



Season's Greetings from Holly and Matt

What a year! More like a hit and run: a worldwide pandemic, months of protests about police violence against Black people, and a crazy election season.

Adjusting to the New "Normal"

At first, Holly moped around muttering, "Our leaders are morons. We're all gonna die." But we soon realized how truly lucky we are. First, we appreciate each other as "pandemic partners." We're also fortunate to be introverted retirees, so the pandemic didn't change our day-to-day lives much. We've been uber careful -- other than medical stuff, neither of us has been in a building outside our home since mid-March. (We even got drive-through flu shots.) Matt has morphed into "grocery man" -- ordering groceries online (after editing in Emacs, of course) and picking them up curbside. Holly is the disinfectant lady for perishables, as well as our hairdresser. One upside of the pandemic is less traffic and easier parking, so we are



Matt Gets a Hair Cut

exploring different parts of Austin during our morning walks. Oh, then there's our weekly Vietnamese take-out; hey, when you're preparing three meals a day, yummy take-out food is exciting!



December, 2020

New Purchase Rescues Holly's Sanity

After dithering for months, Holly finally bought herself a fancy new sewing machine just before the shutdown. Quilting and Netflix have saved what little of her sanity is left. Her volunteer activities either stopped or went virtual. She continued making quilts for



One of Holly's New Quilts

Project Linus, as well as one commissioned by her sister-in-law, Candice. Holly also sewed face masks for a nursing home and made encouraging "care cards" and phone calls to isolated residents of Foundation Communities, a housing non-profit we support.

Despite her love/hate relationship with Zoom, she appreciated her online spirituality group, Weight Watcher meetings, and happy hours.

Matt Enjoys Semi-Retirement

Matt has enjoyed his first calendar year of retirement -- well, semi-retirement, as he continues to stay reasonably busy with contract work. He feels very fortunate to play pickleball with the same guy a couple of times a week, outdoors, since before the pandemic -- big fun and good competitive matches. His partner is a great sport and they're both careful about playing safely. Matt is a champion napper, enjoys reading novels (mysteries etc.), and sort of enjoys watching Texas football and basketball (in spite of the disappointments). Of course, there are all



Matt Enjoying Nature on a Neighborhood Walk

those hours on the web (already decreasing now that the big election is over). Matt enjoyed seeing a research paper that used the term "Kaufmann-ness". Yes, Matt is now a condition.

Google "kills the Kaufmann-ness".

Travel—and Staying Home

We were fortunate that Brian (Matt's stepbrother) and Andy (his girlfriend -- she's Brian's girlfriend, not Matt's, just to be clear) visited just before the shutdown. And in February, Holly and her friend Freida returned to Holden Village, in Washington -- where they met 40 years ago -- for a women's retreat.



Matt and Brian



Freida and Holly

However, the summer was a different story. Instead of traveling to Northumberland, as we had planned, we were sweating it out in Texas and had to content ourselves with watching episodes of *Vera*, which was filmed there. We didn't risk a trip to California either.

We've kept in touch with friends via Zoom (we even had a Zoom happy hour with friends in England!) and phone calls, as well as a few socially-distant walks and small get-togethers outdoors.

Politics

We were much more politically active than usual this year. Matt paid attention to news and commentary on electoral-vote.com and signed a lot of petitions. We both wrote get-out-the-vote letters for VoteForward. With her Undoing White Supremacy group, Holly advocated at city council to reallocate local police funding. She also wrote many, many angry letters to Congress.



Holly at a Virtual Protest

The Health Report

Our health is good. (We're getting it why old people like to talk about their health. Sheesh, Matt turned 68 this month and Holly is now on Medicare!) We each lost about 20 pounds during the shutdown and Holly has kept hers off, thanks to Weight Watchers. After 30 years of struggling with insomnia, Holly tried Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia and she is now sleeping better with almost no medications. Our aches and pains are reasonably few and manageable, though Matt's new motto is, "It's always something."

Kick 2020 to the Curb

We're thrilled that a vaccine might be available in the coming year and are hopeful about a new administration, but we don't want to forget what we learned this year: to appreciate the front-line workers who make life possible, to address the racial disparities that plague so many Americans, and to learn how to talk across our political divides. We appreciate all our friends and family who encouraged and supported us through this challenging year. Surely 2021 will be better. . .

