 2021; it is the first day of May. I began by exercising and watching PBS *AMERICAN MASTERS FILM Margaret Mitchell: American Rebel*. I will admit as I want- to -be Best Seller author, I found her story captivating and fascinating. Her life serves as a reminder of how much determination, luck, one’s experiences, and one’s social and historical context contribute to how and what one writes. One neat detail. I learned from program is that she secretly funded an African-American College and medical students in Atlanta.

Another indication of life getting back to Before COVID 19 was that I played golf for the first time in over a year. Yes, my golf buddy and I both had been vaccinated, wore masks in the club house, went in separate vehicles and kept 6 feet apart. One change was the holes were filled in with Styrofoam. This meant the ball stayed on top next to the pin and did not go into the now

non-existent hole. Sorry, this calls a quick joke. Why did the golfer take an extra pair of pants with him? Answer: in case he got a hole in in! It great to be outside and the challenge of each hole to approach par. Yes, golfers are dreamers. I will also admit I was exhausted at the end of 17 holes. I passed on the 18th, but the newspaper said. “a good time was had by all”.



The hole filled with Styrofoam

Good morning, it is Sunday, May 2, 2021; the sun is shining and the wind not hollowing. There is competition of several major things occurring locally, nationally and globally. The first is record number of people are getting vaccinations. That brings us closer to something called herd immunity. At same time, there is growing concern about the number of folks who refuse to be vaccinated. And the third is surges in COVID cases. One way to put these all together is in too many people’s mind is that the pandemic is over. And, they act on that assumption. Despite the loosening of restrictions, vigilance, masks, and distancing are still required and necessary going forward.

Hello and welcome to a new week on Monday, May 3, 2021 with some good news and some news of concern. The good news we played Mexican Train with a vaccine protected group. Another small step in moving out of our distancing world. Now, here is the bad news. From a Tai Chi group member, I learned of a landmark Danish study published in the Lancet <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33743221/>. If you want to be intimidated here is the article’s title: “Assessment of protection against reinfection with SARS-CoV-2 among 4 million PCR-tested individuals in Denmark in 2020: a population-level observational study.” It concluded those younger than 65 years of age had an approximate 80% likelihood of protection against COVID-19 reinfection. But, for those older, like me, there was reinfection rate 53%. What does all the mean? COVID-19 and its variants will be here for a long time. It is not measles, where once you have it, you will not get it again. I still need to protect myself into the future with masks and precautions. There will be need for booster shots in the future. Or as the old cliché’, the opera is not over until the COVID-19 sings.

Good morning, it is about to rain and that is good news. It is Tuesday, May 4, 2021 and a day which started my me connecting the dots. All these connections came about because of what I watched while exercising. First, I saw a Hiroshima survivor campaigning against nuclear weapons. Then, an interview with Malcolm Gladwell <https://www.gladwellbooks.com/> about his new book, The Bomber Mafia. In it, he talks about carpet bombing in World War II especially the use of napalm on Japanese cities. Next, I went to Tokyo with Joseph Rosendo’s *Travelscope*. He showed the results of the fire-bombing of it during WWII. Finally, to loop back to Gone with the Wind which showed the destruction done by Sherman’s March to the Sea. The

common theme is the horror, death, despair, and destruction brought by carrying the war to civilians to end the war.

After writing all morning, I went kayaking in the afternoon. The anticipated rain once again illuded us and the sun danced across the waters. Two loons welcomed me. Many of the bushes and trees are about to bloom and produce leaves. I also saw may trees up-rooted by the recent attack of heavy winds. But it felt good to be out on the lake again.

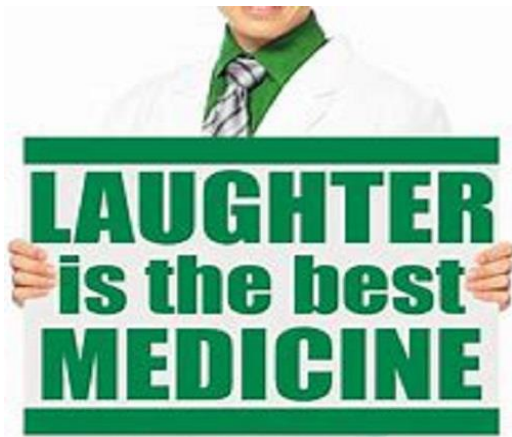


A loon on Pawtuckaway Lake and Mount Pawtuckaway looking on.

Hello. It is Wednesday. May 5, 2021 and it is raining 😊. Here are two thoughts for the day. One is the new battle or decision: whether to get vaccinated or not? That is the question. Much of the debate hinges on individual rights and “no government is going to tell me what to do!” The same argument was voiced against wearing masks. I go back to the Epping Fire Department sign: “Wear a mask; “Save a life”. And the live saved is both yours and other peoples. I am pleased to report when I do go out, most of the places I go; most folks wear masks. The second idea is based on my geology course. It is the profound and the real power of nature. Examples of the effects of plate tectonics, earthquakes, volcano and meteors striking the earth show how much of our planet and history have been shaped by huge forces beyond our control.

Good morning, it is Thursday, May 6, 2021 and the sun is shining, the wind blowing and hope is in the air. Broadway is set to open in September! Wow. While exercising I saw, PBS American Experience the Chinese Exclusion Act, this program reviews the background, origins and history of the 1882 law. It excluded Chinese from coming to the United States and denied citizenship those already here. It showed how the Opium Wars, trade with China, the Gold Rush, the building of the trans-continental railroad, ethnic cleansing and racism played roles in the creation of that law. Some of our history does not reflection the spirit of the Declaration of Independence. That law was in effect for 60 years. And, that law can be linked to our current violence towards Asians in the pandemic.

I did go to Concord today. The sun did shine, the birds sang, the water was calm-all is goo. Let’s have some laughter.



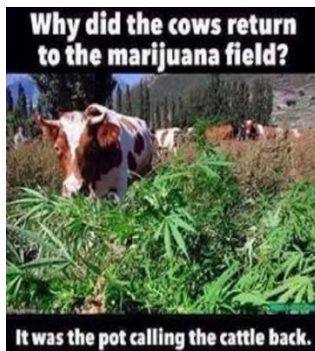
Did you know?

The term "weather breeder" is an old expression for an unusually clear, calm and warm day which precedes a storm.

Horse racing in the United States is run counterclockwise as a protest against the English custom of racing clockwise. The Greeks and Romans also ran racing events counterclockwise.

In most cases, life is sexually transmitted.

Regular Humor



A chef likes to steal utensils from his job. The first time he does it, he steals a big wooden spoon. The second time he steals a plastic spatula. The third time is a nice chef's knife. His boss notices him pocketing the utensils and says, "Next time I catch you stealing I will have you fired!" The chef doesn't say anything but thinks to himself, "Well that is a whisk I am willing to take!"

Why did the student eat his homework? Because the teacher told him it was a piece of cake!
Shrink-wrap Definition-a meeting with your psychiatrist.

What do you call an ugly dinosaur? An eyesaur

Did you hear about the first restaurant to open on the moon? It had great food, but no atmosphere.

What did one ocean say to the other ocean? Nothing, it just waved.

Why is Peter Pan always flying? Because he Neverlands.

. How does NASA organize a party? They planet.

COVID-19 Jokes

Where do sick boats go to get healthy? The dock!

What did the sick parent make their kids for lunch? Mac and sneeze.

I ran out of toilet paper and had to start using old newspapers. Times are rough.

What do baseball catchers do during the coronavirus pandemic? They stay home!

Whom did Snow White kick out of the house during the Coronavirus pandemic? Sneezy.

What did the mother say to her aardvark son after weeks of a Coronavirus shutdown? Why the long face?

What did the cashew say during the Coronavirus pandemic?

Quarantining drives me nuts.

Which root vegetable makes staying home during Coronavirus easier?

An up-beet.



My 436th day of distancing Seeing the bright side in the confusing world

The Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner: Part XLIV

Steve Soreff, MD

Today is Friday, May 21, 2021 and it is my 436th day, my 66th week, the end of my 15th month and into my 2nd year of social and physical distancing. And my 44th Diary! There is a hint of light at the end of the tunnel. Mask mandates are being lifted. But and there is that but again, the world is not well. The rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer. In politics at all levels polarization abounds and gaps grow wider. With re-entry we are navigating through uncertain and uncharted waters. With that, let's look back on the last 14 days and see our way forward. The search for the defining moment when we can say it is over still eluding us.

Good morning, it is Saturday, May 8, 2021 and we are about to take another step in our coming out of COVID-19 journey. For over a decade, Peggy and I have been part of 4 couples' group. In some ways, it was like the endurance of couples' relationships like in the 1981 movie, *The Four Seasons*. Our gang has done things together like mini-golf and especially we played Mexican Train together. We have weathered many changes such as couples moving out of Nottingham and the loss of one of members. But, and yes there is that but again, the pandemic stopped us for over a year of getting together. Now, we all are 2 shots and 2 weeks post vaccine and are finally gathering to kayak and to play Mexican Train! There is one neat fact of old good friends. It is that no matter how great the length of time you have been apart, the moment you finally get together something amazing happens. You connect and continue exactly where off.in the past. And that is what happened with our gang's reunion. The gap of over 400 days evaporated. We kayaked, played, ate pizza, joked and had fun just like before. But it was even better, this time. We appreciated the moment and each other even more.



The gang after over a year now gathered to play Mexican Train Dominos

Good day, the sun is out; the day has begun. It is Sunday, May 9, 2021 and Mother's Day. I started exercising and watching on PBS *Greta Thunberg: A Year to Change the World*. It chronicled her journey doing 2020. It included her trips to World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, to Poland, to speak with miners who have lost their jobs and to the UK, to visit Sir David Attenborough. She pointed out how the roles in the world had been reversed in terms of climate change. What does that mean? The children globally were now the adults in the recognition and doing something to move from fossil fuels to renewables. Sadly, she is right. Earth Day started in 1970. It has taken over 50 years to get its message. All I could think of was from Pete Seeger's song "Where have all the flowers gone? Long time passing... Oh, when will you ever learn? Oh, when will you ever learn?"

With the spirit of spring in the air, I hiked to the White Birch Corridor. Everything was green now. And I completed the day with two things close to my heart. I heard on the radio the Red Sox beat the Orioles. The team is on fire and there were many mini-climatic moments in the game. I reminded me how exciting the games can be. I ended the day by listening to the *Folk Show* on NHPR. On it, there was a celebration of Pete Seeger 102th birthday. I am proud to say I heard Pete in concert twice. In one, he had the entire audience stand, link hands and sing "We Shall Overcome".



The White Birch Corridor with everything green.

Hello, it is Monday, May 10, 2021. Despite the forecasted rain, we experienced a warming and inviting sun. A hike with Tai Chi brought us to more delightfully now green magnificent birches trees. I continued my asking folks what lessons they have learned from

COVID-19. Here are four of the ideas they expressed. One person noted how much she enjoyed her own company. Since, as this diary proclaims, I am a card-carrying extrovert prisoner, I found this take on life interesting and refreshing. I recall from my teaching days that there are two types of students-introverts and extraverts. It seems some introverts thrive in the pandemic.

Another lesson is that some persons did well during the pandemic. And, I am not talking about those financially who did. Yes, Amazon is more than a river. I am talking about people to whom the COVID job loss proved to be a blessing. They found opportunity where others saw loss and depression. A third message was that many homes improved during the pandemic. In the early days of health crisis, folks were amazed at how well places like Home Depot did. Forced to stay indoors, people wanted their dwelling to be better. I know at the start of the isolation. hurricane Peggy hit my office. As a result, it is now a far better place to work in. And, the fourth, like the houses, gardens benefitted for the attention. We grew many of our vegetables this last year and perhaps even more in the now here spring and coming summer.

Welcome to Tuesday, May 11, 2021. It is bright but windy and I am slowly, cautiously moving into the world again. I participated in water testing program on Pawtuckaway Lake. This project has been going on for over a decade. It measures such things as the phosphorus levels and the water's clarity. We checked 2 deep parts of the lake, on in the north and the south sections of the lake. The importance lays in not only being able to record the data that day but also then see to trends and patterns. It is part of the tradition of being citizen scientists. It was also being on a pontoon boat with 3 other people. Our new rule is 2 shots, 2 weeks and outdoors means this was now doable. In addition, I took another step in a different direction, towards the White Mountains and volunteering for the Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC). I set-up stints for Peggy and myself in July, August and October. I am moving very hesitantly into the future

Welcome to Wednesday, May 12, 2021. I am moving forward into an unknown world. Sadly, there is again fighting in the Israel and Gaza. My daughter who lives and works in Tel Aviv, called to say she is safe. While exercising, I watched two programs about major events, their consequences and how to prepare for them. In the first program, [Niall Ferguson](#) the author of *Doom: The Politics of Catastrophe* made several points. He linked plagues and national unveils. He talked about how events like the "Spanish Flu of 1917" was related to huge political unrest. A quick loose association. Here is the reason for Influenza 1917-18 is also called the Spanish Flu. It occurred in 1917 and 1918 while the world was at war (WWI), All of the combatant countries censored their death statistics. But Spain <https://www.psychcongress.com/article/forgotten-flu> did not. Hence, the flu got its Spanish name. He noted that there is now the cold war between China and the United States. He concludes that all nations must prepare for all kinds of disasters which are both known and as of now not known.

In contrast, the second program was the geology lecture which was about the meteor <https://www.psi.edu/epo/ktimpact/ktimpact.html> that hit the earth 65 million years ago. It wiped out all the dinosaurs and thereby, allowing mammals to flourish. And, ultimately, this leads to us. His point was that had the meteor hit the earth at different angle or missed it completely, then

how life here would be different, And, although we are tracking thousands of asteroids, there is little we can do about them.

Hello, it is Thursday, May 13, 2021 and it is day of mixed emotions. On one hand, the slow process of moving forward happened today. For the first time in over a year the Nottingham Historical Society was open. Yes, we have be shuttered by COVID. Today, we put out the flag, opened the door and were ready to have visitors-provided they wore masks. That is the good news.



Nottingham Historical Society finally open

Here is why my soul on fire. The rockets are falling on Israel. My daughter in Tel Aviv is now in a war zone. Bombs are falling on Gaza. I, again hear Pete Seeger singing "Oh, when will you ever learn?". And India, a variant of COVID is exploding the country. One step forward, and two steps back. To calm my racing mind, I went kayaking. The loons called, swam about and dove for fish. I am praying for my daughter, for Israel and for peace.

Hello and welcome to another day of anxiety mixed with another step forward. It is Friday, May 14, 2021. The day was warm, inviting and spring. Pickle ball and Tai Chi were anchoring. But the war in Israel cast a net of concern over the entire day. Yes, thoughts and hopes for daughter due Gaza rockets is now in a war zone. The other anchor of day was Friday night synagogue service. For the first time in 429 days, we had services outside with everyone 6 feet apart. Yet, another step forward.



Services outdoors at Etz Hayim Synagogue

Good morning, it is Saturday, May 15, 2021. Yes, 15 is my lucky number, but, and there is that but again, I am worried. Each morning, I wake up and want to check on two things- the survival of Israel and that the Red Sox won. The Sox did win, but rockets on hitting Tel Aviv. I fear for my daughter, her husband and their cats. Besides, that life has taken an interesting turn. Now, when you meet someone, the first question is “have you been vaccinated?”. The new CDC guidelines allow those vaccinated to be without masks. This has translated into confusion and chaos. I still believe in masks and 6 feet apart. Meanwhile, the world is bewildering. There is gas shortage because of Ransomware hacked an oil company. India is reeling with COVID and China landed something on Mars.

Up-date. I realized that I have not been this up-set for the safety of my kids’ safety since 9-11. At that fateful moment my daughter and son both lived in NYC. I could not relax until I was able to talk with each one and be reassured that they were okay. However, I just heard from my sister that Matana and husband have moved to their new apartment and they are safe. Now, I can breathe again!

Hello, it is Sunday, May 16, 2021 and my heart is heavy with the war in Gaza. With my anxiety high and worries abound, I sought a different tack. I am now taking a Great Courses class called *Biblical Hebrew: Learning a Scared Language*. Each year, on Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, I read a Torah portion in Hebrew. With this series of lectures, it is my hundred time to learn Hebrew. At least, it fulfills to learn new things every day.

Hello and welcome Monday, May 17, 2021. It begins a new week with new challenges. The war in Gaza continues and I worry. Good news, my 12year old grandson has had his first COVID vaccination. But and there is that but again, there is new concern. It is called re-entry anxiety. I, as many folks, have made our accommodations to our distancing world. There are a number of places I will not go, such as eating in a restaurant indoors. I accept wearing my trusted mask. I am more comfortable when other wear them, too. The new CDC guideline have buzzed things. Cautious steps should not lead to leaps.

In an act of displacing my worries about Israel and COVID re-entry, I mowed the lawn for the first time this year. The good news is that mower started. Yippee. Actually, I enjoy mowing. Why? Good question. The reason is that the grass listens to and obeys the machine. When I taught my college classes, despite the brilliance of the syllabus, it was greeted by a chorus of students of complaints. Later, as the semester progressed, they said, “is this on the final?” or “do we have to do a term paper?” The grass did not complain. And, when I finished the job, lawn looked great. And I felt like, “I accomplished something”.

Good day, it is Tuesday, May 18, 2021. The sun is shining and the wind blowing. Remember, I am nuts about numbers and the number 18i in the Hebrew numerical system means life! I could just break into a song from *Fiddler on the Roof*, "To life, to life, l'chaim. L'chaim, l'chaim, to life." The first good message of life was a call from my daughter in Tel Aviv, They and the cats are in a new apartment and safe. Then two women took center of life stage, while I exercised. The first was the Statue of Liberty. I watched Ken Burns' the Statue of Liberty <https://www.pbs.org/kenburns/statue-of-liberty/about/>. In the film "For more than 100 years, the Statue of Liberty has been a symbol of hope and refuge for generations of immigrants." It was great reminder of the hope and promise of America.



The Statue of Liberty the hope and promise of America

The second lady was Elizabeth Smith Friedman in *American Experience: The Codebreaker* <https://www.pbs.org/wqbh/americanexperience/films/codebreaker/>. "Based on the book *The Woman Who Smashed Codes: A True Story of Love, Spies, and the Unlikely Heroine Who Outwitted America's Enemies*." She stands as an amazing woman as code breaker in World War I, the war against gangsters during Prohibition, and World War II against the U—boats and Nazi attempt to take over in South America. Based on the book *The Woman Who Smashed Codes: A True Story of Love, Spies, and the Unlikely Heroine Who Outwitted America's Enemies*, the book gives her the credit due her which was blocked by others greed for glory and the secrecy laws. Both women are inspiring.

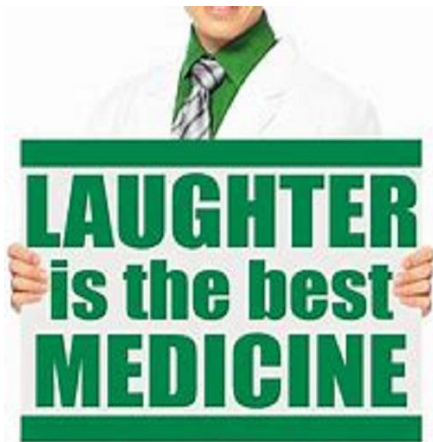
Good morning, it is Wednesday, May 19, 2021 and "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of light, it was the season of darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair." Charles Dickens, [A Tale of Two Cities](#). The best means glorious warm delightful spring days with flowers and trees blooming. The loons calling, the lake inviting and the daylight rime longer. Slowly, mask mandates are becoming mask recommendations. In New Hampshire the COVID number s are looking better. But India is the virus is surging. Rockets still fall on Israel. There are no computer chips thus limiting new car production. With all that, Peggy and I sought the calm, peaceful, reflective answer. We went kayaking.



Peggy on the waters of Pawtuckaway Lake

It is a beautiful day in my neighborhood, thank you Mister Rogers. It is Thursday, May 20, 2021 The sun is out: the day warm. And I have miles to go before I sleep. Thank you , Robert Frost. My current angst is that I am in the hunt for a date when the COVID-19 restrictions are over. I agree that is ludicrous endeavor because this a pandemic aka worldwide. Yes, many things are opening up. But, it is not over. Nor can I see the finish line in sight. What is worse. I am not sure what the end point would even look like. One low hanging fruit to say it is over would be when the New Hampshire governor lifts the state of emergency. I feel like I am galloping off on a Monty Python quest. After a series of meetings, a busy dance card for the day, it ended with good news. The 11-day Gaza rocket war is over,

Enough, let's laugh



Did You Know?

Yogi Berra said, "If I ever found a million dollars, I'd give it back to the guy if he was poor." He also said "I never said half the things I really said."

Kentucky was the birthplace of two presidents who served at the same time - Abraham Lincoln and Jefferson Davis. The state motto - adopted in 1792 - is "United We Stand; Divided We Fall"

The first recipient of social security old age benefits was Ida May Fuller of Ludlow, Vt. Her benefit was \$22.54 per month. The date was January 31, 1940.

Regular Humor

Knock! Knock! Who's there? Art
Art who? R2-D2, of course.

Where did you get that gold watch? I won it in a race.
How many people participated in the race?
Three: a policeman, the owner of the watch, and me!!

One windmill asked another: "What's your favorite music?"
The other one replied, "I'm a big metal fan."

Why did the M&M go to school? He wanted to be a Smartie.

What did one traffic light say to the other? Stop looking at me, I'm changing!

Why do French people eat snails? They don't like fast food!

How does a rabbi make coffee? Hebrews it!

COVID Humor



One thing every man in the country realizes during these tough times is just how important your relationship with the barber is. When stay-at-home orders are finally lifted, there's going to be a bunch of homeless-looking dudes rolling out of their crib desperate for a lineup.

Sure, having a child and starting a family is something that most people look forward to in life. But if you are stuck in a house, would you rather have a glass of wine or a whining baby?

There has never been a better time to track down that person who has been avoiding you because they owe you \$20 from a drunken bet.

Has anyone checked on the pigeons lately? While we are all locked up at home, these poor pigeons are out there left alone without anyone tossing out their bread crust for the birds to feast on.

No matter how many recommendations come from the medical professionals, we're always going to have people ignoring the orders and going about their normal lives like nothing is wrong. Don't be that person. No one likes that person, because they're going to get us locked down for another 30 days.



450 days of distancing with the end in sight, almost

The Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner: Part XLV

Steve Soreff, MD

Hello and welcome to Friday, June 4, 2021. Today marks my 450th day, the end of my 68th week, the beginning of my 16th month and the toward the middle of my 2nd year of social and physical distancing. As the colors of 450, show these are mixed days of progress, concerns, and set-backs. My family, friends and myself are making sorties into previous taboo places and attending events which we would have refused to go to in the past. Some of our friends have dined inside restaurants. Our group resumed playing Mexican Train in person. But and there is that but again, many folks are vaccine hesitate, in some countries COVID is surging and the ugly specter of new and more damaging variants hangs in the air. With two steps forward and one step backwards, I moved into the summer. I hope to see grandchildren again and my daughter is coming on a visit from Israel.

With that, let us look back on the last 2 weeks.

Good morning, it is Saturday, May 22, 2021 and my 45th Diary. Forgive the pun. I working for a good caliber narrative. The sun is out, ,with needed rain possible in the afternoon, Perhaps, it will interrupt my golf attempt. Yes, I am still a want-to-be good golfer. The best news is that rockets from Gaza has halted. There is a truce and my daughter can sleep safely now through the night. My day begins with through lens of Zoom, I will travel to a Bat Mitzvah in Belmont, Massachusetts. It is always interesting and good to see how other synagogues conduct their services. I always learn new ways and idea from that experience. Afterwards, golf was an adventure playing in 85 degrees walking. I needed more hydration and better aiming. Too many sand traps interfered with some good long drives. Oh well, I'll do better next time.

Hello and welcome to Sunday, May 23, 2021. I started off with NPR's Krista Tippett's program *On Being* with Jill Tarter on 'It Takes a Cosmos to Make a Human' <https://onbeing.org/programs/jill-tarter-it-takes-a-cosmos-to-make-a-human/>. Astronomer Jill Tarter, a co-founder of the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence (SETI) Institute , made a number of compelling, relevant points. She talked about extremophiles which are life forms

surviving and thriving in harsh, seemingly inhospitable environments. These are here on earth and she is looking for them on other planets. She said, if life technically existed beyond earth, this would indicate that other civilizations survived. She referred to all of us earthlings. By using this designation of earthling, it would stress we all occupy the same planet. That is really a cool idea that all of on earth are parts of really just one group. ! That notion is related to my idea of every letter mailed in every nation should have the final address EARTH. Hence, for me 32 Dolloff Dam Road, Nottingham, NH 0320, USA, EARTH. Thus, by EARTH it would emphasize our commonality. And, all earthlings do face a global challenge, climate change. Her ideas were a great idea to start the day.

Did you know that this week marks Bob Dylan's <http://www.bobdylan.com/> 80th birthday? As a product of the 60's and loving the Coffee Houses a round Harvard Square, Bob is one of the best artist of that generation and the folk music tradition. His song, *The Times They Are A-Changin'* are applicable to all times. Also, my synagogue's book club will hold its next meeting in June in person outdoors. Yet, another indication the COVID distancing times are changing.

Good morning, it is Monday, May 24, 2021, a new week and a new term. What's the new term? Its s that we are in a time of transition. Yes, with vaccinations up, movie theaters are open again. The distancing world is changing. There is hope and anxiety. I became more hopeful as a watered the garden. Seeing things grow, watching the perennial flowers blossom, feeling the wind, inspired me. There is a future.



The rose said "smile, I'm here".

Good morning, it is Tuesday, May 25, 2021 and I started the by exercising and watching *Gandhi's Awakening & Gandhi's Gift: Gandhi's Awakening* <https://aptonline.org/catalog/GANDHI-S-AWAKENING-GANDHI-S-GIFT>. It “tells the fascinating story of Gandhi's early transformative years in South Africa. It is here the young, naive lawyer experiences harsh prejudice and hatred firsthand, when he is thrown off a train and beaten with a lead pipe. During the Zulu War of 1906, serving as an ambulance stretcher carrier in the British service, he comes face-to-face with the brutality of war, and undergoes a spiritual epiphany that sets a course for the rest of his life. The film offers a deep, discerning look into Gandhi's spiritual ideals as he practices and teaches them in his first revolutionary ashrams. GANDHI'S AWAKENING shows when, where and how Gandhi became the Mahatma or "Great Soul." GANDHI'S GIFT reveals inspiring details about Gandhi's life that were known before only to scholars”. I found his life inspiring and he definitely walked the talk. He believed and practiced non-violence, the quest for truth, simplicity, and poverty. He talked about “be the change you want to be.” I have glad to see how much Thoreau ideas influenced him.

I am connecting the dots of Gandhi, Memorial Day events, marches and White House meeting mark one year since George Floyd's death <https://www.cnn.com/2021/05/25/us/george-floyd-death-anniversary/index.html>. Gandhi lived a life of non-violence and truth. With Floyd's murder, the nation and the world generally said non-violently, that Black Lives Matter. His murder did change the world. All races united. The world will never be the same again.

Hello, it is summer hot today, Wednesday, May 26, 2021. I am in the slow process of moving beyond social and physical distancing to venturing into new activities. I still wear a mask in places that have lifted the mask mandate. I kayaked before the thunder storm. It was good but, and there is that but again, we need more rain.

Here it is. It is Thursday, May 27, 2021. Remember the old one liner, “I saw the ball coming toward me; it got bigger and bigger. Then it hit me!” I have struggled to understand and define this new phase of COVID saga. That is the post vacation world and its confusing mask wearing messages. We have entered into a time of anomie. Wow, what is that? It came from the work of the great sociologist, Emile Durkheim. He made the observation that in times of unemployment, suicide rates increased. This is was predictable. He, also saw in times of high employment, suicide rates also increased. He coined the word anomie to depict a moment when social standards are breakdowning. Here is the definition of anomie

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/anomie>.

“Anomie, also spelled anomy, in societies or individuals, a condition of instability resulting from a breakdown of standards and values or from a lack of purpose or ideals.” In the beginnings of the pandemic the rules of distancing were clear and direct. I and my family followed them. The guidelines get less clear every day.



Good morning, it is Friday, May 28, 2021. I still think today in terms of TGIF. And to further complicate it, there are two ways to look at TGIF: "Thank God It's Friday" or the alternative phrase, "Thank Goodness It's Friday". However, since the Jewish Shabbat begins tonight, I prefer the first definition. As I look at the pandemic, there is a number of hidden areas that have been impacted. The example, opioid overdoses and their deaths have increased <https://www.commonwealthfund.org/blog/2021/spike-drug-overdose-deaths-during-covid-19-pandemic-and-policy-options-move-forward>. A related and contributing factor has the mental toll of isolation and unemployment. Another less known facet is those people, who because of the pandemic, have delayed and did not get diagnosis or treatment many diseases such as some cancers. Perhaps, these will be labelled a collateral damage of COVID-19. That is much to ponder.

Welcome to a rainy Memorial day weekday. Saturday, May 29, 2021. It is also my 14th observance of National Cribbage. And, my computer rival just won 2 games. I'll get him later or tomorrow. Today was noteworthy in several ways. We went to comfort a friend before her husband's funeral. Yes, people are dying not just from COVID these days. For better or for worse, funerals are times to reconnect with old friends. And, we did that just that. Being out in the public, I did notice all the joked about weight gain during the isolation, were true. We then went to several box stores. Their parking lots and insides were full. It looked like Christmas. Most shoppers wore masks but many did not. Most employees wore masks but many did not. This more evidence of anomie.

We went to Lowe's as the high point of commercial wanderings. Its policy on masks (yes, I did ask them) was if you had 2 shots and 2 weeks, you did not have to wear a mask. We did wear masks, but again many shoppers did not. We continue to navigate uncharted vaccinated waters. Remember, it is Memorial Day weekend. Well, it has been said we are commercializing holidays. It was clear on all the cars advertisements that was true of this Memorial Day. But, here again is the but, this year there was a twist. At least at Lowe's, the commercial establishment honored the war dead more that the public and many communities did.



Lowe's Memorial Day display at the Epping, NH store

Good morning, it is cool with rain threatening, Memorial Day Sunday, May 30, 2021. It is a catch-up day and I relish the opportunity. Sorry, I cannot resist a pun which is good for Heinz sight. Two things are on my mind. Number one is the 100th anniversary of the Tulsa Race Massacre <https://www.history.com/topics/roaring-twenties/tulsa-race-massacre>. “During the Tulsa Race Massacre, which occurred over 18 hours from May 31 to June 1, 1921, a white mob attacked residents, homes and businesses in the predominantly Black Greenwood neighborhood of Tulsa, Oklahoma... In 2001, the report of the Race Riot Commission concluded that between 100 and 300 people were killed and more than 8,000 people made homeless over those 18 hours in 1921.” Yet, another example, of American history not well known.

Number two comes from exercising and watching NOVA’s *Great Electric Airplane Race* <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/video/great-electric-airplane-race/>. It not only showed the huge contribution from aviation to accelerating climate change but also things are beginning to address it by electric planes. It talked about three aviation revolutions: 1 powered flight, 2 jet and 3 electric planes.

Welcome to cool, wet but hopeful Monday, May 31, 2021. More vaccinations, more lifting of restrictions here in NH and America; more surging around the world, more variants-welcome to the mixed news world of today. Before Tai Chi, our gang hiked around the Little River Park and got to smell and see the ‘roses. We saw blooming trees, heard singing birds, and saw a running fox. On the walk, we came across an oak tree with what looked like an apple hanging on it. One the group identified it as oak gall <https://www.woodland-ways.co.uk/blog/primitive-crafts/oak-gall-ink/>. What is that? It is produced by insects often wasps laying eggs in the tree. Here is the explanation. “Over 30 species of parasitic Oak Gall Wasps can infect our native oak trees (both English and Sessile). These wasps lay their eggs in various parts of the tree and the tree responds by producing abnormal growth around the egg and developing larvae which is the gall...Both these galls (and other galls) have a high tannin (gallotannin and gallic acid) content and it is this feature which has led to their use in the manufacture of ink.... Its use can be traced back at least to Roman times and was used right up until the 20th century. Documents such as the Magna Carta and the American Declaration of Independence were written with oak gall in”. That is so cool. And, yes, I love learning new things everyday.



An oak wasp gall

On the radio, they talked about the 50th anniversary of the issuing of Malvin Gayle’s *What’s Going On* <https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/marvingaye/whatsgoingon.html>. The lyrics are as relevant today as then. “Mother, mother, There's too many of you crying, Brother, brother, brother, There's far too many of you dying ...Picket lines and picket signs,

Don't punish me with brutality, Talk to me, So you can see, What's going on, Yeah, what's going on, Tell me what's going on, I'll tell you what's going on – Uh, Right on baby, Right on baby”.

I concluded day by garden work. Planting something was a nice celebrate Memorial Day. And, I called my college roommate’s widow. Her husband, Jon Hayes was fighter pilot in the Viet Nam War and died last year. These were my Memorial Day observances.

Hello, it is Tuesday which feels like Monday , June 1, 2021. Since this is June first, the theme remains, I am distancing but cautiously doing less of it. I put wood chip mulch on a garden path. Like mowing, this project has a beginning, middle and an end. I could see progress with each bucket of mulch laid down. Does that mean those buckets filled could be part of my bucket list? Go figure. The President and the nation acknowledged the Tulsa massacre. The message of George Floyd and Black Lives Matter is being heard. My friends are taking small steps beyond their bubble. Some are actually dining inside restaurants. This is a new form of for senior,s “I dare you!”

Hello, it is Wednesday, June 2, 2021 and it is a day of renewal. For several weeks I have been plagued by a series of unexpected and terrifying moments of vertigo, The room is spinning. I am off balance and feeling I am falling. Finally, my denial was breached and I made an appointment with my Primary Care Physician. I feared a brain tumor. He swiftly saw me. He performed a head maneuver on me, which triggered the vertigo. This confirmed the diagnosis of Benign Positional Vertigo <https://www.healthline.com/health/benign-positional-vertigo>. I was greatly relieved with that it had diagnosis and treatable Also, score one for the electronic medical record. On several strokes on the computer’s key board, he was found that he had treated me for the same condition in 2008.

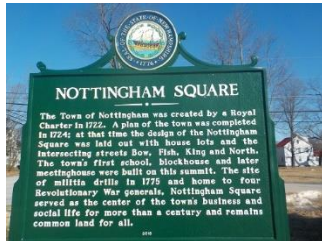
In addition, remember the old adage,” [never go to a doctor whose office plants have died”](#). His office had a neat twist on that message but in the opposition direction. At the entrance to his office was a robin’s bird nest on top of a light fixture. In it were 3 hungry chicks. I just caught a moment when they were being feed. Forgive, the blurry photograph. Focus on the nurturing quality of the birds and the doctor’s office. The bottom line, having a responding doctor and a non-fatal diagnosis and a treatment plan is quite comforting.



Feeding time at the entrance to my doctor’s office

Good day, it is Thursday, June 3, 2021 and it is one more step beyond COVID-19 isolation. Nottingham School again had its 3rd grade annul and traditional tour of some of the town’s historic sites, a farm and one room schools. Last year, because of COVID, this event was not held. So, it was with great pleasure for teachers, third graders, their parents and the Nottingham Historical Society that the students got visit a dairy farm, a graveyard, Nottingham

Square, the four generals' monument, two school houses and play outside on a glorious day, It was refreshing to see all the involved, engaged and learning accompanying parents. In colonial attire, I told them about the town's famous march to Medford hearing about the Battles of Lexington and Concord, April 19, 1775. Again, respecting that we are still in a pandemic, most of the activities were done outdoors. Yes, it was yet another step forward.



The sign at Nottingham Square where the 3rd grades were all morning

With that, let's laugh.



Did you Know?

If you've ever wondered why it's called "home plate", just look at it.

"Decoration Day" - the precursor to Memorial Day - was first organized by the Grand Army of the Republic in 1868. The date chosen was May 26 because no Civil War battle occurred on that date.

When the U.S. Post Office formally instituted the zip code on July 1, 1963, it used a great ad.

“ZIP moves the mail and mail moves the country”. Remind it? And while we are zipping along, the term ZIP is an acronym for Zone Improvement Plan.

At the end of their first trip to Kitty Hawk, NC, the Wright brothers left their glider behind. The postmaster's wife used the sateen covering the wings to make dresses for her daughters.

The hobble skirt, fashionable in the early 20th century, is said to have been inspired by Edith Berg, the first woman to fly in an airplane at Le Mans, France in 1908. She tied a rope around the bottom of her skirt for the flight in order to prevent it from blowing during the flight. Although it is interesting, I was left wondering what is a hobble shirt? Here is the answer <https://medium.com/@kanupriya.goenka/why-did-the-hobble-skirt-become-popular-e86dbdd06880>. During the first decade of the 1900s, just as women began demanding more freedom, more rights, and more comfortable fashions, one of the most restrictive styles of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries came into vogue. This was the hobble skirt, a tight, ankle-length skirt that grew narrower at the hem. Popular between 1905 and 1910, the hobble skirt was so tight at the ankles that the woman wearing it could only walk in very short steps.

Regular Humor



How many golfers does it take to change a lightbulb? Fore!

What did the grape say when it got crushed? Nothing, it just let out a little wine.

What do you call people who like tractors? Protractors

Why do plants hate math? Because it gives them square roots.

Why did the dinosaur cross the road? Because the chicken wasn't born yet.

How does a cucumber become a pickle? It goes through a jarring experience.

Two [pickles](#) fell out of a jar onto the floor. What did one say to the other? Dill with it.

What do you call two [birds](#) in love? Tweethearts

A classic old one. How are false teeth like stars? They come out at night.

COVID-19 Humor

Why hasn't anyone in Antarctica contracted COVID-19? They're so ice-o-lated.

If Covid 19 has forced you or a loved one to wear a mask with your glasses, You may be entitled to condensation.

I can't believe Comic Con 2020 got cancelled because of covid 19! It was the one group of people who were 100% guaranteed to wear masks.

What will Quentin Tarantino be called if he gets COVID-19? Quarantino'd.

Never in my life would I imagine that my hands would someday consume more alcohol than my mouth.



467 days of distancing

The Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner: Part XLVI

Steve Soreff, MD

It is Monday, June 21, 2021 and it is my 467th day, beginning of my 71st week and toward the end of my 16th month and in the middle of my 2nd year of distancing. And, yes, the end is in sight. Our vacation behind us and new future is just ahead. As the many numbers below 467 shows, the road tomorrow remains a gamble or lottery. But I can say with the vacation and vaccination, I no longer am a reluctant prisoner who is at least so times not doing social distancing. For me, the Diary premise is changing. With my last to be Diary, XLVII aka number 47, with the pandemic in sight, I will offer my insights about the pandemic. For now, I think of General Douglas Mac Arthurs's quote, "Old soldiers never die, they just fade away". Although for some nations and parts of America the virus is not just fading away, for other sections the message is reopening. And the Diary may just be morphed in a different type of journal called Nottingham Notes. Wow, that is a lot to say. Let's look back the last two weeks.

Hello and welcome to Saturday, June 5, 2021. It has been a busy productive day. How so? Let me tell you. It began while exercising, watching on PS *Chasing Greatness*. It showed the life and works of Lewis Howes. He is a motivational speaker who wrote the book, The School of Greatness. He made several points relevant to the pandemic. He said the first step of achieving your dream is gratitude. He emphasized having a vision and quoted Stevie Wonder, "Just because a man lacks the use of his eyes doesn't mean he lacks vision". And his third idea, many successful people have to overcome a major personal challenge such as surviving an automobile accident, on their road to achievement. That is the point now. We have all survived the pandemic. How we do in this pandemic will determine our future success. Or ,to

put it another way , will the breakdown lead to a breakthrough? And can we turn the COVID stubbing block into a stepping stone.

The morning was spent on an organizational meeting to planning for a Revolutionary War encampment and re-enactment August 19-21, 2022 <https://forumhome.org/planning-for-the-encampment-and-reenactment-august-p34719-129.htm> . As yet another sign of moving out of the COVID restriction, it was held outdoors with few, if any wearing masks. It was pleasure to be part of a successive, productive group session. This work now for something in the future, reminded me of my daughter's needle point gift to me. It said, "Plan ahead. It was not raining when Noah built the arc". I completed the day by being the Paul Revere on Pawtuckaway Lake. I discovered the loon on its nest. This triggered the alarm for us to put up the protective signs and water barriers so as to not disturb the nesting loon. The loon on the nest is yet another hopeful of spring and the world is getting better.



The loon on its nest

Today is Sunday, June 6, 2021. It is summer hot and quite eventful. But, let me start with the most obvious part, It is the 77th anniversary of the D-Day, the invasion of France at Normandy. Here are 2 quotes from that day. "Your task will not be an easy one. Your enemy is well-trained, well equipped and battle-hardened. He will fight savagely...I have full confidence in your courage, devotion to duty and skill in battle. We will accept nothing less than full Victory! Good Luck! And let us all beseech the blessing of Almighty God upon this great and noble undertaking" – *General Dwight D. Eisenhower, Supreme Allied Commander* "I have full confidence in your courage, devotion to duty and skill in battle. We will accept nothing less than full victory! Good luck!" – *Winston Churchill*. However, what I find so appalling is how many Americans, I have encountered, who do not know about that date nor its significance.

In the morning, we had the annual cleaning-up the grounds of the synagogue. It was moved up to 8 AM to try to avoid the heat later in the day. Again, like is so many activities in the places of worship and in my town, there is a distinct bifurcation by age and generations in participation. There were either older folks, like me, taking part or youngsters and their families involved. The important lesson here is to have events which bridge the gap.

For the work detail, the jokingly, average age was 78. I used the electric lawnmower. In pushing it up a steep hill, I thought of the poem *To An Athlete Dying Young* <https://poets.org/poem/athlete-dying-young>, written A.E. Houseman. No, I am okay just recovering from the vertigo, but activity indicated a younger person who be more able to compete that task. It is the realization that I used to jog and now I walk, instead. It is older person lament about aging. That is all. And, yes, not to forget the pandemic, we were all vaccinated and worked outdoors.

As a nest postscript of the day, in the last two days Peggy and I pulled off surprise birthdays for two different friends who both turned 66! I also, kayaked again today. The loon is on the nest. In response to my Pal Revere call, “the intruders are ae coming”, folks have cordon of the nesting island and put-up warning signs to keep away. When I returned to home port, our 2 flamingos were having an encounter with a mallard duck.



2 flamingos and 1 mallard Perhaps they were using fowl language?

Welcome to a hot Monday, June 7, 2021. The big event was the arrival of the bricks for the Path of Life campaign for my synagogue. One could purchase a brick to honor, recognize or remember someone or an event. It was a fund raiser and a way to beautify the synagogue’s landscape. With the bricks in hand, the Path’s actual construction will commence. It was great to see the real bricks instead of an order form. I recalled how in Robert Frost’s poem, *The Wood-pile* <https://poets.org/poem/wood-pile>, he talked in affectionate tones about a pile of wood. Now, viewing the engraved bricks, I remembered the purchase of each one.

Welcome to a very hot Tuesday, June 8, 2021. How hot was it? Thank you, Ed McMahon. It was so hot, that I went swimming for the first time this year. Switching gears, let us look at what the single rose taught me. On last Monday, May 24, in the Diary <https://forumhome.org/the-diary-of-a-reluctant-social-distance-extrovert-prisoner-part-xlv-p34684-1.htm>, I showed a picture of rose and said how it was a harbinger of good things to come. However, later in the week, on a quick peek at the rose bush, I did not see any roses. I was crestfallen and felt I had missed the rose blooming season was over. Today, again while watering the garden, I saw a bouquet of pink roses. Here is the lesson: assumption makes an ass

of you and me! In haste, I made false assumption. There were the many roses. And, yes, I take that is another good sign of things to come and I did smell them!



Many roses

And, assumptions brings me back to COVID 19. Many folks, states, and countries are easing restrictions on the assumption the pandemic is over. With India and Brazil exploding and in England variants are multiplying, wishful thinking needs to be replaced with facts. I am about to go off and voting in Nottingham's town and school elections <https://forumhome.org/voting-day-tuesday-june-am-pm-p34649-129.htm>. The moderator enforcing a mask mandate. The election was postponed from March until today because of virus. I am still in a quandary as to when distancing is over! Film, at eleven. Readers, if you have idea for 'it is over' email me soreffs15@aol.com*. The * is for you saying, " and, you still using AOL!".

Welcome to today, it is Wednesday, June 9, 2021. Another hot day with nice pickle ball and Tai Chi. Then it was a tale of two cities. On a visit to my physical therapist's office, I entered a world COVID-19 at its height in New Hampshire. You are greeted by questions about your health, travels and family. They take your temperature. You must wear a CDC approved mask. The message was clear: danger infection possible ahead. I found that reassuring and comforting. However, when I went to the Irving gas station, it was different story. No one had masks on-neither staff nor customers. What pandemic? You would not know we are in pandemic.

Hello, it is Thursday, June 10, 2021 and I am on the threshold of big changes. But before I talk about the coming steps, let us see how the CDC views the big picture. The CDC <https://www.verywellhealth.com/understanding-a-pandemic-2615488> offers 6 Phases. “ Phase 1: Investigation Interval, A new type of virus is identified and investigated—in animals or humans anywhere in the world—that is thought to have implications for human health. Phase 2: Recognition Interval, Increased cases, or clusters of cases, are identified, along with an increased potential for person-to-person transmission. Phase 3: Initiation Interval, Cases of the virus are confirmed with both efficient and sustained person-to-person transmission. Phase 4: Acceleration Interval, The new virus infects susceptible people. Public health officials may take measures such as closing schools, encouraging social distancing, and offering antivirals or vaccines—if available. Phase 5: Deceleration Interval, There is a consistently decreasing rate of cases in the United States. Phase 6: Preparation Interval, Even after the pandemic has subsided, public health officials continue to monitor the virus and brace for another wave of illness.” Hence, around here the pandemic has subsided. COVID 19 cases are down and vaccinations up. Now, let’s go back to big step. Ready?

My big step involves going out of state, on our first vacation is over one and half years. Wow, how daring. It is an adventure and a major move from distancing. We are going into the heart of darkness—a time share resort in Maine.

