



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

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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 Schmotlach 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

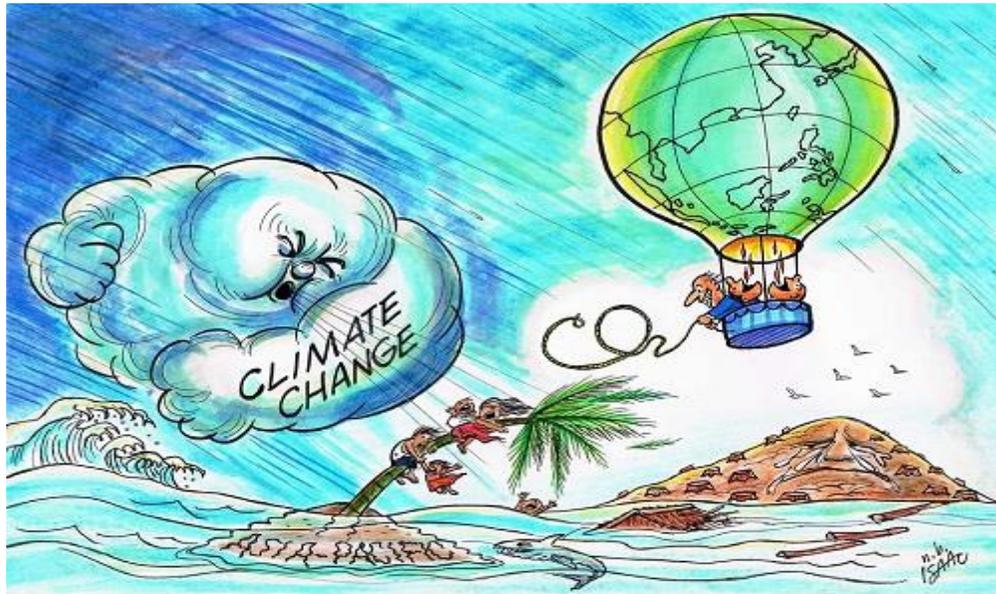
action. But they did. An antilynching law was passed and signed. Yet watching some of the US Senators publicly interview or more like interrogate Supreme Court nominee, Ketanji Brown Jackson, it almost looked like an oral lynching. Some Confederate statues came down. And it was recognized and is being 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