And, now that I have your attention, I want to make a concern about medical terminology. If I was not trying to be polite and politically correct, I would call my bitching about it. Remember I was diagnosed with Benign Positional Vertigo or its more recent designation Benign Paroxysmal Positional Vertigo (BPPV). That was the bad news. The good news was the Physical Therapist, who specializes in working with BPPV patients, could not replicate the symptoms. Thus, I was discharged and better.

But, now let’s get back to the terminology issue. There is the notion words can kill and words can heal. That is a neat concept. Here, I object to the word benign. There was nothing benign about it. It caused me to fall twice and have great distress. I had a minor form of PTSD. Ronald Reagan once said “Recession is when your neighbor loses his job. Depression is when you lose yours,” Hence, it is fine for the doctor to use that term, but not for the recipient. And, that recipient is me. There I said it. Let’s move on.

One more point, I saw this today. A firetruck was shooting water out at the Nottingham Center. Inquiring minds want to know. I asked and they told me that the fire department tests each fire hydrant once a year. That is neat and now you know.



Testing the fire hydrant

Hello and welcome to the first day and adventure of our vacation. It is Friday, June 11, 2021. After pickleball, Tai Chi and watering the garden, we were off. First, we saw this sign of the times, on big billboard in NH proclaiming “This is your best shot at getting back to normal”, with the emphasis on SHOT. This meant vaccination. The push is on for reaching the vaccine hesitant group. The second we encountered a supermarket notice, ‘if you are vaccinated, you do not need to wear a mask’. It sounds CDC-ish. However, it means everyone without a mask has been vaccinated. I do not believe that is true.



The sign proclaims: “This is your shot to get back to normal”.

We did get to our time-share. It is a ski resort, but this is June. Its vacant appearance is creepy like in the movie, *The Shining*. The place is deserted. The stores and restaurants are closed. The lobby is empty. Back to Pete Seeger, “where have all the people gone, long time passing, long time ago”. Score another victory for Zoom. In the woods of Maine, I could attend Friday night synagogue services in Derry, NH. And at the service, I got to review and talk about the Torah portion this week. How cool is that!

It is Saturday, June 12, 2021. Vacation day two and a reason for getting away became clear. Let me explain that by what we did that morning. After sleeping in, we headed off to climb a mountain via the Summit Trail. It was a hot and hard but rewarding hike. We remembered to bring the camelback packs as hydration was key. The woods were alive with the singing of birds, scurrying of ants, and blossoming of flowers on bushes. As we moved up the mountain, Peggy noted the real reason for the vacation. It allowed us time to reconnect. We had met in the White Mountains at Zealand Springs Hut, almost 26 years ago. Hiking was something we have in common. However, over the years we were on parallel tracks pursuing our own talents and interests. The vacation returned the ‘we’ to our relationship. However, signs of COVID followed us to Maine. We did appreciate the masked moose approach.



The Maine Masked Moose approach

One postscript to the hike was that we walked in tick city. We left the woods with 7 or 8 ticks as passengers.

On Sunday, June 13, 2021 we set off the find and then hike into Angel Falls <https://www.northeasthikes.com/angel-falls-hike-maine/>. However, to get there we needed to go to Mexico. Okay, Steve, how is that possible? Remember, we are in Maine, hence we drove through Mexico, Maine. Having driven down a 3-mile dirt road, we got to the trail head for Angel Falls in Franklin, Maine. There, we commenced our walk in.

On the hike in, I met and talked to other hikers from Maine. I told them my famous Maine story. Oh, please, tell us that tale. Okay, here it is. This fellow from Massachusetts drives up to a house in Ellsworth, Maine. He inquires about how to get to Bangor. (Yes, this is one of those *you cannot get there from here* stories.). The local is slow in his response so this flat lander's question. The growingly exasperated driver says, "Does this road go to Bangor?" The Mainer replies, "No, it just sits there between those two telephone poles". The driver then asks, "Can I take this road to Bangor?" The annoyed Mainer answers. "No, they already have roads in Bangor". Finally, the Pine State resident gives him the directions on how to get to Bangor. The motorist drives off. About a half hour later he is back at the exact same spot, where he asked for the directions. He curses the Mainer (expletive deleted). He says, "You sent me in a complete circle!" Upon which the Mainer replies, "Yes, sir. I did, I just wanted to see if you could follow directions before I gave you directions." This is followed by a Maine pronunciation, "Ayyyyyyyyyyy UP." The Maine hikers appreciated the story and said they had not heard it before.

We continued up the then rocky trail. There were 4 major challenging stream crossings. We considered giving up, but a coming back down group, told us the view was worth it. The hike yesterday did help prepare me for today's adventure. Getting to the Falls, itself was hard. There were 3 difficult river crossing. It was a test of faith. Would it be really worth it? The journey up was like the hike up Mount Willard at Crawford Notch or into Petra in the country of Jordan. You travel on long way without seeing any views. You feel discouraged. But you soldier on. Then, suddenly, you come on a fantastic vista overlooking all the Notch or you come

upon a magnificent ancient city. And so, it was when we got up to see Angel Falls. It was spectacular- a thin ribbon of water cascading from a very high ledge. With surrounding cliffs of up to 115 feet above us, Angel Falls proved to be a remarkable sight. And, yes, it was worth it.



Angel Falls

Later, we visited Coos Canyon <http://www.newenglandwaterfalls.com/me-cooscanyon.html>. It was created by differential erosion by the river through various layers of rocks. It was witched cool. That is another one of neat Maine terms.

Good morning, it is Monday, June 14, 2021, And I have already completed my mission for today. It was to say good-bye on the air to Laura Knoy <https://www.nhpr.org/post/laura-knoy-reflects-25-years-exchange>. She has hosted the Exchange on NHPR for 25 years. I am a frequent flyer to that show and call in often. Neat, she recognized me, and I got to say thank you to her. Back to COVID-19, a major New York city hospital is requiring all its workers to be vaccinated. It is amazing that only about 70 % of its staff are vaccinated. Even within the healthcare community, vaccine hesitancy is rampant.

After my radio moment, Peggy and I had a day of discoveries. First, we went to the Valentine Farm Conservation Area. It featured a neat bird walk with pictures of regional birds hidden along the path. This is a great way to introduce folks to local birds. We, also once again tick city. We again had to get ticked off. Second, we visited the Maine Mineral and Gem Museum (MMGM) <https://mainemineralmuseum.org/>. It has a world class meteorite collection. What the exhibit showed was that some meteors contained amino acids. These are the components of proteins and the building blocks of life. It can be argued that life on earth came from outer space. Also, at the MMGM, we learned that tourmaline was the Maine state mineral. Furthermore, that mineral was first discovered in Maine in 1820. Thus, there was supposed to be 200th celebration of that in 2020. However, as the museum staffer said, “2020 did not count”. Tell that to pandemic. Incidentally, a quick bit of history, in 1820 Maine entered the Union as a free state and Missouri as a slave state. Up until then, it was part of Massachusetts. Now, the lost Massachusetts driver might even seem funnier, I hope. Third, we did a short bike ride. I had been phobic about riding one since several bike falls last year. Good news, the ride went well. Longer pedaling adventures are in the future. And, just we finished biking, it began rain. Just like in *Camelot* where it only rains after sundown. . The rain was also good news, we this region like back home is in drought.

Hello and welcome to a day of adventures. It is vacation day number 5, Tuesday, June 15, 2021. An overcast morning gave way to hot, glorious afternoon. On the COVID front, the nation moves toward 600,000 dead. Sadly, attention to “reopening” and vaccination now grabs the headlines. For us, we made another baby step forward. We went to a restaurant for the first time in 1 ½ years. It was only very small advance since we still ate outside. Then we drove to Grafton State Park <https://www.maine tourism.com/listing/grafton-notch-state-park/3020/>. There we hiked to Screw Auger Fall. It was a huge pothole left by the melting glacier. Next, we went to Moose Cave. A neat boulder formation in the side of the mountain. Finally, we hiked 99 feet of the Appalachian Trail. We did it northbound then southbound.



Hiking a section of Appalachian Trail in Maine

Hello and welcome to Wednesday, June 16, 2021. Today is spent visiting Peggy’s family. This is yet another moment of moving beyond COVID. We have not been there for 1 1/2 year. Yes, all were vaccinated, and it was outdoors. It was great to catch-up and see how each had faired during the pandemic. COVID lessons learned for the family conversations were the following: 1 was a greater appreciation of oneself and one’s resilience’s; 2 was how contiguous the virus is, and 3 was the joys of living a simpler life.

Finally, we made it home!! Yippee It is Thursday, June 17, 2021. We got to sleep in our own bed and had control of the room temperature. Our hotel room aka Resorts Condominiums International (RCI) timeshare, the air conditioner (AC) proved to be very vexing. (Vex is a neat Scrabble word). When on, the AC only knew one setting VERY COLD. When not on, the room was a Sauna.

Good day, it is Friday, June 18, 2021 and it is monumental day. How so? First, the easy one, 18 in Hebrew numerology means to life. That is a good thing. Second, -the big one -for the first time in 1 ½ years, I will be going in person to Friday night synagogue services in person. I began distancing and this Diary <https://forumhome.org/the-diary-of-a-reluctant-social-distance-extrovert-prisoner-p32507-1.htm> upon returning home from my synagogue on March 13, 2020. As I wrote then, “It is Saturday, March 14, 2020 (Pi day) 10:45 AM. While listening to *Wait Wait... Don't Tell Me*, I am entering into my first morning of my confinement. To be exact this self-imposed prison sentence of an undetermined sentence began on Friday night, March 13, 2020 (Friday the thirteenth) at 10:12 PM. Upon returning home from attending Friday night services at Etz Hayim Synagogue and struggling with the toilet paper hoarding crowds in the supermarket, my partner greeted me with request aka ultimatum.” Her suggestion was that “we immediately

commence a strict social distancing program for the next two weeks. Her rationale was correct and still annoying. “ And those two weeks have stretched to 464 days or 70 weeks.

And to complete the circle, it was great actually be back in the synagogue after 464 days without being there. Zoom can be good but singing in person even with masks on is better. However, we are not out of the woods, yet. In the building we all wore masks and sat 6 feet apart. And, there was no food served afterwards.



The return to Friday night service at Etz Hayim after 464 days.

And speaking of worship, which is the reason for going to the synagogue, our vacation had a neat touch of irony. Where we stayed in Maine was next to the town of Bethel, Maine . <https://www.bethelmaine.org/>. It is a neat, unique four seasons town. But I want to focus on its name and link it to synagogue services tonight. Bethel has a Hebrew origin and means house of God. And to make it more connected, when I lived in Portland, Maine, I attended Temple Beth El.

The question now becomes, how come the synagogue was now open after 464 days of Zoom services? What changed? The easy answer is New Hampshire has hit the adult population being vaccinated at over 70% The previously unheard term “herd immunity” is now being heard throughout the land. In both New York and California, things are dramatically better. Theaters are opening again. People can go inside buildings now. Vaccination has proven to be a game changer. The emphasis has shifted from masks to shots. As the NH billboard said, “This is your shot to get back to normal”. Now the big question emerges what is normal? More to come on that topic.

Hello, it is Saturday, June 19, 2021 and I went golfing, which is par for the course. Actually, with the help of a one our golf partners, one of the Milligan brothers, I did get one par on one hole. We e.g., New Hampshire, America and the world, are entering into a new twilight zone as the we randomly and by Brownian movement move into the reopening phase. It reminds me of the British Army surrender <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/victory-at-yorktown> to the American army after the Battle of Yorktown, October 19, 1781. In that ceremony, the British bands played *The World Turned Upside Down*. That is what my world is experiencing. Suddenly, we have gone from full masks to the lifting of the mask mandate. It has gone from no groups to groups. It has gone from only outside to okay inside.

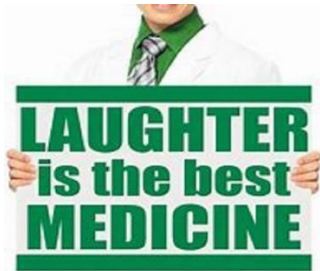
Good morning, it is a wonderful day in our neighborhood, thank you Mister Rogers. It is Sunday, June 20, 2021, Father’s Day, the Summer Solstice, the beginning of summer and the longest day light in the year. It began while exercising and listening to NHPR’s *On Being*. It featured [Alexandra Elle](#), talking about her book, [After](#)

[the Rain: Gentle Reminders for Healing, Courage, and Self-Love](https://www.goodreads.com/en/book/show/50999390-after-the-rain)
<https://www.goodreads.com/en/book/show/50999390-after-the-rain>.

She wrote about the importance forgiving one 'self as a basis of loving. It was neat and powerful. Then, a very good friend kayaked over for breakfast . What a delightful supervise and great conversation. Next, I went for my first golf lesson. If not for my drive, mid-game, pitching and putting I would be in the PGA. I hope to prove you can teach an old dog a new trick. And, yes to paraphrase Robert Frost, I have miles to go before I get par.

As for the Father's Day, my four terrific kids now adults represent my greatest joy and vote for the future of the planet. They are contributors, productive, involved, engaged and significant persons. Love you, your spouses and children.

Wow I have said a lot. Let's laugh



Regular Humor

At a granite donor walkway in front of the Mineral Museum was this inscription. "Between a schist" (donor's name) and a gneiss". Boy, does that rock,



Proof of the joke taken in granite.

Did you hear about the two peanuts walking through town? One was a salted!

A man is at the funeral of an old friend. He tentatively approaches the deceased's wife and asks whether he can say a word. The widow nods. The man clears his throat and says, "Plethora." The widow smiles appreciatively. "Thank you," she says. "That means a lot."

What do you call a pig with laryngitis? Disgruntled.

If you're bad at haggling, you'll end up paying the price.

A commander walks into a bar and orders everyone around.

I lost my job as a stage designer. I left without making a scene.

Never buy flowers from a monk. Only you can prevent florist friars.

Sub-category Vacation jokes

Q: Where do the pianists go for vacation? A: Florida Keys

Q: Why don't mummies go on summer vacation? A: They're afraid to relax and unwind!

Why didn't the Elephant carry a suitcase? He already had a trunk!

Where do math teachers go on vacation? Times Square

Q: Where did Tarzan go on summer vacation? A: Hollywood and Vine

What do you drink while riding a camel? Camel-mile tea

COVID-19 and Vaccination Jokes (note, the not too subtle shift)

I am a proud anti-vaccine Father of 3. Edit- Two Now;2nd Edit- One Now; 3rd Edit- Never mind; 4th Edit- WOW this really blew up. I would like to dedicate all these wonderful awards to my 3 children Byson, Deanne, and Immunity. They would have been so proud. RIP

A friend of mine went to take the vaccine for covid yesterday. After getting vaccinated, his vision was blurred and when he reached home, he called the hospital that gave him the vaccine for advice asking if he should be hospitalized. The hospital told him to come back and collect his glasses

A classic one with a neat twist An old woman is offered a covid vaccine at her senior home. She refuses it and says "I have faith in God to protect me." A week later, her nurse daughter calls her and tells her that she can come into the clinic and get her the vaccine quickly that day. Again, the woman refuses and says "I have faith in god to protect me." Several weeks pass, and several of her friends have died of covid. Her son, a doctor, calls her and offers to even bring her the vaccine in her home. Again, the woman refuses and says "I have faith in god to protect me." A week later the woman catches covid, develops respiratory failure, and dies. She enters heaven through the pearly gates and finally reaches God himself. She asks him "God, I had faith in you to protect me from covid, why didn't you?" God replies "Well, I did send three people to give you the vaccine...."

A vaccine has been released for the Indian coronavirus variant. It's called the Punjab Great news: guys when you get the 2nd dose of the vaccine, they will promote you to a superpfizer.



480 days of distancing

The Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner: Part XLVII

Steve Soreff, MD

Hello it is Sunday, July 4th 2021 and it officially Independence Day. It marks my 480th day, the beginning of 73rd week and the start of my 17th month of social and physical distancing. Or so I say, Yet, I am no longer a prisoner of COVID-19. Here are the reasons I am out of the pandemic prison. . First, we just returned home from post wedding breakfast hosted by me from sister in Wells, Maine. Second, he day before, July 3, 2021 we attended Eric and Caroline’s wedding in Wells. At the breakfast, we get to eat and talk with many folks from the wedding the evening before. And both events were out of state. Furthermore, Third, I have attended meetings and synagogue services in-person as well as vacationing near Bethel, Maine two weeks ago. Moreover, I will return as an Information Volunteer for the Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC) <https://www.outdoors.org / in the White Mountains>. That is all evidence that I cannot call myself a prisoner ,anymore.

But and there is that but again, the threat of COVID-19 still governs my life. In the grocery store, I wear a mask. I do not believe all those in the market, who are not wearing masks, have been by CDC guidelines been vacationed. With this in mind, after today, the Diary will become Reflections from Pawtuckaway from an Ambivalent Participant Extravert in the Newly Emerging Post Covid World (RPAPENEW). Wow, that is a lot to digest. The key word is ambivalent.

Ambivalent is an often misunderstood work which means experiencing two simultaneity diametrically opposite emotions at the same time. That is heavy. As my psychiatrist colleague once said about his wife. “Divorce, never; homicide maybe.” I will be more engaged in my

world, do more things, and go more places. But all these ventures will be done through the lens of not getting COVID-19. I am too aware of the Delta variant, the numbers not vaccinated and the dangers of reopening. However, I will move forward.

There is a metaphor of this change on July 4th, 2021, Independence Day. Despite all the high ideas of the Declaration of Independence, America ambivalently embraced these principles of all people created equally and liberty, justice and opportunity for all as well as the pursuit of happiness. Or as the Declaration of Independence <https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/declaration-transcript>, exactly said. *“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.-- “*

Here is what I meant by ambivalently here. By the US Constitution, we accepted slavery and did give women the right to vote. So as our country struggles to fulfill the full ideas of the Declaration of Independence, I move cautiously forward in engaged in the world. As I do so, I be fully aware of COVID-19. It is not going away.



July 4th, 2021

Wow that is one hell of swam song or statement of a freedom. Too much there, let's look back on the last two weeks. .

Hello and welcome to Tuesday, June 22, 2021. Today was a bittersweet adventure. Again, breaking out of my prison, I travelled with a group of men for the Jewish Federation of New Hampshire <https://www.jewishnh.org/> to Claremont, NH. All of us had vaccinated and did not wear masks-how daring the drive! We were on a mission. The synagogue there is closing. This was is sad . I had been there when 2 colleges in which I had taught at had ceased to exist- Chester College of New England and Daniel Webster College. In both two instances, it was painful to see the campuses once holding of such life and learning abandon. But and there is that but again, with a synagogue ending it was different. It was difference because in its graveyard they are still there. Namely, although the actual the house of worship may change

hands, but its cemetery remains. That was our mission to preserve and perpetuate the Jewish cemetery. One of the cardinal tenets of Judaism is honor and care for the dead. And we took a first step in doing that on this trip.



The soon to close synagogue at Claremont, NH

Welcome to Wednesday, June 23, 2021 and the big event was a haircut. I have not been to barber shop in 469 days. I was looking like either Bernie Sanders or David Ben Guerin. Although Peggy had cut my hair during the distancing, it was not the same as going to a barber shop. It felt good to actually sit in that chair again. One foot note, the prices at my barber shop have gone dramatically up. The barber attributed the increase to the many months that it were not open. And yet it another indication of inflation. The whole visit highlighted the fascinating role of the hair cut itself and the place of the neighborhood barber shop in the male pantheon. I recall Barack Obama talking about how important his hair was to him. I did feel like a new man after the hair was cut, the eye brows trimmed and the neck cleaned up.

But and there is that but again, my haircut was linked to a poem. How is that possible? That night, while exercising, I watch the PBS Poetry in America featuring Mark Doty's masterpiece, epic poem, *This Your Home Now* <https://poets.org/poem/your-home-now>. The poem is based on a visit to the barber shop and connects to themes of love, the 1980's, the AIDS crisis then, masculinity, home, and getting older. The poem emphasizes the feelings of intimacy and of being home in your chosen barbershop. Here are the first lines of it. "For years I went to the Peruvian barbers on 18th Street —comforting, welcome: the full coatrack, three chairs held by three barbers." I was astonished how my hair cut today coincided with the PBS program lionizing barber ship. What serendipity!

Hello and welcome to a spectacular Thursday, June 24, 2021. Wow, what made it so great? It was four things. First, a person came to the Nottingham Historical Society's Van Dame School House and Museum and presented it with ta fantastic poster <https://forumhome.org/documenting-covid-one-poster-at-a-time-p34802-1.htm> entitled

“Nottingham Practices COVID-19 safety recommendations.” For one trying daily to document



the pandemic, it was a dream come true.

The poster entitled “Nottingham Practices COVID-19 safety recommendations.”

Second, while exercising I watched *H2O: The Molecule That Made Us: Crisis* <https://www.nature.org/en-us/what-we-do/our-priorities/provide-food-and-water-sustainably/food-and-water-stories/molecule/>. It highlights the importance of water in our lives, our histories and our future. It was an appropriate bookend to my watering the garden with lake water because of drought.

Third, I fell in love with Zoom again. The Museum of the White Mountains <https://www.plymouth.edu/mwm/> offered a series of geology lectures via Zoom. Yes, if not for the pandemic, I would have never had these types of educational opportunities. To cut to point, this talk was by the recently retired NH State geologist, Rick Chormann, entitled *The Emerging LiDAR Landscape: Clearcutting with Lasers. It features Lidar* — Light Detection and Ranging <https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/facts/lidar.html>. Lidar (Light Detection and Ranging) is a **remote sensing method** used to examine the surface of the Earth. Lidar shows the real earth under and beneath the trees. Early in my distancing world, while exploring my neighborhood wilderness, I discovered an extensive series of stonewall in my woods. In his talk, he demonstrated how Lidar can find stonewalls. But not only that, it is being used to map all the New Hampshire stone walls. How cool is that! Additionally, he offered brief agricultural history of New Hampshire. Early settlers cleared the land and built stone walls for crops. Then, sheep raising took over, with the construction more stone wall, Later, many of these farms were abandoned and white pines took over the fields. It great to learn new things and connects of the dots along the way.

And fourth, I did a quick kayak over to Sanctuary Island. I checked it. The loon is still on the nest. Good night.

Welcome to Friday, June 25, 2021. After Tai Chi, I did my reporter job by interviewing a new member of Nottingham Recreation Department. It is great to hear people’s life stories. Then, I had to see and photograph the miracle in the garden. What is that? I have been withholding from you. the wonder in Peggy’s garden patch. It has been our little secret. It is a duck sitting on its an egg or more undercover of the dense vegetation and flowers on the dry wall. Once the baby duck breaks out of its shell, we are anticipating based on the book by Robert McCloskey, a Make Way for Ducklings moment.



A duck on an egg or more in Peggy garden

The day concluded with more evidence of reopening. For the second week in a row, we had in-person Friday night services. Then, I listened to the Red Sox playing the Yankees at Fenway Park. Suddenly, it was back to the old days and that traditional rivalry. It was a very emotional game as it was Dustin Pedroia night at Fenway. It was a sellout crowd who chanting, “Yankees Suck”-sorry, for the language. During the game, I got a surprise call from my son, Barak. He was in the crowd at Fenway Park. My love affair with the Red Sox continues. And the Red Sox just WON!!!!



From my son at the game at Fenway Park

Welcome to full day of adventures, Saturday, June 26, 2021. It began with the resumption of the Shabbat on Pawtuckaway Lake. This is yet another sign of reopening. It was not held last year because of COVID restrictions. Led by my Rabbi and his wife, we had a Shabbat service and Torah study with a neat moment for kayaking in between. It also showed synagogue events in the future as both the service and the study were Zoomed.

Then, we played best ball golf. What is that? A question, I hoped you had asked. Here is an unabashed explanation for my book, Life's Dueling Dualities A Grandfather's Legacy of Wisdom Chapter 4 Alone or as Part of a Group “In sports, there are individual and team sports. Simple? Not really. Golf is an individual sport-agreed. It really does reflect on the person's skills, talents and determination. So, one player does win the tournament or in the case of the Masters, one individual goes home in the coveted green jacket. Yet, even in golf there can be teams. On the international level there is the Ryder Cup which pits American versus European Teams against each other. This biennial tournament began in 1927. Or, in the more

local approach, I have played team golf called best ball. In this case you are on a team of with three other players. In this format, one team plays against other teams. It begins with all four members teeing off. Then they select which of the drives was the best. Next all four again hit from the location of the best ball and so on. Thus, the team has one score for each hole. The point being here that even a highly individualize game of golf, can be team based too.” However, besides prompting team work, best ball today also sped up the time of actually playing the game.

Hello and welcome to Sunday, June 27, 2021 and the reopening march continues. This time, the Book Club face to face in-person with masks on inside the synagogue. What a joy to have conversations with real people. Yes, Zoom allowed us to meet during the last year. But after over a year of computer faces, it was a pleasure to be together in-person again. Then I had a second golf lesson. I am learning to get in the swing of things 😊 Still later I watered the garden and mowed the lawn . Spring is definitely a growing season.

Wow it is hot today, Monday, June 28, 2021. It is the first day of a heat wave. For our Tai Chi group, it is an amazing contrast from our doing the sets in the cold, snowy , windy winter days. For me, I was on the injured reserve list, since I pulled a leg muscle pushing the lawn mower up-hill yesterday. Advantage, the mower. Then, I went for my Prostate-specific antigen (PSA) test. As a survivor of prostate cancer, those test result number govern my life. In getting my blood drawn, I have this to report. “ I went for the blood test and all I got was a picture of these bubble heads”. That would make a great tee shirt slogan. The phlebotomist had a bubblehead his collection on her window box. And, yes, I did tell her that her work was in vain. . Stay tuned for the results when I go to my urologist in July.



<https://golftips.golfweek.usatoday.com/rules-playing-ball-golf-1844.html>

Welcome to the second day of the heat wave. It is Tuesday, June 29, 202. And you, you guessed it, this marks my 15th month in now distancing and observing Nation Cribbage Day, The good news is that 15 is an important number in playing real Cribbage .As in this example, the opponent plays a eight card and you play a seven, That translates into 15 for two points and you then peg two holes on the Cribbage board. Just now, my computer competitor, , Bill, just beat me. However, as the evening waned, I did manage to have one win, in observance of National Cribbage.

It is hot today. It is SO hot, I have gone swimming already. Could go again, may be? Today is another item reopening. My daughter, Matana, just flew in from Israel. And as Henny Youngman would say. “Boy, were her arms tired”. She came to America partly because of the pandemic deferred events. Eric and Caroline had planned a big wedding on July 4th, 2020. But f

COVID-19 made that out of the question. The couple did get married then in their driveway around that time last year. But they still wanted a large family and friends event this year. Matana came for this make-up wedding. And, yes, it is another sign of many reopening.

And speaking of COVID, here are two thoughts. The Japanese news program talked about the significant number of people who died alone and their bodies were only found much later. The second deals with Delta variant. It speaks urgency of getting the world vaccinated to prevent the emergence of other variants.

Good morning, day three of heat wave, it is Wednesday, June 30, 2021. Yet, another dwarf month where I have to advance the date manually on my wrist watch. Remember wrist watchers, you iphone and apple watch folks? Anyway, on returning from Tai Chi, I had a driveway moment. Yes, as an NPR listener, I know what its definition of that term is. It means when you are driving home and hearing a NPR story which is so good you want to hear the rest of it. But you have arrived home. So you sit in your car in your driveway to finish the story. However, this was a different type of driveway moment. Here is what happened. As drove into drive way, there was a duck standing in the middle of the road way. I stopped the car. The duck just continued to just stand there. I got out of the vehicle. I too just stood there looking at the duck. At this point neither of us moved. Then, I believed the duck recognized me. The duck then walked over to the wall and flew up t its nest. Yes, it was our duck and it is back on the nest!!!



Our duck's drive way moment

Hello and welcome to Thursday, July 1, 2021. And for the record, it marks my 72th week of distancing. It is raining! Praise the Lord and splash in a puddle. Two machines dominated the day, First, was the printer. It decided it would no longer print anything in black. Colors were okay, but suddenly it ceased to print anything in black. Despite many cleanings of its heads attempts, it still refused to allow black ink to reach to paper. The only explanation that made sense was that these printers are designed to fail aka planned obsolescence. The printer company wins. I will get a new one.

The second machine to take center stage was my car. It is 2015 Subaru Forester. Thank you for asking. . The idea of going to a wedding out of state and thought of others besides Peggy being in my vehicle, provided the incentive to clean it. Clearing the debris from the vehicle was like doing archeology of the distancing career and saga. There was the scarf and hand warmer from doing Tai Chi in the snow. There was a folding chair which I sat in for outdoor meetings that had held there instead of in a building because of COVID-19. There were huge variety of face masks. And, of course, there were my books on CD, since my car will not start unless I have CD inserted. The good news is my car is much cleaner.

Big day, Friday, July 2, 2021. I got to see my daughter, Matana, the Israeli, today !!!! It has been two years since we saw each other. COVID has a way of interfering with everything. A wild quick thought, COVID is both a noun and verb. And yes, as a verb, it is a killer. Seeing

her today points out the erratic geographic and temporal nature of the virus. She could fly here and return home, but I cannot fly to Israel. Its borders are closed. Today, in Portsmouth everything was open and few people wore masks. But in other part of America and the world, they are back to lock downs again. Two trends are evident. The variants especially now the Delta, are the wide cards. The pandemic is not over until the fat variant stops singing. Second, the pattern is clear. Lock down, too fast reopening coupled with huge sports events leads to another surge and lock down.

Reopening can be like the experience of going into a body of water like a lake, river or ocean. Some people just jump right in. Others slowly waded in. Right now, today, Peggy and I took another step in wading into the world. Remember, we just for the first time in one and one half years went on a vacation and eat outside at a restaurant. We ate today inside a restaurant. It was good and awkward. More wading tomorrow when we stay at a hotel and attend a wedding in Maine.

Hello and welcome to breakout day, Saturday, July 3, 2021. Still the duck is sitting on the egg. And perhaps, the ducklings are about to break out of their shells. Good luck ducklings.



Peggy's picture of one of the eggs in the nest while the duck r was away

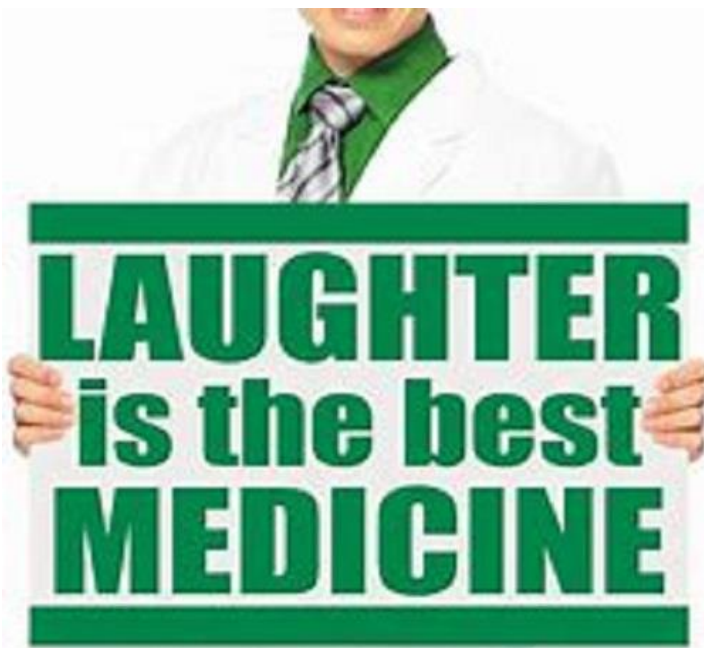
Yes, we going to Wells, Maine for a delayed by COVID-19 wedding ceremony. All's well that ends in Wells, so they say. I am on the cusp of changing my prisoner status. Big time wading. The wedding was spectacular. The couple, Eric and Caroline sparkled and the event emotional, loving, and caring. The vows were fresh, tearful and a reminder of the commitment of the day.



Eric and Caroline

But it was more than just a wedding. It was for the huge appreciated historic assembly. For most of the attendees, it was their first time in a year and half that they were part of without a mask large gathering of any kind. Many there had traveled huge distances to attend. For a moment, I had the images from Edgar r Allan Poe's The Masque of the Red Death <https://www.poemuseum.org/the-masque-of-the-red-death>. As terrifying that connection is, I hope and believe vacations would preclude that type of story, At any rate, it was a WOW event.

Free at last, free at last-perhaps, let 's laugh and celebrated



Did you know?

When the British army liberated the Nazi concentration camp at Bergen-Belsen, Alfred Hitchcock was asked to help amateur film makers document the event. He was so horrified by what was filmed that he refused to allow the film footage to be released. It was finally released sometime around 1980.

The collective noun for a group of chipmunks is a "scurry" - and they do.

During World War II, a Great Dane named Juliana was awarded the Blue Cross Medal. She extinguished an incendiary bomb by peeing on it!

Alexander the Great was accidentally buried alive. Scientists believe Alexander suffered from a neurological disorder called Guillain-Barré Syndrome. They believe that when he died, he was actually just paralyzed and mentally aware!

The world's most successful pirate in history was a lady named Ching Shih. She was a prostitute in China until the Commander of the Red Flag Fleet bought and married her. But her husband considered her his equal and she became an active pirate commander in the fleet.

Ketchup was sold in the 1830s as medicine. In 1834, it was sold as a cure for an upset stomach by an Ohio physician named John Cook. It wasn't popularized as a condiment until the late 19th century!

Andrew Jackson had a pet parrot. And he taught his parrot, Polly, to curse like a sailor. There is even one legend that the parrot had to be taken out of Jackson's funeral for its proclivity for profanity!

The Law of Perversity dictates that any weed seed sprouting in one's garden bears an uncanny resemblance to the nearest plant.

Regular Humor

In a democracy it's your vote that counts; in feudalism, it's your Count that votes.

A chicken crossing the road: poultry in motion.

If you don't pay your exorcist, you can get repossessed.

With her marriage she got a new name and a dress.

Show me a piano falling down a mine shaft and I'll show you A-flat miner.

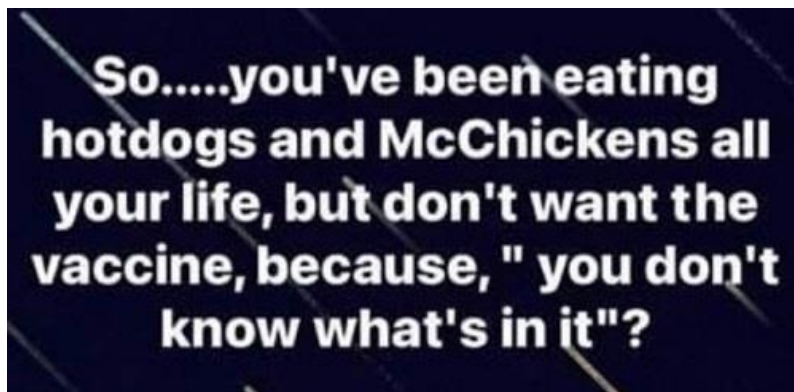
When a clock is hungry it goes back four seconds.

The guy who fell onto an upholstery machine was fully recovered.

Kids exploring ancient ruins



COVI-19 and Vaccination Humor



I thought I had Covid 19 so I decided to give it a go and I injected myself with bleach...Surprisingly I'm all white now.

If Covid 19 has forced you or a loved one to wear a mask with your glasses, You may be entitled to condensation

For how long since its discovery has Covid 19 been deadly? From right off the bat.

The Covid 19 Toilet Paper craze was a lot like the Stock Market Crash of 1929. But this time, instead of everyone dumping their stocks, they're stocking for dump



492 Days of my COVID distancing world

The Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner: Part XLVIII

Steve Soreff, MD

Hello, and welcome to the what I thought would be the first issue of Reflections from Pawtuckaway I. Reflections from Pawtuckaway I would have continued where The Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner: Part XLVII <https://forumhome.org/the-diary-of-a-reluctant-social-distance-extrovert-prisoner-part-xxlvii-p34853-1.htm> left off. For day 480 days I felt and acted like a prisoner of COVID-19. I went to no public gatherings. I lived on and in a way, thrived on Zoom. I roamed only in my neighborhood wilderness and enjoyed Pawtuckaway Lake. Our family stayed inside our known and safe 'bubble'. However, as I wrote on the 480th day, "Hello it is Sunday, July 4th 2021 and it officially Independence Day. It marks my 480th day, the beginning of 73rd week and the start of my 17th month of social and physical distancing. Or so I say, Yet, I am no longer a prisoner of COVID-19." I go the meetings indoors: we went on vacation: we socialize with vaccinated friends without masks on, and I even went to Boston. That is the way I thought things would go, but, and there is that but again. Upon reflection, I am still a semi-prisoner. And here are reasons I am not fully free.

However, I am too aware of the Delta variant, the numbers not vaccinated and the dangers of reopening. With that in mind, The Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner: Part XLVIII continues. Thank you for accepting and appreciating the almost change. It is now Friday, July 16, 2021. It is my 492th day, end of my 74th week and the middle of my 17th month of distancing and prisoner-hood in some form.

This is Friday a Tai Chi day. One of the enduring and endearing part of the pandemic has been our Little River Tai Chi gang. For over a year and a half, three times a week our little group has done 2 sets of 108 Tai Chi moves and some exercises, The group has sustained me physically, emotionally and socially. We have there when it was too hot, too cold, too rainy, too humid and, like in the three bears story, when it was just right. Having a schedule helps one to survive the restrictions of the COVID-19 world. And, this gang was great that way. Today we kayaked and canoed together on Pawtuckaway Lake.



Tai Chi on Pawtuckaway Lake

Wow, with that almost reversal in course and long introduction, let 's look back on my new semi--prisoner life the last two weeks.

Hello and welcome to Monday, July 5, 2021. First, I want to begin with reflections on July 4th 2021 weekend <https://forumhome.org/the-diary-of-a-reluctant-social-distance-extrovert-prisoner-part-xlvi-p34853-1.htm>. . It did not seem to me as patriotic, nor were there the excited three cheers for America as usual. And if my perception of that indifference is accurate , there are a number of superficial personal reasons and several deeper meanings. The top layer included the rainy weather. Yes, it put a damper on the day. Second, the big event of the weekend for us, was my cousin's Eric and Caroline's wedding in Wells, Maine. July 4th was not even noted at the ceremony. And, the spectra of COVID -19 is always there, regardless of what Biden says that America is back!

The deeper layer involved the last few years in Washington. DC and the deep wounds Black Lives Matter (BLM) exposed. The past administration policies toward immigrants, climate change and the world, showed ideas that are not, for me, American values. The BLM movement sadly highlighted many aspects of United States history, that we are not proud of and that we have ignored.

Now back to the day itself, Monday, July 5, 2021. A good hike before Tai Chi lifted my spirits. A glorious, hot summer day raised my enthusiasm further. And the postponed Boat Parade <https://forumhome.org/the-th-of-july-boat-parade-on-july-th-a-great-success-p34850-129.htm> restored my patriotism.



Proud of America was the spirit of the Boat Parade

I want to make one final comment about the day. I heard on NPR a program detailing how the COVID-19 crisis changed three career trajectories. Each one of the people described how the distancing forced them to re-evaluate their jobs and lives. In turn, each chose a new more satisfying life path forward. Some things good can come out of the pandemic.

Good day, it is Tuesday, July 6, 2021. Again, while exercising, I learned how slavery led to the American Revolution. This book [Slave Nation: How Slavery United the Colonies & Sparked the American Revolution](https://www.zinnedproject.org/materials/slave-nation/) by Alfred Blumrosen and Ruth Blumrosen <https://www.zinnedproject.org/materials/slave-nation/> made this profound connection. This way

“in 1772, a judge sitting in the High Court in London declared slavery ‘so odious’ that it could not exist at common law and set the conditions which would consequently result in the freedom of the 15,000 slaves living in England. This decision eventually reached America and terrified slaveholders in the collection of British colonies, subject to British law. The predominantly southern slave-owners feared that this decision would cause the emancipation of their slaves. It did result in some slaves freeing themselves.”

To ensure the preservation of slavery, the southern colonies joined the northerners in their fight for “freedom” and their rebellion against England. In 1774, at the First Continental Congress John Adams promised southern leaders to support their right to maintain slavery. As Eleanor Holmes Norton explains in her introduction to Slave Nation, “The price of freedom from England was bondage for African slaves in America. America would be a slave nation.”

It was great day and evening . My daughter, Matana from Israel and son, Barak from Boston arrived. It was the beginning of neat meals, conversations and water ventures.

Welcome to Wednesday , July 7, 2021. Our house is a little factory. Peggy’s daughter, Mandy, an engineer is working remotely for a Massachusetts s company in the basement. Matana is working om the porch remotely for an Israeli company. Peggy, son Jeff on the lower level is doing assuagements for a California company. Peggy is caring for her grandson, Emerson and Barak is out running in preparation for the postponed Boston Marathon.

Today, I relearned an old lesson from three generations occupying the house at the same time. The lesson is that each generations likes to talk with the folks of their same generation. I saw that in Worcester with the radio program. *Senior Speak: Worcester’s Mature Voice*. Seniors prefer to talk to and listen other mature folks rather than others. We saw the lesson played out at the July 4th wedding. Old folks gather and chat with other seniors. Youngsters flock together.

Hello and welcome to a rainy Thursday, July 8, 2021. The theme is two steps forward and two backwards. The forward ones were easy to describe. With all in the house, now well rested and organized, communication in the home went very well. Old lesson # 1 was revisited: a good night’s sleep and the feelings of being relaxed and not being stressed improves context of one life. The new printer was delivered today. But it took a computer genius to make it work. An old lesson # 2 was relearned: Too much of a good thing makes it into a bad thing. Case in point is with the rain. It was good to get rain. For the first time .this year the dam’s spillway was active and roaring. The lake was finally at it projected full level. But with the rain came also Hurricane Elsa which meant more rain. And this now translates into flooding.

Meanwhile COVID-19 has scored a series of wins. Number one is no spectators for the Tokyo Olympics. Number two areas of America like Missouri are like NYC a year ago. Number three, the Delta variant is spreading national and globally. And number four, it looks like I’ll need a third shot of the Pfizer vaccine.

Today is Friday, July 9, 2021 and the theme and message is rain. In the words of Ed McMahon, It rained so hard, I could not even to my Lake Hosting job. It rained so hard that the lake came to the boats. And it rained so hard that there was no pickle ball and Tai Chi was inside the pavilion. All kidding aside, the rain reminded me of the son by Leonard Cohen called *Passing Through* <https://genius.com/Leonard-cohen-passing-through-lyrics>. How it applies here is the Elsa is only passing through. And yes, the sun is coming out.

Welcome to Saturday, July 10, 2021 and was back to my old routine. That is exercising while watching. This time I saw on PBS *Summoned: Frances Perkins and the General Welfare*. Her story and the program made several key points. First, the program showed how slow it was in the United States for power and leadership to be given to women. In 1933, she became the first woman in the President's cabinet. Second, the show highlighted the seemingly eternal battle and division in America between the role of government to help people like in the Great Depression or in this COVID crisis or the position that government should do very little as possible Third, it highlighted the struggle to get Social Security. We owe Francis Perkins a great deal and she made the New Deal work!



Francis Perkins

Hello. It Sunday, July 11, 2021 and it is time for activities and reflections. First, I played golf with my golf 2 golf buddies. We selected a course which in terms of grooming is coarse. We preferred it because we were not pushed by course personnel and other players. Now, for the reflection. Remember my longwinded discussion about ambivalence? I love and hate the game of golf. Love is based on the challenge of each hole and the occasional moment of doing things right and even paring a hole. Hate is based on my frustration of so many bad shots. I also enjoy the exercise since we walk the course and see and hear in the glory of nature.

In the afternoon, I went kayaking. It is relaxing and gratifying to be on the water. I watched a loon and wondered about the fate of the lone loon chick on the south lake. With recent rain and the pass through by hurricane/ tropical storm, Elsa, the lake level is way up and water roaring over the dam and spillway. The flamingos are fearful I about being overwhelmed.



The flamingos in the rising lake level

I completed the day with listening to NHPR, *The Folk Show* <https://www.nhpr.org/programs/folk-show>. Folk music is my music. I went to college, Tufts 1964, when coffee shops featuring folk music was “in”. I have been to the Newport Folk Festival and heard in person twice Pete Seeger.

It is Monday, July 12, 2021 and the word for the day is gratitude. I had car crisis today. After the power out, I could not get my vehicle out of the garage. Cindy of the Tai Chi group came to the rescue. Thank you. As we drove there to do the sets, we talked about how families handle health crises. In so many cases, families do step up the plate. (go Red Sox). And so, it has been throughout the pandemic. Families and friends come together help and protect each other. I am reminded of Robert Frost poem *The Death of the Hired Man* <https://poets.org/poem/death-hired-man>, “Home is the place where, when you have to go there, They have to take you in.”

A busy, Tuesday, July 13, 2021. It began with a visit to the celebration of Frank Case’s <https://forumhome.org/remembering-frank-case-p34824-1.htm> life. Case was great, neat, and beloved local pharmacist, state legislator, Family and friends gathered to remember him, share stories and sing Happy Birthday to him. He would have been 90 today. Then of the Boston for lunch with Matana and Barak. Boston proved to be an adventure. All the parking lots were closed. There was major construction throughout the city. I felt like a country mouse visiting a metropolis. What does that mean? Glad you asked. I am used to parking meters which take coins. I am also used to a machine that covers a number of parking spaces. You pay that device and it gives you a paper to put in the car’s dashboard to showed you have paid. But and there is

that but again, in Bean Town there were now solo parking meters which took coins or credit cards. Yes, the individual meter was a small computer with Internet access! Boy, did I feel out of date with the world.



This is not your father's parking meter.

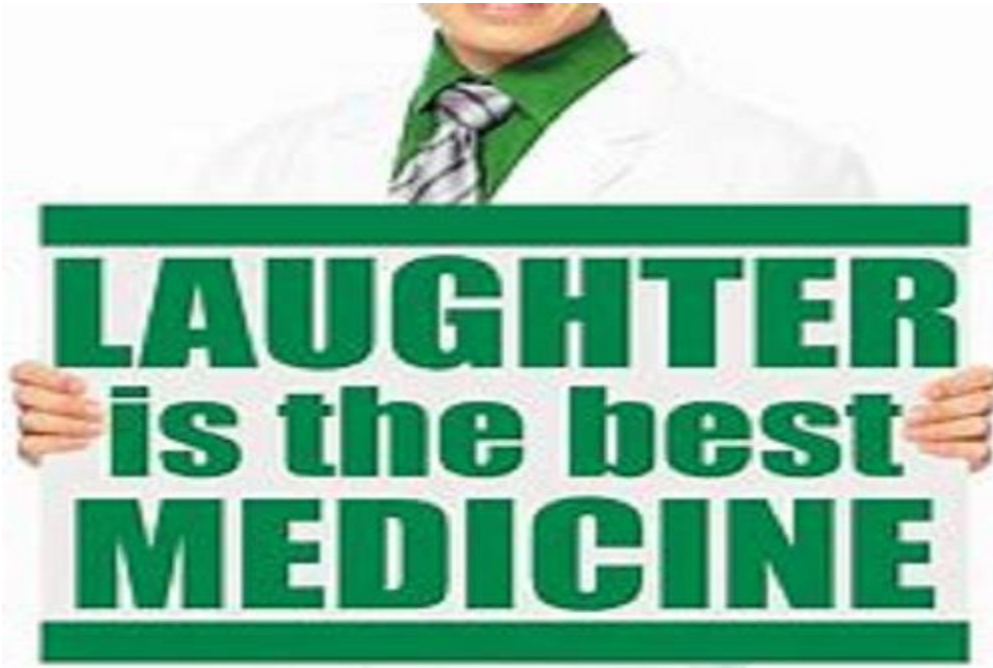
Welcome to Wednesday, July 14, 2021. It was my professional day and chance to see more evidence of reopening. I had coffee with a psychologist colleague of mine. Yes, we sat outdoors. In-door dining remains something I am still slowly wading into. We both lamented loss of autonomy in mental health care and in teaching. We talked about the issue of Wasted Worry. We concluded that for many people devoted their mental energy to things they had no control of. It was great to talk 'shop'. In reopening, the Nottingham Historical Society is planning its annual blueberry pancake breakfast on August 8. It was not held last summer because of COVID-19.

Welcome to a hot marble shooting day, Thursday, July 15, 2021. Please, let me explain the marble reference. Each year the Nottingham Historic Society participates in the town's Summer Day Camp program. I taught a series of small group of Kindergarten through fifth graders on how to play marbles, I gave each student 2 similar colored marbles, Each student put one in the center of circle or hula hoop. They kept the second one as the 'shooter'. In turn, individual students would shoot their shooter marble at their opponents' marbles. The object of game is to knock all other marbles beyond the circle or into the circle's side using the shooter marble. The one who is the only marble left in the circle wins. It was fun teaching kids a new game. Many said "I love marbles" and "I will play it when I get home" I also, came away with fuller appreciation of the work of being an elementary grade school teacher. And, I am not used to standing all day, too.



The marble game with 4 marbles in the middle of the circle

That's enough. Let's laugh.



Did you know?

Admiral Chester Nimitz was court-martialed in 1908 for running a destroyer - the "Decatur" - aground in the Philippines. He received a reprimand. In WWII he was given the rank of Fleet Admiral by President Roosevelt, and basically put in charge of the Pacific Theater. His method of relieving stress was to throw horseshoe's.

The word "mill", referring to 1/1000 of a dollar, is derived from the Latin "mille" meaning "a thousand". Our word "mile" has the same root, denoting 1000 paces for the typical Roman foot soldier. The Roman foot soldier was known as a "miles". Today's term "military" has the same derivation.

Regular Humor

Why can't you explain puns to kleptomaniacs? They always take things literally.

How do you keep a bagel from getting away? Put lox on it.

Why don't Calculus majors throw house parties? Because you should never drink and derive

What's the different between a cat and a comma? A cat has claws at the end of paws; A comma is a pause at the end of a clause.

Why should the number 288 never be mentioned? It's two gross.

Why did the yogurt go to the art exhibition? Because it was cultured.

COVID and Vaccination Humor

After a long debate with my Wife, I decided that we won't vaccinate our kids. We think the doctor would do a way better job than u

I have a vaccine joke.....but a lot of people won't get it

A friend of mine went to take the vaccine for covid yesterday

After getting vaccinated, his vision was blurred and when he reached home, he called the hospital that gave him the vaccine for advice asking if he should be hospitalized. The hospital told him to come back and collect his glasses

Weird Pfizer vaccine side effect. I haven't made any sounds when I go to the bathroom since I got the shot. Doctor said that with Pfizer, the p is silent.

I didn't tell anybody but I volunteered for the Russian vaccine trials for C-19 in Amsterdam

I received my first shot today and wanted to let you all know that it's completely safe with no side effects whatsoever, and that I feelshki хорoshó я чувствую себя немного странно



508 Days of the COVID Distancing Life

The Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner: Part XLIX

Steve Soreff, MD

Good day, and welcome to Sunday, August 1, 2021. Wow, this marks the beginning of another month both reopening and retreating in the face of COVID. Officially today stand as my 508th day of living in a twilight zone as well as the beginning of my 77th week and the start of my 18th month. At this point my world and life is both expanding and eclipsing, I went to the mountains as AMC volunteer for the first time in over a year, And yet with the alarming increases in Delta variant and the unevenly distributed areas of surges, I see my world also shrinking. Today I go the Manchester- Boston Airport to welcome Ra'anana De-Has, New Hampshire's New Shaliach <https://cdn.fedweb.org/fed-121/2/2021-JNHReporter-WEB.pdf>! This is a program that brings Israeli to the United States to connect the two countries. And, I will recover from my golf game on Saturday.

Let's look back and wonder later about what is forward.

Welcome to Saturday, July 17, 2021. My day began with my participating in the Annual Loon Count <https://loon.org/lpc-work/counting-loons/> on Pawtuckaway Lake. We circled the South Lake from 8 AM to 9 AM and counted 4 adult loons and one chick at that time. It is nice to know conservation effects are working and the loon population is increasing. I also like the idea of being citizen scientist which the count allows me to do. By the way, if you are interested in becoming a citizen scientist there is the USA National Phenology Network <https://www.usanpn.org/>.

Then, I went off to play golf. On the course, I was reminded how far things have come in the reopening process. In the early days of the pandemic, the NH golf courses were prohibited from having any one from Massachusetts play there. They could be fined by the state if that happened. However, with Los Angeles now back into lock down, we have a long way to go.

Here is an important topic. Today I watched the PBS three part series .entitled *Dismantling Democracy* <https://centerforpolitics.org/publications->

documentaries/documentaries/dismantling-democracy/. It made a number of troubling points. Our American democracy is endangered. And others around the world are too. There are many reasons for this. One are the *political action committees* (PAC). Their money buys votes and politicians want votes. The assault on journalism continues. There is now hyper-polarization which now divides the country, states, communities and families. Finally, there tyrants who want a dictatorship, The series represents wake -up call.

Good day, Sunday, July 18, 2021 and many things to note. First, is the surge yet again in some parts of the country. It was been called the 'Pandemic Of The Unvaccinated'. How appropriate and accurate is that. I recall the horror and terror polio was in past in the summers. We were and are so grateful for the polio vaccine. Why is COVID so different? Switching gears, I heard Brian Greene, a professor of physics and mathematics at Columbia University, talking about his new book entitled Until the End of Time: Mind, Matter, and Our Search for Meaning in an Evolving Universe. He made the point that we are composed of material from exploring stars. It gives new meaning to the funeral proclamation 'from dust to dust'. He added that science now acknowledges consciousness as appropriate to study. How cool is that!

After that, I helped the process of finding and removing milfoil from the Pawtuckaway Lake-saving the lake one plant at a time. This is one small step in .saving the planet! The day was completed by attending the synagogue's annual calendar meeting. This is when we plan and schedule the year's events. Yes, the specter of COVID-19 did haunt these deliberations.

Hello and welcome to Monday, July 19, 2021. It is a mixed day in many respects. It rained in the morning. But that they did not deter us from walking in the woods before Tai Chi and taking a forest bath. The mushrooms were out in force. And later the sun came out and it was quite pleasant. In world and in America some places the Delta variant was surging while other places were opening-up. In the West, the forest fires have testified to Global Warming. Many nations are spying on journalists and imprisoning them. More blows to democracy. Sorry, for the pessimism. The glass is half full and half empty. I want a full for democracy.

Good day, it is Tuesday, July 20, 2021. And the sun is shining, the birds are chirping and a gentle breeze blowing. It is all good and I have two thoughts. The first one builds on my Biopsychosocial Information Model <https://forumhome.org/applying-the-medical-biopsychosocial-information-model-to-your-own-health-p32444-149.htm>, In that system biologic, psychologic, sociologic and information all contribute to our understanding of life in sickness and in health. Last night, in dream I added technology component. Here is what I mean. Things like computers, i-phones and vaccinations have huge impact on our lives and interactions. For example, some folks being on their i-phones dominates their lives. Other just use them to occasionally communicate. Their interactions with the device are amazingly variable These tools and events can definitely alter the arc of our days and nights depending how use or deal with them.

The second was that I am back in the saddle again. with OLLI <https://olli.granite.edu/>. "OLLI (Osher Lifelong Learning Institute) at Granite State College is a member-driven, volunteer-based membership program offering an open invitation to adults age 50 and better to enjoy lifelong learning, social events and volunteer opportunities in accessible and safe locations. Come for the classes, stay for the friends!" This means I can do my Madness and the Movies

VIII in person for the Fall semester. So today, outdoors under a tent, I met ‘students’ and other teachers to talk about our classes. There were smiles, joy and much clapping all around as we all celebrated being in-person that morning. Yes, Zoom is good but it has its limits.

Several other things I want to note. One, today NH passed the number of over 100,000 cases of COVID-19. Two, the particles in the air from the fires out West made a brilliant red sun set. Three, I am thinking of keeping a score card for these categories: COVID-19, Climate Change, Assaults on Democracy and Black Lives Matter.



The forest fired sunset July 20 over Pawtuckaway Lake photograph by John Bartsch

Hello and welcome to sunny, warm beautiful summer day, Wednesday, July 21, 2021. The theme for the day is garden, specifically Peggy’s garden. By picture here are some of the early products of its. The garden has many meanings, It marks one of the centerpieces of the distancing movement, namely attention to things at or a round the home. Although Peggy does all the heavy lifting in the gardening work, I have two tasks. One is to water the flowers and vegetables. With the lake’s help and more recently the heavy rains, that job has been well done. My second role is the mow the lawn sections amongst the raised garden beds. Last, month I pulled a hip muscle completing that assignment. As a result, I did not mow for a month. The grass rioted and grew like crazy. It was looking like a jungle out there.



From Peggy’s garden

A quick loose association and then I’ll get to the point. Christians are born with original sin; Jews are born with original guilt. And as card carrying Jew, I have been feeling guilty about not performing my mowing job. Today, I rectified that. I mowed the lawn and feel good about it.

And speaking of guilt, I am feeling some guilt because I prematurely attempted to end the Diary. I was my hope verses the really. COVID still dominates my world and activities. I still wear a mask in the supermarket. The opera is not over until the fat lady sings, and the fat lady is COVID-19 and she is not finished singing yet.

To get out of my guilt trip and put CPVID out of my mind, I went for a kayak on Pawtuckaway Lake. I got inspired and hopeful when I saw the baby chick and the parents cruising and feeding on the lake.



Two loons and a chick on South Pawtuckaway Lake

Hello and welcome to *Ground Control to Major Tom*, it is Thursday, July 22, 2021 and I hope you are intrigued by that introduction. I began the day with exercising and listening to an interview with Chris Hadfield. He is the Canadian astronaut who once broadcast from the International Space Station singing the song *Ground Control to Major Tom* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KaOC9danxNo>. He was offering insights into being alone as a product of the pandemic. Hearing his ideas is yet another example of the pandemic is NOT over.

His first step in living with isolation which he did for months in the Space Station was to recognize the danger. What danger does isolate ion keep you safe from? In our case is not getting and possibly dying of COVID-19. And yes, it is real and current danger. The next step is acknowledging your 'new' life is your real life. Stop lamenting the way things were and deal with life you have now. Third involves finding purpose, mission and meaning in your current life and world. He talked about the utter joy of being weightless and marveling at seeing the world pass below him from the Space Station. These steps lead to an utter appreciation of one's integral strengths and self-worth. He message to all of us is "the antidote to fear is confidence". This was a great and profound way to start the day.

Hello and welcome to Friday, July 23, 2021 and join me as I entered a different planet for the afternoon. Okay, I will cut to the chase. Our Tai Chi gang, after months of planning, finally went to play miniature golf at Chuckster's <https://www.chuckstersnh.com/> in Chichester.

Besides doing Tai Chi three times a week for over a year and a half years, the gang has done kayaking, hiking and snowshoeing together. What made the mini-golf experience other worldly, to me, was that except for a very few people, nobody actually wore masks. You would not suspect that the pandemic existed. Although we had great fun, it was weird that there was no recognition nor acknowledgement of COVID-19. Some health officials have predicted another surge of COVID in September. Based on the group too close sharing crowded context of that amusement park, you can see the seed for an up-surge.

Good morning, it is Saturday, July 24, 2021 and incredibly it is also my 500th day of distancing! The number 500 conjures a wild mixtures of associations. Here is the Roman numeral meaning. The normal number 500 is identical to the Roman numeral D, therefore D = 500 in that world. In my world, 500 not only represents a big number but also, I wonder if it is instead of a milestone a millstone. Switching gears yet again, it was great to see the athletic performances at the Tokyo Olympics but sad to view the nearly empty stadium. .



500 days

Here is something I learned and want to share. It is called the Big Mac Index <https://bigmacpricing.com/>. It “created by The Economist to illustrate purchasing power differences throughout the world. If you want to price your products or services fairly for people from different economic backgrounds, one way to do it is to price it as a multiple of the cost of a local McDonald's Big Mac burger, which is carefully priced at a level the local market can afford.”

Good wet morning to you. It is Sunday, July 25, 2021. It is raining. It is like a snow do for me. How so, simply my planned outdoor activities are canceled. It is day to catch-up on things. Back to exercising and watching an array of disturbing programs. First called Earth Focus looking at lumber poaching in Oregon and Brazil <https://www.pbs.org/video/building-a-future-lumber-poaching-in-oregon-and-brazil-jxxb7s/>. Since I am going tomorrow to Pinkham Notch,

in the middle of the White Mountains National Forest, I found an interesting connection. The show talked about the National Forest Crime Laboratory investigation unit. These folks are cataloging the ‘finger print’ of each tree species. They use the identification data as evidence to catch and convict the tree poachers.

In Oregon, the lab helped to trace and tracking poaching from the National Forests and lumber coming illegally from other countries. In Brazil, the program chronicled Indigenous armed volunteer folks telling to prevent the poaching of their Amazon forest. There is also this explanation for the poaching. Lumber, it turns out is closely connected to the world’s economy. A country’s importation of lumber tends rises with its gross domestic product. That makes lumber a hot commodity for poachers. Furthermore, in both countries, tree poaching means tree removal which accelerates Climate Change. And the other program I saw showed the increased flooding in Bangkok, Thailand and decreased coffee bean production in Bogota, Columbia. Both were due to global warming.

Meanwhile, I completed the day with watching some of the Tokyo Summer Olympics. It was surreal. I watched specular athletic performances before like *Wait, Wait Don’t Tell Me* before an audience of no one.

Hello and welcome to Pinkham Notch, I am at the Appalachian Mountain Club’s (AMC) ‘s Visitor Center there. It is Monday, July 26, 2021. The drive was long, but worth it. This was my first overnight in the White Mountains in a year and a half. I have missed them. I have several observations. First, the Visitor Center is very cosmopolitan. Place. Folks from all over the United States are here. They have felt trapped by COVID and really wanted to see New Hampshire. At certain points, half of New Jersey and Pennsylvania were there. Second, the labor shortage has hit here, too. It is very hard to recruit staff at any level. Third, there are still many accommodations to the pandemic. These included making supper served buffet to minimize passing food at the tables and having a window at the volunteer desk so hikers need not have to enter the building to order and get lunches and snacks.

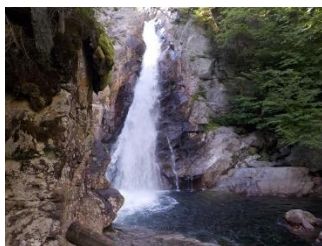
It is Notch for me to say. That is my musical attempt at singing. It is another t Pinkham Notch day. It is Tuesday, July 27, 2021/ Great weather it was until slight rain in afternoon. I met many “thru hikers” on the Appalachian Trail <https://appalachiantrail.org/>. “The Appalachian National Scenic Trail is the longest hiking-only footpath in the world, measuring roughly 2,190 miles in length. The Trail travels through fourteen states along the crests and valleys of the Appalachian Mountain Range, from its southern terminus at Springer Mountain, Georgia, to the northern terminus at Katahdin, Maine. Known as the “A.T.”, more than 3 million people visit the Trail every year and over 3,000 people attempt to “thru-hike” the entire footpath in a single year. People from across the globe are drawn to the A.T. for a variety of reasons, such as reconnecting with nature, escaping the stress of city life, meeting new people or deepening old friendships, or experiencing a simpler life.”



A sign on the “A T” on Old Jackson Trail

Each thru hiker had amazing, different stories to tell and unique experiences. I interviewed on solo woman 62 year old woman hiker. I was glad to hear about her adventures. It puts a face on groups heading north and south. I hiked to Crystal Cascade and it was roaring. I gave a talk entitled *I am Mount Washington* that night. There was a small, involved, engaged audience.

Great day and night, it is Wednesday, July 28, 2021. I am still at Pinkham and I have witnessed trail angels. For the AT, trail angels <https://www.nhmagazine.com/trail-angels-provide-shelter-services-and-smiles/> are who go out their way to help Thru Hiker. . But here I will expand the term to cover anyone who help hikers. This is an example that happened on the trails around Pinkham Notch. A hiker hurt his shoulder on the trail. He had to leave his pack there and walk out for help. One AMC volunteer took him to the hospital. One hiker marked the location of his pack's GPS and called it in. An AMC staff hiked back miles to retrieve the pack. In another example, AMC workers and volunteers remained more longer than their shift to assist in the hunt for lost hiker, All this is inspiring. Later in the day I hiked to Glen Ellis Falls and observed the awesome power of a river. I closed out the day with a group talk and discussion entitled *the Wilderness Experience*. It featured great conversation of the meaning of the wilderness, what brings people here and the reasons folks are through hikers.



Glen Ellis Falls

Wow, it is Thursday, July 29, 2021. It is my 16th National Cribbage Day’s observance and I am home from the White Mountains, yippee. And I have a tale to tell. Here is what happened. A trail situation began on Wednesday when a hiker got separated from her group. Because of confidentially concerns, I will focus on the fantastic team effort to find her. In that evenings, AMC folks went out to look for her. The next morning, more AMC folks, other hikers and NH Fish& Game were involved. An orchestrated, organized coordinated small army of people scoured the possible trails she might have taken. By the end of the day, several hikers

found her off trail. I was proud of the team efforts and was glad to say I had a very small part in the search's success. And to complete the day, I beat my computer Cribbage opponent tonight to finish the Cribbage Day festivities.

Back and ready, it is Friday, July 30, 2021 and the sun is shining and I am catching-up. I want to made some observations and recollections. First, reflections on the White Mountains experiences. It was super to meet, greet and hear about many interesting active people. The message of the AMC, the wilderness and the mountain remains come to me, enjoy me, participate in me and be excited here. The seemingly eternal mountains serve to rejuvenate me and lift my spirit. I must quickly add as a want-to-be geologist and historian neither mountains nor the Old Man of the Mountain are really eternal.

Second, I was Lake Host this afternoon. This is a volunteer position where we check boats coming into Pawtuckaway Lake to prevent more invasives species from getting into it. And later in the day I will go the synagogue where I functions as rabbi. That means I talked about this week's Torah portion. I linked it to the life, the White Mountains and current events.

Hello to beautiful shining summer day with a welcoming breeze , it is Saturday, July 31, 2021. I observed the day by playing golf with a friend. We believe if you end up with more golf balls at the end of the game, you win. We also toyed with the des, if my bad shots were better than your bad shots, I win. Today he won. We did walk 18 and I am exhausted. But we did spend a nice day outside. Praise the Lord, and hit the ball better.

Enough, let 's learn, smile and laugh.



Did you know?

The "Panama Hat", made from palm-like leaves, originated in Ecuador. It became known as the "Panama Hat" due to photographs of Teddy Roosevelt wearing one while touring the Canal Zone. It was effective in both providing shade as well as holding up during rainstorms. Eventually the Ecuadorean artisans did set up shop in Panama.


Hours after Pearl Harbor was bombed on December 7, 1941, the Secret Service found themselves in a bind. President Franklin D. Roosevelt was to give his Day of Infamy speech to Congress on Monday, and although the trip from the White House to Capitol Hill was short, agents weren't sure how to transport him safely. At the time, Federal Law prohibited buying any cars that cost more than \$750, so they would have to get clearance from Congress to do that, and nobody had time for that.

One of the Secret Service members, however, discovered that the US Treasury had seized the bulletproof car that mobster Al Capone owned when he was sent to jail in 1931. They cleaned it, made sure it was running perfectly and had it ready for the President the next day. Al Capone's 1928 Cadillac V-8 "Al Capone" Town Sedan became the President's Limo in December 1941.

Mechanics are said to have cleaned and checked each feature of the Caddy well into the night of December 7th, to make sure that it would run properly the next day for the Commander in Chief. And run properly it did. It had been painted black and green to look identical to Chicago's police cars at the time. To top it off, the gangster's 1928 Cadillac Town Sedan had 3,000 pounds of armor and inch-thick bulletproof windows.

2021 marks a century since Benton MacKaye first published his idea for the Appalachian Trail.

Regular Humor



**I want to be like a
caterpillar.
Eat a lot.
Sleep for a while.
Wake up beautiful.**

Rest in peace boiling water. You will be mist!

How do you throw a space party? You planet!

Want to hear a construction joke? Oh never mind, I'm still working on that one.

Why don't scientists trust atoms? Because they make up everything!

I hate Russian dolls... they're so full of themselves!

Talk is cheap? Have you ever talked to a lawyer?

Why did the gym close down? It just didn't work out!

Two artists had an art contest. It ended in a draw!

COVID-19 Humor

As people were told to self-quarantine, we warned each other that the Messiah won't come, because he's in quarantine.

What's the best way to avoid touching your face? A glass of wine in each hand! ___

I've just had that dreaded call telling me I have to self isolate!
Apparently my roommate's cat has Covid 19! Don't ask Meow

A baggage handler couldn't understand how he caught COVID 19 but was discharged from hospital the next day. The Doctor told him it was a brief-case.

Wife : How dare you saved my mobile number as Covid 19
Husband : Because you take my breath away!



524 days of distancing

The Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner: Part L

Steve Soreff, MD

Wow, it is Tuesday, August 17, 2021. This marks 524th day, my entrance into my 79th week and the middle of my 18th month of social distancing. This has been going on much too long. I have gone from distancing to reopening to retreating and verging full distancing yet again. The light at the end of the tunnel is a little lee brighter and seems a little farther away, but we soldier on. Someday COVID-19 will be in the rear view mirror but not today. That said, let's look back at the last two weeks.

Hello and welcome to Monday, August 2, 2021. It was sunny productive day. But and there is that but again, I want to ponder several things I heard on the NPR program, *On Being* <https://onbeing.org/programs/jen-bailey-what-we-inherit-what-we-send-forth/> Sunday, August 1, 2021. In the program, the term transformative times was employed and it particularly resonated with me. It nicely defines and captures the pandemic global experience. It is easy to say Before COVID (BC) and delineate that period. Sadly, now and the reason for the Diary continuing, it is difficult to impossible to determine After COVID (AC). Furthermore, transformative applies to the four Furies I have been tracking and chronicling: COVID-19, Climate Change, Assaults on Democracy and Black Lives Matter.

The second idea is based on Moses' death before the Israelites enter the Promised Land. In the program, a Christian woman spoke speaking about her disappointment that Moses never went into it. However, that is one of the theme of the book of Deuteronomy, the last of the Five Books of Moses or the Bible. The volume deals with Moses's farewell to his people. And, yes, after forty years of leading his people, he does not enter Promised Land. And, that got me thinking, it may be alright. I came to realize that I may not get to one promised land. That means I may not see my grandchildren go to college and hopefully marry and have their own families. But I do feel that part of me will go on. What a sobering but realistic though that is.

The third idea is the eternal question asked during the pandemic, What is life all about? Yes, COVID did make you stop and think, what are my priorities? It makes one recall the song

and lyrics *What's it all about Alfie*, “is it just for the moment we live” That question is that what religions have been trying to define forever. Distancing does make you think.

Wow, what profound ideas and questions to start the day. As for the rest of the day, I went for a walk, did Tai Chi, and played pickle ball in the morning. Then I had new molded ear pieces added to my hearing aids. Yippee, I can hear better. Next, I moved the lawn- moments of green grass obeying me. And I swam.

Good day, it is Tuesday. August 3, 2021. It is another day of reflection and catch-up. The word is out about the Fourth COVID-19 Wave with the Delta Variant leading the charge. New CDC guidelines suggest masks may be in order again. New cases of the virus are up in New Hampshire. And back to exercising and watching on PBS *The Planets — Inner Worlds* <https://www.wgbh.org/program/nova/the-planets-inner-worlds> . “Each of our celestial neighbors has a distinct personality and a unique story. In this five-part series, NOVA will explore the awesome beauty of “The Planets,” including Saturn’s 175,000-mile-wide rings, Mars’ ancient waterfalls four times the size of any found on Earth, and Neptune’s winds—12 times stronger than any hurricane felt on our planet.” It was a reminder about changes in time. Yes, time is bigger and longer than just earth’s geologic time. It tells time in the life and death of stars, planets and moons. What a galactic wake-up call.

Hello, it is Wednesday, August 4, 2021 and the subject is healthcare, prejudice and biases. Today instead of Tai Chi I went to a healthcare provider. I am keeping the site and the professional, like Dick Cheney’s undisclosed location, so as to not embarrass that worker. In the course of evaluation and during a pleasant banter, the worker said in response to something “it was just like an Indian giver”. Immediately, I had to flashback to when my children used that term at the dinner table to describe something at school that day. Then and as now I was modified by it. Indeed, the term has a long and painful history <https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2013/09/02/217295339/the-history-behind-the-phrase-dont-be-an-indian-giver>. Cutting to chase, it is pejorative and offensive American expression. It represents all the ways we stereotype and marginalize groups and people. And this is often done as in this case, with people being unaware of that they are doing it.

I bring this incident up now as a reminder of how far we need to go Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement. Although I quickly educated the worker, it’s a reminder how our unconscious prejudices are still with us. We must take inventory of our feelings and vocabularies to recognize their deeper meanings. We are all learning. The worker and I benefitted from the resultant conversation.

I just got punched in the gut. Wow, what happened? I just returned from a synagogue meeting. After weeks of slowly reopening, we are back to only wearing masks in the building and changed to High Holiday services back to ZOOM. Cases are rising in Texas and Florida and even in New Hampshire. The culprits are Delta variant and many folks unvaccinated. WOW.



Just when we thought we saw the light at the end of the tunnel.

Welcome to a day of reckoning, it is Thursday, August 5, 2021. And what does reckoning mean? It translates into the reality of COVID being around a lot longer than many of us including myself thought. Yes, back to wearing my mask in all the places I go. Forget the CDC rule on not needing masks if you are vaccinated. I am back feeling like the Lone Ranger without Tonto. At my every 4th month dental cleaning and water boarding, my dentist said I have a cavity under a crowned tooth. \$\$\$\$\$\$ Yes, more, reckoning. I'll get over it but a momentarily pity party.

Marching forward today, Friday, August 6, 2021. I have one insight and quick example of how COVID controls are lives. In the past, I have speculated that living with COVID now, gave a glance of what life was like during World War II. Then, there was often just battle reports, lists of dead and wondering when it would all be over. We are in the same predicament today. COVID reports dominate the news and we are all pondering what the school year will be like. I confess I thought vaccination would mark the end of the pandemic. It has not. As an interesting twist in the virus saga, many employers are now requiring workers to be vaccinated as a condition of working there. Remember the Epping Fire Department sign, "Wear a mask, Save a life"? Perhaps it should become "Get vaccinated, Save your job and a life".

It is now time for my COVID control story. My car needs an oil change and new tires. Easy and simple, right? When I called the Subaru dealer for appointment to get it for the next week, they could only offer me a date two weeks away. That seemed odd. The reason was that I would be in the waiting room while the work was to be done rather than dropping it off. The dealer limits and minimize the number of people in the waiting room. Even a simple oil change date became collateral damage of COVID-19.

Welcome to Saturday, August 7, 2021. On a warm and pleasant summer day, I had two surreal experiences. Both were large outdoor events with few if any folks wearing masks. One was the annual meeting of the Pawtuckaway Lake Improvement Association (PLIA) <https://pawtuckawaylake.com/> and the other was a combination birthday/retirement party for a friend. Here is what it seem surreal to me. Attending both was like watching the play, *Cabaret*. Although the music was catchy and acting good, the play takes place in just as Hitler is coming to power in Germany, What is so striking about the play was the denial and self-centeredness of the characters in the face of the impending horror. All round me today the message is about COVID surging, a return to lock down, and Delta variant is much worse than the original. Yet, you might know that from those two outdoor events Here is the sign that I want to put up COVID-19 DO NOT ENTER.



How I feel about COVID-19

It is Sunday, August 8, 2021 with other two important outdoor meetings with same surreal flavor of many people without masks and no hint there is a Delta surge of the unvaccinated. That being said, I want to deal with, explain and justify my anger at COVID-19. Yes, the first thing to do is to recognize that I am indeed angry. Yes, I am! it. Remember the movie, *Iris* <https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/iris-2002?> It shows the brilliant novelist, Iris

Murdoch descent into Alzheimer. In one scene, her husband in very strong language curses Dr. Alzheimer and his disease. Well, that is how I feel about COVID-19. About a month and half ago, I thought we were getting out of the woods. Now we are back masks and lock downs. I am mad!

I see three reasons for me rage. First, it based on Kubler-Ross Model's **The Five Stages of Grief and Dying** <https://www.psycom.net/depression.central.grief.html>. **It has five stages** - Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Depression and Acceptance. Way back in March 2020, I talked about how quickly, in terms of distancing, I reached the level acceptance. What I did not talk about is that the scheme is not linear nor sequential . You can progress through them, or you can go back to previous stage or you could be fixated at one phase. In the case, I have reverted back the anger stage.

The second explanation deals with the concept of Relative Deprivation (RD) <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1088868311430825>. Defined here as “Relative deprivation is the judgment that one is worse off compared to some standard accompanied by feelings of anger and resentment.” Allow me to apply this to my situation. For a year and a half, I survived and dare I say thrived in my very restricted distancing world. Then, with the vaccination, my life was moving dramatically toward almost normal-vacations, meeting with vaccinated friends without masks and going to the synagogue in-person without a mask. I liked it and felt liberated. I even thought about ending the Diary. Now, I am plunged back to wearing masks and there is talk of locked downs. It makes me annoyed to have to retreat! For a moment, I felt liberated but now I am back to being a prisoner.

And the third reason for the anger is that I am picking up the tenor of the times. Locally and nationally people are railing against the unvaccinated population. Daily, the media is calling it the surge of the unvaccinated. Employers and governments are demanding vaccination as a condition of working there. There is a hint in the air of the blaming the victim by saying you got COVID because you did not get the shot. I am surrounded by angry folks. And emotions are contagious.

Okay, I said my piece. I will make peace with new restrictions. The goal remains the same- I nor my family or my friends get COVID-19.

Now that I have calmed down, I also want to report on great and successful Nottingham Historical Society's annual Blueberry Pancake Breakfast <https://forumhome.org/the-annual-blueberry-pancake-breakfast-returns-sunday-august-p34957-129.htm> in Nottingham Square. Over 175 folks came, ate delicious blueberry pancakes, heard neat music, talked to neighbors, met old friends and raised over \$1200. It was community at its best.



They taste even better than they look!

It is warm and beautiful, Monday, August 9, 2021 and the United Nations has just issued a Red Alert <https://www.un.org/press/en/2021/sgsm20604.doc.htm>. It says “The following statement by UN Secretary-General António Guterres was issued today: 2021 is a make or break year to confront the global climate emergency. The science is clear, to limit global temperature rise to 1.5°C, we must cut global emission by 45 per cent by 2030 from 2010 levels.

Today’s interim report from the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is a red alert for our planet. It shows Governments are nowhere close to the level of ambition needed to limit climate change to 1.5°C and meet the goals of the Paris Agreement. The major emitters must step up with much more ambitious emissions reductions targets for 2030 in their nationally determined contributions well before the November United Nations Climate Conference in Glasgow”.

This time, I feel, people are paying attention. With world-wide drought, forest fires, floods and severe storms, the signs are there. The message is clear and more focused. For years, we have been told to act . Maybe finally we will!

Welcome to a glorious Tuesday, August 10, 2021. Two quick lessons learned while exercising. Watching the PBS series, *Hemingway: A Writer (1899-1929)*, I appreciated Hemingway’s quest to find “one true sentence”. As a writer, I cherish that idea and it is something I strive for. The other is from viewing, again on PBS, *NOVA: The Planets: Mars*. The program reminded me that Mars once what water on it . It was not only just water but also rivers and waterfalls. Since water is one of the keys to life on earth, it offers the possibilities of life on other planets. But and there is that but again, it shows planets can change. Which brings up the question, what happened to make it into a cold dessert? And could that occur here? Better, take Climate Change more seriously.

Also, I did get to kayak with 2 Israeli ambassadors Ra’anana De-Has and Avia. Sagron. This is part of the Jewish Federation of New Hampshire’s <https://www.jewishnh.org/> Shlichut Program. This connects New Hampshire and Israel.



Ra’anana De-Has on Pawtuckaway Lake

And the other shoe fell today. What does that mean? My next stunt with Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC)’s Highland Center in Crawford Notch, I will be required to wear a mask for in doors activities. This is what happened at my synagogue. Time to remember, “wear a mask; save a life”, is still true.

Hello it is very hot Wednesday, August 11, 2021 and the theme for today is “You shall reap what you sow”. I have put anger in the rearview mirror. Yes, the statement has Biblical origins but is also so pertinent to today, The notion came to me as I watered Peg’s garden and mowed the grass patches between the flower and vegetable raised bed boxes. She planted the seeds and the young plants in the proper soil. Sun, rain, watering did their jobs. Her cultivation helped. The garden testifies to sowing and reaping. But there are other examples. Remember the duck on the eggs in the garden? The empty shells suggest birth and ducklings. And there are many ducklings now maturing on Pawtuckaway Lake. I would like to believe some came from our garden. In the spring, fish sandy fish nests on the bottom of the lake. Then, the fish would lay eggs there and guard them. Now, there are baby aka small fish swimming along the shores. And we have avoided COVID-19 by out distancing, masks and vaccinations Yes, you reap what you sow. Spoiler alert, if you look closely at the maple tree in the background of the garden picture, you will see several orange leaves. Hint, fall is coming.



Peggy’s garden with flowers and vegetables

Welcome to Thursday, August 12, 2021 and it was a day of doing and giving. To the Nottingham Historic Society, I presented it with a photographic book chronicling the Blueberry Pancake Breakfast 2021. To protect the lake, as a Lake Host , I inspected 32 kayaks and canoes and educated their owners about invasive species. Then, secured a mezuzah for my daughter’s, Sasha’s, new apartment in New York City. The mezuzah is on the “door posts” of Jewies homes and it contains Shema. The first part of the Shema is from Deuteronomy 6:4–9. “Hear, O Israel, the L-rd is our G-d, the L-rd is One. Blessed be the name of the glory of His kingdom forever and ever. You shall love the L-rd your G-d with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all you might. And these words which I command you today shall be upon your heart. You shall teach them thoroughly to your children, and you shall speak of them when you sit in your house and when you walk on the road, when you lie down and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign upon your hand, and they shall be for a reminder between your eyes. And you shall write them upon the doorposts of your house and upon your gates”. Observant Jews say the Shema upon awaking the morning and before going to bed at night.



The mezuzah

It felt good and right to do and to give back.

Good day, it is a very hot aka a heat wave, Friday, August 13, 2021. There was another COVID-19 wake up call. A close friend, who is immune compromised, developed a fever and vomiting in the middle of night. The fear was this COVID. A swift visit to an Emergency Department to a COVID test was done. Fortunately, it was negative; it was not COVID. It was just another reminder we are not out of the woods yet. We will keep distancing, masking and precautions. Now, Peggy and I are off to the White Mountains and the Highland Center in Crawford Notch. Yes, film at 11 o'clock.

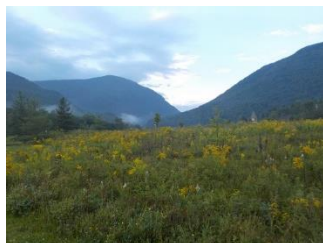
This is the film at 11. This is a tale of two lodges. Several weeks ago, I was at Pinkham Notch. Few, if any folks wore masks. The CDC said if you vaccinated, you need not wear masks indoors. Now, at the Highland Center all staff and volunteers must wear masks indoors. For others masks are optional. Why the change? New CDC guidelines. COVID-19 rules and realities keep changing.



New CDC signs at the lodges

In the White Mountains, Crawford Notch. It is Saturday, August 14, 2021. This is great opportunity to be in the wilderness. Thoreau said, "In wildness is the preservation of the world." It was super to wake up in the mountains. And, since Peggy and I are Information Volunteers,

it was a great opportunity to not only be in the wilderness but also to give back by providing information to hikers, And that information helped them to have a better wilderness experience. We saw many example trail Angels. That night, I gave a talk called “ I Am Mount Washington” to an engaged, interactive and excited audience



Day break in Crawford Notch

Wow, it is Sunday, August 15, 2021 and home. The morning was spent helping hikers plan their trips. Now, I want to reflect on the profound experience of being with hikers in the White Mountains. As a group, they are doers. They walk the talk. Back to Thoreau. In one of his signature quotes, he said, “I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived.” The people I met and worked with there, all had deliberately come to the wilderness. As day hikers and Thru-Hikers they are voting with their feet. It is an inspiring gathering of active folks.

Good day, it is Monday, August 16, 2021 and yes, yet another Monday in my distancing life. It began with outdoor pickle ball and Tai Chi-all good. But I have the feeling of being back to first distancing days. Those days were dominated by isolation, Zoom and restrictions. And so is today. To connect my current situation to my White Mountain experience, my premature sense COVID was over, was like in hiking and getting to a false summit. What is a false summit? In climbing, it occurs when you feel you have reached the summit only to discover the real top of the mountain is off in the distance. And now, the end of COVID summit seems more in the clouds and farther away than before.

As I look back on my White Mountain adventure weekend, one thing stands out- the lack of workers and staff throughout the region and the ubiquitous help wanted signs. What was impressive was how much the present staff pitched in to help. For example, the head of the entire Highland Center system helped out by cleaning rooms and making beds.

Finally, I am sad at the fall of Kabul, It felt like Saigon all over again. This is the ultimate assault on democracy.

Enough, let's laugh.



Regular Humor

My friend keeps telling me, "Cheer up, man. It could be worse. You could be stuck underground in a hole full of water!" I know he means well.

What do you call a fake noodle? An impasta!

Pasteurize: Too far to see

No matter how far you push the envelope, it'll still be stationery.

Energizer Bunny Arrested: Charged with battery.

What do a tick and the Eiffel Tower have in common?

They're oth Paris sites.

What did the janitor say when he jumped out of the closet?

Supplies!

What do you call it when a snowman throws a tantrum?

A meltdown.



Tee shirts for seniors

COVID-19 Jokes*

Arizona may be a COVID 19 hot spot.....but at least it's a dry cough.

My love for you is like COVID 19, It keeps increasing everyday

Why don't chefs find coronavirus jokes funny? They're in bad taste.

I'll tell you a coronavirus joke now, but you'll have to wait two weeks to see if you got it.

I washed my hands so much because of COVID-19 that my exam notes from 1995 resurfaced.

Two grandmothers were bragging about their precious darlings. One of them says to the other, "Mine are so good at social distancing, they won't even call me."

What did the sick parent make their kids for lunch? Mac and sneeze.

The Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner: Part LI

Steve Soreff, MD



538 days of distancing and still distancing

Amazingly, it is Tuesday, August 31, 2021. That means the last day of August, the beginning of my 81st week, the almost commencement of my 19th month and the 538th day of social and physical distancing. Amazing. And, these 14 days have been amazing-let's take a look back on them

Good day, it is a humid, hot afternoon, Wednesday, August 18, 2021 and everyone is waiting for the other shoe to fall. What is that all about? Simply, the sword of masks, lock downs, cancelations, and new restriction is hanging over our heads. With the Delta variant taking over the planet and the number of unvaccinated people still huge, one wonders when next containments will be forth coming.

Hello, like the program *Sesame Street*, today , Thursday, August 19, 2021 Is brought to you by the word, uncertainty. However, before I explain the word, let me lighten the mood by a cute loose association to the weather report. Ready? What was the first American television program to show a married couple in the same bed? Hear the music from *Jeopardy* in the background? The answer is the *Flintstones*. Yes, it was Fred and Winna. Getting to the point, all day the remnants the Tropical Storm Fred have been soaking the region. Hence, the seemingly random TV connection.

Now let's get back to uncertainty . The COVID example is the return of kids to school in the Fall. To mask or not to mask, that is the question. Many parent want their children to wear them. Many parents oppose their kids wearing them. Governors and school boards clash over the subject. The hoped for science answer is unclear and the CD guidelines change, We had friends over to plan a vacation trip to Hawaii in December. Yet, there always is the risk of an

island lockdown. In the news, the devastation in Haiti after the earthquake and rains, make life uncertain there. At the Kabul airport there is struggle to gain order and the uncertainty of whether all the Americans and their Afghan comrades will get out of the country. We move forward in the face of uncertainty and make the best decisions with the best information available.



Embracing the Uncertainties Siobhan Roberts

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/07/science/coronavirus-uncertainty-scientific-trust.html>

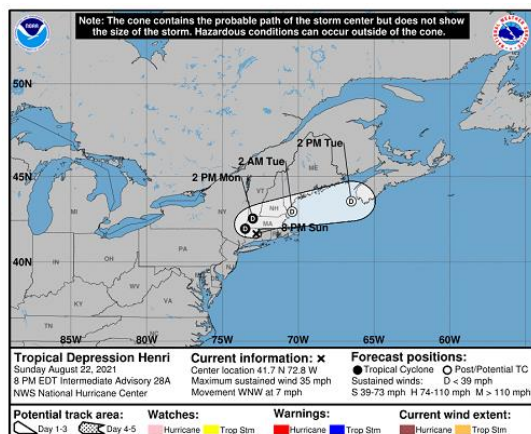
Welcome to Friday, August 20, 2021 and three cheers for routines and a new focus. Today, my day featured pickle ball, Tai Chi and the Friday night synagogue service. These three events have been sustainer in my too long distancing life. However, today saw the news centered on concerns about now Tropical Storm Henri <https://forumhome.org/people-in-nh-should-prepare-now-for-tropical-storm-henri-p35049-1.htm> which is about the turn into a hurricane. And that hurricane had New England as its target. I find this topic a relief from the surging news about COVID-19 and the anguish about Afghanistan and Haiti. I know how to prepare for and do something about hurricanes.

Hello and today is sponsored by the weather. It is Saturday, August 21, 2021. The cliché of the day is, “the quiet before the storm”. Time for the first Mark Twain quote, “Everybody talks about the weather but nobody does anything about it.” Yes, that is all folks talked about today. But, and yes, back to that famous but again, in this case, everyone actually did something about the weather. They moved furniture indoors, the batten down the hatches and prepared for the possible storm.

Now for the second almost Twain quote. “Golf is a good walk spoiled.” Although attributed to him, this quote was first cited in 1948. Yet Twain died in 1910. Today my friend John and I played golf. Or rather, we walked almost 18 holes on a very humid hot and unforgiving day. As our paced slowed, our game deteriorated. It was a very long amble spoiled!

Rain reigns the day. It is Sunday, August 22, 2021. The question of the day is what does Henri and masks have in common? And the answer is ? Both represent confused, mixed messages. To start is the actual name, Henri. For what reason is not called Henry? That is where some mixed-up begins. The bewildering answer is that the origin of Henri can be an Estonian, Finnish, French, German and Luxembourgish form of the masculine given name *Henry*. How clear is that! Henri started out a tropical depression became a hurricane and it back to being a tropical depression. Its path through New England is fascinating as it turned west after landfall in

Rhode Island. Later it will move east to exit New Hampshire and Maine. My point here is that there is ambiguity about Henri.

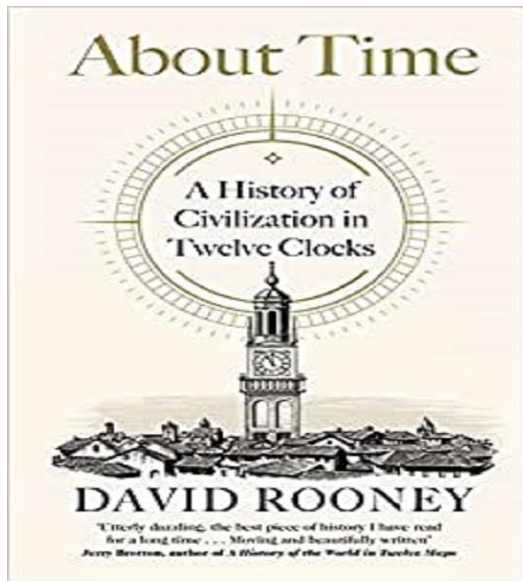


Henri path at 8 PM Sunday August 22,2021

And that same uncertainty dominates the rules on wearing masks. In my synagogue is back to masks indoors. The business practice on masks depend on the establishment. But for children going to school the message and required are mixed. Yes, children can get COVID; they can transmit it. The governor of Texas demands not masks while some of his state's cities' Education Board say wear them. As the first day of school nears and answer to masks eluded us.

Welcome to Monday, August 23, 2021 and I am taking a new look at the world. Yes, let me explain. Years ago, I saw a movie called *Over New England* which features views of all of region from the air. It had stunning aerial views of Mount Katahdin's knife edge, Boston's state capital's dome and Connecticut's waterfront. It gave me a new perspective of my area. The same thing happened to day when I watched the PBS series entitled *Life from Above*. It focused the earth from the satellites. It showed how forest fires can be detected from space and documented the dramatic loss of glaciers. It screamed " look at the global devastation of climate change.!"

Hello, it is Tuesday, August 24, 2021 and it was a full day with writing, Talmud class, mowing and kayaking with a friend. But what stands out is the book by **David Rooney** entitled [About Time: A History of Civilization in Twelve Clocks](https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/55298389-about-time) <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/55298389-about-time>. "For thousands of years, people of all cultures have made and used clocks, from the city sundials of ancient Rome to the medieval water clocks of imperial China, hourglasses fomenting revolution in the Middle Ages, the Stock Exchange clock of Amsterdam in 1611... Rooney shows, through these artifacts, how time has been imagined, politicized, and weaponized over the centuries—and how it might bring peace." The book makes you think about time. It shows how time controls our lives. And now we are living in COVID time.

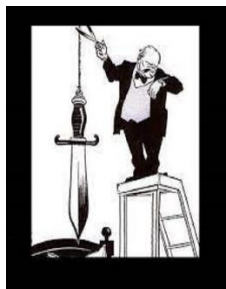


Welcome to my world, Wednesday, August 25, 2021. It was pickle ball, Tai Chi, senior *Hawaiian* luau picnic overlooking Portsmouth harbor and featuring Peggy's ukulele group performance, swimming and meeting. I was productive but vexed. Why now? Remember I just said "And now we are living in COVID time.". Here was yet another example of that. The Forum <https://forumhome.org/index249.htm>, the online newspaper and the home of this Diary is planning hold its annual meeting on September 27. In 'normal' times we would just have it, Now because the uncertainty of the surg and the unvaccinated, we are not sure whether it will be in-person or by Zoom. The is one hell of a way to run a rail road. Hence, my vexation!

Hello and join me for another hot day, Thursday, August 26, 2021. After working on the history of my town, Nottingham in preparation for its 300th anniversary, I watered the garden. Yes, periods of intense rain punctuated stretches of hot, humid days has been our weather pattern. Recently, I was into *reap what you sow mood*. Today, as I gave lake water to the parched garden, I thought about the Book of Ecclesiastes. And with that, heard Pete Seegar sing, "to everything there is a season." The garden offered evidence of the cavalcade seasons. Some plants were peaking and growing, while others had passed prime and were wilting.

This prompted me to figure out why have I now putting such emphasis on life and death. The answer is that the Jewish New Year is almost here. For those keeping track, we will be entering Jewish year 5782. This is time for reflection about the past year and praying to be inscribed into the Book of Life for the coming year. That realization, along with the daily assault of COVID, accounts for my pondering mood.

Welcome to my world, which is Friday, August 27, 2021. I feel the Sword of Damocles over my head. What does that mean? Literally, it translates into sense of imminent and ever-present danger about one. My life and that of family and friends is okay. Not great but good. The surge of the Delta variant looms ever closer and threatening everything.



The Sword of Damocles

Hello, it is Saturday, August 28, 2021. I realize I have been teetering between on one hand doom and gloom, and on the other everything going be alright. Although that state of mind is accurate, it is not necessarily a way to live. However, today I found a way to hit a reasonable balance. I attended a birthday party for Peggy’s three year old grandson. The event brilliantly combined elements of prudent precautions with just plain a fun party. It was held outdoors with ideal 70’s temperature, in a safe, enclosed space with great playground equipment and folks all wearing masks except when eating. The kids played and had birthday cupcakes; the adults had conversations. It was a neat even handed approach to having a birthday in the pandemic.

Tonight, I wentl go synagogue for a Selichot <https://reformjudaism.org/jewish-holidays/rosh-hashanah/what-selichot> service. “In Hebrew, *selichot* translates to “forgiveness,” and indeed there is an emphasis in these prayers on the merciful attributes with which God is said to govern the world. “ It is in preparation for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Remember the Jewish New Year is 5782. But and there is the but again, it was a balanced gathering. Although indoors, everyone will be 6 feet apart and with masks on.

Welcome to Sunday, August 29, 2021 and the 17th month in which I have observed National Cribbage Day during the pandemic. Time flies when you are pegging. I marked the day by beating my computer opponent, Bill.

Here is another idea from life in the time of COVID. My friend teaches at one of the Boston universities. He must fill-out and pass a health survey online before he is allowed on campus. The questions are similar to ones taken before entering a doctor’s or dentist’s office. They relate to the symptoms of COVID. In addition, he must have been vaccinated before he can teach there. And, these same requirements apply to his students. Yes, I hear Bob Dylan singing, “*The Times They Are A-Changin’*”. Yes, the face of higher education has a mask on.

As the sunset, I reflected on the confounding predicaments doctors and all healthcare providers face in treating unvaccinated patients. The recent surge has been called the epidemic of the unvaccinated. And, the majority of the new cases have occurred in those who have declined to be vaccinated. And, this situation vexes frontline workers. In one incidence, one Alabama physician <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/alabama-doctor-pledges-stop-treating-unvaccinated-patients-n1277316> says he will treat unvaccinated patients for COVID. He calls it “an eminently preventable disease”. Although healthcare workers are called upon to be non-judgmental, it is very difficult for any of us to be that free of biases. However, the ultimate challenge is for them to do just that. Namely, they care for the patient and fight the disease.



The treatment challenge

It is Monday, August 30, 2021 and beginning of a new week, close to a Jewish New Year and for my grandsons a new school year-one into the 4th grade and the other 7th grade. My have they grow-up. I began with my Monday regular routine-pickle ball and Tai Chi, Then off for an oil change and new tires. So, yes like my life, my car retired 😊 But, there I saw first hand yet another crisis. The dealer had few if any new cars to sell. The salespeople had no product to offer. The culprit is the global short age of computer chips. Yet, another example of the computers or their lack of them, rule the world. It all comes back to supply chain economics and will translate into higher prices.

Enough, let us laugh



Did you know?

In 1920's slang to "bump gums" meant to talk of something unimportant or irrelevant.

Regular Humor

What did the Buddhist say to the hot dog vendor?
Make me one with everything.

It's inappropriate to make a "dad joke" if you're not a dad. It's a faux pa!

Q: What goes through towns, up & over hills, but doesn't move?
A: The road!

Q. Why is Cinderella so bad at soccer?
A. Because she always runs away from the ball!

Q: I once fell in love with a girl who only knew 4 vowels.
A: She didn't know I existed.

Q: What is an astronaut's favorite place on a computer?
A: The Spacebar!

COVID-19 Jokes

Halloween 2020: *doorbell rings*

Me:



What goes great with Corona? Lyme disease.

During the pandemic, it's important to take after NASA. Give people space.

Why hasn't anyone in Antarctica contracted COVID-19? They're so ice-o-lated.

Knock, Knock *Go home, you're supposed to be social distancing.*

What do all virus jokes have in common? They're catchy.

The COVID-19 Jokes seem to be less funny as the pandemic lingers



555 days of distancing and yes, still counting

The Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner: Part LII

Steve Soreff, MD

Hello, it is Friday, September 17, 2021. It is hard to believe that it marks my 555th day, the end of my 83th week, the middle of my 19th month and the middle of my second year of being a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner. Yes, we are still on COVID-19. And, that is the whole world. This is a pandemic. Zoom has again taken center stage. With that, let us look back over 17 days.

Hello, it is Wednesday, September 1, 2021. Yes, the beginning of a new month and the start of my 19th month in some form of isolation. It is getting old of my saying “I never thought it would last this long”, so I will not utter it again. About me, I see more and more things being delayed or postponed because of the newer uncertainty of the Delta variant and the many folks unvaccinated. It is very much COVID-19 time, we are living. Meanwhile, the remnants of hurricane Ida are about to visit us.

However, what is really on my mind is today, September 1 marks the 82th anniversary of Hitler’s invasion of Poland and the beginning of the Second World War in Europe. It is their Pearl Harbor Day. All I can think about death and destruction of that war, the over a million

Polish Jews killed and what a horrible war it was.



And in case you missed it, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) report <https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/09/1098662> said today, “Climate and weather related disasters surge five-fold over 50 years, but early warnings save lives”. And “ a surge in natural disasters over the past 50 years disproportionately impacting poorer countries.” Yet , another wake-up call and another type of surge.

Good day, it is Thursday, September 2, 2021 and I have several things on my mind. First, it is the date itself. Like yesterday, I will relate it to World War II. It was on September 2, 1945 on the deck of the battleship, the USS Missouri <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/japan-surrenders> in Tokyo Harbor where General MacArthur and representatives of the Japanese government signed the official papers ending World War II. Although on August 15, Emperor Hirohito on national radio to announce the Japanese surrender, this marked the formal end of the war.

But and there is the but again, for what reason I am talking about now? It is because have a personal connection here. How so? When I did my rotating internship at Harborview Medical Center, Seattle, Washington, I walked on the ‘surrender deck’ of the Missouri. It was part of the Navy’s mothball fleet <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/history-hints-of-future-in-navys-mothballed-ships-near-bremerton/> Bremerton, Washington. I feel connected to the ship. Also, for Trivia Pursuit fans here is the reason that ship was selected to have the event on its deck. It was because the President then was Harry Truman. And President Truman came from Missouri.



The second thing on my mind goes back to it is better to light one candle than curse the darkness. Again, while exercising I heard about Tim Brown's company called Allbirds <https://www.allbirds.com/>. It makes environmentally responsible sneakers and other clothing from natural materials like wool and corn stalks. Each shoe contains a label telling its total carbon footprint. He walks the talk about sustainability through shoes.

And finally, I heard about Mu <https://www.livescience.com/mu-coronavirus-variant.html>. The World Health Organization (WHO) has called it a variant of interest. Yet, another virus to worry about.

Good day, it is Friday, September 3, 2021. Sorry, no World War II dates to reflect on today. But I have been visited by the ghost of Hamlet. He uttered his soliloquy. "To be, or not to be, that is the question: Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer. The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, Or to take arms against a sea of troubles And by opposing end them." The reason for the quote and question is because of COVID. In fact, it is a series of related questions. When and where to wear a mask? When and where can I travel? When and where can I be inside with a mask on? These are my daily challenging questions.

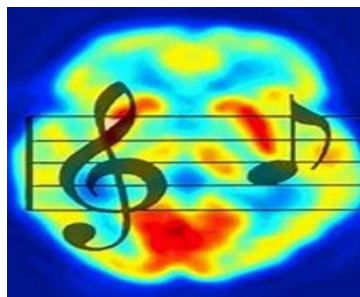
Welcome to a warm, pleasant Saturday, September 4, 2021. The theme for today is how to make decisions without a full knowledge of what is really ahead. I'll admit that is rather obtuse I am saying certain things are occurring prompting decision. For example, Labor Day is almost here. That day used to signal the end of the summer. In many ways it does still. But now the debate rages as to what form will K-graduate schools take? Masks, Zoom, hybrid classes, required vaccinations are all in the mix.

One thing remained constant-the lake. A friend and I kayaked for 2 ½ hours. We saw and heard the loons. There were many folks boating, kayaking, canoeing, paddle boarding and swimming. All were smiling. I would like to believe, as one door closes, and another one opens. In the pandemic, I cannot wait to see what new door will open.

Hello, it is Sunday, September 5, 2021 and music is my mind. It began while exercising, I listened to *On Being* <https://onbeing.org/> with Krista Tippett on NHPR. She interviewed Béla Fleck and Abigail Washburn on the topic *Truth, Beauty, Banjo*. The guest artists talked about not only the transcendent emotional power of songs and music but also their ability to teach. And that got me thinking of the important place of music in our lives. With the Jewish New Year and Yom Kippur cantorial pieces hold a dramatic and central part of the services.

I want go two ways right now at the same time. Help!! The two are how I got to appreciate the power music and the another, the neuroscience of music. Let's begin the emotional potency that music backs. A number years ago, I became acquainted with the Israeli song, *Al kol Eleh* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GdOSR1X5v70>, written by Naomi Shemer. I first heard in Hebrew and was very moved by it. Later. I listened to it in English and cried. It translates to *For All These Things* <http://www.hebrewsongs.com/song-alkoleleh-bikel.htm> and here are some of the lyrics: *Every bee that brings the honey, Needs a sting to be complete*
And we all must learn to taste the bitter with the sweet. Keep, oh Lord, the fire burning,
Through the night and through the day, For the man who is returning, from so far away. Chorus:
Don't uproot what has been planted, So our bounty may increase, Let our dearest wish be granted: Bring us peace, oh bring us peace. That song speaks directly to my heart.

Now, here is the neuro-physiological explanation. Music activates the Limbic System of the brain <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2776393/>. This is a more primitive and an early brain program which deals with emotions as well as memories. Actually, both music and the sense of smell by-pass the cerebral cortex and go directly to the limbic system. It is fascinating to see how persons with dementia; e.g., Alzheimer respond positively to music from their youth even though the memory of that time is lacking . In this way music can contribute to our happiness and joy.



Music and the Brain's Limbic System

Later in the day, I learned yet another secret from World War II. This was a secret US Army intelligence unit called the Ritchie Boys <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/world-war-ii-jews-escape-nazi-germany-hitler-60-minutes-2021-09-05/>. The unit was mostly composed of German Jewish men who had fled Nazi Germany. Their fluency in speaking German made them idea to in interrogating German soldiers and civilians. As the CBS program said. "The Ritchie Boys were responsible for uncovering more than half the combat intelligence on the Western Front during World War II. For the many German-born Jews in their ranks, defeating the Nazis was heartbreakingly personal."

- Welcome to Monday, September 6, 2021, Labor Day. This is a full and eventful filled day. What made it full was that I did pickle ball, Tai Chi and golf. What made it eventful was Labor and the start of the Jewish New Year. I, senior citizen, lament about the loss of meaning

of Labor Day on several ways. It used to signal the end of summer, the move back from the cottage and the start of school. Most of that is gone. It also lionized labor and the labor movement. The labor movement is now under attack in many ways across the nation. NPR's program called *I A* had a great program today called *Aaron Copland And The Spirit Of Labor Day* <https://www.npr.org/2021/09/01/1033424048/aaron-copland-and-the-spirit-of-labor-day>. Copland captured, through his music, the essence of America and championed the labor movement. And, since he was Jewish, talking about him offered a bridge to the Jewish New Year, Rosh Hashanah, which began that night.

Happy New Year! It is Tuesday, September 7, 2021. Today was the first day of the Jewish New year, Rosh Hashanah. It actually began last night as all Jewish holidays start on the evening before. It is a celebration of the birthday of the world. By this tradition, this is year 5782. And that relates to two of the determining forces I am tracking-COVID-19, Climate Change, Black Lives Matter, and assaults on democracy.

Here are the two I am talking about. . First, as the earth's birthday, we have a responsibility to care for it. That means slowing down and stopping climate change. And on that idea, in the afternoon, I provided kayak support for a diver removing milfoil, an invasive weed, from Pawtuckaway Lake. Hence, I was doing my share repair the planet. Second, by the story of Adam and Eve in the Book of Genesis, there is that we all have the same ancestry. Score one for brotherhood and sisterhood for all of us.

Today, I attended Rosh Hashanah services from my Derry synagogue via Zoom. Yes, again we are on COVID time, since we did s last year, too by Zoom. All on Zoom, I read from the Torah from my home, from another home others canted the Torah blessing before and after the reading, and the Rabbi showed my Torah portion.



Me reading my Torah portion from my home.



A Torah portion

Hello, it is Wednesday, September 8, 2021 or the second day of the Jewish year 5782. After services by Zoom, while exercising, I spent part of the afternoon watching the PBS show, *American Masters: Oliver Sacks: His Own Life*. This was remarkable movie about a truly remarkable life. I found several things about the candid chronicle of his life of importance to me. First, as a physician-author myself, I appreciated his career, style and work. He detailed the inner lives of the patients; he told their unique stories. He elevated the role and power of observing and documenting patients as people. Second, I loved seeing and hearing in the program some folks I have admired most. These included Robert Krulwich, who used to be on *Radiolab* <https://www.wnycstudios.org/podcasts/radiolab/podcasts>, and Temple Grandin.

But and there is the but again, I liked Sacks' work with patients who had Parkinsonism. This was captured in the film, *Awakenings*. Some of his patients with severe Parkinsonism had survived having the Spanish Flu 1918 <https://www.hmpgloballearningnetwork.com/site/behavioral/article/forgotten-flu>. . It was the result of brain damage from the flu. Now one can wonder the long-term effects of the surviving COVID-19 will be. The CDC <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/long-term-effects.html> lists many on-going effects of the COVID which include difficulty breathing or shortness of breath, Tiredness or fatigue, Symptoms that get worse after physical or mental activities, difficulty thinking or concentrating (sometimes referred to as "brain fog"), cough and chest or stomach pain. The story is unknown what the years later effects will be. Socially, people also speculate about the educational impact of the pandemic because of school by Zoom. .

Welcome to Thursday , September 9, 2021. I am in trivia pursuit mood. What does that mean? I have a love affair with puns. Thus, I have always enjoyed the PBS television show entitled. *Between the Lions* <https://www.pinterest.com/ericalindberg/between-the-lions-celebrated/>. It was a program promoting literacy and reading. I think it was inspired by the two lions in face of the New York City Public Library. Getting to the point, I recently learned for my town's librarian, who used to work at that building, that those two lions actually have names. Their names are patience and fortitude. That is so cool.

A beautiful Friday, September 10, 2021 and after pickle ball and Tai Chi, our gang went to the Coppal House Farm's <https://www.nhcornmaze.com/> corn maze. I'll admit I have never really been to and through a corn maze. Yes, it was amazing, pun intended. Like in the song

from *Oklahoma*, “The corn is as high as an elephant's eye. “ As a result, once into the maze, you could and did get lost attempting to find your way out.



Heading into the corn field

Perhaps, there is a metaphor here for the maze of COVID-19 we are all caught. Many blind passage ways, twisted and turn, and at moments seeing no way out. However, especially being outside and outdoors, it was nice to a local adventure and forgot about the pandemic.

Wow, we have finally reached that important date and day, Saturday, September 11, 2021 and remembering 9/11. I poured my heart about it in this article *9/11 Remembered: 2021* <https://forumhome.org/remembered-p35150-1.htm>. I do want readers to check out and watch BOATLIFT <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=18lsxFcDrjo> in which Tom Hanks narrates the remarkable story of the 9/11 boatlift that evacuated half a million people from Lower Manhattan. The film shows the unity and heroes that emerged from the destruction.

And Nottingham's unity came together with the Nottingham Fire & Rescue Department's Memorial Observance and the Nottingham Parks & Recreation Department's (NP&RD) Earth Fest 2021 celebration <https://forumhome.org/in-nottingham-p35178-129.htm>. It remembered the dead with a moment of silence before a 5 K race and with wildflower seeds for a remembrance garden. The real message of the day was community coming together. That is neat.



Earth Fest remembers 9/11

Hello, it is Sunday, September 12, 2021. It was a day and reflecting. Peggy's sister and her family visited us from the mid-west. It was great to share the lake with them. Then, we got to talking about 9/11 experiences. As we were discussing it, we realized two of the visiting children were born after 9/11. Yes, it was certainly life changing for us. We wondered how to make that event meaningful to them. I found a particular parallel to the Torah portions we are in this month. Specifically, we are in the Book of Deuteronomy. In it, Moses was addressing the Israelites generation that knew not Egypt. The common denominator is how to transit the lessons from one generation to another and make it meaningful when the younger one has the

firsthand experience of their elders? And to complete the loop, I am writing this Diary to tell how our generation lived on COVID time and for future generations to learn how we dealt with it.

Welcome, it is Monday, September 13, 2021-yes, yet another Monday and thus the beginning of new week. Since the Red Sox are in a very pennant race, it is time for a joke (please, at least smile). How do you know God is a baseball fan? Because the Book of Genesis commences with, “In the beginning=in the big inning. To quote Dickens, “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times... it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair.” Let me start with the worst of time. One by one my planned face-to-face meetings have hastily returned to Zoom meeting. It feels like some Baltimore Ravens to the vaccination gains have been lost. However, the best of times was the beginning of Madness and the Movies VIII class to start. This is teaching at its best. I checked out the classroom today. And, yes, it is in COVID time so the class size has been limited and we will all wear masks. But it will run!!!

One more casualty of COVID is the lack of any reading material in healthcare waiting rooms. The fear of virus transmission is the reason. Today, when I went see my dermatologist, barren waiting room was filled with people on their cell phones. I suddenly miss the old golfing magazines that used to be there.

Hello, it Tuesday, September 14, 2021 and I have a confession to make. Last night I stayed past midnight to watch the Monday Night Football game. This headline told part of the story: “ESPN’s Monday Night Football opener draws 15.3 million viewers for Ravens-Raider’s overtime game” <https://www.cnn.com/2021/09/14/espn-monday-night-football-raiders-ravens-opener-draws-15point3-million.html>. The other part of the game was that it was compelling, well played and entertaining contest. One weird thing was that I watched on the ABC TV Network on the living room television with the play-by-play in Spanish. However, on the basement television with same ABC channel for the same game, the announcers were in English. Can you figure that one out?

The game was played in Las Vegas where the Raiders have moved to. They played against Baltimore Ravens there in a new billion dollar stadium. A huge crowd of unmasked fans filled the stadium. All I could see was there would be huge spread of COVID because of the that game. Tuesday included a golf game in the afternoon and two Zoom meetings at night. Both meetings had been originally planned to be in person. But COVID concerns said Zoom. . Yes, we live in COVID time-damn.

Welcome, it is Wednesday, September 15, 2021 and a lot is happening. I had my first class of Madness and the Movies VIII. It was example of education in the time of COVID. All students and teachers were required to wear masks and sit 6 feet apart. We watched *The Jazz Singer* with Neil Diamond. The films showed generational conflict of aspirations, the theme of following your own destiny, and climaxed with father and son’s reconciliation created by the singing of Kol Nidrei <https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/kol-nidrei/> at the evening service of Yom Kippur. That scene was particularly relevant as that night I attended the Kol Nidrei service by Zoom from my Derry synagogue.

Later while exercising, I watched on PBS The Ideas That Changed the World: The Telescope. It was neat to see how that invention along photography, helped us to see our place in the universe. When we look at stars at night many of them are actually galaxies. And each galaxy can contain millions of stars like our sun. And around many stars are planets. It makes one appreciate the size of the cosmos and the truly uniqueness of our planet. More incentive to preserve it.

Shalom, it is Thursday, September 16, 2021 and it's the day of Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, the Day of Judgment and the Holiest Day of the Jewish Year. I spend it all day, praying and fasting, in my synagogue office as the service is on Zoom. This marks the second year the High Holidays that my Derry synagogue's services have been on Zoom. The love the service, its chanting, and its traditions (TRADITION!!, thank you *Fiddler on the Roof*). But miss the being with others in person.

Wow, there is a lot of heavy stuff going on. Time to laugh.



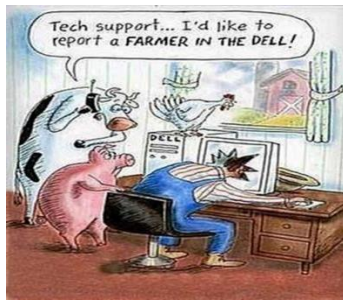
Did You Know?

In 1948, the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to Paul Muller - a Swiss chemist - for inventing DDT.

Under the Articles of Confederation, the name of our country was "The United States of America".

A common thread shared by National Merit Scholars is that they sit with their families at the dinner table.

Regular Humor



I'm working on a poem about the wind. So far, I only have a draft.

What did the cupcakes say to the icing? I'd be muffin without you.

What does a momma color wheel say to her daughter? Don't take that tone with me.

Why can't your hand be 12 inches long? Because then it would be a foot.

Why did the woman get mad at her husband when she asked him to pick up six cans of Sprite? He picked 7 Up instead.

COVID Jokes

Where do sick boats go to get healthy? The dock!

What should you do if you don't understand a coronavirus joke? Be patient.

They said that a mask and gloves were enough to go to the supermarket. They lied, everyone else has clothes on.

I stood on my talking scales today and they said "please practice social distancing, only one person at a time".

2020 is a unique leap year. It has 29 days in February, 300 days in March and 10 years in April.

Is August too early to put up the Xmas tree? I am up to date with everything else.

Never in my wildest of wild dreams did I ever think I would go up to a bank teller and request money with a mask on.

During self-isolation.

Dogs: "Oh My god, you're here all day and this is the best as I can love you, see you, be with you and follow you! I am so excited because you are the greatest and I love you being here so much!"

Cats: "What the hell are you still doing here?"



The 569th day of a COVID-19 restricted life and the pandemic goes on

The Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner: Part LIII

Steve Soreff, MD

Hello, it is Friday, October 1, 2021 and would you believe today represents the end of my 86th week, the beginning of my 20th month and my 569th of COVID created isolation. Stories about variants, third shots, and protests against masks and vaccination fill the news. Yet it is a new month. What will it bring? It is like whack-a-mole. COVID-19 surges in on area, state, and other places start to ‘reopen’. Some school require masks and others do not.



The COVID-19 whack-a mole world.

Uncertainty is the oddly the order of the day. But we move forward. With that, let’s look back on the last 14 days.

Good morning, it is Saturday, September 18, 2021 and I have a lot on my mind. First, at Tia Chi on Friday, Linda wore this shirt. What a way to look at last year and it could apply also to this year.



Second. Barak, my son, is part of a 12 person team running from Bretton Woods in Mountains in the White Mountains to Hampton Beach called *Reach the Beach* <https://www.runragnar.com/event-detail/relay/reachthebeach>. That is so cool. Third, while exercising I watched on PBS *Objects and Memories* <https://www.runragnar.com/event-detail/relay/reachthebeach>. It offered a human side and dimension of 9/11. It talked about how New Yorkers came together to help each during it and then remember it. The program chronicled the huge yearlong effort to recover and to return to families personal items from the wreckage and debris from the World Trade Center (WTC). It also showed the destroyed vehicles were searched and, in some cases, were preserved to remember the day. In one instant, one woman's husband died on 9/11, which was also her birthday. 9 months later, workers found his car and opened its trunk, In it was his present, card and flowers for her. They were able to give her those things and she felt some closure. The show put faces and personalities on 9/11 and echoed message of the 20th anniversary of 9/11, Never Forget" <https://forumhome.org/remembered-p35150-1.htm>.

Finally, it is Sunday, September 19, 2021 and I had an opportunity to see my sons and grandsons! That sounds dramatic and it was. Because of distances, schedules, and COVID, I had not actually seen my grandsons in a year . Today, we all met at Mystic Seaport <https://www.mysticseaport.org/>. Yes, we observed all the CDC rules. My father took me to Mystic in the 1950's and now I was there again with 3 generations of Soreff's. We saw, we played, we looked and we learned. Mystic Seaport has taken a big hit from COVID with having to lay off more than 100 staff, having staff now vacancies now and closing certain exhibit areas. But and there is the but again, it is open and amazing.



Left to right Barak, Foster, Westley, Ben and Steve Soreff-three generations at Mystic Seaport

Hello, it is Monday, September 20, 2021 and I am still glowing of having seen my sons and grandsons yesterday. I am please how they are growing, doing and developing. 😊 Today it was delightful to get back into my routine of pickle ball, Tai Chi and writing. While exercising, I watch the PBS program *History Detectives Special Investigations: Civil War Sabotage?* <https://www.pbs.org/opb/historydetectives/investigation/civil-war-sabotage/> “When the SS Sultana exploded on April 27, 1865, more than 1,800 died —outnumbering the death toll from the Titanic disaster.” The Civil War was over and it was carrying Union soldiers feed from Andersonville prison home. I learned about coal torpedoes, which were bombs disguised as coal designed to blow up boilers. And they did explode in boilers. Program also showed to political side of Lincoln. And it reminded me how easy it is to forgot or simply not remember bad things that happened. And that is both good and bad thing.

Welcome, it is Tuesday, September 21, 2021. How's it like to live in COVID time? The simple answer is that life in the COVID world is complicated. My new Tuesday schedule has emerged. This is how it goes-Talmud study via Zoom followed by walking 9 holes of golf at Nippo Golf Course. Remember the old axiom: How do you get to Carnegie Hall? Practice, practice, practice. Well, I have applied that idea to my golf game. I have synthesized what I had learned from the lessons and incorporated them in my game. Yes, par still eludes me, but my outing today was good.

Returning to the complications, everything I do is governed by COVID. Whenever I go anywhere indoors, I wear a mask. I wonder if I should get a third COVID shot. The jury seems to be still out. Forward! that is my marching orders.

Hello, it is Wednesday, September 22, 2021 and I have more evidence that we are still on COVID-19 time. The Raymond Walgreens displays this sign. The key word is CONTINUE. It means we are not out of the woods. And that sign is at a vaccination site.



Raymond Walgreens' sign

Here is more proof, it is not over. “Last Updated | September 22, 2021 | 3:00 PM TD Garden, Boston Bruins and Boston Celtics announced today that all guests 12 years and older are required to present proof of full vaccination against COVID-19 or a qualifying negative COVID-19 test to gain access to the arena. These entry requirements will go into effect on Thursday, September 30, 2021, aligned with the first Boston Bruins preseason game at TD Garden. Additionally, the City of Boston public health order requiring all guests over the age of 2 are required to wear a mask at TD Garden, except while actively eating or drinking as permitted, will remain in effect until further notice.”

And late breaking news. FDA authorizes booster dose of Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine for people 65 and older.

Welcome to Thursday, September 23, 2021 and word for the day as is also its theme is *medicine*. Let me start with one of my favorite sayings: “There never has been a better time in the history of the earth to be sick”. There have been staggering, major advances in medical diagnostics and treatments in recent years. And they continue at a record pace. As evidence look at how rapidly the COVID-19 tests and vaccination have become available. Linking back to yesterday's CDC announcements, all my senior friends are clambering and stampeding for their third shot. My drugstore says wait until next week when all the corporate and CDC guidelines have been completed. I will wait, but I would prefer it today.

Returning the medical theme, allow me to lead back into it with a joke from the classic *Airplane!*, the 1980 movie. The pilot is sitting in the airport before the flight and is talking on a phone. Then, he receives another call from a different telephone from the Mayo Clinic. In response to the second call, he utters the famous line, “hold the mayo”. Today, while exercising, I watched on PBS documentary *The Mayo Clinic: Faith - Hope – Science*. The film brilliantly with care for patient sensitivity, tells the story of the Mayo doctors, the nuns and nurses of St. Mary’s Hospital. The program highlights their concern and care. For each patient regardless of payment, and showcases the clinic’s medical innovations. The Mayo Clinic is based on three pillars-patient care, education and research. Watching this program increased my pride in being a doctor.

Hello and welcome to Friday, September 24, 2021. It was a day of writing and anticipation-the emotion, not the song. The day started off with pickle ball, birthday party, Tai Chi and more pickle ball -all good. Then I returned to Coppal House Farm for check some facts. A gang of my friends went there on September 10 and I wanted to be correct in my information of my report of our maze adventure. As a reporter/journalist, I strive to be accurate in my work. I secured the key information from the visit and was able to write the article. I was pleased that the article Amazing Mazes <https://forumhome.org/amazing-mazes-p35228-105.htm> could be published today! Online papers can be amazing that way. The anticipation is when and where I will get my 3rd Pfizer vaccine shot.

Hello, it is Saturday, September 25, 2021 and it is a day of reflection. The day began with looking at heat pumps for the house and Torah study. To deal with my vaccine anticipation, by telephone I secured a booster shot for this coming Monday at 11:15 AM. I like the idea of more personal protection against COVID-19. Indeed, that is what the 563 days of self-isolation has all been about .

But, the highlight of the day was gathering of our good friends to a meal and to play Mexican Train. We had a great time playing the game and just being together. It is a friendship for all seasons. However, now here is a reflection piece. I asked the gang what lessons have you learned and gained from their COVID experience? This is what they said. One person voiced deep appreciation of the relationship he had with his wife. They did many things together with super enjoyment because of COVID. Another cited the simple joy of going to the grocery store and picking her own selections. Curbside service can only go so far! Someone suggested the importance of getting together with a friend or friends , such as we were doing now. Let’s face it. Zoom is good but face it face is better and best..

On the same subject, one person talked about missing hugs. Having just recently hugged my grandsons at Mystic Seaports, I really liked that idea. Zoom can only go so far. One couple loved the experiences they had had from the local resources in their area such as trails and scenic places. This extended my love of my own neighborhood’s wilderness <https://forumhome.org/patterns-in-the-neighborhood-wilderness-p32796-105.htm#> to a whole region of the state. Someone suggested how people came to treasure toilet paper in the beginning of the pandemic. One individual with a smile said, he found he only needed to go to the grocery store every 3 weeks. And finally, one person, with great pride, offered that he discovered his

ability to adopt and adjust to a changing world. I thanked my friends for sharing their experiences. What have you learned COVID-19 time?

The whole conversation reminded me of the song *Big Yellow Taxi*, “They paved paradise and put up a parking lot, With a pink hotel, a boutique, and a swinging hot spot. Don't it always seem to go, That you don't know what you got 'til it's gone”.



The Mexican Train carried a lot of great pandemic insights

Good evening, it is Sunday, September 26, 2021 and I am in an attitude of gratitude. Mood. The immediate reason for this out pouring of thanks is that it participated in Appreciation Event conducted by the Pawtuckaway Late Improvement Association (PLIA). At it, folks who volunteered throughout the year for its various activities, were honored and thanked with a great meal and official well done event. Yes, it is nice to say thank you. And this is not done enough.

And while we are on that subject, throughout the pandemic I am grateful my partner, my family, my friends my health, and my location. Yes, I am thankful you reading this.

Finally, all the anticipation is over. It is Monday. September 27, 2021. Yes, after my Monday routine of pickle ball and Tai Chi, I received my third Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine also known as my booster shot. I am glad. This shot was different time from my two prior injection experiences. Both instances were at the Exeter High School and were administered by the Army National Guard. This time it was at my neighborhood Walgreens. It was more convenient, with a shorter wait time, and delivered by a pharmacist whom I knew. I also had good company for the third shot. Not only were there many seniors in line with me for the shot but also President Biden <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/white-house/biden-receive-covid-booster-shot-camera-monday-n1280181> received his third shot today, too.



My third shot administered by pharmacist Ryan Nguyen.

Good day, it is Tuesday, September 28, 2021 the COVI is hanging on. Here is my latest evidence. The picture is of an Irving gas station in Northwood, NH. The lower of the two signs reads, ATTENTION CUSTOMERS: With the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic, please allow for 6 feet apart. The key word stands as ongoing.



The door of an Irving gas station in Northwood, NH.

Meanwhile, a national battle has shifted from disputes over face masks to mandated vaccination as a condition of employment. We have gone from Wear a Mask, Save a Life to Get Vaccinated Save Your Job. It pits advocates of individual rights against a public health model.

Hello, it is Wednesday, September 29, 2021. Today marks my 17th month in which I have observed National Cribbage Day. I celebrated by both losing and winning to my Cribbage computer opponent, Bill today. I showed the film *Gaslight* <https://www.tcm.com/tcmdb/title/166/gaslight#overview> in my Madness and the Movies class. It was great film which showed how a noun becomes a verb. In the film, the husband attempts to drive his wife insane by many manipulations such as decreasing the brightness of a gaslight. The same thing happened with the word Google. It had a transformation into a verb. It was weird with the whole class and myself having to be vaccinated and wearing face masks. Such is education in 2021. And speaking again about COVID time, this year, although the Deerfield Fair is back, we will not be back to attend it. The risks are still too great.

Last day of September, it is Thursday, September 30, 2021. I am tired of asking the reason this month has only 30 days instead of 31. I can fall back on the classic parent answer. It just does! We have the 300th meeting for the committee to celebrate Nottingham's 300th anniversary – 1722 to 2022. One can only wonder what cloud COVID will cast over that year and our plans. While exercising, I watched the *Ellen Show* starring Ellen DeGeneres. The program and her role in it and in the media testimonies how more open we are and the changes in acceptance. It also illustrates how silly people can be. But, and there is the but again, what I focused on was the audience. They all wear masks and any contestant from those in attendance was vaccinated. We have embarked on a hybrid world. This includes cars, schools and events.

Enough is enough, let's laugh.



Did You Know

A "mondegreen" is a line or word in a song or poem which is misunderstood. The term was invented by an American writer Sylvia Wright when she misheard the lyrics in an old Scottish ballad "laid him on the green" for "Lady Mondegreen."

The most famous mondegreen is found in "The Twelve Days Christmas". Originally written as "four colley birds" ("colley" meaning black), it was heard as "four calling birds". The mondegreen became so common, that the author actually changed the lyrics.

Regular Humor



Why would a frog wait for the bus? Because his car got toad.

Where did you get that gold watch? I won it in a race.

How many people participated in the race? Three: a policeman, the owner of the watch, and me!!

Classic Knock-Knock Joke Knock! Knock! Who's there? Art. Art who? R2-D2, of course.

A Short History of Medicine

"Doctor, I have an ear ache."

2000 B.C. - "Here, eat this root."

1000 B.C. - "That root is heathen, say this prayer."

1850 A.D. - "That prayer is superstition, drink this potion."

1940 A.D. - "That potion is snake oil, swallow this pill."

1985 A.D. - "That pill is ineffective, take this antibiotic."

2000 A.D. - "That antibiotic is artificial. Here, eat this root!"

COVID-19 Jokes

I no longer need to wear a mask. Now that I have my COVID 19 positive shirt people juts avoid being near me

The Covid 19 Toilet Paper craze was a lot like the Stock Market Crash of 1929. But this time, instead of everyone dumping their stocks, they're stocking for dumps

I can't believe Comic Con 2020 got cancelled because of covid 19! It was the one group of people who were 100% guaranteed to wear masks.

The world has turned upside down. Old folks are sneaking out of the house, and their kids are yelling at them to stay indoors

Ran out of toilet paper and started using lettuce leaves. Today was just the tip of the iceberg, tomorrow *romaines* to be seen.

If I keep stress-eating at this level, the buttons on my shirt will start socially distancing from each other.



583 days of COVID-19 times distancing and please, note the fall foliage colors

The Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner: Part LIV

Steve Soreff, MD

It is Friday, October 15, 2021 and the glory of the fall foliage abounds and is all around. It is the end of my 88th week, the middle of my 20th month, the middle of my 2nd year and my 583 day of social and physical distancing. Today also marks the 27th anniversary of meeting my partner Peggy. We both had been hiking in the White Mountains and met at Zealand Falls Hut. So, what could be more appropriate than for us to return to White Mountains as Information Volunteers for the Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC) <https://www.outdoors.org/> at Pinkham Notch. And, it is peak season to peek at the fall foliage on the mountains and their peaks.

Recently, a friend asked, “Isn’t the pandemic over? The cases are lower in New Hampshire.” Another friend who is a physician joined the conversation. He said, “No”. Yes, we are still on COVID-19 time for a while more. We are just learning to live with it and around it. With cheery note, let’s look back on the last two weeks.

This is what I pondered on and came up with Friday afternoon, October 1, 2021

	Time Frame 3/20-3/21	4/21-7/21	8/21-present
<u>Activities:</u>			
Time in house	85%	40%	65%
Car distance from house	20 miles	150 miles	30 miles
Grocery store	curbside delivery	inside with mask	inside masked
Restaurant	only take out	outside eating	inside masked
Synagogue	Zoom only	Inside no mask	inside masked
Tai Chi	outdoors	outdoors	outdoors
Pickle Ball	outdoors	outdoors	outdoors
Planet Fitness	membership frozen	membership frozen	frozen
Golf	Did Not Play	Played	Played

Hindsight 20/20 for the COVID times. Here is my explanation. The first year I practiced total isolation, distancing and withdrawal of most things. March 2021 we had our two vaccination shots. That ushered in the summer of love. Then in July, 2021 the Delta variant and the surge set in and set us all back.

Back in the saddle again and it is Saturday, October 2, 2021. I had a banner day. It commenced with me renewing by love of Zoom. Via Zoom, I went to Tel Aviv, New York City, Chicagoland, Boston and Ridgefield, Connecticut. The occasion was my daughter in Israel's birthday. What a marvelous way for us all to be connected. I sang Happy Birthday to her without washing my hands trice. Then they voted me off the island. Sometimes technology can be very helpful.

And, again via Zoom, I attended Torah Study. We are back in the Book of Genesis. In my reading and working through the Torah, it is amazing how seemingly familiar stories provide sources for new perspectives and insights. Actually, folks have been doing that for over 2,000 years.

In the afternoon, I renewed my love affair with the lake. I kayaked for 4 hours. I saw beginning of the foliage changing. I followed at a respectful distance, a parent and juvenile loon as they cruised about the South Lake of Pawtuckaway Lake. Folks on the lake including myself having been following and protecting these loons all summer long. When there were eggs in the loon's nest on Sanctuary Island, we put up 'no trespassing' lines around the island and signs warning folks to keep away. Once hatched and throughout the summer, we have protected the chick from eagle predators and other nefarious critters and watch it grow. Now our chick is a juvenile and soon to fly away for the winter to Great Bay. It was sweet to observe the pair.



The parent and juvenile loons

Good day, it is Sunday, October 3, 2021 and today duty called. What does that mean? I am co-captain of the Pawtuckaway Lake Weed Watchers. Weed Watchers have the responsibility to patrol the entire lake's shoreline to find an invasive species. It has an important role in protecting the lake. Today, an email came in notifying me of a possible milfoil sighting. This required action. It reminded me of my work as a psychiatrist in a busy emergency department. Since rain that afternoon precluded my kayaking over to check it out, I drove over instead. I marked the location with a purple buoy. Tomorrow, a member of the Milfoil Team will dive and identify the plant. The system is working.

But that is not all. The Red Sox just won a post season playoff spot!!! Yippee. But, and there I go with the but again, the victory was bittersweet because of COVID. The Red Sox radio announcer, Joe Castiglione, was at Fenway Park doing the play-by-play, but the game was in Washington, D.C! In 'normal' times he would have travelled with the team to that city and afterward conducted interviews with the players. This is yet, another bit of evidence of COVID time.



Good afternoon, it is Monday, October 4, 2021. After my routine of pickle ball and Tai Chi, I watched while exercising two PBS programs which framed our current dilemmas. The first was *The Open Mind* program entitled *A bad science fiction movie that is real* <https://www.thirteen.org/openmind/science/a-bad-science-fiction-movie-that-is-real/7080/>. It featured Augustin Fuentes, Ph.D., a biological anthropologist at Princeton University. He talked about the profound effect of COVID both immediately and long-term. He sees the virus mutating and society evolving, too. He talks about the major devastating and destructive effects in altering life as in a bad fiction movie but which is real. He says about the virus “That is it infects us and affects us in ways that are seriously damaging and have these long-term repercussions. I don’t just mean illness and death, but it looks like it alters some of our physiological functioning.”

The second program on PBS was *In Their Own Words Elon Musk* <https://www.kpbs.org/news/arts-culture/2021/09/28/in-their-own-words-elon-musk>. It was an interesting biography, however, what I want to talk about is his motivation for his work. He sees the earth doomed by climate change. With Tesla, he started a revolution to move from fossil fuels to electric energy. With SpaceX, his plan is to colonize Mars because this planet will be uninhabitable.

Good evening, it is Tuesday night, October 5, 2021 and I am excited for many reasons. This morning via Zoom I went to Talmud study. Yes, another victory for Zoom. Then I played golf. Although par eludes me, it was fun to be outdoors with sun shining and the trees displaying their all foliage. I was overjoyed witnessing the fall colors on and around the course.

Now let me tell you the two big reasons for my excitement. Here is the first one.. For about a half year I have been striving to create A Museum of the Jews of New Hampshire. I became interested as I was part of program to see if there was a unique Jewish experience in all six New England states. This effort resulted in a major conference by Zoom (yes, another product of COVID time) and a website <https://www.nejhc.org/>. Today, someone donated a locked display case for the Museum. Finally, the Museum has a place to display its items. Like this Diary, I am in the business of making and preserving history.

And the second reason for my excitement is that I am listening to Red Sox vs Yankees one game playoff game. I remember the joy of 2004 when the Sox beat the Yankees and then went on to win the World Series. I'm back to feeling that way, again. I listen to the entire game on the radio while playing computer games. It was a good game with the Red Sox winning 6 to 2. I was reminded how in baseball every pitch counts. Spoiler alert, in the series against the Tampa Bay Ray, this ever pitch would be dramatic. Furthermore, several home runs proved the point. Yippee and good night.

Hello, it is Wednesday, October 6, 2021 and while at outdoor pickle ball and Tai Chi, I saw something I wanted to share. At the Little River Park in Lee, NH, there is an outdoor basketball court. Nice. What is neat is at the court there is a basketball just there. Let me repeat it. There is a basketball left there. People come, use it and leave it. That is so cool. How many parks in the world could you do that?



The ball stays in the court 24/7

Welcome, it is Thursday, October 7, 2021 and today the present met history. That is obtuse. Here is what happened. In my Madness and the Movies, we saw the film *Argo* https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/argo_2012. “ On Nov. 4, 1979, militants storm the U.S. embassy in Tehran, Iran, taking 66 American hostages. Amid the chaos, six Americans manage to slip away and find refuge with the Canadian ambassador. Knowing that it's just a matter of time before the refugees are found and likely executed, the U.S. government calls on extractor Tony Mendez (Ben Affleck) to rescue them. Mendez's plan is to pose as a Hollywood producer scouting locations in Iran and train the refugees to act as his "film" crew.” The movie was based on this amazing escape of the six Americans from Tehran. But what more remarkable was a friend and colleague of mine after the film, talked to the class. He, himself, also escaped from Tehran mirroring the climactic three phase interrogation at the airport. He was living history and added so much to the appreciation of the movie and the history it depicted..

Meanwhile tonight I am listening to the Red Sox American Legion championship game against the Rays. The Sox are losing . But, COVID is ever present . Finally, the Boston announcers can travel with the team instead of doing the away games play by play from Fenway. Also, many of the ads are from COVID shots at the supermarkets.

Hello, it is Friday, October 8, 2021. And with the good weather and my all outdoor activities, I had almost forgot about COVID-19. Yes, with splendid kayaking on the Pawtuckaway Lake <https://forumhome.org/an-early-fall-day-on-lake-pawtuckaway-p35285-105.htm>, one could almost feel like ‘the good old days’, before the COVID Era (BCE).

But, and yes there are is that infamous but yet again, four events have shown we are definitely on COVID-19 time. First, two of my friends have had to be tested and have self-quarantined themselves. The virus is hitting close to home. Second, the battles over vaccination especially in educational setting has become petulant and combative. Boards of Education have turned into battleground. Third, continuing on the educational theme area, locally Raymond High School has gone to remote learning as a COVID outbreak. Raymond High School moved to remote learning after COVID-19 clusters in that school

<https://www.wmur.com/article/raymond-nh-remote-classes-covid-19-clusters/37901056#>.

“RAYMOND, N.H. —Rising COVID-19 cases at Raymond High School have forced administrators to transition to remote learning. School officials hope to have students return to in-person classes after the weekend. But with several test results still outstanding, it could take longer. As of Wednesday night, there were 56 positive cases among students and staff. “

Fourth, Boston Marathon has gone to a world-wide virtual marathon because of the pandemic. That means folks on October 9, 2021 can run a local marathon route. My son, Barak, both organized and will run one such route in Boston. “Running Their Way: Dorchester Group Maps Its Own Marathon Course Through Boston's Overlooked Neighborhoods

https://www.wgbh.org/news/local-news/2021/10/08/running-their-way-dorchester-group-maps-its-own-marathon-course-through-bostons-overlooked-neighborhoods?fbclid=IwAR2qohmeR0ZL_5V8k_ruSQV2aBQSSvwEnjAU977qwKDITkpHcW-tUDOO1Bc.



Members of the PIONEERS Run Crew get set to run on Wednesday, October 6 in Dorchester. *Frances Ramirez, Courtesy Barak Soreff in the red shirt.*

Barak is running the local marathon as a member PIONEERS Run Crew

<https://runningcrews.com/crews/pioneers-run-crew/>.

The PIONEERS Run Crew was founded by Sidney in April 2017 after he grew frustrated with the lack of diversity in the Boston running community.

Hello and welcome to Saturday, October 9, 2021. First things first, Barak and his PIONEERS Run Crew finished their local marathon. And, his organizational skills paid off with about 40 runners completed the course “without a hitch”. In Torah Study today we looked at the

story Noah and the Tower of Babel. In the yearly Torah reading cycle, we are commencing again in the Book of Genesis. What I learned this time was how the Jewish Bible aka Torah had it right. Let me explain. The stories of Adam and Eve and Noah both show that ALL humans had a single common ancestry. Anthropology and biology scientifically says the same thing. We can trace the roots of all peoples back to Africa. Sadly, that appreciation does not quell the local, national and global hatred.

Next, back while exercising, I watched the *Antique Roadshow*. This episode showed the iconic photograph, *The Soiling of Old Glory* <https://rarehistoricalphotos.com/soiling-old-glory-1976/>. The program not only featured the picture for appraisal but also years later the reuniting of the photographer and the attacked lawyer. From Old Glory website, “Stanley Forman was early for his shift at the Herald American on April 5th, 1976 and he decided to head out to an anti-busing demonstration at Boston City Hall that another journalist was already covering. It was already two years into a desegregated school-busing in Massachusetts, a scheme that forcibly bused students to schools often far from their homes in an effort to diversify schools, but the protests in favor of the old system were still raging.

Forman managed to capture a photograph that would later become iconic. The photograph depicts a white teenager, Joseph Rakes, assaulting a black man, lawyer, and civil rights activist Ted Landsmark, with a flagpole bearing the American flag as Landsmark was on his way to a meeting in the courthouse. Landsmark was active in trying to get more minority contractors in the construction industry, but he hadn’t been paying attention to the busing protests.” I actually remember the violent that happened when the court ordered the desegregation of the Boston schools. The reason I am bring it up now, is that is what is happening currently with the wearing of masks and the getting of vaccinations. It also offers echoes of the storming of the nation’s capital building on January 6. We are polarized and violent country, too often.



Stanley Forman’s *The Soiling of Old Glory* photograph

Good day , it is Sunday, October 10, 2021. As for baseball and football. when it comes to New England I am a fan,. I have the Patriots and Red Sox to watch and listen to as a double hitter today. The actual outcomes and scores will be later. But, I want to go back to last night. While exercising, I watched on PBS *The Sons And Daughters Of America (1964 -1968)* of eight

part Ken Burns series *Country Music* <https://www.pbs.org/kenburns/country-music/> . That segment featured Loretta Lynn, Merle Haggard becoming "The Poet of the Common Man", Johnny Cash, Dolly Parton and Charley Pride. Their music was important because it told the truth and was authentic. It went their hearts to ours. The real key to success is in must be right from heart. That is what I strive too here.

And this morning, again while exercising and watch *Global 3000* <https://www.dw.com/en/tv/global-3000/s-11487>. It talked about 200 million Climate Refugees round the world. The immediate causes were not enough water, rising sea levels and land becoming deserts. And, the big culprit remains global warming. But to Pete Seeger. “ When will we ever learn?”

Wow, it now 10 PM and the games are all over. In both instances my teams came from behind, tied the game and went on to win. The Patriots won on a field goal in the last seconds of the game 25 to 22. The Red Sox in a 13 inning, over 5 hour game won with a walk-off home run in the bottom of the 13th inning 6 to 4!

Welcome to Monday, October 11, 2021. Today is either Indigenous People Day or Columbus Day. It followed my routine of pickle ball and Tai Chi. Then, I spend the day Bedrock Garden as it celebrated its 5th Fairy House and Hobbit Festival <https://www.bedrockgardens.org/fairy-house-festival-2021.html>. Children , families and seniors came in record numbers to marvel at the creative fairy houses. The youngsters also had an opportunity make their own fairy houses from material at the 2 Gnome Depots. I got to work with the fairy god-mother, Peggy Tucker, in showing folks the ‘Once Upon a Time Estates’. I had fun watching the delight of folks wandered about Fairy Woodland.



I got to get my picture with fairy god-mother, Peggy Tucker

The day however ended on high but rocky note. The Red Sox jumped to an early lead, followed by the Rays slowly whittling way to tie the game. But, in the bottom of the 9th , the Red Sox had a walk off victory. The home team advantage really showed it worth.

Hello and welcome to a glorious Tuesday. October 12, 2021. What makes it terrific is a warm autumn day with magnificent fall foliage all around. It was a good morning with Talmud Class followed by golf. Although par continues to elude me, being outdoors walking is exhilarating. Right now, the meetings I attend are now engaged in a great battle between being in person or by Zoom. There are good arguments on both sides. The bottom line remains that without COVID this would not have been an issue. Just another example how the world will never be the same.

Today, is Wednesday, October 13, 2021. It was another day where the wonders of fall and its foliage danced across the region. The day began in Madness and the Movies the showing best high school film of all time, *The Breakfast Club*

https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/breakfast_club. The movie depicts the stereotypes in high school and how they deflect from knowing the real persons. The class loved it and all could relate to their and their children's high school experiences. Watching it and seeing the class's appreciation of it, showed how the movie has endured. Then I worked with two local historians in developing the Museum of the Jews of New Hampshire and formed the New Hampshire Jewish Historical Society. We looked through about a million of the photographs of the Jews of Manchester, NH. Wow ! I capped of the day as the lake called by kayaking into the sunset. The lake did not disappoint me.



Pawtuckaway Lake at sunset

Welcome to Thursday, October 14, 2021. The day began with exercising and watching on PBS *News Room Tokyo*. It cited the high youngsters' suicide rate and truancy in Japan during the pandemic. It underscores the global mental health crisis due to COVID-19. Depression and anxiety levels worldwide have soared. The isolation has been devastation. On a lighter note, "William Shatner goes to space on Blue Origin mission" <https://www.cnn.com/business/live-news/william-shatner-blue-origin-space-flight/index.html>. Yes, the legendary Captain James T. Kirk of the spaceship Enterprise of the series *Star Trek* did get his wings. At 90, he is the oldest Astronaut. Yes, that is out of this world and a rather unique way to see the fall foliage.

Enough, let's laugh.



Regular Humor

Why did the football coach go to the bank? To get his quarter back!!!

Why did the chicken cross the playground? To get to the other slide.

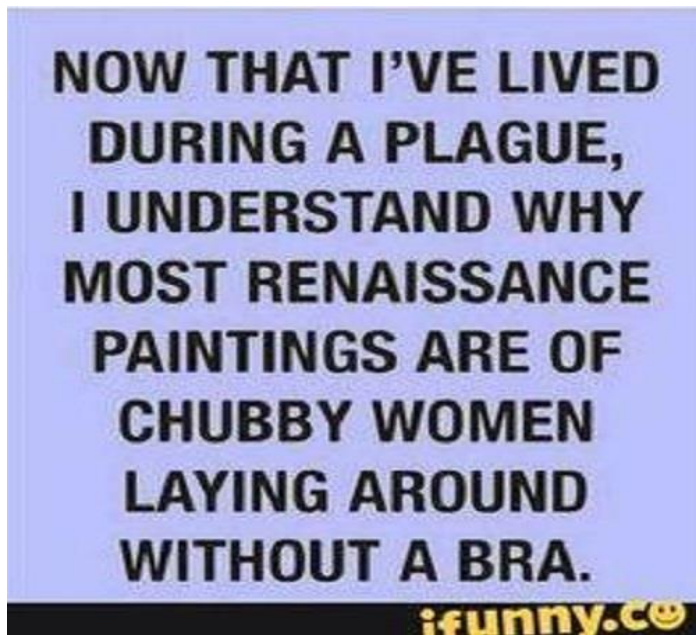
What do you call berries playing the guitar? A jam session.

What's the difference between a poorly dressed man on a unicycle and a well-dressed man on a bicycle? Attire.

Q. How much money does a pirate pay for corn? A. A buccaneer.

But what about this one? "Frank is recovering from day surgery when a nurse asks him how he is feeling. 'I'm fine, but I didn't like the four-letter-word the doctor used in surgery,' he answered. 'What did he say?' asked the nurse. 'Oops!'"

COVID-19 Humor



Pandemic [pick-up line](#): "You can't spell quarantine without 'U R A Q T.'"

Happy hour is starting earlier and earlier. If this keeps up, I'll be pouring wine in my cereal.

I'm not talking to myself; I'm having a parent-teacher conference!

Why did the chicken cross the road? Because the chicken behind it didn't know how to socially distance properly!



597 days of social and physical distancing Note, the leaves for fall foliage.

The Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner: Part LV

Steve Soreff, MD

Hello, this is Friday, October 29, 2021 and it represents the end of my 90th week, the end of my 20th month, the 19th observance of National Cribbage Day, my over 1 ½ years and my 597 days of some form of isolation, social and physical distancing, I think I have gone way passed COVID and Zoom fatigue. It is more like exhaustion, angry and fear. I had one too close call with COVID in a friend. Hence, the fear. The one truly saving grace right now has been the brilliance and abundance of the fall foliage. Wow, let's look back at the last 14 days.

I am in Pinkham Notch and it is Saturday, October 16, 2021. My partner, Peggy Tucker, and I drove up Friday to be Information Volunteers for the Appalachian Mountain Club <https://www.outdoors.org/> (AMC). What better way to celebrate our 27th anniversary then by giving back to the mountains? We both have and do love hiking and have done the all 48 four thousand footers in New Hampshire. We give back by offering trail ideas to folks there for leave peaking ,for those climbing Mount Washington and for those who want a short hike. It is foggy all day at the Notch, so we have the today, the same foggy view as those at the summit of Mount Washington. We met folks from around the United States and some other countries. What makes the 'job' fun, is that people are there because they want to be there. Not as in my medical and teaching career, they 'have to be there' That night I gave talk entitled "I Am Mount Washington". I portray myself at the great mountain and give its geologic, social, and recreational histories . I also talk about the 231 mile wind once at its summit and the over 150 people who have died on its slopes.

And, yes we were still on COVID time. Most everyone wore masks indoors. When they get hike outdoors, no mask necessary. But it was masks inside.

Hello, it is Sunday, October 17, 2021 and the sun is shining. We got to peek at the peaks in peak foliage season. People travel from around the country and from around the world to see the autumn leaves turn vividly red, orange and yellow. Thoreau said " In wilderness is the preservation of the world". The mountains and the colors provided us with renewal, awe and wonder. There were moments when COVID -19 did not rule nor curtail of our lives.



Pinkham Notch October 17, 2021

Welcome to a new week. It is Monday, October 18, 2021 and the sun is shining which makes one less concerned that it has also turned colder. Today, while exercising, I watched a political commentator make the following point. With the decline of local journalism, all the public hears is the national political discord. And that countrywide coverage emphasized the dramatic polarization of America. The point was that the national dichotomy now goes down to the local level. I have seemed it here in Nottingham, much more local polarization. My final point is that is the reason for my writing and working on local journalism.

Finally, as I exercised before going to bed I heard this. Superman <https://www.nbcnews.com/pop-culture/pop-culture-news/superman-changes-motto-truth-justice-better-tomorrow-says-dc-chief-n1281716> has changed his motto to 'Truth, Justice and a Better Tomorrow'. So' says Jim Lee, chief creative officer and publisher of DC, "The Man of Steel's motto will be 'evolving' from the well-known mantra that he fights for 'Truth, Justice and the American Way'". Now that is my type of superhero.



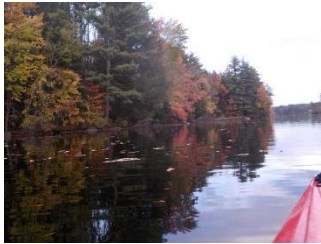
Shows how the COVID world has shifted

Hello, it is Tuesday, October 19, 2021 and I am living in a peripheral world. What does that mean? I, Zoomed to Talmud class, played golf and went to a meeting. The meeting was indoors with all attending wearing masks. I am on the edge of activities and worried about too much involvement. Around me, I am aware of areas surging and people of importance getting COVID-19. The death of Colin Powell is yet another reminder of no one is fully protected.

Welcome back to 2020. It is Wednesday, October 20, 2021 and today felt like a giant step backward. Yes, I still had my constant morning routine of pickle ball and Tai Chi. This has been since March 2020. Nothing new. Then I went to new glasses at Concord Hospital. There again masks were required. This has been since the pandemic commenced. Next went to Israel

by Zoom and attended 2 meetings by Zoom. As you can see, this day was a more like a year ago than today. That is what I mean.

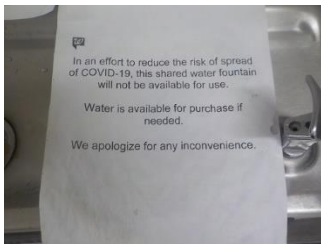
Hello, it is Thursday, October 21, 2021 and I want to hide. Why? All around me too many people do not wear masks when they are indoors. Russia is exploding with COVID-19. I did find refuge and solace in the lake. I did a great deal of writing all day, which has its own rewards, for me. I went kayaking with Peggy. I am eternally in gratitude that Pawtuckaway Lake as my front lawn. It was only a matter of flipping the kayak over and pushing it into the water. It was just like the doctor ordered. Take two paddles and call me in the water. The foliage, although muted by the clouds and setting sun, gently said, "I am here. Relax, take a big breath and chill out". .



The healing lake: Thank you

Hi, it is Friday, October 22, 2021 and I find myself angry. Actually, the first part of my day was good. It was pickle ball and Tai Chi. Then the fund raising brick walk at my synagogue was done. All good. But, and there is the damn but again, on the news I heard this. In areas of New Hampshire where vaccination rates were low, the COVID infections was high. Conversely, in other regions of the state, where vaccination rates were high, the COVID infections were low. Listening to this report got me . You do not need to be rocket scientist or have a Master's in Public Health, to know vaccinations does cut COVID cases. Just do it.

Then, I went to my beloved Walgreens and there too many folks were not wearing masks. Therefore, I witness this classic double message. The sign said do not use the water fountain because of COVID-19. Good idea. It also said buy water bottles instead. No cool. But they did NOT turn off the water. You could still drink from it. At least, at the school, they did turn off the water to the fountains. Moreover, my mini-rage this is also due to classic displacement, partly. I am really angry that the pandemic. It has persisted for far too long. And the Red Sox are losing, too! There I got it out of system.



At the drugstore: Want a drink of water?

Today, Saturday, October 23, 2021, and COVID became personal. Up until now, I have been talking about the pandemic in terms of statistics, trends and news stories. That all changed this morning with an email. One of the Little River gang had tested positive for COVID. We had been together outdoors Friday morning. She had worn a mask because she thought she had a 'cold'. Yes, friends of mine had lost loved ones to COVID. But those connections were at a distant and not personal. My anger of yesterday, turned to my fear of today. Although I had three shots, I was most afraid of giving it to my family and friends. I had to let them all know of my exposure. We modified our plans based on mutual comfort levels of my family and friends..

Hello, it is Sunday, October 24, 2021. It is a day of a cautious connection and major reflection. Peggy and I went to Boston and lunch with my daughter, Matana, in from Israel.. Because of COVID-10 and my possible exposure to it, everything was at a distance. Masks on and dining only outdoors was the new golden rule. Hearing my daughter's tales of COVID-19 in Israel was enlightening. There as here COVID causes major disputes and disruptions. It is yet another reminder it is called a pandemic because that is what it is. The now infamous disruptions to the supply chain is another evidence of global effects.

On the way home on National Public Radio (NPR) we listened to *On the Media* <https://www.npr.org/podcasts/452538775/on-the-media>. It featured a piece by Kurt Vonnegut based on his *Kurt Vonnegut on 8 'shapes' of stories* <https://bigthink.com/high-culture/vonnegut-shapes/>. In it, he talked about the common scenarios all stories and news stories fit into. For example, the tale of a difficult predicament with the curve going down. The low point in curved line is reached and a solution is found. And then all is good; the curve goes up. Everyone loves that format and story. And now for the reason to cite him. They applied his system to reporting on COVID-19. As the program noted that is "why the narrative arc of the COVID-19 pandemic has been deeply unsatisfying". The story goes down, the goes and then down again. And it keeps on going down and up. But it never stays up! And I keep on writing about it. That reminds of *The Song That Never Ends* <https://lyricsgem.com/the-song-that-never-ends-lyrics/>. "This is the song that never ends. It just goes on and on, my friend. Some people started singing it, not knowing what it was. And, they'll continue singing it forever, just because This is the song that never ends..."

Good morning, it is Monday, October 25, 2021 and it is raining. That translates into no pickle ball and limited Tia Chi. However, the situation allowed me to rediscover one of the silver lining of the pandemic. How so? Let me tell you. This morning while exercising, I watched on PBS *Nature: My Garden of a Thousand Bees* <https://www.pbs.org/wnet/nature/my-garden-thousand-bees-about/26263/>. The program was "A story of surprise and revelation. A wildlife cameraman spends his time during the coronavirus pandemic lockdown filming the bees in his urban garden and discovers the many diverse species and personalities that exist in this insect family." The show itself was amazing and it acquainted me with the wonder, the importance, and variations of the bee world as well a learning about their sex lives. Recently, I saw at the Nottingham Historical Society's garden many busy bees, Yes, the bee expose ' gave new meaning to the famous talk parents are supposed to have with their child about "the birds and the bees".



Local bees on flowers

But, and there it is again, the program was reminder of one good thing about the pandemic, it caused people globally to appreciate the wonders and miracles in their own backyards. I have done that with *Patterns in the Neighborhood Wilderness* <https://forumhome.org/patterns-in-the-neighborhood-wilderness-p32796-105.htm>. Family and friends have found delights near home. You do not have to travel the world to see amazing things and people in your own backyard.

Hello, it is Tuesday, October 26, 2021 and the theme is baseball and the Word Series which begins tonight. As a sad and disappointed Red Sox, I will not watch it. But, and there is the but again, I did while exercising watch on PBS Ken Burns' *The Tenth Inning: Top of the Tenth* <https://kenburns.com/films/baseball-tenth-inning/>.

It took off where his *Baseball* series left off and showed about the 1990's and beyond. . Of interest, since it was more recent, the footage was in color. For me, it was a trip down memory lane. It gave the back story of the events I lived through. These included the players strike in August 1994, the heroics of Cal Ripkin Jr. in the home run derby presented by Sammy Sosa and Mark McGwire. I was fascinated to see how some of the most famous players then as of now switch teams. I especially liked the interview with the sports writers then and their perspective. The program was a pleasant diversion the isolation, uncertainty and concerns of living in the ongoing COVID times.

Hello, it is Wednesday, October 27, 2021 and the word for today is accommodation. What does that mean? On July 13, 2019, I signed the official document surrendering our front lawn to the weeds. Years of futile irradiations efforts have not worked. The dandelions keep coming and other weeds marched in formation toward the few islands of real grass in the lawn. The point here is that COVID-19 is not going away. It is a fact of life. But, and there is the damn but again, it can and must be worked around, adjusted to and accommodated to.

Here is an example of that new reality. This morning I went a morning prayer service at Temple Israel in Manchester. I attended to pray and be part of a minyan <https://www.britannica.com/topic/minyan>. In Judaism, certain prayers require a minimum of 10 adults to be present. There has been a long tradition that it was the only synagogue between Boston and Montreal which conducted regular minyans for morning prayers for decades. However, COVID ended that streak. Today, the minyan was restarted but with adjustments to COVID-19. We prayed in the large sanctuary instead of our usual small room so that everyone could be more than 6 apart. We were required and did all wear masks. And, the minyan will now continue once a week rather than as before several times a week.

I also met a friend for lunch. Neither of us dared to eat indoors. It was raining so the alternative picnic was not possible. Instead, we did take out. Then we parked the cars with the driver's side opposite each other. There we talked and ate. We dined in this unique way because we were adopting to the continuing COVID-19 time.

Good morning, it is Thursday, October 28, 2021 and it has stopped raining. That means I could get to play outside today, I hope? As the month comes to an end, I thought I would take stock of my four areas of concern that I have been tracking: COVID-19, Climate Change; Black Lives Matter and the Assault on Democracy. For COVID-19, there is some good news and bad news. The good is that children can get the vaccine and the third dose is there for others, too. The bad news is the war between the mask and vaccine mandates versus those who say no. In places many boards of education meetings have turned ugly. Also, in New Hampshire, in other certain states and in many countries, COVID-19 is surging.

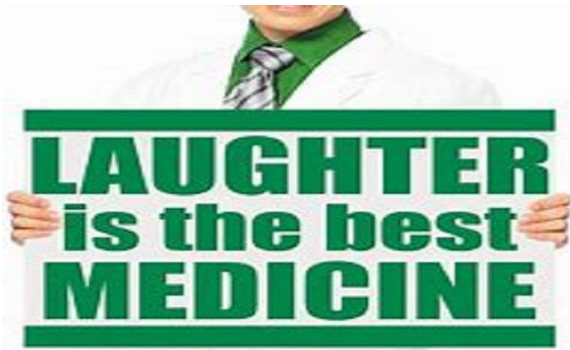
Climate Change is gaining traction. Although the US Congress endorsement is luke warm. nationally and internationally, there is more acknowledgment of climate change and some actions to control it. . There will be a United Nations Conference on Climate Change in Glasgow, Scotland, UK <https://ukcop26.org/> at the end of this month.. Although there have been many talks on this subject before, there is a feeling of desperation now. It is touted out as the 'last chance to save the planet'. I hope they really do something. Sadly, I and the world have been to this rodeo before. For BLM, there has been resistance noted. In many areas, diversity training has been blocked. And for the Assault on Democracy, there have been many set-backs. In many states there are limits to voter registration and actual voting procedures to disenfranchise group. Washington has failed to protect voters rights. Internationally, authoritarian regimes have cracked down on free speech, opposition candidates and journalists. Sorry, this is not a good report card..

With all the noise of these areas, I again sought the comfort of the woods. I went for a promised earlier hike. I returned to my beloved White Birch Corridor. It was glorious.



My White Birch Corridor.

Enough, let's laugh!!!



Did you Know?

Man of War, the great racehorse, was beaten only once as a two-year old by a horse appropriately named "Upset". He never ran in the Kentucky Derby because his owner felt that the distance was asking too much of a young three-year old. He later beat Upset in the Preakness Stakes. The last race of his career was a match race against Sir Barton who was the first triple crown winner. Man of War beat him by seven lengths, the only time in his career he raced against an older horse. His stride was measured at 28 feet, and is said to be the longest of all time.

Regular Humor



Fun Insults

You're old enough to remember when emojis were called "hieroglyphics."

Two wrongs don't make a right, take your parents as an example.

He is so old that he gets nostalgic when he sees the Neolithic cave paintings.

Fun quotes

"My drug test came back negative. My dealer sure has some explaining to do." Unknown

“It’s not that I’m afraid to die, I just don’t want to be there when it happens.” Woody Allen

“I did not attend his funeral, but I sent a nice letter saying I approved of it.” Mark Twain

“Room service? Send up a larger room.” Groucho Marx

A lie gets halfway around the world before the truth has a chance to get its pants on. Winston Churchill

Fun one liners

What did the left eye say to the right eye? Between you and me, something smells.

“You don’t need a parachute to go skydiving. You need a parachute to go skydiving twice.”

COVID-19 Jokes



Since everybody has now started washing their hands, the peanuts at the bar have lost their taste.

What does eat raw garlic have to do with preventing COVID-19? It helps keep everyone at a safe distance.

Definition of Irony - When the Year Of The Rat starts with a plague.

I sneezed in the bank today, it was the most attention I have received from the staff in the last 10 years.

Do you remember on all those Sundays when you just wanted the weekend to go on forever? Well, wish granted.

Chinese doctors have confirmed the name of the first person to contract Coronavirus. His name is Ah-Chu.



611

days of distancing

The Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner: Part LVI

Steve Soreff, MD

Hello, it is Friday November 12, 2021. And this marks the end of my 92nd week, the middle of my 21st month, toward the 1 ¾ years and 611th day of social and physical distancing. As an Angel Number <https://thesecretofthetarot.com/angel-number-611/> it has this meaning. “611 is an Angel Number that indicates you need to reinvent yourself. Your Angels want to see the best version of you.” I have been doing that for 611 days!!! Today, Peggy and I are off to New York City, The Big Apple, to see my daughter, Sasha, and on way back my son , Ben, and his family. Film at 11 and more to tell about in Diary LVII-stay tuned. With that, let’s look back on the last 14 days.

Good morning, it is Saturday, October 30, 2021 and rain is the order of day. But, and so soon, again with the but again! I want to note I went to last night’s Friday night services at my synagogue in Derry. This occurred after the d Diary went to press. It demonstrated the new normal there marked by accommodation and hybrid. I suspect hybrid is the word for the next century. And it is not just for cars. The service featured those present were 6 feet apart with masks . The candor was in the building and the Rabbi at home conducting service by Zoom on the computer screen. And other members of the congregation were also participating by Zoom. If that is not hybrid, then nothing is.

Now that is yesterday is done, let’s look at today. It began with exercising and watching on PBS *Margaret: The Rebel Princess* <https://www.pbs.org/show/margaret-rebel-princess/>, the first of two episodes. Episode 1. “This intimate two-part series profiles Princess Margaret, whose life and loves reflected the social and sexual revolution that transformed the western world during the 20th century. With sumptuous archive and revealing interviews, the series follows Margaret’s life as she re-defined our image of the modern princess. This deeply personal account reveals how Princess Margaret’s character combined the rebellious force of modernity and respect for tradition.”

As a card carrying sociologist and an amateur historian, I loved the program. It brilliantly showed the differences between ascribed and achieved status https://www2.palomar.edu/anthro/status/stat_2.htm . It illustrated that your inherited position can be for some people a prison. It also portrayed how the attitudes toward divorce and royal family rules have changed over the years.

Peggy and I revisited practiced the notion of accommodations to COVID-19. We had planned to meet old friends from 50 years ago for a reunion at a restaurant. However, just as the car GPS announces, “recalculating”, we decided indoor dining was too risky in the face of the pandemic. So, instead, we did Chinese take-out at our house. It was a much better choice.

Good evening, it is Sunday, October 31, 2021. It is Halloween and I went into my Henry David Thoreau phase. What does that mean? I like the spirit and idea of his famous quote: “I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived.” Perhaps that is a bit over dramatic. Bringing back to my day. I spent it with nature. First, I went hiking in the woods and then I did kayaking on Pawtuckaway Lake. Yes, no mask, just being in the moment and nature.

My lake kayak was done in the spirit of Halloween. That translates into the paddle was full of tricks and treats. The tricks involved always paddling into the head wind. This was eerie in respective of which direction I went., I was always into the wind. And this was especially true as I worked my way home. The treat was the foliage, the water, the sky, the ever changing clouds,, the 2 loons, the 29 ducks and the freedom of the soul. It was renewing, comforting, exciting and uplifting.



Here what I saw kayaking on Pawtuckaway Lake

Morning, not good morning, it is Monday, November 1, 2021 and my wilderness wonderland has been shattered. How come? On the way to pickle ball and Tai Chi, I heard this COVID-19 story on the radio, “The official global virus death toll has passed five million. The full count is undoubtedly higher <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/01/world/5-million-covid-deaths.html> .” It added a quarter of a billion folks worldwide have had the virus. Wow!!! All my precautions have been justified. I want to go hide in my lake side retreat. But I really cannot. Meanwhile, without fanfare, today also marks the Diary’s 600th day!

Good day, it is Tuesday, November 2, 2021. My day began with Talmud study and golf. The Talmud class; e.g. studying interpretations of the Torah, expanded my mind. Golf

expanded my lungs. Actually, it was great being outdoors in the waning hours of the still brilliant but a bit dull fall foliage. My lessons have paid off as I approached par on several holes. The big event of the day and two weeks is COP26 <https://unfccc.int/conference/glasgow-climate-change-conference-october-november-2021>. Already there was an important action on stopping deforestation. Many leaders are saying the right things. However, Russia and China were not there. Finally, the topic is getting the global and US attention it deserves and requires. There is hope that the polluting countries can fiscally help the less develop world. The proof of the pudding will be in the eating. Will the actions follow the words? I am cautiously optimistic.



COP 26

Hello, it is Wednesday, November 3, 2021 and the middle of the week. In automobile production in America, it was important that vehicle can off the assembly on Wednesday. Why? Good question. On Monday and Tuesday, workers are talking about their weekend activities. On Thursday and Friday, folks are planning the next weekend's adventures. Hence, the most productive day remains Wednesday. The same formular might also be applies to other business and educational settings.

As for my day, it was very productive with an early morning prayer session, the final class on Madness and the Movies, and work on the Museum of the Jews of New Hampshire. The class saw *Mozart and the Whale* https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/mozart_and_the_whale. The film was a romantic comedy of two people with Asperger's Syndrome. It prompted a great discussion about those on the Autism Spectrum. As one student put it, "if you see one person on the Spectrum, you are seen one person on it". For individuals on it, the range is huge.

However, what is really concerning me today is Madagascar. This Time magazine article says it all, "Climate, Not Conflict. Madagascar's Famine is the First in Modern History to be Solely Caused by Global Warming" <https://time.com/6081919/famine-climate-change-madagascar/>. 400,000 people are starving to death. That makes COP26 imperative. But, and there I go again with the but, although leaders say the right things, many of them will not actually do the right things.

That is because reducing emissions will reduce their individual power. If one is from a coal producing state/nation or a coal utilizing state/nation, then that person talks about cutting coal production or use. The it will cause unemployment and that individual will be voted out office. And, that person loses power.

And just for the record, there is new culprit in the Climate Change mix or mess. It is methane <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/methane-emissions-are-driving-climate-change-heres-how-reduce-them>. Add this to what we have to do something about now bucket list!

. Good morning, it is Thursday, November 4, 2021 and I will start with a semi-joke to make a point. Did you hear of the fire in the upholstery factory? It was a disaster, but the chairs recovered. While exercising I heard about the Belfor Company <https://www.belfor.com/en/us>. This is now an international company dedicated to helping individuals, communities, other companies and nations recover from disasters. For example, it de-COVID-19ized the entire Carnival cruise ship Princess after it had been quarantined in Japan. With my background in emergency psychiatry, I appreciated what the ‘can do’, hands on and optimistic attitude and approach can achieve in the face of the chaos of a disaster. In the world of Climate Change catastrophes, the Belfor Company represents a silver lining.

Good day, it is Friday, November 5, 2021 and I want to go in a couple of directions. The first direction is TGIF. Yes, most of us have heard or used the term. [TGIF](https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=TGIF) <https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=TGIF> “Acronym for "Thank God it's Friday". Used to express the joy one feels in knowing that the work week has officially ended and that they have two days off with which to enjoy.” And, it is also a string of restaurants. But, and there I am with the but again, I want to put a different spin on it. A cute semi-joke, Every rabbi is a latent psychiatrist and every (Jewish) psychiatrist is a latent rabbi. Periodically, over the decades I have functioned as a rabbi when the real rabbi is on vacation. In that capacity I once gave a sermon entitled TGIF. Here, though I was thanking the Lord for the Shabbat. The Jewish day of rest and all over holidays begin on the evening before the next day. I am in a good mood and I am thanking G-d for Friday and Friday night services which I will attend.

Moving on to another topic, next week my dentist putting a new crown on one of my teeth. Yes. \$\$\$\$\$. So, today I went to Burger King to get one of its crowns to give him. Remember the old Royal date joke? A dinner at Burger King and dessert at Dairy Queen. When I went to the Epping Burger King, I saw this shield, One more reminder we are in for the long haul with COVID-19. My Burger King crown quest continued and will be revisited next week.



The Epping Burger King- another sign of the COVID-19 times

Welcome to Saturday, November 6, 2021. After attending Torah Study via Zoom this morning, where talked about the about the meaning of birthright, I went from Hebrew to Greek. Okay, let me explain. Reminder Aesop's fable about the grasshopper and the ant? <https://fablesaesop.com/the-ant-and-the-grasshopper.html> Here it is in a nutshell. "A Grasshopper frolicked while an Ant stored food for the winter. When winter came the Ant was comfortable; the Grasshopper not so. Prepare for the future." That what Peggy and I did today. We drained and put away the garden hoses. We raked the beach. Our denial of winter has been breached.

Hello, it is Sunday, November 7, 2021. It is a day of outdoors and reflection. The day was warm without a breeze. I participated in Pawtuckaway Lake Improvement Association (PLIA) <https://pawtuckawaylake.com/> Adopted Highway road clean-up. It was good the fight litter and make the community better. People working together for a good cause-neat! Then, with a friend, we kayaked for 2 hours. Again, I am blessed to have the front lawn a lake. We paddled in the shadow of Mount Pawtuckaway. What makes that particularly meaningful is the motto of The Forum which is "Serving the Towns in the Shadow of Pawtuckaway".



Kayaking in Mount Pawtuckaway's shadow

And now, It is time for the reflection. Today, on the radio, I heard the term, the Great Resignation. I had been aware for months that because of COVID-19 many folks have left their jobs. In turn, that their leaving had created a labor shortage and supply chain challenges. But, now this act of job quitting has a name, the Great Resignation. One quick fact highlights the phenomenon. In July, 2021, 4 million Americans actually quit their jobs according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics <https://hbr.org/2021/09/who-is-driving-the-great-resignation>. This also for me under the title because of COVID-19, the world will never be the same. The reasons are many. These include a life re-evaluation prompted by the virus and the impact of working from home. Regardless of its etiology, COVID-19 will have a lasting impact.

Welcome to Monday, November 8, 2021. The reflection of yesterday has become of my thinking and focus of today in two ways. First, I found this quote by William Butler Yeats which explains much of the Great Resignation. He wrote “Genius is a crisis that joins the buried self, for certain moments, to our daily mind.” The idea nicely connects the COVID-19 crisis, Freudian concepts of the power of the unconscious and my views. To start, let us all agree the pandemic constitutes a huge crisis on many levels. Second, is the notion that events, experiences and ideas exist in the brain that we are not consciously aware of. I offer proof by way of Freud’s great quote, “Dreams are the royal road to the unconscious”. Dreams furnish us items, figures and events we are not daily aware of. Cutting to the chase, the virus crisis brought to the mental surface, long repressed longings for a different life, work milieu and life style. Once recognized, many quit their jobs in pursuit of their real passion.

The second thought for today came from exercising and watching on PBS *Trauma to Triumph – The Rise of the Entrepreneur*. The program featured survivors of the Holocaust and War in Viet Nam. It began with quotes from Victor Frankl, author of Man’s Search for Meaning. He wrote “When we are no longer able to change a situation, we are challenged to change ourselves.” What a great message as to how to deal with COVID-19.

Today, Tuesday, November 9, 2021 constitutes my crowning achievement. How so? Fact, I needed a new crown for one of my teeth. Remember, I went a quest for a Burger King crown to give to my dentist as a joke. And, yes he gave me not only a new crown but also a zillion dollar bill for the work. After going to 2 Burger Kings without luck, that its crown eluded me (like par on the golf course), I settled for a kids Happy Birthday crown instead. However, I finally did get 2 Burger King crowns, Here is the cool part. When I presented the crowns to the dental team, one of them actually had a birthday today, too. The picture shows the dental team crowned.



Left to right dentist Victor Stetsyuk, Dental assistants Heather Zimont (the birthday girl) and Melissa Hodgman

On my trip to Concord, I went to the dentist and an eye doctor’s office. In both places, the signs were clear and direct- only admittance is with a mask. Over simplified, I prefer that rule be applied to all indoor settings. In those location COVID-19 time rules. And speaking of things will never be the same after COVID-19, I just completed a Zoom meeting. Yes, these type of meetings are here to stay. Zoom meetings mean less time driving and more time for discussion.

Welcome, it is Wednesday, November 10, 2021. It is a day of gratitude and appreciation of veterans. With the early morning rain, pickleball gave way to a hiking, followed by the 2 two sets of 108 moves in Tai Chi. I am grateful for the group, its support, its schedule and its positive attitude. Remember, your attitude determines your altitude. And, my last name is SOAR OFF! Then, I went to another Zoom meeting. Again, it was productive but the informal before and after the meeting's interactions are missing. The future will hybrids.

As COVID-19 time grinds endlessly forward, I want to pause and give thanks for my situation. I live with a wonderful partner, in an exceptionally terrific place with the woods and a lake as my front and back yards. I am thrilled my family nor my friends have had COVID-19. I am particularly thankful I have had 3 shots of the Pfizer vaccine. I am grateful that in retirement I can do the things I WANT TO DO! And, thanks to all who reads this Diary Yes, with Thanksgiving coming, why not give thanks.



Yessssssssssssssssssssssssssssssssssss!!!

Now, with Veterans Day tomorrow, I want to report on a PBS program I saw while exercising. Its title is *Portraits for the Home Front. The Story of Elizabeth Black* <https://www.wqed.org/elizabethblack/about>. “Elizabeth Black left a promising Pittsburgh art career to join American Red Cross efforts during World War II. She proposed a unique project to sketch hundreds of soldiers, sailors and airmen throughout Europe and send the treasured portraits to worried families back home - all across America. Seventy years later, Black’s son uncovered her fascinating memorabilia and shared it with WQED. The poignant story unfolds as we explore Black’s lost art career, seek out elderly veterans who encountered Miss Black on the battlefield, and present to amazed and appreciative families’ portraits that never arrived.”

The show brought tears to my eyes. Elizabeth Black, as Red Cross worker, did drawings of American service men and one woman in Europe in 1944. Some of the men and one woman did not survive combat, but photographs of her portraits of them did. The program detailed the search and the reunion of the pictures with their still living subjects and some of their spouses, children and grandchildren. It is a powerful thank you to the GIs and their families.

Good morning, and it is nearing the 11th hour, of the 11th day, of the 11th month (East Coast US Time) November 11, 2021 when the guns fell silent on the West Front, the Armistice can into effect and the war to end all wars ended. That moment has already passed in Europe aka the Western Front) Sadly, it did not end all wars and even more tragically the ‘peace treaty’ and deals made then helped to cause other wars. It is Veterans Day and I am in a reflective mood on two fronts-veterans and COP26.

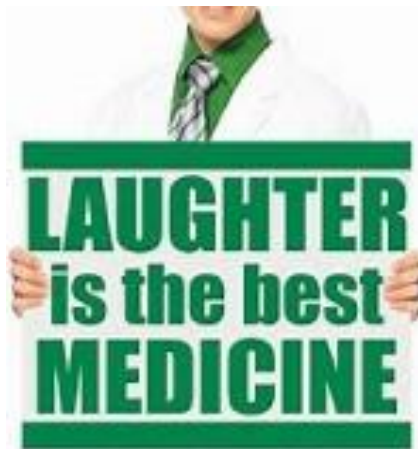
First, I thank all the veterans. If not for you, I would not be safe and able to be free. What I want to reflect on is the how badly we treated returning troops from Viet Nam. One of my best friends, a former Army Ranger, recalled being spit upon when he was on his college campus.

We have come a long way from that time. Bob Hope, when he performed as part of the USO in Viet Nam, used to thank the troops there for protecting the rights of American citizens to protest that war, Thank again veterans.

Second, this two weeks Diary period coincided with the 2 weeks COP26 gathering. It is time to reflect on it and give it a report card. On one front, deforestation https://www.conservation.org/blog/un-climate-talks-protecting-forests-takes-priority?gclid=CjwKCAiAm7OMBhAQEiwArvGi3BQV6HD3Oi4nwoD-anJy6H2rY9zbuZdYDcf993Dgkjtew6a-I8BaBoC2kUQAvD_BwE significant progress was made “In a major announcement on day two of the UN climate talks (COP26), more than 100 countries — accounting for about 86 percent of the world’s forests — committed to stop deforestation by the end of this decade. But it’s not just governments that stepped up to the plate: More than 30 financial institutions pledged to eliminate deforestation driven by agriculture from their portfolios and increase investments in nature-based solutions by 2025.”

The uninvited guest Greta Thunberg has pronounced it a failure. But, it get the world attention it deserved. It spotted the plight of many countries due to climate change. For example, is *An Underwater Meeting of the Maldivian Parliament* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zizVixspBEU>. The leaders there did almost say the right thing. It was not enough yet it was something. And, yes, it is a process.

Enough, time laugh!



Did You Know

The phrase "mad as a hatter" stems from the use of mercury oxide to cure felt used in the making of hats in the 18th and 19th centuries. Prolonged exposure resulted in tremors and irrational behavior. In Danbury, CT - well known as a hat manufacturing center - the condition was known as the "Danbury shakes"

Regular Humor:

What do you call a pony with a cough? A little horse!

What do you call bears with no ears? B.

Why do French people eat snails? They don't like fast food!

How does a rabbi make coffee? Hebrews it!

Rest in peace boiling water. You will be mist!

How does a rabbi make coffee? Hebrews it!

Rest in peace boiling water. You will be mist!

COVID-19 Jokes**The 2020/2021 IKEA collection**

What did the sick parent make their kids for lunch? Mac and sneeze.

Knock-Knock! *Go home, you're supposed to be social distancing.*

What's the difference between working from home and working in an office? COVID.

Everyone is laughing at the quarantine jokes as we try to deal with personal and economic anxiety, let's just hope that we're the ones who ultimately have the last laugh.

COVID-19 This may have been the worst and longest April Fool's joke ever.



627 days of distancing

The Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner: Part LVII

Steve Soreff, MD

It is Sunday, November 28, 2021. Tonight, will be the first night of Hanukah and tomorrow will be the 20th observance of National Cribbage Day. Also, tomorrow Peggy and I will fly to Hawaii. Since we are still in the pandemic a concerns about the COVID-19 will travel with us. Today marks the beginning of my 95th month, the end of my 21th month, moving toward almost 2 years and my 627th day of social and physical distancing. In our rear view mirror has been our trip to New York City and Connecticut and our Thanksgiving feast and straight head of us is Peral Harbor. All we can do is hopes that COVID becomes endemic. Furthermore, this is Diary LVII which the Latin translates to 57. And, I cannot stop the idea of looking at the Diary weeks in terms of Heinz sight and let me catch-up on the last two weeks, too. This is what I relish to do.



Enough let's look back on the last more than two weeks.

Hello, from New York City, it is Saturday, November 13, 2021. Yes, Peggy and I motored to the Big Apple with a pair of dueling system- Garmin versus Wazes giving us directions. The trip took 8 hours due to huge volume of traffic. Everyone wanted to go the New York that Friday. And upon arrival, it was very, very difficult to find a parking garage. Enough complaining. We got there and saw my daughter, Sasha. We also found the fall foliage which

had left New Hampshire, alive and well in Connecticut and New York, especially in Central Park.

We went walking about Manhattan. Yes, it best to ambulate about the metropolis. And we did walk about. We saw many packet gardens in the sidewalks and a number neat fruit and vegetable sidewalk vendors as well as my sidewalk flower stores. But, and here is the but again, the City has notched up the COVID-19 requirements. Many places demanded not only masks be worn but also proof of vaccination before entrance.



Proof of vaccination

Welcome to Sunday, November 14, 2021. On the way home we got to see and connect with my son, Ben and my two grandsons. We went to the SONO Collection, a very up-scale mall in South Norwalk, Connecticut hence SONO. It was an adventure and amazing how a mall can also be an entertainment center. My grandson, Foster just got his first Pfizer shot and he is in the 4th grade. Vaccinations are now for 5 year old and older!! On the way home, Wazes won the direction battle, first telling us of a huge traffic mess as we were approaching Worcester and then negotiating us around it.

Hello, it is Monday, November 15, 2021 and I woke up in my own bed and felt again in control of my day and destiny. Yes, that sounds a bit grandiose, but travel does make me appreciate home more. In the opposite direction, I am reminded of Mark Twain's travel quote "Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness". However, in terms of baseball. I still love to hear on the radio that "the Red Sox win and the Yankee lose", I did find much to like and enjoy in New York City. It has been said that in NYC, every 10 city blocks constitutes a neighborhood. And I found my daughter's upper westside neighborhood pleasant, viable, safe and engaging. New Yorkers despite the stereotype were polite, likeable, opinionated and very helpful.

However, I was glad to return to my semi-prisoner-hood Monday routine of pickle ball and Tai Chi. I missed the discipline and organization of each set with 108 prescribed moves outdoors without a mask. Remember how we got used to and now automatically use automobile seat belt? Now, in my travels both locally and regionally, I now automatically put on my face mask when I go indoors. And, yes, they do still fog-up my glasses. Yet, these very masks remain yet another reminder that we are living in COVID-19 times.

Hello, it is Tuesday, November 16, 2021 and a day of retreat. With the cooler weather, recovering from NYC trip and long Board of Selectmen meeting with longer write up Monday night, I did not leave the house all day today. I listened to reports of Broadway opening again. The actors talked about how nice it was to perform in front of a live audience. Good acting and

good teaching as well as good relationships revolve around a dance. I mean the back and forth, the moving together, the inter-connectiveness, and reciprocity one finds in dancing. I loved my in-person Madness and the Movies class for that reason. We dance together.

Welcome, it is Wednesday, November 17, 2021 and I worried. Why? Because, New Hampshire has become a COVID-19 hot spot <https://www.mayoclinic.org/coronavirus-covid-19/map>. By that discomfoting map , NH has a rate of 59.0 per 100,000 people. And the counties where I live and travel to, are hot spots within the state. Furthermore, the epidemiological state data show the hospitalization rates for COVID-19 continue to show it is an epidemic of the unvaccinated.

Good day, it is Thursday, November 18, 2021 and I exercised to an inspiring PBS documentary film call *Independent Lens: Storm Lake* <https://www.pbs.org/independentlens/documentaries/storm-lake/>. It told the story of a small town independent newspaper and showcased the cause and reason for, the importance of local journalism. Yes, it was self-serving to watch but documentary supported my role as a local reporter for local online newspaper, *The Forum*. Right, not like Clark Kent who worked for the Metropolis newspaper, *The Daily Planet*. Sorry, too grandiose, but I do love my new career as a newspaper reporter.

Here are several thoughts linked to one event. What will be the effects of COVID-19 on education? What will kids remember about the pandemic? How do youngsters experience their COVID world? Tonight a 7th grader, Braydan Behr gave a powerful presentation to the Nottingham 300th Committee, which is planning the town's tricentennial anniversary in 2022. He is part of the Summer Institution 2021 Fall Edition <https://forumhome.org/the-summer-institution-fall-editions-time-capsule-p35530-129.htm>. This is a p[ss1]rogram open to all Nottingham School students grades 4 through 8. In 'normal' times it happens in the summers but COVID has precluded that this summer, hence the Fall Edition. With the town's 300th coming up, that group is planning a time capsule to be opened in 25 years from 2022, in 2047. The Time Capsule will be 'buried' next to the flag pole in front of the Nottingham Town Hall on the morning of Sunday, May 15, 2022. It will be followed by a reading of the town's Charter that afternoon on Nottingham Square. After the Charter reading, there will be a performance by the Never 's Second Regiment Band <https://www.neversband.org/>. All three events that day will be part of Nottingham's 300th anniversary celebration.

Cutting to the chase, in one of the Time Capsule's components will be a list of "CORONAVIRUS VOCABULARY AS GENERATED BY SUMMEER INSTITUE STUDENTS AND STAFF". The following are some of the 64 listed words:" coronapocalypse, governor stay at home orders, Wuhan Lab, zoom meetings, Anter-vaxxers, TV binge watching, developing phobias, toilet paper shortage, herd immunity, remote learning, empty grocery shelves, quarantine, and death". There is no doubt that COVID has changed their education and their lives.



Braydan Behr, a n member of the Tricentennial Jr. Board of Directors

Hello, welcome to Friday, November 19, 2021. Today I have a confession to make, which will be followed by my sense of tremendous sense relief. Let me explain. Remember how my salvation in this era of COVID distancing, has been where I live. My front porch is the woods and my back yard is the lake. However, on October 28 as I hiked to the refuge of my White Birch Corridor, In route, I encountered an ominous yellow sign on a tree. It said this is “POSTED land and that hunters, trappers and trespassers must keep out and if not they would be prosecuted”. I had traversed that path and those woods for 14 years. Suddenly, as I hiked on; but I felt like a criminal.



The yellow POSTED sign

In the ensuing days, first I made an effort to find out who posted the sign. Once I knew the name, I attempted to contact him. Since I did not know his telephone number, I walked to house and left a note saying “ I am a neighbor and I wanted to talk to him”. For over 3 weeks, I had not response. Winter coming and the lake less of an option, I was worried and became even more concerned. Good news, today he called me. He explained that others had been damaging his land and hunting on it, hence the sign. And, he gave my family and me permission to continue to walk on his property . Yippee.

Good morning, it is Saturday, November 20, 2021 and I am worried. As I watch the European news programs, the major alarm story is of the fourth wave. The PBS shown program *France 24* <https://www.france24.com/en/europe/20211111-covid-19-is-the-fourth-wave-in-germany-a-warning-for-the-rest-of-europe>, puts it this way. “With a record number of new cases of Covid-19 recorded on Wednesday, the seven-day average soaring and hospitals increasingly under pressure, the health situation in Germany is rapidly worsening. This fourth wave could prove to be the worst since the beginning of the pandemic, even though some 70 percent of the adult population has been vaccinated. The scenario risks being replicated in other European countries.” Already, there is a surge In New Hampshire.

All I can think of is song entitled *The Song That Never Ends* <https://lyricsgem.com/the-song-that-never-ends-lyrics/>, “This is the song that never ends, It just goes on and on, my friend. Some people started singing it, not knowing what it was. And, they’ll continue singing it forever, just because This is the song that never ends...”.

To think, several months ago and even a year ago, I believed the pandemic was over. Foreshadowing alert, at the end of November, Peggy and I are going to Hawaii. Since COVID-19 is a continuing pandemic, my prison will simply and sadly move to the Pacific islands. It is the distancing that never ends!



A Fourth Wave

Hello, it is Sunday, November 21, 2021 and a possible semi-optimist new word to describe COVID -19 times. I was listening to an epidemiologist on the radio. He said ,if and the operative word is IF, people continue to get vaccinated and get the boosters, then we enter into period in which COVID 19will be classified as an endemic

<https://www.publichealth.columbia.edu/public-health-now/news/epidemic-endemic-pandemic-what-are-differences>. Here how the Columbia School of Public Health defines it this way.

“**WHAT IS AN ENDEMIC?** An endemic is a disease outbreak that is consistently present but limited to a particular region. This makes the disease spread and rates predictable. Malaria, for example, is considered an endemic in certain countries and regions.” This means it is there but contained and some but all life goes on. That is a goal which is realistic and one you can and must live with.

Hello, although it is Monday, November 22, 2021, for me, I am back to Friday, November 22, 1963, at 1:30 PM East Coast Time. I am experiencing a flashback or more precisely an abreaction. That means that not only am I remembering that moment but also actually reliving it. I am in my fourth floor room in coveted West Hall dorm at Tufts University, Medford, Massachusetts. The radio says the President has been shot while in a motorcade in Dallas, Texas. I am shunned and bewildered. Why, I wonder, is he even in Texas? The news pours that he is being raced to Parkland Memorial Hospital. There is hope and much fear. CBS news reporter up until that moment stops talking. Then, Walter Cronkite comes on. He announces that the John F. Kennedy, the President of the United States, is dead. I leave my room and wander about the campus with hundreds of other students and some faculty speechless and in shock.

As I look back at the moment, my mind is flooded with a million thoughts and remembrances of JFK. “ No Catholic should be President, because he would take orders from the Vatican”, “the torch has passed to another generation “, Robert Frost reading a poem at the inauguration, the Bay of Pigs, the Cuba Missile Crisis, the touch football games at the Kennedy compound at Hyannis, in German, “I am a Berliner!” the Peace Corp, takin fifty miles walks for America, in a heavy Boston accent “Let me say this about that”, Hollywood stars at the White House, the Kennedy children, John John and Coraline, Jacqueline’s hats and pink coat, the space race, the beginnings of Viet Nam action and so many more. This November 22, 2021 marked the

58th anniversary of that day. A day that changed my life, defined my college days, and changed America and the world. John F Kennedy and that day is remembered.



Earlier in the motorcade November 22, 1963 Dallas Texas

Hello, it is Tuesday, November 23, 2021. After Talmud study, the air is crisp and the sun shining and calling, Peggy and I hiked to the beloved White Birch Corridor. With my neighbor, the one who posted the big yellow no trespassing sign, permission, we smilingly walked in the woods. The white birches stood tall, without their leaves, welcomed and greeted us. The birches never disappoint me. Now Peggy is on the preparing for Thanksgiving's dinner.



The White Birch Corridor.

Welcome to Wednesday, November 24, 2021 and I have many things on my mind. First, is the attitude of gratitude. Last night, Peggy and I attended an Interfaith Thanksgiving service. The Rabbi conducted the prayer session and the Episcopal gave the sermon. It was moving to hear the words of the Torah and those of Jesus in the same prayer service. Second, in the COVID-19 score card, it was terrifying to see and hear the violent in many places and many countries against vaccinations. One the things I am most thankful for, are the vaccines and that I have had my third shot.

Third, in the Black Lives Matter (BLM), I am thankful a mostly white jury in Georgia convicted three people who chased down "a black man running in" their neighborhood. One sobering afterthought, the event and the conviction would never have happened without a video finally surfacing which depicted the killing. And fourth, this headline caught my eye, *NASA launches spacecraft to test asteroid defense concept* <https://www.chron.com/news/article/NASA-launches-spacecraft-to-test-asteroid-defense-16647911.php>. Here is that back story. "NASA launched a spacecraft Tuesday night on a mission to smash into an asteroid and test whether it would be possible to knock a speeding space rock off course if one were to threaten Earth." That is out of this world!! It is nice to know people are protecting the earth.

Happy Thanksgiving, it is Thursday, November 25, 2021. After its origins with the Mayflower, Pilgrims and a Sarah Josepha Hale's of the nursery rhyme "Mary Had a Little Lamb" fame 36 years campaign, Abraham Lincoln <https://www.history.com/topics/thanksgiving/history-of-thanksgiving> made Thanksgiving a national holiday. Here is the backstory. "Abraham Lincoln finally heeded her request in 1863, at the height of the Civil War, in a proclamation entreating all Americans to ask God to 'commend to his tender care all those who have become widows, orphans, mourners or sufferers in the lamentable civil strife' and to 'heal the wounds of the nation' He scheduled Thanksgiving for the final Thursday in November, and it was celebrated on that day every year until 1939, when Franklin D. Roosevelt moved the holiday up a week in an attempt to spur retail sales during the Great Depression. Roosevelt's plan, known derisively as Thanksgiving, was met with passionate opposition, and in 1941 the president reluctantly signed a bill making Thanksgiving the fourth Thursday in November."



Lincoln made Thanksgiving a national holiday

And the message of to 'heal the wounds of the nation' is very appropriate today. While exercising and watching Ken Burn's *Country Music* <https://www.pbs.org/kenburns/country-music/>. I found four messages for today. One is that American music is often composed of combinations from many parts of this country and its various cultures and traditions. Woody Guthrie's *This Land is Your Land* <https://www.npr.org/2000/07/03/1076186/this-land-is-your-land> had its origins in African-American church. From there, it changed into the Carter 's family 's song *Little Darling Pal of Mine*. Finally, from that song, he created the *This Land*. Two is how important was radio in American history. The program showed, radio was a pivotal source of information and entertainment in the first half of the 20th century. As a loose association, I prefer to hear the Red Sox games on the radio rather than watch it on television. Three is that the power Country Music comes from its telling authentic stories from the heart and to your heart. And finally, the series demonstrated that America survived the Great Depression and World War II and we can survive the pandemic, too.

One neat detail, Barak, son from Boston and Matana, from Tel Aviv came for Thanksgiving to our house. They gave me for Hanukkah and my birthday, a monitor and keyboard adjustment height desk.



Steve and Barak with the new adjustable desk

Hello, it is Friday, November 26, 2021 and I am standing and typing. This is good for my posture (so they say). Yesterday, after turkey and all the stuffing, we were so stuffed. How stuffed were we? Like in a Robert Benchley, short story I recalled, we all took a nap. Later we visited with my sister in from Chicagoland. Yes, in many ways it was “home for the holidays”. One bit of very distressing news was about yet another COVID 19 invariant <https://www.wsj.com/articles/southern-africas-new-covid-19-variant-prompts-wave-of-travel-restrictions-11637920491>. World Health Organization calls it a virus of concern. I am concerned.

Good morning, it is Saturday, November 27, 2021 and the word for today is origin. It comes is important in several ways. First, while exercising and watching PBS *Independent Lens: Rumble: The Indians Who Rocked the World* <https://www.pbs.org/independentlens/documentaries/rumble/>. It shows the origins of jazz, country music, rock and roll, and the blues. This linkage was too long not acknowledged and occurred in the disgraceful attempts of the US government to suppress the Native American cultures and songs.

The second origin comes from today’s Torah portion and study. It deals with Joseph story. As a psychiatrist, I love the role and power of dream interpretations. In many ways, this saga shows how the Jews went into Egypt as tribes and later emerged as a people. The third origin story comes for the attention now focused on the new variant of COVID-19, Omicron. We have stopped looking at China as the source of COVID-19. We are calling attention to South Africa and focusing variants rather than who started it.

Wow, this have been several weeks, time to laugh and smile as I pack for Hawaii.



Did you Know

The original agreement on the cessation of hostilities for which Armistice Day was named was only temporary in nature. It expired after 36 days and had to be renewed several times prior to the Treaty of Versailles which ended WWI. The United States did not ratify the Treaty of Versailles, and remained technically at war with Germany for a number of years.

Said the old Indian when Daylight Savings Time was explained to him. "Only the government could cut a foot off one end of a blanket, sew it onto the other end, and believe that it had a longer blanket."

In Switzerland, home pregnancy tests are available in vending machines. Brand name? "Maybe Baby".

At the signing of Japan's surrender in 1945 aboard the USS Missouri, a small honor guard of sailors was selected to greet the Japanese signatories. Each member had to be at least six feet tall.

Regular Humor

Every single morning when I wake up I announce to my family that I'm going jogging. I never go through... It's just a running joke.

Light bulb jokes

How many narcissists does it take to change a lightbulb? Just one. He holds the lightbulb, and the world revolves around him.

How many Jewish mothers does it take to change a lightbulb? Don't inconvenience yourself for my sake, I'll just sit here in the dark.

How many Grateful Dead fans does it take to change a lightbulb? None, they just let it burn out and follow it around for a few decades.

How many psychiatrists does it take to change a lightbulb?
Only one, but the bulb has got to really *want* to change.

How many actors does it take to change a lightbulb?
Only one. They don't like to share the spotlight.

What did the lightbulb say to the switch?
You turn me on.

How many board meetings does it take to get a lightbulb changed?
This topic was resumed from last week's discussion but is incomplete pending resolution of some action items. It will be continued next week. Meanwhile...

How many programmers does it take to screw in a lightbulb?
None. That's a hardware problem.

COVID-19 Humor



A sign in a Women Restroom in Norwalk, CT Nov. 14, 2021

What's the difference between the Alpha and Delta variant? I don't know; it's all Greek to me.

Have scientists determined why cats can catch COVID? It's still a meow-stery.

What do you call grabbing your packages from the front porch? The day's outdoor activities.

What's the worst part of homeschooling? You can't transfer students out of your class.

Today I learned that you can use disposable masks to brew espresso. That's because they're coughy filters!



646 days of distancing in a COVID -19 world

The Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner: Part LVIII

Steve Soreff, MD

It is hard to believe that it is today Friday, December 17, 2021. At least, the number is a palindrome (spoiler alert, more on palindromes to come). Today marks the end of my 97th week, the middle of my 22nd month, toward the end of my 2nd year and my 646th day of social and physical distancing. This is the Diary's 58th issue, too. Or alternately it could be entitled "living with my mask on" and "have mask will travel". It has been an eventual, interesting and challenging time. I have much to report, including traveling to Hawaii and celebrating National Cribbage Day at 38,000 feet-which is quite a feat! Let's look back at the last 18 days.

Reflections on Sunday, November 28, 2021. Remember how each year, some folks and magazines pick one word to typify that year. In that spirit, I nominate for 2020, the word mask. In the pandemic, every view of people around the world shows them in face masks. For 2021, I vote for hybrid, Yes, with Zoom, work, education and worship everything is now hybrid. And to save the planet, hybrid and all electric vehicles are a must. And, Sunday night began Hanukkah. Look what my grandkids gave me. We will fly to Hawaii tomorrow.



Wearing my grandsons' Hanukkah gift "BAD PUNS ARE HOW EYE ROLL."

Hello, it is Monday, November 29, 2021. Peggy and I with friends are in Honolulu, Hawaii. It has been the longest day of my life. How so? We got up 3:45 AM, East Coast time in Nottingham and will go to bed 9ish PM Hawaii time. In the flight, we flew west for 10 ½ hours. And speaking of flying, we were a Hawaiian Airline's airbus. It was a great airline. It reminded me of EL AL, the Israeli airline. It boasts that your trip to Israel begins boarding the plane. The Hawaiian Airline did a fabulous of promoting and showcasing the islands. Most of the staff were from the island and love it here. By the way, we did observe National Cribbage Day. We played a game at an altitude of 38,000 feet.



For "small" islands we did a lot driving here

One thing I liked about going to Hawaii was the appropriate COVID-19 concern. We could not board the plane without having prior clearance from the state of Hawaii. We needed a *fly safe pass* based on our online showing proof of our vaccination and that we were free of any COVID-19 symptoms. Moreover, everyone at the airports and on the plane were required to wear masks. And they did so, without any complaint. Yes, even though we have traveled almost halfway around the world, COVID-19 restrictions govern our lives here, too..

Good morning, it is Tuesday, November 30, 2021 and the sun is kissing Diamond Head. I slept very well after that long, long trip. All night, I thought about COP26. How they said all rights things; they demonstrated the consequences of Global Warming. But I felt nothing will change. Altering life styles, the loss of power for some, and threats to the old system make it very challenging.

Welcome, it is Wednesday, December 1, 2021. It has been a busy and meaningful day. It began with a visit the *Pearl Harbor World War II Valor in the Pacific National Monument*. It was emotionally powerful. The realization of the death that day, December 7, 1941, “a day that shall I live in infamy”. That morning when they played the National Anthem, *The Star-Spangled Banner* while we waited to board the tender to take us to the Arizona, I cried. We toured the structure over the sunken hull of the USS Arizona. Over 1,1000 crew members bodies are still in there. Here is the story of Pearl Harbor in terms of a strategic victory <https://forumhome.org/the-difference-between-strategy-and-tactics-insights-for-a-better-mental-p35554-1.htm>.



Oil still leaking the hull of the USS Arizona

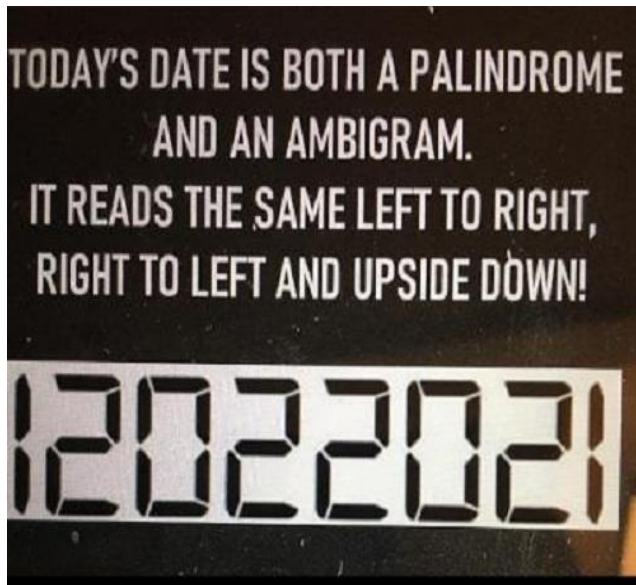
Later we went to Flea Market. It was neat array of local folks selling tourist stuff. I fulfilled my Zayde (the Yiddish word for grandfather) duty by buying tee shirts for my grandsons. Still later we dined with folks on ‘real’ Hawaiian food. What was so impressive in the total compliance with masks and vaccination proof requirements everywhere we went in Hawaii. And even later after a quick rest, we watched the sunset over the Pacific Diamond Head Lighthouse.

Good morning, from paradise. It is Thursday, December 2, 2021. We came from Pawtuckaway Lake called “our little piece of paradise” to a Hawaiian bit of paradise. Much reflection about opposites and bookends. In this paradise there is life, flowers, surfing and fun; at Pearl Harbor there was death and destruction. At Pearl Harbor there was the bookends of World War II for America. The USS Arizona is the attack on December 7, 1941, and then the USS Missouri with the surrender deck in 1945. One other thought, in the disaster of Pearl Harbor, I also saw the resilience of America. And I see resilience in our facing COVID-19 now.

Today was an island adventure. We went the Dole Plantation <https://www.doleplantation.com/>. We got to see where and how pineapples are grown. We also saw the variety of other fruits that are produced here including banana and papaya. Then we traveled to Oahu’s west coast and observed the big waves and the surfing. Clearly, surfing is the

national sport here. We capped the day off with take-out from China Town supper and experienced a power failure. Paradise has limits.

And for fans of palindromes, which I am, today is a neat and important day, with an ambigram thrown in. This was pointed out by son Barak.



12022021!!! How about that.

Hello, it is Friday, December 3, 2021 and we have entered into Phase II of the vacation. After we gained a brilliant panoramic view of Honolulu from Nu'Uanu Pali Lookout <https://www.gohawaii.com/islands/oahu/regions/windward-coast/nuuanu-pali-lookout> on Oahu, we flew to the Big Island, called Hawaii. That island is a huge piece of , but all the Hawaii Islands are. However, here it was more clear and visible lava. It feels good to be here in our RCI time share.

Good morning, it is Saturday, December 4, 2021 and all rain day thus far, but all is good. We drove through miles of ancient lava fields punctuated by cinder domes. These were from the several lava flows in the 1880's and beyond. These are remnants of small volcanos. Second, we visited the Imiloa Astronomy Center of Hawaii <https://imiloahawaii.org/>. There we learned about the native story of creation. At the Planetarium, we saw the native names and tales for the various constellations which we usually know by the Greek and Roman terms and legends. And third, we witnessed how Hawaii has accommodated to COVID-19. People wear masks; stores follow the rules; vaccination must be shown. But, life goes on.

Aloha, it is Sunday, December 5, 2021. It is day to connect my Hawaii dots. Despite the rain, no rain, pouring, almost sunny, and then rain again, we made a tour of the northwestern beaches on the Big Island. The surfing was great and ocean inviting. One neat discovery, almost the state beaches were closed by the dangerous riptides, the State of Hawaii still has the lifeguards on duty. Its priority of the swimmers' safety over the 'posted rules' was noted.

We visited Kamehameha I's Pu'ukohola Heiau temple <https://www.nps.gov/puhe/index.htm>. Kamehameha I proved to be the native hero of the Hawaii nation. He conquered all the other chiefs, won the decisive battle at Pali, built the temple, started the island's royal line and unified all the Hawaii islands. We completed the day by driving to the farthest northwestern point, Pololu. Quite a day in a varied terrain and weather.



Kamehameha I's Pu'ukohola Heiau temple

The sun came out and paradise really became paradise. It is Monday, December 6, 2021. We went to the beach and snorkeled. It was delightful. We walked through lava fields and Hawaii history. In the lava terrain is where the early Hawaii inhabitants lived in lava tube caves and grass homes.



An early inhabitants' home

What is pleasing about Hawaii is the huge variety of many different things. This includes the weather, flowers, trees, birds, terrains, cultures, languages, and people. For example, on several one of the volcanos peaks there are snow. What is so neat is how lava has been and is used to build walls. It is great to be here. Thank you, sun!

Aloha, my birthday, it is Tuesday, December 7, 2021. It is the 80th anniversary on the attack at Pearl Harbor. But and the brochure says, it was battlefield Oahu. We did three things today. We drove the 9,000 foot level of Mauna Kea. That is the mountain where the big and famous telescopes are. We hiked up one of the cinder cones. It was good walk/climb. Our little summit was 9,500 feet. At that top we could look down on clouds. Later we saw petroglyphs. They are evidence of the first Hawaiians. These sites are honored and preserved. Finally, we watch at the sunset over the Pacific. How cool is that.

As I reflect on the day, I had several thoughts. First, besides December 7th being my birthday, the attack in 1941 led to the US total involvement in World War II. That is important because I am therefore a war baby. In some way, the war produced me. Wow, think about that. Second, Hawaii, the Big Island, itself is amazing in how many different weather patterns exist on one island on one day. We had rain in the morning and drove to glorious sunshine. Then we

encountered clouds. Third, it is impressive that there was both the general friendliness of all the people we met and their willingness to follow CD protocols.



Steve at 9,500 feet level on a cinder cone on Mauna Kea. with Mauna Loa in the background

The theme for today is ocean. It is Wednesday, December 8, 2021. That makes sense still we are on the island called Hawaii. We snorkeled in the morning. I am getting hang of it and I saw a huge sea turtle doing that. Next we had tuna fish for lunch. How appropriate. Finally, we took an evening dinner cruise. On board we saw and heard more about the Hawaiian history as guitar player sang to Hawaiian and popular music.

Wow, theme for today is volcanoes. We saved the best for last. It is Thursday, December 9, 2021. It is our last full day on the island of Hawaii. We went to Hawaii Volcanoes National Park <https://www.nps.gov/havo/index.htm>. We witnessed an actual active volcano called Kilauea. It was flowing. We saw two Nene geese, <https://statesymbolsusa.org/symbol-official-item/hawaii/state-bird/nene> and witnessed a full rainbow. But there was no pot of gold at the end it. However, it created great pictures and great memories to treasure. And we explored the long Thurston Lava Tube <https://www.nps.gov/havo/planyourvisit/day-hike-nahuku.htm>. The whole Park was a spectacular course in applied geology.



An erupting and flowing volcano in Hawaii Volcanoes National Park.

Hello, it is Friday into Saturday, December 10-11, 2021, It is a travel day. A day when we left lava fields to return to our pine tree woods. It was a long flights from land of rainbows to the rain in New Hampshire. And as my mother would say, “Steve, what did you learn from the trip?” To answer that, here at 40,000 feet over the Pacific and the mainland of the United States are a distillation of what I have observed, gained insight into, and thought about our Hawaiian adventure.

First, I recommend if fly to Hawaii, take Hawaiian Airlines. How come? They represent, love, display, and offer the spirit of aloha. In comparison other airlines seem to treat passengers like cattle drivers. They do their job but lack the spirit of the islands. Second, the islands themselves are continuously changing. That is most clearly at Volcanoes National Park. More island is being created right in front of you. Some roads are blocked lava flows. Other parts of the other islands are being weathered and eroded. Some older islands are becoming a coral reefs. Yet at the same time on other areas, under the sea, new future islands are being created. The T whole state is a giant theater applied geology.

Third, the diversity of birds, flowers, trees, animals, weather and terrains remains astonishing. Fourth, traveling in a group of five folks proved to be fantastic. Each contributed ideas, interests, insights and experiences which enriched the adventure. *The Forum* works on the principle two sets of eyes before anything is published. Here we had five sets of eyes to produce a remarkable trip. The Swedish Proverb “Shared joy is a double joy; shared sorrow is half sorrow ” nicely fits here. Fifth, Mark Twain was right again. I "**Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness**, and many of our people need it sorely on these accounts. Broad, wholesome, charitable views of men and things cannot be acquired by vegetating in one little corner of the earth all one's lifetime” from [The Innocents Abroad](#).

And sixth, so was Bob Dylan correct when he wrote and sang, "The Times They Are a-Changin'". Pearl Harbor meant air craft carriers would replace battleship. In the islands, king pine apple and sugar cane was replaced with tourism. The royal family and lineage of Kamehameha have become a democratic 49th of the union.

And finally, seventh, does our flight to Hawaii represent my breaking out of COVID prison. On one level you can say, sure. But, sad to report, COVID-19 rules the islands and everything we did. The good news is that State of Hawaii following CDC procedures fully make it a much better prison. I applause its efforts.



COVID-19 Hawaiian style.

Hello, home, really home for a full day. It is Sunday, December 12, 2021 and all is good. One thing I discovered in going to Hawaii and therefore traveling through time six zones, is that it takes a while for the body to adjust to all the changes. I wonder if my return to home, will take as long as my trip to Hawaii to adjust? I can also report that air travel is less and less fun. With TSA, small seats, long time sitting, narrow plane aisles and charges for luggage, getting there is not fun **at all**. Wow, some volcanic islands took over millions of years can be **atolls**. That is a

really loose association. One quick Hawaii/ NH comparison: there in the island the malls everyone one wore masks; here in NH, few wore masks.

Since I am back home, I am trying to re-establish the old routines. Hence, while exercising I watched on PBS Spiritual Audacity: The Abraham Joshua Heschel Story
https://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/films/reviews/view/29077/spiritual-audacity-the-abraham-joshua-heschel-story?qclid=Cj0KCQiA2NaNBhDvARIsAEw55hhKUy7E6S1n9oh3VrIICFO-FAzCe2qPYXchUHC2j5eyrktk3P5LK_saAgPqEALw_wcB. He is Rabbi that I have greatly admired, liked and often quoted. He was longtime friend of Martin Luther King and marched with him in Selma, Alabama. In a too polarized America and world, it was a pleasure to see and hear folks of differences working together.

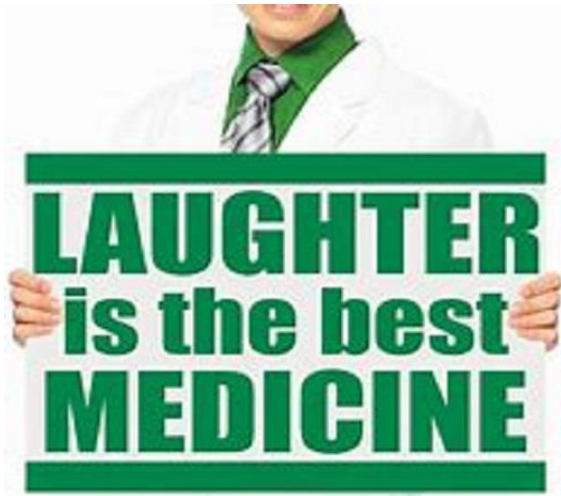
Back in the saddle again. It is Monday, December 13, 2021. I did pickle ball and Tai Chi. It felt good to be back into my regular routine. There was comfort in the familiar.

Just as I had thought I had escaped my home state prison by going to Hawaii, now I discovered the return to New Hampshire that the state has become an even bigger COVID-19 confinement. It is Tuesday, December 14, 2021. Here is what's happened here. The state and my region has experienced an alarming increases of COVID-19 cases
<https://www.fosters.com/story/news/local/2021/12/09/new-hampshire-nations-worst-covid-surge-low-vaccination-rates/6419296001/>. It is reported "Evidence and pleas ignored: New Hampshire is battling the worst COVID rate in nation". In response the Nottingham Board of Selectmen last night voted to follow CDC protocols have everyone in all town facilities must wear a face masks, no exceptions.

Hello, it is Wednesday, December 15, 2021 and I feel like I am in a war zone. At Manchester's Catholic Medical Center <https://www.nhpr.org/nh-news/2021-12-13/nh-catholic-medical-center-manchester-covid> there is "'A constant tsunami': N.H.'s health care workers at the epicenter of COVID surge". The numbers of people with COVID-19 in NH are soaring, folks near me a getting infected, and the Town Hall is into mask only mode. Yet, my visits out and about to Raymond do not reflect the next reality. Back to Pete Seeger, "oh when will they every learn?".

It is Thursday, December 16, 2021 and it feels like the song, "The World Turn-ed Up Down". The British army band played that song when Cornwallis's troops played that tune at his surrender to the American and French forces at Yorktown, Virginia, 1781. My town is finally taking COVID-19 seriously. However, NH still leads the nation in per capita rates cases. And, the Omicron variant is in the state.

Enough!!! Let's laugh.



Did You Know?

1816 in New England is called "The Year Without a Summer" due to the effects of the eruption of Mt. Tambora in Indonesia the year before. The effects were felt all over the world.

Lord Byron hosted several literary guests at his villa in Switzerland that summer, among them a teenager named Mary Shelley. Outdoor activities were limited due to the weather, so Byron challenged his guests to each write a ghost story as a diversion. Mary Shelley had a nightmare the night before of a monster created in the image of a man by a mad scientist playing God. It became the basis for her novel "Frankenstein".

Regular Humor

When an actress saw her first strands of gray hair, she thought she'd dye.

Bakers trade bread recipes on a knead-to-know basis.

Santa's helpers are subordinate clauses.

Acupuncture is a jab well done.

Marathon runners with bad footwear suffer the agony of defeat.

He had a photographic memory that was never developed.

The short fortune teller who escaped from prison was a small medium at large.

Once you've seen one shopping center, you've seen a mall.

COVID-19 Humor

March 2021:
Pretty much the
same as March
2020 but now
we have toilet
paper

Did you hear the joke about coronavirus? Never mind, I don't want to spread it around!

Nothing like relaxing on the couch after a long day of being tense on the couch!

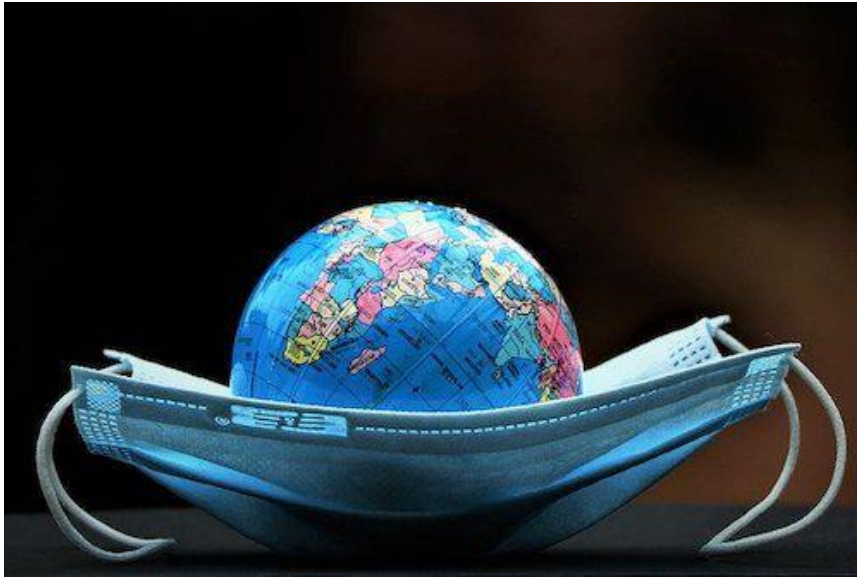
[What](#) do you tell yourself when you wake up late for work and realize you have a fever? Self, I so late.

A final thought.

Things will get better. Here is a Hawaiian rainbow. Aloha and Happy Holidays



A rainbow at the Volcanoes National Park



It is my 667th day of social and physical distancing. And, yes we are still in COVID time.

The Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner: Part LIX

Steve Soreff, MD

December 18, 2021

Welcome to Friday, January 7, 2022. It represents the end of my 100th week, beginnings of my 23rd month, the start of my third year and my 667th day of isolation. Yesterday, Thursday, January 6, 2022 was my 666th day, I have a devil of a time with that number. The December holidays and New Years are in the rear view mirror and a bleak, cold Winter is before us. The only constant is that we have been, are and will be in COVID time. Right now, the noise of Omicron is deafening. That is all one hears about is the infection rates which are soaring. Suddenly, there has been a mass return to Zoom meetings. I again feel like March and April of 2020. With that, let us look back at the last 21 days.

Good morning, it is Saturday, December 18, 2021. Despite the fact in Hebrew numerology 18 is a lucky number and means life (“To life, to life, l'chaim”.-thank you *Fiddler on the Roof*), I feel impending doom. The statistics are appalling and the realization that is each number is indeed a person makes it more tragic. There is a new wildcard in the COVID-19 deck, Omicron <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/variants/omicron-variant.html>. Globally, the return to lockdowns are occurring. New York City has again become a COVID epicenter. Meanwhile, it is about to snow here.



For the moment all is good. It is Sunday, December 19, 2021. It snowed yesterday. The first plowable snow of the season and just in time before the Winter Solstice <https://www.britannica.com/science/winter-solstice> December, 21, 2021. Although the snow fall meant much shoveling this morning aka Planet Fitness 32 Dolloff Dam, it now offers winter activities here. Yes, hiking and snow shoeing in my neighborhood wilderness is now available. And the sun is shining!. The woods <https://forumhome.org/the-first-snow-of-the-season-p35650-105.htm> called me. The trees showed their snow covered branches. My beloved White Birch Corridor welcomed me. It was great to have and enjoy the snow.



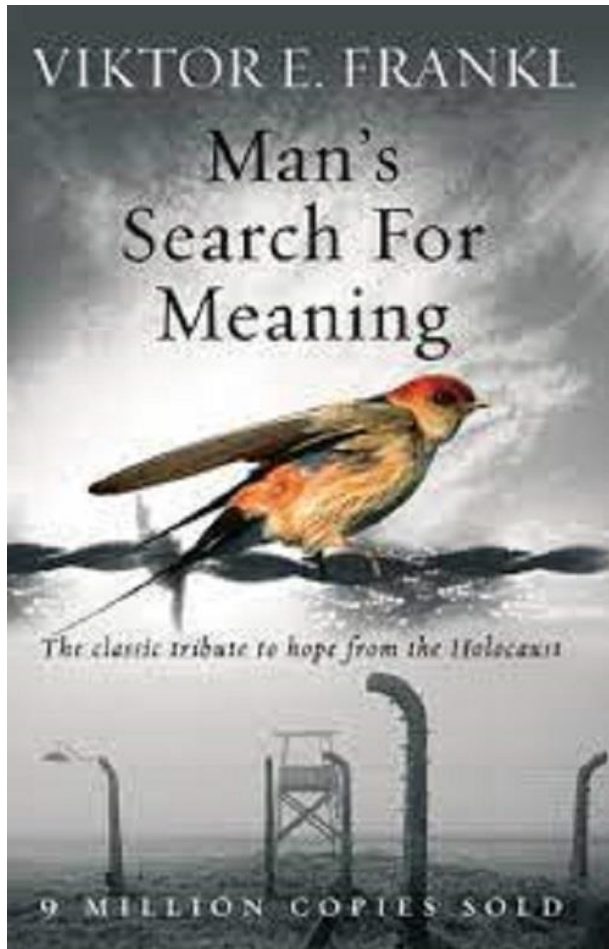
At the White Birch Corridor-the first real snow of the season

Hello, it is Monday, December 20, 2021. In the snow we did Tai Chi. That was soooooooooooooo different than being in Hawaii. And the gang surprised me with a delayed birthday party. WOW That was so neat. Then I entered the world of a huge disconnect. In Raymond many folks did not wear masks indoors. Here it is Omicron is not only a wildcard but also spreading like wildfire. Yet, if you observe people around here, you might not know that.

Good morning, it is Tuesday, December 21, 2021. I am back to exercising and watching PBS leading to two ideas. One is about *Ocean Hope Spots* <https://www.solutions-site.org/node/1162>. There are 13 of the them in the world now. These are protected areas which does the same role as national parks. They provide natural sanctuaries for fish and coral to be safe, protected and thrive. Oceans as forests are keys to preserving the planet.

The second is a book, *Apollo's Arrow: The Profound and Enduring Impact of Coronavirus on the Way We Live* <https://www.goodreads.com/en/book/show/53487333-apollo-s-arrow> by Nicholas A. Christakis, MD, PhD. He writes about the 3 phases of COVID-19: current acute phase through 2022, the intermediate phase and post COVID phase. He details the truly profound effects of the pandemic. It is a powerful, significant volume.

That book got me to thinking of one of the great messages of the pandemic. It echoes the idea from Viktor Frankl's Man's Search for Meaning [https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/4069.Man s Search for Meaning](https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/4069.Man_s_Search_for_Meaning). That is one of my favorite books. It is the story of psychiatrist who survived the labor and death camp and found life's meanings in the experiences. In the most basic form, I have been isolating to be alive. But, many folks in the face virus, have asked themselves, "what is the meaning of my life?" That is Frankl's central idea. That question resulted in the Great Resignation <https://hbr.org/2021/09/who-is-driving-the-great-resignation>. People left their jobs in search for meaning for their lives. For many self-reflection has been the byproduct of COVID-19.



And tonight, will be historic

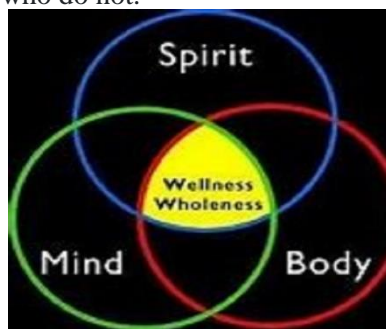
<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/what-will-it-mean-when-the-clock-strikes-921-tonight-it-all-depends-on-one-thing/2420196/>. Why you should ask? Because at 9:21 PM it was 21st minute of the 21st hour of the 21st day of 2021. That is something akin to the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month the guns fell silent on the Western Front in World War I. That is cute.

It is Wednesday, December 22, 2021 and it is a cold rain which is falling. Yes, at least in Hawaii it was warm rain. It feels like we are back to the bunkers again. With Omicron taking center stage, we are beating a hasty retreat of so many of our recently re-started community activities. It is like the 2020-2021's again, only now we have been vaccinated. It is more difficult today because suddenly, we feel and know that only recent gains are being taken away.

It is Thursday, December 23, 2021 and it is a day to reorganize and readjust. Let me explain. As noted, we are back in the bunkers again-big time social and physical distancing. It reminds me of my mountain climbing and peak bagging days. You hike for a long time. You see the summit. You summit it. But, and there is that but again, you realize that it is a false summit. You see the 'real' peak ahead and march up-ward and onward. You gain the new top. Only to see, the true summit still lays ahead.

That is the metaphor of the pandemic. In 2020, I naively though the COVID-19 crisis would be over by the summer. Parts of the United States government said so. It was not. Then, I believed once we were vaccinated it would be over. Omicron said very clearly, you are not there yet. I still think there will a summit, and end to all of it, However, I am Sagittarius which has these ascriptions: brave, naïve and optimistic. Onward!

Enough worrying, I am marching on. While riding the exercise bike, I watched the PBS program, *Your Health: A Sacred Matter* https://clinicalbioethics.georgetown.edu/yourhealth_asacredmatter/. "The two-hour feature documentary "*Your Health: A Sacred Matter*" depicts a comprehensive overview of the relationship between religion, spirituality, and health." As a psychiatrist I believe in the mind body connection aka psychosomatic medicine. The show emphasizes the role of faith in health and healing. It reminds us that folks who regularly attend worship services live on average 7 years longer than those who do not.



And since the theme for today is climbing, the mind body connection means your attitude determines your altitude.

Hello, it is Friday, December 24, 2021 with Christmas almost upon us. Cold, bleak and quiet marks the day here. I cannot help but think that the Grinch in the form of Omicron has just stole Christmas. All around us and including ourselves, people are curtailing their celebrations. But like in the original story of the Grinch, I hope folks do enjoy the true spirit and hope of the evening. It is very painfully clear that COVID-19 time is our time this season.

Good morning, it is Saturday, December 25, 2021, Christmas day and it is freezing rain out. However, I am happy to report I am in a much better mood and place. How come? Two things moved the needle on the affect scale. First, last night Peggy and I watched the PBS special *20 Years Of Christmas With The Tabernacle Choir* <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/christmas-tabernacle-choir/>. "During the worldwide pandemic of 2020, The Tabernacle Choir at Temple Square was quiet, and the Conference Center in Salt Lake City was dark and empty. But not entirely. With no public announcement and absolutely no fanfare, Tony Award-winner Brian Stokes Mitchell, a former guest artist with the Choir, came back to remember and relive twenty years of inspiring Christmas concerts." The show revealed the true joy and spirit of the birth of Jesus. It does mean then and now, joy to the world.

The idea of Christmas is great; it is hope; it is love. Sadly, it is also too much linked to commercialism, antisemitism, and the wars been Christian denominations. But, its basic message is important and good. The second mood changer was going via Zoom to Torah Study. We looked at the beginning of the Book of Exodus, the story of Moses and the ideas of Isaiah. I love learning.

Hello, it is Sunday, December 26, 2021. This morning, a beautiful snowfall from last night greeted us. Our two flamingos were heard to say, "We should have gone South for the Winter". They added, "Happy Holidays".



Our flamingos in the new snow this morning

As the pandemic drags on and as we enter its second round, I resurrected an idea I had talked about it when it began. Then, I likened being in the seemingly indeterminate COVID-19 sentence now, to those who lived during World War II. Again, in the early days of the virus, PBS re-aired Ken Burn's *The War* <https://kenburns.com/films/war/>. The program not only showed the actual combat footage but also the home front. Well, we are on the COVID-19 battle field and home front. We see and hear about friends getting sick and dying of COVID -19. The media minute to minute reports on the COVID-19 statistics-locally, statewide, nationally and internationally. And, like those living through the middle years of WW II, do not know when it will ever end!

Wow, it is Monday, December 27, 2021 and despite a good walk in the beautiful snow covered woods and inspiring outdoor Tai Chi, all I want to do right now is to hide in the bunker. Everything is COVID-19's Variant Omicron <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/covid-data/covidview/index.html>. Here is what the CDC is saying." The United States recently surpassed 50 million COVID-19 [cases](#) and 800,000 [deaths](#) since the start of the pandemic. This week also marks the first anniversary of the first COVID-19 vaccination in the United States. In recent weeks, COVID-19 [cases](#) and [hospitalizations](#) have increased, with many parts of the country experiencing substantial or high [levels of community transmission](#). These increases and the recent emergence of the [Omicron](#) variant highlight the importance of [prevention strategies](#) to help people stay safe and reduce the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19."

Welcome to Tuesday, December 28, 2021 and it feels like March 20, 2020. I was in full retreat/isolation then. And I am back in that saddle again. Talmud class , a Zoom meeting and a walk to the mail box. New Year's eve plans are planned canceled. I am back to enjoying my wilderness neighborhood.

Good morning, it is Wednesday, December 29, 2021 and my 21st observance of National Cribbage Day. I am playing my online opponent, Bill now. In your face COVID, I will keep pegging. Meanwhile, in the past, I have introduced the term accommodation and applied to how we handle life in these COVID times. Here is an example of how we adjusted pickle ball playing in the pandemic. In 'normal' times, in the Winter in New Hampshire we play pickle ball indoors. But, and there is that but again, many of us do not want to be indoors with a number of other people. With some adaptations such as plowing off the snow by hand off the pickle ball court. As a result, we have played there outdoors year round. COVID will not stop us from living some of the thing is we love to do. And, I just beat Bill in the Cribbage game-so there.



The snowed removed pickle ball court

Hello, it is Thursday, December 30, 2021 and I again worried about the earth. Last night we watched on PBS *Earth Emergency* <https://www.pbs.org/show/earth-emergency/>. “ This revealing film examines how human activity is setting off dangerous warming loops that are pushing the climate to a tipping point of no return. And, it showed what we need to do to stop these cycles. With captivating illustrations, stunning footage and interviews with leading climate scientists as well as support from Greta Thunberg, *Earth Emergency* adds some of the missing pieces to understand the climate change puzzle. Let me tell you more about that program. The show emphasizes the many climate loops. These are the way atmosphere, earth, water, trees, and pollution all interact. For example, the Northern ice area aka the North Pole-northern Canada and Antarctic reflects the sun’s rays and therefore actually ‘cooling’ the planet. However, as the ice melts, there less reflected sunshine. In turn, the earth get a little warmer. Then, that hotter planet results in moving melting. The show illustrates the various tipping points beyond which recovering is not possible. It was a very sobering program.

Wow, it is Friday, December 31, 2021, New Year’s Eve. We are about to enter the third COVID year. Looking back, as one does at this moment, the eve of yet another new year, here is what I found. I wrote this in the second Diary under Survival Guide, “Day three Monday March 16, 2020...Now for the tactics. The following tactics are designed to help one survive and thrive day to day while practicing diligently social distancing. Remember, not one size does not fit all and over time be prepared to switch tactics. 1. Use the telephone to connect with others. Call any and all of these: an old classmates, someone living alone who is really isolated because of social distancing, relatives you have not talked to in years, a friend out-of-state or out-of-country, someone from your wedding party. 2. Bring back the old board games. Yes, it is time to play Risk, Monopoly and OMG Candyland. 3. Work on a 1,000 puzzle. “

Well, yesterday we started a 1,000 piece puzzle my sister gave us 2 years ago at the start of pandemic. Good news, the team finished today. But, and there is the but again, the puzzle is missing one piece. 😞



1,000 piece puzzle almost done

Peggy and I did, with friends, hike in the Marsh Woods https://www.nottingham-nh.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf3611/f/pages/marsh_woods_trails_mt_2021dec.pdf. A great way to celebrate the New Year. And as the clock tick down toward midnight, I have a confession to make. I am so tired of COVID, that for the moment I do not have any New Year’s resolutions. Here it is midnight. Happy New Year to you. And, at January 1st, 2022, Nottingham begins its yearlong 300th Anniversary celebration. Congratulations Nottingham.

Happy New Year, it is Saturday, January 1, 2022, New Year’s Day. Three things are on my mind. One, Peggy and I continued our New Year’s eve tradition by watching on television Time Square and the ball dropping. Two, my car celebrated 2022 by wearing its Nottingham 300th anniversary license plate.



The 300th License Plate

And three, while exercising I watched on PBS, *The Ornament of the World* <https://pbsinternational.org/programs/ornament-of-the-world/> “tells the story of a remarkable time in history when the Muslims, Christians and Jews forged a common cultural identity that frequently transcended their religious differences”. What a great story of interfaith living and working together. This represents a great message for today. Welcome, it is Sunday, January 2, 2022 and I sought a wilderness adventure to deal with my isolation. Again, I am so fortunate to live with the lake and woods as me for front and back doors. I hiked into the woods and I deliberately took the trail less followed. I went to where the path ended. Then, using my compass, I headed through the forest bearing north. With help of the use of a compass I reached the familiar other trail and followed it home. Without a compass, I used to wander in the wilderness in circles. The lesson today had twin meanings. First, if hiking, take a compass. Second, I find having a direction in your life is important. To complete the day, I watched the New Patriots win and secure a play-off place as well as listening to folk music. Nice way to start the New Year.

Hello, it is Monday, January 3, 2022 and yes, yet another week in isolation. I have returned to my routine of a short hike followed Tai Chi. It was too cold and icy for pickle ball. My weekly schedule does help sustain me in the face of overwhelming information and cases of Omicron. Besides productive writing, I did walk to the mail at night. It is amazing what one hears and sees at night. It was neat adventure. It looks like a long Winter. Welcome to Tuesday, January 4, 2022. I am into my Tuesday schedule. I Zoomed not only Talmud Class but also stayed for the Gospel Class. The first is done by a Rabbi and second by an Episcopal priest. Each participates in the other, in a truly interfaith spirit and experience. The same two led an Interfaith tour of Israel in 2017. Then, I Zoomed to Israel to help my 9th grade Israeli Druze student learn English as her third language. The first two are Arabi and Hebrew. Finally, I walked to the mail box for exercise. Around me Omicron is surging. What a way to start the New Year.

Hello, it is Wednesday, January 5, 2022 and something has actually eclipsed Omicron. How is that and what is that? Great question. It is the weather. After outdoor pickle ball and the start of Tai Chi, it started to rain, But, this was freezing rain. The roads turned to sheets of ice and driving suddenly became treasonous and hazardous. Behind the wheel, I went very slowly and felt scared. Then the town and the state closed to my road, NH Route 156. I sat in my car on the side of that highway for several hours, waiting for the salt truck and police okay to proceed to my dirt road. Finally. After the go ahead signa, I go t to my dirt road. It was untreated and dangerous. I did make home-yippee. For today, ‘safe home, has replaced COVID time. Good morning, it is Thursday, January 6, 2022. The sun is shining and roads are clear. The anniversary of the assault on the nation’s Capital building haunts me and the America. It is

another reminder that democracy and our democracy are fragile and need constant attention and participation. Currently, the airlines' cancelation due to COVID have grabbed all the headlines. But, and there I am with but, I have discovered many Bank of America offices are closed. The only thing open is their ATM machines. Snow is coming and this Saturday night Nottingham kicks off its 300th anniversary yearlong celebration with a bonfire, Stay tuned for that in the next edition of the Diary LX. For right now, let's laugh.



Did You Know

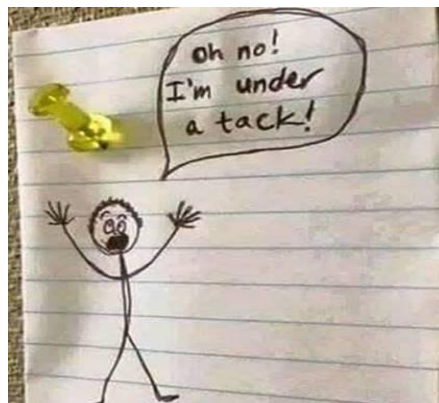
Da Vinci's painting, commonly called the "Mona Lisa" was painted on wood. The term "Mona" is not a name but rather a title of respect derived from "ma Donna" in Italian which is "My Lady". The shortened form "Monna" was Anglicized to "Mona". "Mona" is said to be a vulgarity in Italian.

An eternal question: Why is dryer lint always gray?

There are interstate highways in Hawaii - oxymoronic, but true. And somebody will realize that it is just as true for Alaska

It has been said that the mines in the Cripple Creek District in Colorado have produced more gold than the rest of North America combined.

Regular Humor



My friend told his suitcase they wouldn't be going anywhere soon because of COVID. Now he's dealing with emotional baggage.

Local Area Network in Australia: the LAN down under.

He often broke into song because he couldn't find the key.

Every calendar's days are numbered.

A lot of money is tainted - It taint yours and it taint mine.

A boiled egg in the morning is hard to beat.

Richard Wiseman founded the website Laugh Lab to discover the world's funniest joke. After conducting his research, he found this to be the winning joke. In other words, the "world's funniest joke." (But we'll admit, it's slightly morbid.) Two hunters are out in the woods when one of them collapses. He doesn't seem to be breathing and his eyes are glazed. The other guy whips out his phone and calls the emergency services. He gasps, "My friend is dead! What can I do?" The operator says, "Calm down. I can help. First, make sure he's dead." There is a silence; then a gunshot is heard. Back on the phone, the guy says, "OK, now what?" And, yes, I have heard it before!

COVID-19 Jokes

Which Christmas film was 30 years ahead of its time? Home Alone.

Why couldn't Mary and Joseph join their work conference call? Because there was no Zoom at the inn.

Why are Santa's reindeer allowed to travel on Christmas Eve? They have herd immunity.

Did you hear that production was down at Santa's workshop? Many of his workers have had to elf isolate.

COVID Christmas carols

Go Tell It On the Mountain, over the hills and everywhere. Go tell it on the mountain... seriously dude, tell everybody you know, the vaccine ain't gonna make you sprout a second head. And stop listening to Antivaxxer Karen over in that loony Facebook group.

O Little Town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie ... man, downtown Bethlehem is a ghost town tonight! You think any of these restaurants and stores will ever reopen?

We Three Kings of Orient Are, bearing gifts we traverse afar ... what's that? Nah, man, we ain't got gold, frankincense and myrrh. We brought the kid something even *more* precious: *toilet paper, N95 masks, and Purell*. Now, will you stop calling this a Chinese virus? Pretty please?



Things are still up air after 681 days of social and physical distancing

The Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner: Part LX

Steve Soreff, MD

Hello, it is Friday, January 21, 2022 and in marks the end of my 120th weeks, the middle of 23rd, close to the end of my 2nd year, and my 681th days of COVID-19 isolation and distancing. As I march forward into a still uncertain future, I as Cribbage fan find the number 681 hopeful. How so? Simple. $6 + 8 + 1 = 15$. And, in Cribbage pegging, that means 15 for 2 peg moves. That is long way to find optimism. But, I'll take it. These have been weeks of retreat and staying in the bunker. The cause is both COVID and the winter weather. But we soldier on. Let's look back at the last 2 weeks.

Good morning, it is Saturday, January 8, 2022. The day began with fear and I hope will end in a Nottingham's 300th Anniversary bonfire celebration. Let me explain both. While exercising, I watched the PBS program, *Trust Me: How do you know what to believe?* <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/award-winning-documentary-trust-me-premiers-on-pbs-and-world-channel-january-7-301453106.html>. "The film brings awareness to the need for media literacy to help combat polarization of communities, threats to democracy, medical misinformation, and mental illnesses. It features compelling stories from around the world where a lack of media literacy led to crises. Interviews from world-renowned experts are interwoven, explaining why humanity is drawn to sensational and negative news, how commercial media often capitalizes on our biases along with their opinions on solutions." It is a must watch It shows how Russian trolls work to divide us, how vaccine wrong information leads childhood deaths, and how false stories results in mob violence. It illustrates the perils and the value of the Internet and it underscores the need for media literacy. And, highlights the significance of free, honest journalism.

Later in the cold day, Peggy and I went to the bonfire <https://forumhome.org/nottingham-begins-tricentennial-celebration-p35708-129.htm> at the Nottingham sand pit which officially inaugurated Nottingham's 300th yearlong anniversary celebration. We wore masks and kept social distancing. It was great fun and joy. Also, we enjoyed hot chocolate there, too.

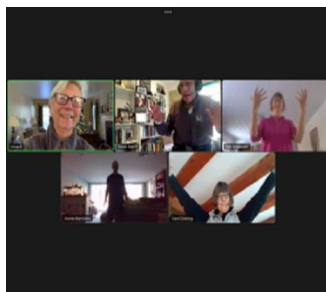


The bonfire at the Nottingham sand pit.

Welcome, it is Sunday, January 9, 2022. It is a day when I feel the heavy foot of Omicron in many ways. The first instance is that I am back to a day on Zoom. A scheduled in person meeting had been switched to Zoom because COVID-19. The word for this phase of the pandemic is “contagiousness” which is because of Omicron. Second way is also linked to contagion. Many of friends either have COVID or have been exposed to someone who has tested positive. Both groups are now in quarantine. One good news is that my friends who did get COVID had mild symptoms because they had been vaccinated. Sadly, the major symptoms, hospitalizations, and death are associated with those not vaccinated.

The third way came about while exercising and watching on PBS *Surviving New England's Great Dying* <https://nhpbs.org/greatdying/>. “It’s been more than 400 years since the first Thanksgiving, and there is a lot we are still learning about that time. Just prior to the Pilgrims’ arrival, a plague decimated New England’s coastal Native American population, altering the course of colonialism. This is the story of the Great Dying and of how tribal leaders are learning from the past as they deal with the effects of today’s pandemic”. The program dramatically demonstrated how plagues and now COVID can change and do alter history.

Good morning, it is Monday, January 10, 2022. It is yet another day when it is Zoom to the rescue. Due to several members in quarantine and the ugly cold weather, Tai Chi was done by Zoom. It kept our over 2 year consecutive record going. And we were all safe and distancing.

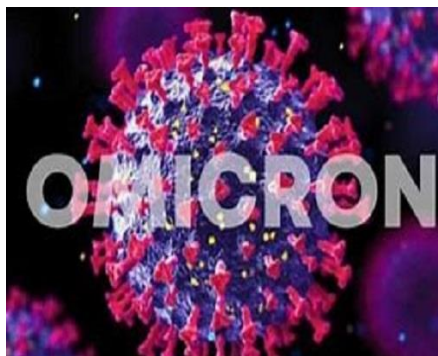


Tai Chi by Zoom

Living today creates tomorrow's history. That sound profound, but what does it mean? We got in the mail the National Parks 2022 calendar. For February, it displayed a picture of Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site Visitor Center <https://www.nps.gov/chsc/index.htm>. It reminded of what I witnessed in the fall of 1957. At that moment, Arkansas Governor, Orval E. Faubus, claimed to literally "stand in the school house door" to prevent the school's integration. As a result, US Army troops escorted the students into the building and into their classes. Perhaps, another foreshadowing of Black Lives Matter. What I lived through then is history. And that is the point of this Diary. We are living it. We are caught in the confusing Omicron messages. Today, we are conducting meetings by Zoom to avoid getting COVID. These daily activities will be history.

Good morning, it is a very cold and windy Tuesday, January 11, 2022. While exercising, I watched the PBS premiere of *The Reunited States* <https://reunitedstates.tv/>. "At a time when America is ripping apart at the seams, *The Reunited States* is a powerful and urgent documentary that follows four everyday heroes on the difficult journey of bridging our political and racial divides." The program is right on target. I am increasingly aware of polarization in my town, in the state, in the nation and the whole world. I am forever attempting to build bridges, to relate to people and to seek common ground. One way to communicate is to keep journalism factual and accurate. It can be done but needs to be worked at. With the frigid weather and surg of Omicron, I layered up with warm clothing and walked to the mail box. Yes, I'm staying in the bunker.

Welcome, it is Wednesday, January 12, 2022 and COVID/Omicron is the story. The statistics tell its horrifying story. For Nottingham <https://www.wmur.com/article/covid-19-cases-nh-town/37155089#>, Nottingham: 47 active; 748 total (5 new). For New Hampshire <https://www.covid19.nh.gov/>, "Coronavirus Cases: 226,132, Deaths: 2,032, Recovered 206,021". For the United States <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/country/us/> "Coronavirus Cases:63,816,716. Deaths:865,230, Recovered: 42,709,475". For the world, <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/>, "Coronavirus Cases: 316,403,305, Deaths: 5,527,644, Recovered: 262,547,199." More things are back to Zoom. Schools have mixed and confusing messages in-person classes.



Omicron

Hello, it is Thursday, January 13, 2022. Temperature outside is in the 30 degree. It feels like a beach day 😊. Actually, it is another day of retreat and isolation. Fear of contagion rules

the day, However, this gives me an opportunity to discuss an interview I saw and heard on PBS *Beyond The CANVAS Episode 1: Making the Music* with Bruce Springsteen <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/beyond-the-canvas-episode-1-making-the-music>. He talked about two messages he heard was to growing up. One was that you are the greatest; the other, you are worthless. And, he pointed out he believed both. Those dual message is what motivates him to give a successful performance each time. That is a powerful insight,. I wonder how many folks this applies to. It does to me. Some days I feel really big and other days I see myself as quite small. Does it apply to you?

Welcome to Friday, January 14, 2022. We were finally back to Tai Chi in-person outdoors. It was great to get reconnected. Zoom is good but being together was better. Then, when I got home, a crisis occurred. The Internet and landline went down. A dramatic reminder of how important the Internet is to my and our family's lives. Comcast aka Afinity came to the rescue. Enter Chris, the Comcast repair person, that afternoon. Amazingly, he got it working again. Wow. This crisis pointed out not only how important the Internet is in COVID-19 times but also the important roles of individuals such as Chris and others in the grocery stores or gas stations are in sustaining us.



Chris from Comcast-My hero!!

Good morning, it is Saturday, January 15, 2022 and a 'perfect storm' resulting in big time isolation. What does that mean? It is bitterly cold with a strong wind outside thus for the moment precluding walking in my neighborhood wilderness. And, with Omicron sweeping the state, I will not go to all those places, I just recently had gone to. One salvation is I can go to Torah Study thanks to the swift restoration of Internet by Comcast. Peggy and I completed the day with following another of the Survival Guide in Diary II, March 16, 2020 which was " Watch over several days or weeks one of the amazing multi-segment shows on Netflix, Hulu or Amazon Prime." We binged saw 3 episodes of PBS *All Creatures Great and Small Season 2* <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/masterpiece/specialfeatures/all-creatures-great-and-small-season-2-what-we-know-now/>. Thank you, PBS passport.

Hello, it is Sunday, January 16, 2022. The sun is shining; it is warmer out and the outdoors calls. For the moment all is good. The theme for today is that the pandemic has gone on for soo long, that is repeating itself. Let me explaine. First, as the just talked about binged episode showed, I had to follow back on very early survival ideas. Second, again my neighborhood wilderness provided with solace, renewal and joy. I hiked to my beloved White Birch Corridor. It made me smile. This is my third winter of distancing. Wow! Thank you White Birches.



White Birch Corridor as seen on the way home.

Another thought: Here is one of the collateral damage reports from the pandemic. I recently heard of a number of folks describe their loved ones have died a non-COVID death, because they could not get into a hospital. Here is the back story. The person had a life-threatening medical condition requiring hospital treatment. However, because the hospital was full with unvaccinated patients with COVID, they could not get into the hospital and they died. This is yet another reason for everyone to get vaccinated.

Good morning, it is Monday, January 17, 2022. Martin Luther King Day aka Civil Rights in New Hampshire, It snowed followed by rain leading to slush. I remembered how I had heard in real time, "I Have a Dream" speech <https://www.npr.org/2010/01/18/122701268/i-have-a-dream-speech-in-its-entirety> , which he delivered on August. 28, 1963, on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. Then, as now, I knew it was a great, inspiring, passionate and powerful speech and vision. It is important to recognize the day, the work done and the miles to go before we achieve full acceptance of all Americans. The spirit of today MLK day is forward. He has seen the mountain; now we must climb it together.



Wade in the Water -the Spiritual Song

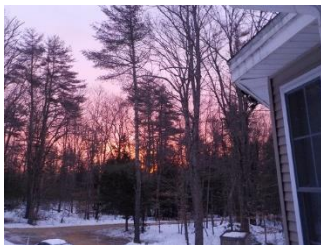
Today I also connected a number of dots with a song. Today, in programs honoring the spirit of MLK day, they featured the Negro spiritual song, *Wade in the Water* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fxZ4H-gq_lc . The lyrics were” Wade in the water, We dey wade in the water, Children wade in the water, God said he's gonna trouble the water... We are the sons and the daughters, We gotta stand up and make it loud, Just like our God told the

Pharaoh, ‘Let my people go, go’”. The song connected these dots. The first dot was the spirit and meaning of MLK Day. The second dot was that the song is linked the Underground Railroad and its powerful history and message of freedom. Third dot was that these weeks in the Torah we are in the *Book of Exodus* dealing with “Let my people go. And, the final and fourth dot was as I shoveled the walks and driveway, I actually waded in the water.

Hello, it is Tuesday, January 18, 2022 and two things are on my mind. One is women’s right to vote and the other is Ken Burns’ *The Brooklyn Bridge* <https://kenburns.com/films/brooklyn-bridge/>. Let us take them in order. I watched, while exercising, a lecture on the women’s suffrage movement in Britain and the United States. So many died for something we take for granted today. That is women not only have the right to vote but lead companies and countries. What is so astonishing is how long it took for that to happen. The same thing was true of slavery. Look at the Civil War as another thing which took thousands of lives is say slavery-owning another human being- is wrong. We did stated that in our Declaration of Independence, didn’t we?

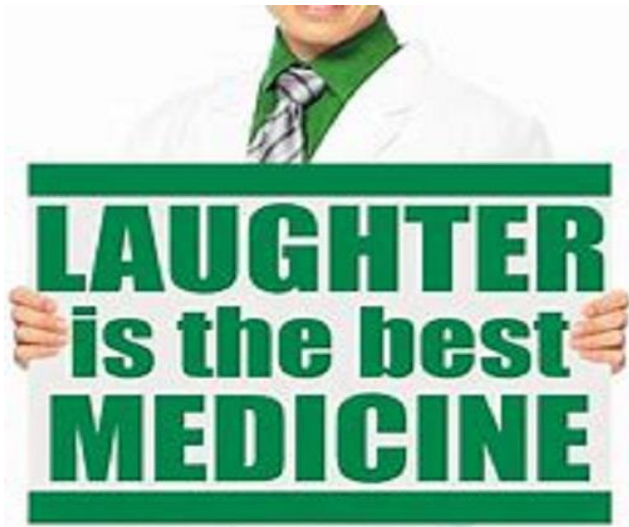
The same insight came from watching again while exercising PBS *The Brooklyn Bridge* . It was a powerful idea of how much we trust engineers, doctors and pilots with our lives every day. When we drive our vehicles, we not only believe it will start but also that is safe to operate. The question then becomes why not trust medical doctors with information, prevention and treatment of COVID-19?

Good morning, it is a cold Wednesday, January 19, 2022. How cold is that? So cold that we did Tai Chi again by Zoom. With Omicron and cold the bunker is appealing right, There was an amazing red sunrise. It made me recall the old adage. “Red sky at night, sailor’s delight. Red sky in morning, sailor’s warning. That makes me worry, what am I being warned about? As the day progressed, I did venture out to walk down and get the mail The driveway and road was icy. So I used my ice spikes and found again it was good to be outside, outdoors and in my neighborhood wilderness.



An amazing red sunrise today

Hello, it is Thursday, January 20, 2022. I have been back in the community for the first time in a week. I found the two moods in the street. One sees Omicron as spreading like crazy. That translates into pull up the bridges, circle the wagons and close the city’s gate. Fear roams the corridors. The other mood is one of ‘it’s here; so what, Let’s just on with life’’. The Chinese saying is “may live in interesting times’’. It is quite accurate. On February 1st begins the Chinese year of the tiger and it also proves interesting. No matter how you see it, we are definitely living in COVID times. With that, let’s find things to laugh about,

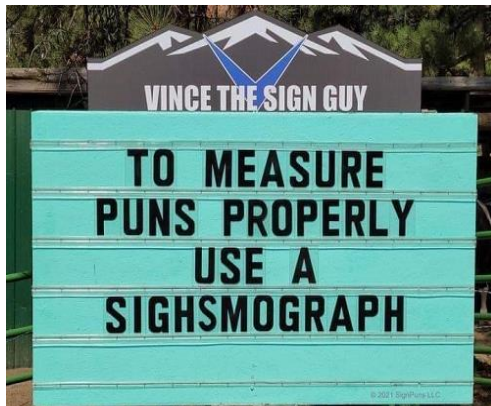


Did You Know

The collective noun for a group of giraffes is a tower.

The 2 lions in front of the New York City Library are called Patience and Fortitude.

Regular Humor



I've been making bread. I kneaded that.

When one door closes and another door opens, you are probably in prison.

To me, "drink responsibly" means don't spill it.

Age 60 might be the new 40, but 9:00 pm is the new midnight.

The older I get, the earlier it gets late.

When I say, "The other day," I could be referring to any time between yesterday and 15 years ago.

I remember being able to get up without making sound effects.

I had my patience tested. I'm negative.

Remember, if you lose a sock in the dryer, it comes back as a Tupperware lid that doesn't fit any of your containers.

COVID-19 Humor



If you have to wear both mask and glasses, you may be entitled to condensation.

You think the Omicron variant is bad? Because the next one will be 3.14 times worse.

I can't believe it's omicron season already. I still have my delta decorations up.

When is 3rd season of COVID coming out?



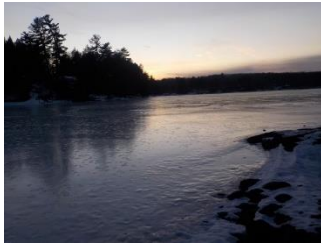
695 Days of Social and Physical Distancing

The Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner: Part LXI

Steve Soreff, MD

Welcome to Friday, February 4, 2022. Amazingly this marks the end of my 104th weed, the beginning of my 24th month, near the end of my 2nd year and my 695th day of Social and Physical Distancing. Since the last Diary much has happened. COVID-19 time has been a roller coaster ride. In some places Omicron has peaked and yet it has also peeked into many peoples I know lives. Mask remain the order of the day for many yet watching others, would not know you are in a pandemic. Peggy and I went to the coast and found the ocean rejuvenating. The Nor'easter has brought a generous amount of snow and restored the fun and shoveling of Winter. Today is dominated by "mixed precipitation". The means isolation by both weather and COVID for right now. I feel we are in a holding pattern but not sure what the next acts of COVID and winter will be. Wow, enough, let us look back on the last two weeks.

Hello, it is Saturday, January 22, 2022. It remains cold and I remained more indoors. Since it was Saturday, I went to Torah Study. There we are in the Book of Exodus with companion Haftarah the words of the Prophet, Isaiah. I made calls for the Exeter Tai Chi and found many people missing the social and physical interaction precluded by COVID-19. I walked to the mail box and saw a semi-sunset over frozen Pawtuckaway Lake, The setting sun offered a moment of hope over bleak, cold iced lake.



Sunset on Pawtuckaway Lake

Welcome to Sunday, January 23, 2022. It was time to escape to ocean. Peggy and I with friends went to Odiorne Point State Park <https://www.nhstateparks.org/visit/state-parks/odiorne-point-state-park>. As its website says, “picnickers can enjoy sweeping views of the ocean and rocky shore, and explorers can uncover evidence of the parks military history.” It was great to be outdoors, fresh air, the eternal sea, the waves breaking and no need for masks. And, being there I could connect another dot. In Torah Study Saturday, we read the words of Isaiah. At Odiorne Point, there was evidence of Isaiah’s concept and hope in his words *and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks*. There the 1942 artillery piece site was turned into a picnic site. The weapons of war site has be turned in a place of reflection and peace and to picnic.



The 1942 artillery piece site was turned into a picnic site.

It is Monday, January 24, 2022 and I am singing, “Back in the saddle again”. After a week of Tai Chi by Zoom, the gang returned to being in-person outdoors. So much for me of doing a set of 108 moves is looking at what others are doing and copying their moves. That is hard to really do on Zoom. We did the sets on a cleared pickle ball court and we called it Pickle-Chi! I learned another aspect of the pandemic today. A couple who lived in our area are moving to the West coast to be with family and especially grandchildren. One of the COVID tolls has been a dramatic and substantial curtailment of these visits for the last 2 years. The restriction hastened their move. Families really miss each other.. I wish and hope things will get better. I miss my kids and grandkids, too.

Welcome to Tuesday, January 25, 2022. The theme for today is you CAN teach an old dog new tricks. Remember the best way to really master something is learn it, do it and then teach it. Today, I tutored by Druze Israeli student in English by Zoom. The lesson plan was about Jerusalem. One of pictures we both looked at was of sunset over Jerusalem. Because of that brilliant sunset that city is called Jerusalem of Gold. The white Jerusalem stone, which all the buildings are constructed with, appears striking golden as the sun sets. And, with that information, I could connected a couple of personal dots. The first dot is that song "Jerusalem of

Gold" composed by Naomi Shemer in 1967, which was at that moment an unofficial Israeli national anthem during the Six Day War, now made sense to me. The second dot was that song was played at my wedding in 1969. And, third dot through Internet and Zoom I could share the singing of that song <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A2KcBLXdlNk> with my student. My pupil liked the song. We both marveled what technology could do. And, through teaching I learned something new.

Hello, it is Wednesday, January 26, 2022 and two difference variations of the word weather and whether dominated the day. Let's look at weather in several meanings. Remember the old idea, there is no such thing bad weather, but bad clothing. Today at Tai Chi we did sets in bitter cold. However, we had the right gear and did well. That is one weather. Then there is a Nor'easter coming for the weekend. That is a different weather. Suddenly, COVID-19 is not the top topic. Despite the disruptions, it would nice to have snow. Cold without snow is not winter.

The other whether revolves around Omicron. The charts show it slightly down from its huge peak. That looks promising. Bu, and there is that but again, in so many places still are experiencing surges. Sad to say, we are still in COVID time.

Welcome to Thursday, January 27, 2022. The theme for today is the praise engineers and technology. The most obvious reason for my admiration of technology has made this online newspaper, The Forum, possible. Moreover, I want to focus on two programs I watched while exercising which featured major technological triumphs - *NOVA: Looking for Life on Mars* and the television revolution. The launching of the rover, [Perseverance](#) in 2020 and its landing in Mars' [Jezero Crater](#) in 2021, not only represented amazing engineering but also was accomplished during the pandemic.

The other program reviewed the advent, rise and power of television. Too often, in this multi-media world we live, we often take television for granted. The lecture demonstrated how TV not only showed people and events but also had the power to change history. It highlighted how in the 1950-70's especially how television provide an American common ground. Then everyone watched the *Ed Sullivan Show*, *I Love Lucy*, the last episode of *MASH* and Walter Cronkite. Sadly, the multi-media world now, although it allows for more choices has become a vehicle to divide us, too.

And I cannot let the day pass without acknowledging and thinking about International Holocaust Remembrance Day <https://www.ushmm.org/remember/international-holocaust-remembrance-day>. The United Nations General Assembly designated January 27 that day as its marks the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau. The Nazi murdered my children's grandparents. We must never forget it nor fail to learn from it how to prevent it again.

Good day, it is Friday, January 28, 2022. Today it is a tale of two storms. The first and most "immediate" is the Nor'easter bearing down on New Hampshire. It promises to deposit more than a foot of snow and be accompanied by huge winds this Saturday. Folks are taking measures in anticipation such as descending in hordes at the local grocery store. The other storm is COVID. Yes, it is less visible and seemingly not as imminent but actually more deadly. However, of those flocking to stores in getting ready for the blizzard, less than half wore masks. For whatever reason, ranging for virus denial to fatigue, they ignore one storm and yet prepared for the other.



A Nor'easter

Good morning, it is Saturday, January 29, 2022 and it is snowing. In fact, we are in the early phase of a blizzard. Here is the official definition <https://www.britannica.com/science/blizzard> of a blizzard. The [National Weather Service](#) of the United States defines a blizzard as a [storm](#) with winds of more than 56 km (35 miles) per hour for at least three hours and enough snow to limit visibility to 0.4 km (0.25 mile) or less. With that pronouncement, it is time to quote Rebert Frost's *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening* <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/42891/stopping-by-woods-on-a-snowy-evening> "The woods are lovely, dark and deep, But I have promises to keep, And miles to go before I sleep,". But, and yes that pesty but again, I do not have miles to go. Peggy and I are safe at home. There we will watch the woods fill up with snow! And I did chronicle the snow piling up on the front yard from the front porch <https://forumhome.org/from-the-front-porch-the-noreaster-p35807-1.htm>.

Today is also ,marks the observance of National Cribbage Day for the 22nd month. To celebrate it, I did beat my computer online opponent, Bill, in Cribbage. I hope to teach Cribbage to a friend and colleague via Zoom tomorrow. 15 for two-that is the way to peg!

Hello and the sun is shining with the wind blowing. It is Sunday, January 30, 2022 and the Nor'easter has gone to Canada. Saturday, Peggy and I did indeed watch the woods fill up with snow, And this Sunday, we got to both shovel and snow blow moreover, for the first time this winter, we snowshoed. We snowshoed to my beloved White Birch Corridor. Then we took another route home. It was great to have the snow. Significant snow amounts meant three things: work aka its removal, play aka snowshoeing and avoid thinking about COVID-19.



Peggy snowshoeing in the White Birch Corridor

Welcome to Monday, January 31, 2022. And this is not your typical Monday morning blues. It is the joy of snow. Instead of doing Tai Chi, we donned are snowshoes and romped about in the new and inviting snow. It was wonderful. The sun kissed the snow covered woods and fields and it danced in our eyes. The snow was a great alternative to fretting about COVID-19 and a possible Russian invasion of Ukraine. As I walked to get the mail, I saw and heard children screaming in delight as they slid down their hill, And following Weber's Law <https://www.britannica.com/science/Webers-law>, I am just now noticing that the day light is getting longer. And, I heard birds singing. Hope springs eternal!.



The 109th move in Tai Chi, snowshoeing

Hello, it is Tuesday, February 1, 2022 and another distancing and playing in the snow. After Talmud Study and a Zoom meeting, I snowshoed on the lake. Isolation and fun, what a way to live.



Pawtuckaway Lake and Mount Pawtuckaway welcomed me while snowshoeing

Welcome to Wednesday, February 2, 2022 and the watch word is shoveling for protection. Let me explain. As a result of the weekend's Nor'easter, the pickle ball courts were covered with from 5 to 8 inches of snow. Hence, the snow precluded pickle ball. But, that did not stop us. Instead of playing pickle ball, the team shoveled the courts instead. And the reason to remove the snow was so we could again play pickle ball outdoors. That is, because of COVID-19, we do not want to play indoors. As New Hampshire Public Radio (NHPR) <https://www.nhpr.org/coronavirus-updates> reports "The most recent update

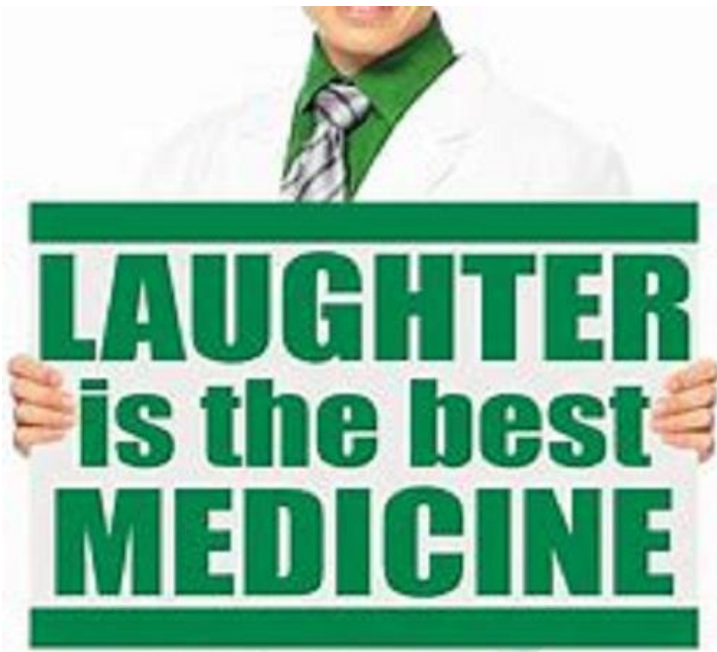
from the N.H. Department of Health and Human Services on Jan. 31:10 new deaths, 417 new cases from January 31, 2022, 292 current hospitalizations, 2,223 deaths due to COVID-19 and 9,104 current cases. Although COVID hospitalizations as down in NH, however its death toll is rising. It is quite clear that we are still living in COVID times. Therefore, we shoveled to keep playing pickle ball outdoors.

And for the record https://news.yahoo.com/groundhog-day-2022-punxsutawney-phil-124107026.html?soc_src=community&soc_trk=tw&guccounter=1 , “Groundhog Day 2022: Punxsutawney Phil sees his shadow, meaning we're in for 6 more weeks of winter”.

Good morning. It is Thursday, February 3, 2022 and in Nottingham there is a sense of almost excitement in the air. Remember, this is a Yankee town, so we cannot be too excited. The reason is the up-coming Town Deliberative Session (TDS) on Saturday. The session has replaced the traditional town meeting where you actually could vote on things such as Warrant Articles.(WA). At the TDS you debate and amend articles but the actual vote comes on March 8. The reason for the anticipation is that TDS many WAs which change the character of the town. They indicate our hamlet is growing. For example, one of the changes will be that we go from all volunteer fire department to a full time professional one for 6 days a week. Let's see what happens Saturday and especially on the actual vote will be March 8th · Film at eleven ☺.

Meanwhile, while exercising I watched on PBS Reel *South: Unmarked* <https://www.reelsouth.org/documentaries/unmarked>. As its website says, “ Much of America’s rich history is being lost to time. In the South, vast amounts of African-American gravesites and burial grounds for enslaved persons have been disappearing over the years.... Unmarked not only explores these untold stories of the past but also the efforts underway to preserve them.” The program underscores the importance of proper burial and grave markers. As a member of both the Nottingham Historical Society’s group to identify, catalogue and preserve graves and graveyards and the New Hampshire Jewish Federation’s Cemetery Committee , I appreciate the importance and significance of cemeteries. Too often at the peaks of the pandemic the role of proper funeral and burial has been lost.

There is another storm coming into today and into Friday. Isolation by weather and COVID looms ahead! Enough, let's laugh.



Did You Know?

The term "Scotland Yard", referring to London's metropolitan police, is derived from the name of a street "Great Scotland Yard" in London. The rear entrance to police headquarters was on that street. Eventually, it became the public entrance to police headquarters.

Pawnxatawney Phil is reputed to be accurate 33% of the time - making him, in some people's opinion, only slightly more accurate than TV weather forecasts.

Woodrow Wilson was the last American president to be born into a family that owned slaves.

Regular Humor

Why couldn't the sailor learn his alphabet? He kept getting lost at C.

My [grief](#) counselor died. He was so good, I don't even care.

What do you say to comfort a friend who's struggling with grammar? There, their, they're

I went to the toy store and asked the assistant where the Schwarzenegger dolls are and he replied, "Aisle B, Back."

What did the surgeon say to the patient who insisted on closing up their own incision? Suture self.

I've started telling everyone about the benefits of eating dried grapes. It's all about raisin awareness.

COVID-19 Humor

The official flag of 2020!



What's the best way to avoid touching your face? A glass of wine in each hand!

Why did the chicken cross the road? Because the chicken behind it didn't know how to socially distance properly!

Why didn't the sick guy get the joke? It flu over his head!

What did the astronauts say to NASA when they notified them that their mission was complete and they could return to earth? Thanks, but no thanks.

What did the barista call her face mask? A coughy filter.

During the pandemic, it's important to take after NASA. Give people space.

Why hasn't anyone in Antarctica contracted COVID-19? They're so ice-o-lated.



The Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner: Part LXII

Steve Soreff, MD

Welcome to Friday, February 18, 2022. It marks the end of my 106th week, the middle of my 24th month, nearly the end of my 2nd year and the 709th day of social and physical distancing. Since the last Diary, I have ‘attended’ my 2nd Super Bowl and my first Winter Olympics. As the split background of number 709 shows, there are grounds for hope and enough evidence to say, “too soon, for it to be over!” It rained today and it one wonder, “what type of Winter are we having?” With our complex weather pattern in mind, let’s look back on the last 14 days.

Hello, it is Saturday, February 5, 2022 and a busy, important day two ways. First, Peggy and I attended the Nottingham’s Town Deliberative Session. It was neat to see a candid open discussion of critical issues for the town. Again, it was clear the town is both growing and changing; e.g., the Fire Department is moving from an all-volunteer to all professional one. It was striking to see the number of folks who do not wear masks. Of interest, the town mask says in town facilities masks are to be worn. However, that rule was successfully challenged at that session.. The second big event was my daughter, Sasha’s 50th birthday (promise you will not tell anyone I gave her age, please). Through the wonder of Zoom, we had all my children, grandsons and sister together to celebrate together. WOW! It was great.

Welcome to Sunday, February 6, 2022. It is catch-up day after a hectic Saturday. At noon, I Zoomed Israel learn how the Jewish Federation of New Hampshire’s (JFNH) sister city/kibbutz, Halutza observes the Shmita year. What is Shmita year <https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/what-is-shemita-the-sabbatical-year/> ? “In the Shmita year, debts are to be forgiven, agricultural lands to lie fallow, private land holdings to become open to the commons, and staples such as food storage and perennial harvests to be freely redistributed and accessible to all. The first reference to Shmita is in the Book of Exodus ([Exodus 23:10-11](#)).” It means every 6 years, the agricultural land takes the 7th year to rest, a Sabbatical Year. This is a great ecological idea and tradition.

After that, I hiked out to the White Birch Corridor, It was glorious. The sun danced over the compacted snow as I walked in my neighborhood wilderness . It was delightful to be far the world of COVID.



The birches of the Corridor.

Good morning, it is Monday, February 7, 2022 and I am off to hiking and Tai Chi. But it is time for an observation. Lately, Peggy and I have been watching 3 PBS serials, as this Diary recommended when the isolation began March 2020. These are *All Creatures-Great and Small*, *Around the World in 80 Days*, and *Vienna Blood*. To fall back on my classic pun. “She was only a bootlegger’s daughter, but we loved her still”, I want to distill the common denominator of these three. Series. The easy links are that they are all British, PBS and take place years ago. And there is the key ingredient, years ago. They all feature great dialogue and by their eras, limited communication; e.g., radio, telegraph and newspapers. Therein lies the charm. Today there is too noise in our lives and communication. Even at home, everyone is on their cell phones, computers and television. There is no dialogue!

Hello, it is Tuesday, February 8, 2022. It is a mixed day. What does that mean? After Talmud and Gospel Classes, I wrote all day. Again, it was nice to rediscover that the messages of Judaism and Jesus were so interconnected. Then I walked to mail box for exercise and cleared the front walk of ice. It was beach day with a temperature in the 40’s. The ice said chop me and I did. Later, I went to the School Deliberative Session in order support local education and the teachers. It was good example of democracy and an open discussion of ideas. I learned two things there. One thing is that elementary education today is very different than in my day (my day was when dinosaurs walked on Mount Wachusett). It emphasizes active, discovery and small group learning. The second thing is you cannot change a collective bargain warrant article. That is the law and the school attorney said it! What I liked best about the session is that it full filled one of my life’s goals-to learn something new every day. And I learned two things.

Welcome to Wednesday, February 9, 2022. The sun is shining; the snow is melting. It was good to back a hiking and Tai Chi. The sun reflected off the, compacted by rain, snow and we saw our shadows. In the hike we saw a grove of paper birches being tapped to learn about their sap’s content. Apparently, it is an experiment to see if the birch sap could be used to make birch syrup. Who knew!



Snow and Tai Chi

Meanwhile on the COVID, front there are a million mixed messages. (M to 3rd power) In Nottingham. the Select Board made masks optional in town facilities. Massachusetts and California are lifting the mask mandates. However, the CDC wants the masks to continue. I still will wear a mask when going any indoors event. The common rule indoor is that supposedly, if you are vaccinated, one need not wear a mask. But many unvaccinated folks do not wear masks indoors. We are still in COVID time. Even though it said Omicron has peaked, I will peek at the world from behind a mask indoors.

Hello, it is Thursday, February 10, 2022. Today was a great example of a compromise in the world of some of the emerging COVID guideline. For the record, I am not comfortable with relaxation of the mask mandates. Tonight, I went to talk at my synagogue. We all wore masks and sat 6 or more feet apart. It was good to actually be with others, to see and hear them. The talk was Zoomed so it also represented the new hybrid of many things that will emerge for the “end” of the pandemic. I did go indoors but in a way I could be at ease.

Welcome to Friday, February 11, 2022. The weather and the COVID is again mixed. The nights are cold and everything freezes. The days are warm, Spring like, and everything melts. We go from ice to mud season and back again every day. It leads to bizarre ice-snow features in the landscape. The snow melts into puddles and then the water freeze. The picture is of the oak leaf settling into the snow.



Oak leaf on snow- a new composition

Again, the COVID weather/climate shifts daily. With lifted mask mandates, more folks who used to wear masks, now do not. It makes me uncomfortable. The truckers and the masses are protesting any mask requirements. Each time I venture out of the house is risky and a balance of alternatives. Many people including myself, are bewildered in the mask/unmasked indoor world. The easy cliché’ is we now in uncharted waters.

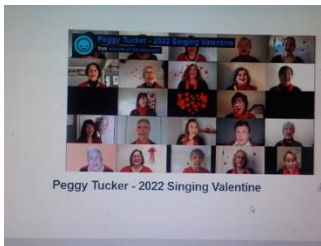
Wow, the February thaw <https://forumhome.org/a-temporary-thaw-a-photo-essay-p35931-105.htm> is the order of the day. It is Saturday, February 12, 2022. After a lively Torah Study session, Peggy and I hiked in our neighborhood wilderness, We hiked through woods and on to Pawtuckaway Lake. It was glorious and warm. We saw ‘lakes ‘ aka huge puddles of water on top of actual frozen lake.. It was enough to make one for the moment forget about COVID. We are so thankful for where we live.



Lakes on top Pawtuckaway Lake

Hello, it is Sunday, February 13, 2022. And all I can think about is in the 2015 movie, *Concussion*. In the film, the person playing, the Pathologist, Dr. Cyril Wecht <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt3322364/characters/nm0000983> is quoted as saying “ The NFL owns a day of the week. The same day the Church used to own. Now it's theirs.” Although it may have been true during the regular season, it is certainly true today, Super Bowl Sunday. That event dominates the day and eclipsed COVID-19 and the possible Russian invasion. Again, although I was not invited to a Super Bowl party, I would not go because of COVID fears.

And since in my religious tradition, holidays are always celebrated on the eve the day before, I gave/sent this singing Valentine to Peggy. It was neat but copyright restrictions said I could not share the actual recording here 😞.



Peggy's singing Valentine

Hello, it is Monday, February 14, 2022 and winter has returned. It snowed this morning. I found watching falling snow flakes like seeing white stuff descending in one of those snow globes, It was pretty. The slush returned to ice and a very frigid breeze shouted, “Get your heavy coat back on and don’t forget the hand warmers”. It was good to get back into the Tai Chi routine. Later, while exercising, I watched on PBS Ken Burns’ *Muhammad Ali Round Three: The Rivalry (1970 - 1974)*. It shows the intense rivalry between Ali and Joe Frazier. The series highlights the amazing career of Ali depicting how he was once viewed as a draft dodger and later as hero. Let me connect some of the dots here. Ali, then Cassius Marcellus Clay Jr, achieved fame at the [1960 Summer Olympics](#) in Rome. Much later, he lit the [Olympic cauldron](#) at the [1996 Summer Olympics](#) in Atlanta. Also, the Winter Olympics are on television right now. Of medical interest to me, is that Ali ultimately suffered from pugilist Parkinson's dementia. Often boxers develop this form of Parkinson's disease from so punches to the head.

Welcome to Tuesday, February 15, 2022. I feel I am living in to different worlds. One world is based on the pandemic is over, no masks and no restrictions. The other says, “wait, it is isn’t quite over. Wear masks whenever you are indoors, regard less of the rules.

Hello, it is Wednesday, February 16, 2022. I went to get my teeth cleaned today. Normally, a trip to the dentist is one of dread. However, one good thing there, I am entering an island of mask safety in often a sea of unmasked people. By the way, no cavities. This sign at the Concord Hospital expresses the reason for comfort in a healthcare setting.

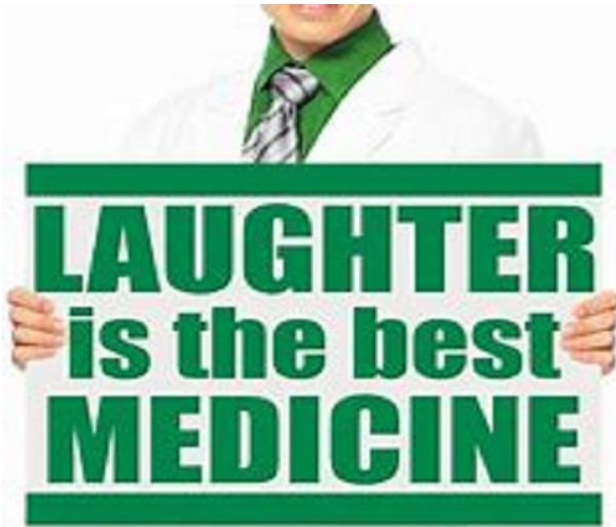


Meanwhile, the CDC is starting to offer cautiously optimistic messages about COVID-19. The CDC https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#vaccinations_vacc-total-admin-rate-total notes 214.1 million Americans have been fully vaccinated. It forecasts a decline in COVID deaths and hospitalization. In Time magazine Vol, 199, Nos 5-6, 2022 issue, Alice Park in an article, *The begriming of the end?*, “COVID-19 is learning to live with us. It might be time we learn to live with it.” Are we entering into an endemic phase? Perhaps, there are emerging evidence for hope.

However, just as the slight sliver of hope attempted to creep around the center, I heard this disturbing report from Denmark, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/covid-restrictions-denmark/> “Despite [COVID-19 cases](#) surging in Denmark, the country has lifted all COVID-19 restrictions. The Scandinavian nation has the highest levels of the [Omicron variant](#) in Europe.” It is a challenging scenario, to the usual pattern That is restrictions are lifted and COVID surges. Am I kidding myself, that there an end in sight? And I am, still preferring to go to meetings by Zoom.

Welcome to Thursday, February 17, 2022 and a record breaking warm day. It is truly beach day. I am feeling like the world has been turned upside down, Let me explain that global reference this ‘story’. Tarzan goes home and says to Jane, “give me a drink!” Jane is concerned as she has not seen him that upset before. He then demanded, “another drink!”. She is worried and asks him, “Tarzan, what’s wrong?”. Finally, he replies, “Jane, it is a jungle out there.” In the loosening of mask restrictions, the world seems to me a jungle. Everywhere I went today, masks were not worn. School and classroom instruction versus Zoom remains a huge contentious debate. Yet, isolation, if it means not getting COVID, has significant educational and mental health consequences. We are in turbulent uncharted waters as COVID times is soon to enter into its 3rd year.

Enough, lets laugh.



Did You Know

In Massachusetts, duels to the death are legal on the common on Sundays as long as the governor is present.

The coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953 was recorded on 35mm film by the BBC. That film was loaded onto a RAF jet bomber where it was developed en route, and delivered in New York in time for the network news broadcasts.

Regular Humor

I'm trying to organize a hide-and-seek tournament, but good players are really hard to find.

I got over my addiction to chocolate, marshmallows, and nuts. I won't lie, it was a rocky road.

What do you say to comfort a friend who's struggling with grammar? There, their, they're

I went to the toy store and asked the assistant where the Schwarzenegger dolls are and he replied, "Aisle B, Back."

What did the surgeon say to the patient who insisted on closing up their own incision? Suture self.

I've started telling everyone about the benefits of eating dried grapes. It's all about raisin awareness.

COVID-19 Humor

Do It Yourself COVID Test

1. Pour a glass of wine and smell it. 2. If you can smell it, then taste it. 3. If you can both smell it and taste it, you do not have the Covid virus

Just to test it out, I did the test 19 times last evening and, thank God, all the tests were negative. But I'll have to repeat them today, as I woke up with a headache and a bit disoriented this morning.

If Covid 19 has forced you or a loved one to wear a mask with your glasses, You may be entitled to condensation.

Two grandmothers were bragging about their precious darlings. One of them says to the other, "Mine are so good at social distancing, they won't even call me!"

COVID Party

While it's [been debated](#) whether this is actually a thing or just urban legend, reports have surfaced saying younger people are throwing parties after a positive diagnosis with the goal of infecting others — with those others' full knowledge — and prompting an immune response. If this is true, COVID partiers are — can you guess? Yes, covidots.



723 days of social and physical distancing

The Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner: Part LXIII

Steve Soreff, MD

Today is Friday, March 4, 2022 and it marks the end of my 108th week, the start of my 25th month, closing in on my 2nd year and my 723th day of social and physical distancing. I can see the end to it sight. No, it is not victory over COVID-19, but just learning to live with it. The notion of herd immunity, which was unheard of in beginning, is now becoming the new way of life. The idea is that COVID has become endemic not an epidemic. My journal and journey began on Friday, March 13, 2020. I am planning to end it in on Sunday, March 13, 2022. I ask for your help. Please, email your answer to this question-What I have I learned about yourself, your community ,your country and your world during the pandemic? Email soreffs15A@aol.com. Remember, this is my hope and my plan. The last time I has this burst of optimism it was eclipsed by Omicron. And, several of my readers suggested it was premature to end it. Let's see. COVID-19 is very tricky and not only plays by its own rules but also makes up new ones.

I will devote the remaining days until March 13th to addressing a number of relevant topics which have dominated the last 2 years. I see four overarching areas I have been focusing on. They are life in COVID-19 times, climate change, the assault on democracies, and racism-Black Lives Matter. What do you see? One underlying theme is all of these is increasing polarization within homes, locally, nationally and internationally. Now let's look back at the last two weeks.

Good day, it is Saturday, February 19, 2022. It was of day of learning. Peggy and I went on guided winter wildlife walk On the Marston Farm Recreational Area. It is amazing how much you can learn with a hike with informed, knowledgeable guides. The naturalists informed us about the area's flora and fauna. I am not sure if you can teach an old dog new tricks, but I am sure I am not too old to learn new things. Plus, in this COVID times, it was great to be outdoors without masks on. We hiked along the Little River. That is the same river where I do Tai Chi along in the next town over.



The Little River Trail with a view of the river

Later. I was home in time to Zoom to Torah Study, This week's portion dealt with the golden calf incident. It makes one ponder of what you need to see physically of G-d to have a belief. Just as I feeling good and safe, I got a call from my Israeli daughter. She is now recovering for COVID!!!! Wow, this very close to home.

Welcome to Sunday, February 20, 2022. There is an opening trends in many states and countries. There is talk of things with COVID coming down after the Omicron peak <https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#datatracker-home>. This is good news. But the COVID picture is still mixed. Yes, I went to a Zoom Purim spiel rehearsal since not ready for in person meetings. Yet, we had friends, who were COVID safe, over for Mexican Train. The sunset saluted Presidents' Day. Again, I am looking for hope and a better tomorrow.



Sunset over frozen Pawtuckaway Lake

Good morning, it is Monday, February 21, 2022 and also Presidents' Day. A quick note, in retirement everyday can be a holiday. However, I can say "Thank G-d, its Monday!". Wow, that is crazy. How can I say that? It is simple. This morning. I was back to my COVID sustaining schedule with prickle ball and Tai Chi. Both are outdoors with proper distancing. This level of social involvement is what I am comfortable with. What is going through my mind is that song *Wade in the Water*. Metaphorically, in the face of laxing COVID restrictions, I feel I am slowing wading into the water. I like this website <https://janetpanic.com/what-is-the->

meaning-behind-wade-in-the-water/ interpretation of that song, “It is believed that Harriet Tubman, who made thirteen trips to the South and helped free more than 70 people, used this song to warn slaves to get off the trail and into the water to prevent dogs—used by the slavers—from finding them.” Yes, we are wading into the uncharted new COVID rules waters. Just, wading.

Several things are on my mind. One is the ongoing Ukraine crisis. Shades of “peace in our time”, with the appeasement of Hitler. I check the news all day and night to see what happening. Two is the very troubling of banning of books and critical race material in schools and libraries. As one political cartoon said, “At least we are not burning them, yet”. Three there is the wave of redistricting and voter restrictions across the country. It shows fragility of democracy. And, fourth, there is good news. There is that the concept of global warming is finally being accepted around the world. Now will that acceptance lead to action to save the planet?

Hello, it is Tuesday, February 22, 2022. It is day of retreat , of Zoom and the lie of “The Lost Cause.” Today , I spent the day at home. Yes, it was a semi-retreat and it offered me a safe place to be. But, and there is that but again, my seclusion was made possible by Zoom. I went to Talmud and Gospel Studies, Israel for tutoring, and a meeting all by Zoom-thank you. Zoom. Then while exercising I watched on PBS the program, *POV: The Neutral Ground* <https://www.pbs.org/pov/pressroom/pov-neutral-ground-film-update/>. Although it started with showing the importance of removing Confederate statues in New Orleans, it brilliantly exposed the false idea that the Confederacy and succession were based on states’ rights. It demonstrated that the Civil War was fought to preserve slavery. It challenged the Southern idea that slavery was good and slave owners were benevolent. Those ideals are still held by many people even now.

On a sad note, Russia invaded an eastern part of the Ukraine. It is not peace in our time.

And, finally, my son, Barak, pointed out the great numbers message of today that it is both a palindrome and ambigram! And you ask, what is an ambigram? An ambigram is An ambigram a visual that is the same even upside down.

The day has arrived.

February 22nd 2022 (22/2/22) which falls on a Tuesday.

Happy TWOSDAY 

Did you know?

The date on Tuesday 22 February 2022 will be both a palindrome and an ambigram?
The date will read the same from left to right, from right to left AND upside down!

22022022

Good morning, it is Wednesday, February 23, 2022. I learned something yesterday that I want to tell you. Someone like me who spends a lot of time in front of a computer is called a mouse potato. Now that has an appeal 😊. Today ushers in a series of roller coaster weather. It is 50 to 60 degrees Fahrenheit now. It was great for pickle ball and Tai Chi outdoors. By Friday, there will be a snow. As I ventured out in town, I found very few folks wearing masks. And, today the state <https://www.nhpr.org/coronavirus-updates> dropped its indoor public location mask requirement. This was partially because the state 's COVID hospitalization rate has continued to decline. Now, that is good news. But I still feel safer at home and will wear a mask whenever I go indoors.

Hello. It is Thursday, February 24, 2022 and Russia invaded all of Ukraine. My son, Ben, old me a bad joke. How will World War IV be fought? With sticks and stone. Not funny. It says World War III will destroy the planet and its people. This is military bullying in the nuclear age. Prayers for the people of Ukraine. Nothing like war to make you forget about COVID-19.

My hearing aid broke but I got it fixed. Hearing is important. Now, I actually ask people to turn the volume down!! Beside hearing the birds sing outdoors, the maple sap cans are on the trees. Birds and sap are two signs of the coming Spring. However, the area's maple sap harvests are diminishing here. This is yet another sign of climate change.



Maple sap is running and spring is coming.

Another sign of the coming Spring was the emergence of season 4 of *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel* <https://www.cnn.com/2022/02/18/entertainment/marvelous-mrs-maisel-review/index.html>. Peggy and I enjoy the show and were glad to have it back.

Welcome to Friday, February 25, 2022. Two things dominated the day-snow and concerns about the Ukraine. It snowed like about a foot of light pretty snow today. Again, I did watch the field fill up with snow as I had nowhere to go. Retirement has its benefits. I got to shovel as it was my Planet Fitness for the day. A walk to get the mail was not only delightful but also proved the old U S Postal Service motto, “Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds” <https://about.usps.com/who-we-are/postal-history/mission-motto.pdf> was still applicable. In other words, when I did get to the mail box, we did have mail. As a loose association, my AOL chirps, “You got mail” when I open that website.



The road to the mail box

Meanwhile, all I could do was fret about the carnage in the Ukraine. I was like watching Hitler’s invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939 all over again. I did give money to the victims and held two 1 moments of silence in groups I attended via Zoom today for them. Only good thing was I not concerned with COVID.

Hello, it is Saturday, February 26, 2022. The sun is shining and the wood beckoning. The invasion of Ukraine is on my mind. After Torah Study, Peggy and I were joined by two good and close friends in a snowshoe to the White Birch Corridor. It was great to share our neighborhood wilderness. The conversations were inspiring. Each one of us found neat things to point out to group. We met the man who posted the land and we able to thank him for his permission to walk there. Yes, outdoors meant for the moment COVID was not even in the rear view mirror.



The group-sharing the White Birch Corridor

Good morning, it is Sunday, February 27, 2022. Guess what is on my mind? Yes, are right-defending UKRAINE. They are fighting the Russians, The world is trying to help. There is a hint of possible peace talk. I also realized I have relatives in the Czech Republic who have their bags packed. They fear a Russian invasion of their country. One interesting footnote to the invasion is this title of Atlantic article *How Zelensky Gave the World a Jewish Hero* <https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/how-zelensky-gave-the-world-a-jewish-hero/ar-AAUnKc8?ocid=msedgntp..> I am very proud of him and what he is doing.



Meanwhile the world is dramatically opening up. Many states, my town and my synagogue are dropping the mask mandates. It makes me uncomfortable, but it happening. Is this finally and really the beginning of the end!

Good morning, it is Monday, February 28, 2022, the last day of February The bitter cold wind meant a snowshoe in the wood rather than Tai Chi. A quick trip to Raymond demonstrated a complete lack people wearing masks even though the stores had prominent signs saying Masks Required. At the Dollar Tree store, 90% of the items now cost \$1.25. It is another clear evidence of inflation.

Welcome to Tuesday, March 1, 2022. Let me start with a riddle which will led to something else. What month do soldier hate most? The answer is March! Now the connection. While exercising, I watched the PBS: *American Experience: The Blinding of Isaac Woodard*. It told the story of Isaac Woodard, a Black army sergeant who in 1946 while returning to his South Carolina home was taken off a bus and beaten and blinded by the police. The event did rock the nation. It highlighted the contradiction of African-American fighting in World War II with white soldiers as equal to defeat racism of Hitler only to return home to segregation. This is yet another reason for Black Lives Matter.

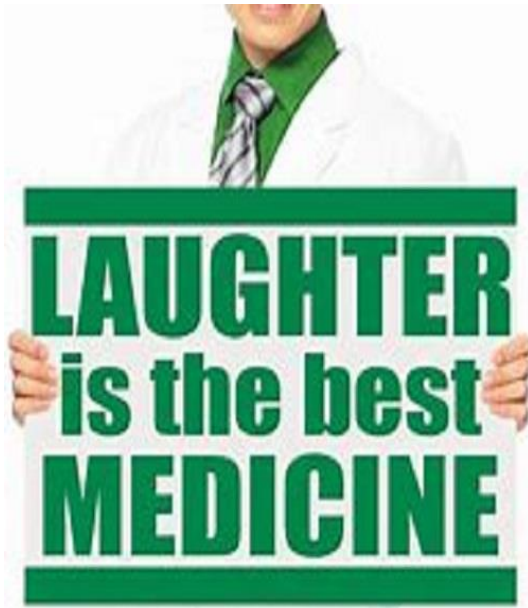
The wave or tide of concerns about COVID-19 is moving slowly out. At the State of the Union address tonight, it will be masks options. The CDC is going in that direction. Time magazine estimates that more than 90% of American have some level of immunity. COVID hospitalization are down. Yet, today also marks my 25th month of distancing. I can see the 2nd anniversary year date, just around the river bend. That is song in the Disney movie *Pocahontas*. Meanwhile, there is talk about another variant of Omicron <https://www.al.com/news/2022/02/ba2-omicron-variant-2-new-covid-symptoms-reported.html>. I am thinking, it is getting time for a big picture and review of the last 2 years.

Wow, it is Wednesday, March 2, 2022 and my preoccupation with the 2 year mark has found a home. Today this was the WMUR lead story, “Wednesday marks two years since first confirmed COVID-19 case in New Hampshire” <https://www.wmur.com/article/wednesday-two-years-first-confirmed-covid-19-case-new-hampshire-3-1-22/39289315>. It noted there have been a total of 298,626 COVID cases (21.96% of NH population) and 2,387 deaths in New Hampshire. Is this a milestone or a millstone? The Ukrainians are holding out. The Congress is unmasked. We are moving into uncharted waters on a well vaccinated ship.

Hello, it is Thursday, March 3, 2022 and the air cold and the wind hollowing. My trip to the Nottingham Historical Society was very productive. I am tracing a local family from its arrival from England around 1660 to the seacoast and then into my town. Once here I am following them through records and other documents in all their life events. That means birth, schooling, housing and death. It is a neat way of connecting the dots locally and at the museum. Meanwhile, few wear masks and you would not know there was pandemic.

Sadly, across the Atlantic, Russia is destroying Ukraine and killing its citizens. It is a modern remake of Hungary in 1956, *Soviets put a brutal end to Hungarian revolution* <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/soviets-put-brutal-end-to-hungarian-revolution>. Then and now, it is bullets against tanks. And the world looks on. You talk about an assault on democracy!! My prayers and hopes are with those there resisting. It is not fair. I want to scream.

Instead, let us try to laugh.



Did You Know

Franklin Pierce, NH's only president, was a strong supporter of the Ostend Manifesto which advocated the annexation of Cuba.

The name "Russia" is derived from the word "Rus" which was used to designate a loose federation of Eastern Slavic peoples around the time of the Vikings. The Vikings used the river systems between Scandinavia and the Caspian Sea as pathways for trade. The word "Rus" may be derived from "Rurik" a Viking leader. Most of the area of what is today European Russia was referred to as "Russkaya Zemla" or "Russian Land." Kiev was an early capitol of the territory.

Regular Humor

What do you call a pig with laryngitis? Disgruntled.
 Dad, are we pyromaniacs? Yes, we arson.
 If you're bad at haggling, you'll end up paying the price.
 Just so everyone's clear, I'm going to put my glasses on.
 A commander walks into a bar and orders everyone around.
 Never buy flowers from a monk. Only you can prevent florist friars.
 How much did the pirate pay to get his ears pierced? A buccaneer.
 My friends and I have named our band 'Duvet'. It's a cover band.
 Why is 'dark' spelled with a k and not c? Because you can't see in the dark.



COVID-19 Jokes

It is getting more and more difficult to find good, news COVID-19 jokes, It is hard to be funny after 2 years of the same ones.

Have scientists determined why cats can catch COVID? It's still a meow-stery.

What's the difference between working from home and working in an office? COVID.

What do all virus jokes have in common? They're catchy.

There has never been a better time to track down that person who has been avoiding you because they owe you \$20 from a drunken bet.



The 732 days of distancing

The Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner: Part LXIV

Steve Soreff, MD

Wow, it is Sunday, March 13, 2022. Would you believe two years ago on this very date I began The Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner? Today, marks the start of my 110th week, the middle of my 25th month, the 2nd anniversary and my 732th days of social and physical distancing. And, COVID willing, this will be my last Diary. As the snows of Winter are disappearing into the early signs of Spring, so has my social and physical distancing been dissolving into more and activities both in- and out- doors. I still wear my mask when indoors in most locations. And, I am still reluctant to eat inside restaurants. However, my world and the wide- world are beginning to open-up.



March 13 2020-2022

By now, my readers know that I am obsessed with numbers and love numerology. Therefore, I cannot miss the opportunity to acknowledge this is my 64th Diary. That is a

significant number me. I graduated Tufts University Class of 64. And it reminds me of the Beatles song, *When I'm 64* <https://www.songfacts.com/lyrics/the-beatles/when-im-64>. Here are some of the lyrics-“ I could be handy, mending a fuse, When your lights have gone, You can knit a sweater by the fireside, Sunday mornings go for a ride, Doing the garden, digging the weeds, Who could ask for more, Will you still need me, will you still feed me, When I'm sixty-four.”

I am not sure the Diary will be needed, but I know it has fulfilled its mission to chronicle daily COVID-19 times for 2 years. Thank you for joining me on this journey. Now let's look back on the last 2 weeks.



The 64th number of The Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner: Also, the colors of Tufts, brown and blue.

Good morning, it is Saturday, March 5, 2022 and everything is coming up roses-wow! Let me explain. Many good things happening. A cease fire for 2 Ukraine cities is a welcome but very small relief. Again, while exercising I watched on PBS Queen Elizabeth's Secret Agents <https://www.pbs.org/show/queen-elizabeths-secret-agents/> It was great viewing, educational and informative. And, as I in in the count do to end of the pandemic, I want to give another shut out to PBS as one of my major sustainers for the last 2 years.

Meanwhile, watching the news I learned that today was National Play Outdoors Day <http://playoutsideday.org/>. Wow, what is that? And the answer is from its website “National Play Outside Day is the first Saturday of every month. The next one is Saturday, March 5th, 2022. What is National Play Outside Day? On the first Saturday of the month, everybody in the nation plays outside. This includes kids, parents, adults, families and grandparents. There are no scheduled events or activities, just go outside and do something fun with your friends and family”. Not only is it a beautiful day out but also playing outdoors has been one of my great sustainers throughout the pandemic.

And more roses are coming up. My daughter, Matana, from Tel Aviv and son, Barak, from Boston coming for lunch. Yippppppppppppppppeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee More evidence of the world opening up. And, it was a great visit and a chance to how they doing, And they are doing well 😊.



Barak, me and Matana

It is Saturday night and I want to reflect on the pandemic. One quick thank you to the Diary readers. Already, some of them have begun to send me their lessons learned. I will share these with you soon. My first lesson learned is that the steps I took in distancing have meant that Peggy nor myself have had COVID. As of right now, we did the right thing. Being cautious has paid off.

As a corollary of doing the right thing meant that we did get vaccinated times 3. I do know family members who did get COVID. But, they were vaccinated. And as a result of being vaccinated, their COVID sickness were mild. Vaccination is a good thing,

Welcome to Sunday, March 6, 2022. It is about 60 degrees and the outdoors beckoned. And I answered. I snowshoed with Peggy across the snow covered Pawtuckaway Lake and completed the loop by cutting through the woods. That brings me to one of big lessons I have learned in the pandemic. It is a deeper and greater appreciation of my neighborhood wilderness in all seasons. The Winter held many treats <https://forumhome.org/patterns-in-the-winter-wilderness-a-photo-essay-p34147-105.htm>. But any time, the lake and woods were my salvation <https://forumhome.org/patterns-in-the-neighborhood-wilderness-p32796-105.htm>.



Snow covered Pawtuckaway Lake with Mount Pawtuckaway looking on

Switching gears on lessons, here is some of “silver linings” of the pandemic from the Reader’s Digest March-April 2022 issue. It includes the following gains during the prolonged lockdown: a romantic involvement, learning to play a musical instrument, new careers, and new activities like yoga and bike riding. What “silver linings” have you discovered?

Hello, it is Monday, March 7, 2022 and my sustaining Monday routine fulfilled its gift of places to go and things to do. It was a short hike, some pickleball and Tai Chi. A Zoom meeting not only confirmed the benefits of it but also showed the growing sense of Zoom fatigue in the participants. We all want more personal in-person events but are still reluctant to fully wade into the water.

Meanwhile, the readers' lessons are coming in. Thank you. Two distinct types of ideas have been offered. The first is that the government failed us. This reader said it this way. "I read a book on the 1918 pandemic which helped me understand both the nature of pandemics and the propensity for mutations to naturally occur. For a virus to 'survive' it must become more infectious, but usually at the cost of decreased morbidity. I could see it happening with Covid, and knew things were almost over... My feeling now is that my government failed us. Too cautious."

The other lesson was voiced by a couple of folks said people are idiots. It was based on their resistance to masks and the vaccine. One reader reported this handmade sign in a Texas restaurant. "'Thank you for not wearing a mask. Wearing a mask makes you look like an uninformed, subservient idiots. But we still love you.'

The bad grammar is copied exactly; I took a photo because I was in awe at the ignorance and bad manners." The million COVID deaths in the United States is testimony that that opinion.

Good morning, it is Tuesday, March 8, 2022. The wind is blowing like crazy here. Here is one bit of good but ridiculous news. Yes, yesterday "Senate passes Emmett Till Antilynching Act of 2022, sending bill to Biden for his signature"
<https://www.cnn.com/2022/03/07/politics/senate-passes-antilynching-law/index.html>. Finally, **Black Lives and Deaths do Matter. But it is amazing that it failed over 200 times to pass before!**

Today is election day in Nottingham. This is where the rubber meets the road in testing democracy. Yes, the people can be heard. There are a number of citizen petitions in the form of Warrant Articles. That they are on the ballot demonstrates citizen can and do have a voice. I spend the morning with my Tuesday holy trinity: Talmud and Gospel Study and tutoring in Israel-all by Zoom.

Hello, now I want to connect two big dots-the invasion of the Ukraine and Climate Change. Both are fueled (bad but appropriate choice of words) by fossil fuels. Russia geopolitical economic power comes from its oil production. Oil use causes global warming. As the latest [UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change \(IPCC\)](https://www.conservation.org/blog/ipcc-report-climate-change-could-soon-outpace-humanitys-ability-to-adapt) <https://www.conservation.org/blog/ipcc-report-climate-change-could-soon-outpace-humanitys-ability-to-adapt> says "Climate change could soon outpace humanity's ability to adapt." It forces us to reckon with a stark reality. The crisis is here, and it is all around us.. The answer to both issues Russia aggression and Climate Change are renewal sources of energy-NOW!!!!!!

Hello, it is Wednesday, March 9, 2022 and it is warm out. I continue my routine of outdoors pickle ball and Tai Chi. However, by the afternoon it is snowing. Within several days it went from warm to winter to mud season to cold and snowing. That reminds of the classic New England weather cliché, "if do not like the weather, wait a minute and it will change".

But, and yes again there is the that pesky but, I want to talk about the local election yesterday. There was a good and steady flow of voters. It was masks optional and few actually wore them. What was most interesting was the mood of those who came there. There was sense of them smiling. They smiled to several reasons. First, finally, they could be out in public without a mask. Second, they felt an engagement in their community. With the vote they felt they counted. And in fact, they did. In one race only 19 votes separated the winner from the loser. Third, there was the idea doing your civic duty. As one of the Nottingham Selectman once said, “ democracy is a participation sport”. And, fourth, it was a great reunion. I saw, greeted and talked with folks I had not seem for seemingly years. Just, maybe we are emerging from the pandemic?

Back to exercising while watching, I saw Ken Burn’s The National Parks: America’s Best Idea <https://www.usatoday.com/story/travel/2016/04/14/ken-burns-national-parks-americas-best-idea/82499256/>. And back to lessons of the COVID-19, it is an appreciation for Public Broadcasting Service (PBS)<https://www.pbs.org>. It has been a sustainer, entertainer, educator, and informer for these 2 years. Coupled with working out on my elliptical and my stationary bike while viewing it, PBS has helped me remain fit and weight down especially during really bad weather. This is a big shout out to PBS.



Public Broadcasting Service

Hello, it is Thursday, March 10, 2022 and a day to come out of my isolation. I went to the Nottingham Historical Society and did some neat family history research. Yes, I did wear my mask, there. Then I went for a haircut. It was a real haircut from a real barber, Carlene. Before the haircut, I looked like either Bernie Sanders, Albert Einstein or David Ben-Gurion. For 2 years, Peggy has been cutting my hair, It felt good to have a professional haircut. And there were magazines in the waiting area., too. However, there was sticker shock, My last haircut there 2 years ago was \$13. Today I paid \$20 plus tip. I rounded out the day with a talk at synagogue entitled *A Rabbi and Priest Walk into Another Bar* presented by Rabbi Peter Levy

and the Reverend Ray Bonin. It was a course in applied interfaith connections and learning. It was Talmud and Gospel classes rolled into one teaching moment..

I also heard about Delta-Omicron <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/science/covid-deltacron-delta-omicron-variant-latest-b2032811.html>. This is a variant which is a hybrid of the two. I hope it does not rain on my exiting distancing parade.



Carlene's Barber Shop

Welcome to Friday, March 11, 2022 and I am about to come full circle. What does that mean? I'll tell you. Let me take you back of two years ago, This is what I wrote in first Diary entry <https://forumhome.org/the-diary-of-a-reluctant-social-distance-extrovert-prisoner-p32507-1.htm> . “It is Saturday, March 14, 2020 (Pi day) 10:45 AM. While listening to *Wait Wait... Don't Tell Me*, I am entering into my first morning of my confinement. To be exact this self-imposed prison sentence of an undetermined sentence began on Friday night, March 13, 2020 (Friday the thirteenth) at 10:12 PM.

Upon returning home from attending Friday night services at Etz Hayim Synagogue and struggling with the toilet paper hoarding crowds in the supermarket, my partner greeted me with request aka ultimatum. She suggested we immediately commence a strict social distancing program for the next two weeks. “ And, so that night I officially started social and physical distancing.

Tonight, to complete the circle, I went back to in-person to my synagogue's Friday night services. Yes, I still did wear a mask, there. But I was there in person, not Zoom. Folks attending the service remembered that it was almost to the day, 2 years ago that we actually did break bread after the prayer service. Okay, there were still some COVID precautions. That meant only one person with gloves on, could actually serve the food. But, we again after a gap of 2 years did break bread together.

Earlier, today, we still did our outdoor pickleball and Tai Chi. I showed them my haircut and they liked it. But, the birds were singing. The sun was shining. The air was warm. It felt like Spring and hope was abounding despite the forecasted weekend snow. Peggy actually went inside to the grocery store. It is almost a 'normal' day.

Good morning, it is Saturday, March 12, 2022. The weather is mixed precipitation As we approach Daylight Saving time, *Spring ahead; Fall back*, March 13 and actual the Spring itself March 20, the character of the snow storms has begun to change. What does that mean? Let me

show you. In the evening Wednesday, March 9 and into the next morning, we had a moderate snow fall. It clearly met the criteria for needing to be shoveled and plowed. In fact , I shoveled the walk ways and the deck and the town did plow our road. Fast forward to that same late afternoon, and most of the snow was gone. The longer hours of sunlight and the warmer temperatures played a role. The point is that March snow often does not last long.



Sunrise Thursday, March 10 at 7:34 AM over our front yard

There is a metaphor here. Just like the snow ‘disappeared’, so have all the rules of the pandemic changed, been removed or ignored. Masks required has become masks optional. It seems the fears of COVID are in public’s mind are nonexistent. In the stores, few if ever wear masks. Schools have gone back to ‘normal’.

Peggy and I completed the day with a “date night” by going to the auditions <https://forumhome.org/auditions-for-becky-rule-play-saturday-march-p36036-129.htm> for parts in Rebecca Rule’s play called *Town Meeting*. Yet, more evidence piece of our lives opening up.

Enough, let us laugh!



Did You Know

The Russian word for "peace" is "mir" which is also Russian for "world".

Do You Remember

Pulling in to a full service gas station, buying high test at \$.339, having your oil checked, your windshield washed and getting double (or triple) S & H Green Stamps?

Regular Humor

Why is it unwise to share your secrets with a clock? Well, time will tell.

When I told my contractor I didn't want carpeted steps, they gave me a blank stare.

Bono and The Edge walk into a Dublin bar and the bartender says, "Oh no, not U2 again."

Prison is just one word to you, but for some people, it's a whole sentence.

Scientists got together to study the effects of alcohol on a person's walk, and the result was staggering.

I'm trying to organize a hide and seek tournament, but good players are really hard to find.

I got over my addiction to chocolate, marshmallows, and nuts. I won't lie, it was a rocky road.

What do you say to comfort a friend who's struggling with grammar? There, their, they're.

I went to the toy store and asked the assistant where the Schwarzenegger dolls are and he replied, "Aisle B, back."

COVID-19 Humor

Well, it's new variant day



AGAIN

Some classic early pandemic jokes,

Let's face it: summer body just isn't going to be a thing in 2020. With the country on lockdown and nothing to do but watch Netflix and stuff our faces with snacks and drink the days away, Summer 2020 is going to be more about appreciating a solid beer belly

Everyone is laughing at the quarantine jokes as we try to deal with personal and economic anxiety, let's just hope that we're the ones who ultimately have the last laugh.

One thing every man in the country realizes during these tough times is just how important your relationship with the barber is. When stay-at-home orders are finally lifted, there's going to be a bunch of homeless-looking dudes rolling out of their crib desperate for a lineup.

This may have been the worst and longest April Fool's joke ever.

At times like this, it's great to be an introverted couch potato. You can go about your everyday life while others complain about being bored and lonely. And you get to do all of that while still being a hero.

*Thank
You,
Readers!*



Steve sees the Diary in the rearview mirror

The Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Ex-Prisoner: Part LXV: Looking back at it in the Rearview Mirror

Steve Soreff, MD

Yes, you are wondering what I am doing now with the Diary? Great question-thanks. I did officially end the Diary on Sunday, March 13, 2022. I am no longer a prisoner. Yippee. [This is what I said then](#) “Wow, it is Sunday, March 13, 2022. Would you believe two years ago on this very date I began The Diary of a Reluctant Social Distance Extrovert Prisoner? Today, marks the start of my 110th week, the middle of my 25th month, the 2nd anniversary, and my 732nd day of social and physical distancing. And, COVID willing, this will be my last Diary.” But, and then again my mischievous but, I wanted to see the pandemic through the rearview mirror and thank the folks that made the Diary possible. This is also a retro-perspective of the whole experience.

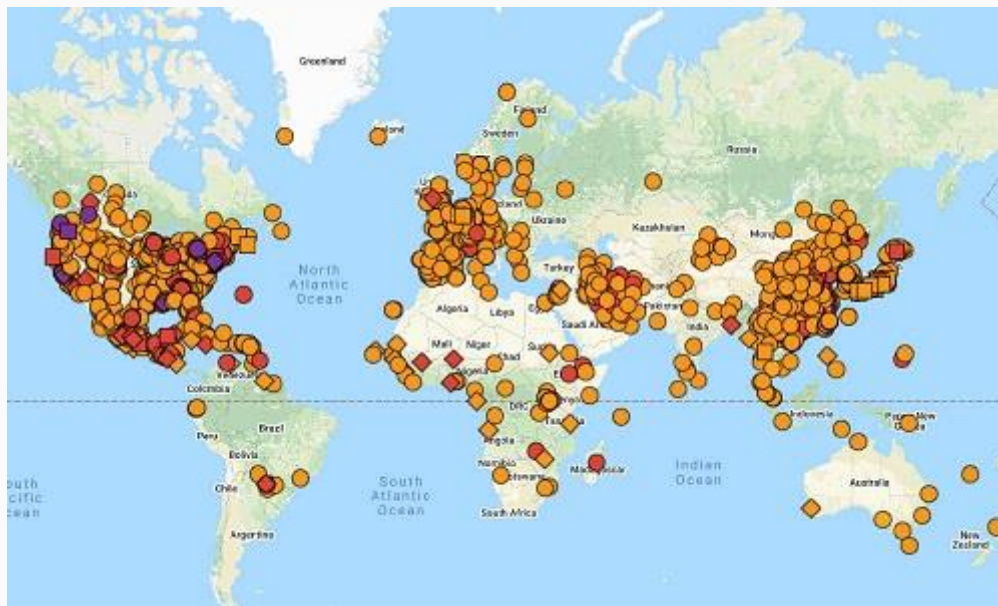
First of all, I want to say thank you to all those who have contributed over the last two years. Several folks have supplied me with material for both Regular and COVID -19 Humor sections, Valerie Chapman has been a constant source of jokes under the banner, “Today’s bad joke”. She would email them to me on a regular basis. Elaine Schmottlach furnished me with wit, wisdom, and humor. Romeo Danais provided some neat pun lists. Bill Gannett proved to be the constant supplier of astonishing facts that made up the regular *Did You Know* section. My primary editing and publishing support came from Elizabeth (Liz) Bulkley along with Lucy Edwards. Their guidance, encouragement, and corrective suggestions have sustained me through 732 days and nights of writing. And I am in deep gratitude, to [The Forum](#), who made this Diary

possible. Finally, a huge hug and kiss thank my partner, Peggy Tucker, for her support of my daily obsession to record and document daily document my two-year COVID-19 prison sentence.

Second, I would like to tally up the scorecard for the **4 areas** I have been following for 2 years. They are COVID-19, the reason for my prisoner ship, racial injustice aka Black Lives Matter (BLM), climate change, and the assault on democracy. Let me look at each one individually and then see if I can connect some of the dots amongst them.

Here is the global toll of the COVID-19 according to the United Nations [World Health Organization](#) (WHO) as of April 4, 2022: 489 779 062 Confirmed cases, 6 152 095 Confirmed deaths, and 11 054 362 790 Vaccine doses administered. Sadly, as I end the Diary, [WHO](#) revised its COVID death total. “New estimates from the World Health Organization (WHO) show that the full death toll associated directly or indirectly with the COVID-19 pandemic (described as “excess mortality”) between 1 January 2020 and 31 December 2021 was approximately 14.9 million (range 13.3 million to 16.6 million)”. And yes, it is truly a pandemic. Even now China is in the midst of a surge. As of the April 25 issue, of *Time* magazine “Roughly 1 million people have died of COVID-19 in the U.S.”.

In the United States, people are behaving like it is over. But the jury may be still out. Too many people including in-flight pilots cheered when the courts overturned the CDC in-flight mask mandate. How have we reached this point to say, “it is over?” If we have credit is due for the rapid development and then swift deployment of the vaccines. Another factor was the appearance of the Omicron. Although more contagious than the Delta form of COVID-19, it was less lethal and helped to develop the possibility of herd immunity.



Map of COVID-19 pandemic

As for racial injustice aka Black Lives Matter (BLM), there has been some gains. In the middle of a pandemic, people around the world stand up and said, “we’re not going to take it anymore!” Sadly, it took a video of a policeman’s knee-on-neck murder to awake the ignoring public to action. But they did. An antilynching law was passed and signed. Yet watching some of the US Senators publicly interview or more like interrogate Supreme Court nominee, Ketanji Brown Jackson, it almost looked like an oral lynching. Some Confederate statues came down. And it was recognized and is being changed that some US military bases were named for Confederate generals. Who knew? In the words of Robert Frost, “promises to keep, And miles to go before I sleep”.

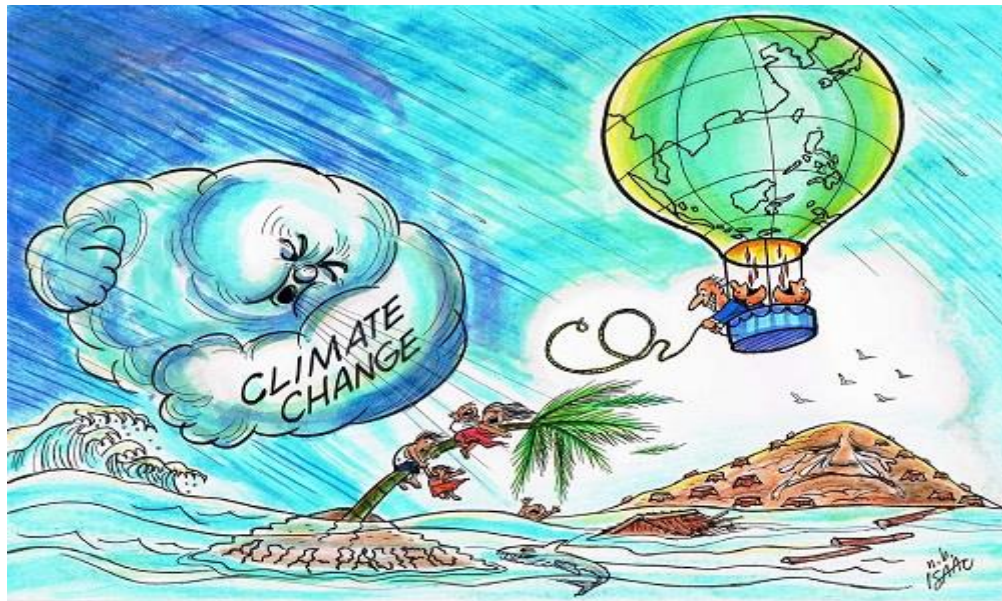


Black Lives Still Matter

As for climate change, I have a foreboding feeling that all the rhetoric is correct but the actions speak louder than words. Islands and low lands are being flooded by rising sea levels. The poles are melting but not like that line for the *Wizard of Oz*. Forest fires and droughts are worldwide. Weather extremes are here whether we like them or not. I fear we have passed the predicted tipping point. I recently learned the snows of Mount Kilimanjaro, will soon be a thing of the past and will only be found in literature, due to global warming. A warmer Indian Ocean translates into lower snowfall there and is part of the reason their glaciers, there are rapidly disappearing. The PBS program, [Climate Change: The Facts](#) nicely captures the problem and the promise of a warming planet.

I did see a ray of hope for an interesting source. Again, the April 25 issue of *Time* magazine featured industries and businesses entitled “How business took on the climate fight”. It is a bit of irony that capitalism, which in many ways caused and promoted fossil fuel use, is now recognizing and dealing with climate change. Despite my rather pessimistic appraisal of the

climate battle, I still will recommend individual effects to make a difference. That means reducing, reusing, and recycling. We will continue to compost and separate the garbage.



Climate Change

The assault on democracy has no more dramatic and tragic example than Russia's invasion of Ukraine. People are dying defending democratic ideas and ideals. In this country, states have been dis-enfranchising groups of voters. Globally, dictators have found ways to remain in power. One of the cornerstones of the democratic processes has been people's ability to compromise and work together. Locally, as well as in state and federally governments polarization has intensified. Working across the aisle has been disappearing so there are islands in the Pacific Ocean, compromising and working together in a sea of discord. Hence the assault continues. That makes our participation and voting more imperative.



The Russian invasion of Ukraine

I will move to yet another perspective called **the world will never be the same**. In addition to the huge death toll of COVID-19 itself, deaths resulting from those who did not get treatment because of the hospital beds filled with COVID patients and those COVID survivors living with prolonged effects of the virus, the pandemic will have a major impact on the world going forward. Let us look at some of them.

Look at literature to start. I am listening to Daniel Silva's latest book, *The Cellist*. It is a good story, but the plot is set against the background and backdrop of the pandemic. Certain things happened in the story because of COVID-19. Switching to the realm of comedy, remember the several weeks after 9/11? During that time all the late-night comedy shows were off the air. Slowly, they emerged to the tune of "is it safe to laugh, now?". Slowly, now comedians are giving voices and developing routines for funny things about the pandemic. One comic did a whole funny set on getting and recovering from COVID-19. And, of course, I have been finding COVID's funny bones and putting them in my Diary, ever since I started it.

In work, hybrid in many jobs is here to stay. It has been accepted by some management people, that working from home can be productive. In education, there is a headlong rush to return to in-person learning. As a teacher, I still prefer to be in front of a class than on a computer. As for committee meetings, the jury is still out. Many folks have discovered that driving to committee meetings takes a lot of time and that Zoom sessions can be productive. One group, I am in, preferred to keep meeting by Zoom.

One thing I gained from distancing is my enhanced appreciation and love of PBS. I enjoy exercising while watching many of its shows. Ken Burn's *Benjamin Franklin* <https://www.pbs.org/kenburns/benjamin-franklin/> has increased my viewing opportunities. And yet, I still prefer my outdoor Tai Chi gang and pickleball games to going back indoors. Here are several more items since I left my COVID prison. First, on Tuesday, April 12, 2022, I got my second booster shot. Yes, I feel better protected. But, I still have many self-imposed restrictions. I do not eat inside restaurants. Consequently, I skipped my synagogue's second seder.

Yet, my newfound freedom remains a quandary and an enigma to my friends and myself. We are still reluctantly slowly wading in the water of activities. And we are cautious for good reason. Daily we hear reports of family and friends who either have gotten COVID or be exposed to someone who has COVID. It is often bad news and the good news situation. The bad news is the person with COVID had been vaccinated. The good news is the case is 'mild', does not require hospitalization, and they did not die of COVID.

As U.S. infectious disease expert [Dr. Anthony Fauci](#) said on April 29, 2022, "It is unlikely the United States will ever eliminate COVID-19, he said, but the nation should strive to control the virus and get out of the acute pandemic phase". It is like *The Song That Never Ends* "This is the song that never ends. It just goes on and on, my friend. Some people started singing it, not knowing what it was. And, they'll continue singing it forever, just because This is the song that never ends..." Meanwhile, some folks who were very sick with COVID-19, now have long-term ongoing physical problems. They remain prisoners of COVID in other ways.

How to say goodbye. Wish I could echo General MacArthur's sentiments about COVID-19 when he in said, in a different context, "**Old soldiers never die they just fade away.**" I do

not see COVID-19 just fading away. There is another booster shot this summer. COVID will continue to shape how I live. Enough, let's laugh.



Did You Know

Charlie Chaplin once entered a "Charlie Chaplin Look-alike Contest" and came in third.

The date of Easter is set as the first Sunday after the first full moon following the vernal equinox. This year, Easter is about as late as it can get. If the full moon occurs on a Sunday, Easter is celebrated on the following Sunday. The Orthodox Easter is set in accordance with the Julian calendar, and is often on a different date. The two Easters will next occur on the same Sunday in 2025.

Bachelor's buttons (centaurea, cornflower) got their nickname because it was fashionable for young men to place one or more in their buttonholes.

Regular Humor

Why is it unwise to share your secrets with a clock? Well, time will tell.

When I told my contractor I didn't want carpeted steps, they gave me a blank stare.

I'm trying to organize a hide-and-seek tournament, but good players are really hard to find.

Scientists got together to study the effects of alcohol on a person's walk, and the result was staggering.

What did the surgeon say to the patient who insisted on closing up their own incision? Suture self.

Why is 'dark' spelled with a k and not c? Because you can't c in the dark.

COVID-19 Jokes

If I get quarantined for two weeks with my wife and I die. I can assure you it was not the virus that killed me.

My body has absorbed so much soap and disinfectant lately, now when I pee I clean the toilet.

Do you remember all those Sundays when you just wanted the weekend to go on forever? Well, wish granted

During self-isolation..

Dogs: "Oh My god, you're here all day and this is the best as I can love you, see you, be with you and follow you! I am so excited because you are the greatest and I love you being here so much!"

Cats: "What the hell are you still doing here?"

The science community has figured out that the spread of Coronavirus is based solely on two things.

1. How dense the population is.
2. How dense the population is.



This disaster ends when people listen to scientists

