

Covid-19 diary, 2021

January 1, 2021

[David P Gelles @gelles](#) December was the deadliest month of the pandemic

Covid-19 Deaths in the US

Jan 0

Feb 1

Mar 5,277

April 60,738

May 41,703

Jun 20,112

July 26,446

Aug 29,532

Sep 23,418

Oct 23,974

Nov 36,964

Dec 77,572

I attended a bit of the local Alcathon this morning, a couple of hours hosted by the Saturday morning women's meeting. It was on the 9th step, which continues to plague me, because I'm not sure if I ever apologized properly to Ann for my defects as a partner. Maybe I should ask someone to work with me on that, or maybe I should start by asking Ann if she would like me to apologize at this late date, 38 years on.

It's good to turn the page on 2020, but of course we still have all the problems we had yesterday, so it's not as comforting as one would hope.

We're reading the newsletter from CCRC where we're on the waiting list and comparing that with the NJ vaccination plan. It looks as though people in the group living sections were vaccinated last week, while the other folks may be in the same phase as Henry and me, the one for people over 65. Yup, that's 1C, and we won't be there for some time.

New Year's Day is always kind of an odd day, and today was no exception. I got to play with Evan for a while before the Alcathon. Afterwards, I found

myself feeling kind of down because of the continuing presence of all our problems -- well, I'm not going to enumerate them. But if there's anything I've learned in the past few months, it's that when I'm down, it's worth checking to see if I'm tired -- and I was, so I took a nice long nap and woke up feeling a lot better.

The iMac I ordered in early December is due to arrive on Monday, and that'll keep me busy for a few days. I watched the end of the Thin Man movie I started last night, and then a new episode of Doctor Who -- not the Daleks again!

Tomorrow and Sunday I'll be text banking for Georgia again. Uh-oh, do I start teaching with Angie as soon as Tuesday? I don't feel ready!

Saturday, January 2

I hosted the Saturday morning AA meeting, and enjoyed it. Then a notice popped up that they were giving out extra names for texting at Fair Fight, and even though it isn't my shift, I clicked -- and got 300 names to send texts to. And they were gone within minutes! I have a proper shift at 4pm today, but this way I got to do some extras. The folks in Georgia must be pretty well saturated by now, so I don't expect much more than opt outs ... though I was just able to give the Voter Protection Hotline number to someone who wondered whether there would be security at the polls on voting day.

I just did my stretches and some PT exercises, and I'm about to go for a walk. It's just over 50 degrees out, and sunny! ... and what a lovely walk it was.

I'm just watching the zoom orientation for my Fair Fight texting session. There are 12 pages worth of people there, so that's as many as 300 people ready to start texting in about 5 minutes. How many names? It's so suspenseful. Only 220! A quiet shift. Glad I snarfed those 300 earlier today.

[Keith Boykin @keithboykin](#) Four Republican elected officials (1. Dick Hinch, 2. Luke Letlow, 3. Ben Chafin and 4. Mike Reese) have died in the past few

weeks after contracting coronavirus/Covid. And, of course, former Republican presidential candidate Herman Cain last summer.

This could be happening to Democrats as well, of course, but I think most Democrats, elected or not, have been more likely to follow the advice of public health experts.

Sunday, January 3

The US is up to 4.2 million doses of vaccine administered. Progress seems slow, but I'm glad at least to see the number continuing to increase.

More than 350K people have now died in the US from this virus.

I'm glad I made it outside yesterday, because it's gray and chilly today, with some mixed precipitation. There are storms in the area, but I don't think we're getting hit here.

[Abraar Karan @AbraarKaran](#) [practicing medicine in Boston]. Working a stretch of shifts Patient after patient suffering from loneliness, social disconnectedness— serious contributors to other problems, such as substance abuse & suicidality. Some said they still hesitated to come in bc they didn't want to take up space. [#covid19](#)

I enjoy the current use of "flexing" and "flex" to mean, I guess, showing off, showing your power. (Hey, showing off, showing up, and showing out -- there's a challenge for students of English.)

I just put on my weighted vest and walked some stairs -- down to 25, up to 50, down to 25, then back home to 33. Wow, that's one hell of an aerobic workout for me. I haven't done it in months and months -- since last spring, I think -- and I clearly need it. I take a lot of walks, but this was significantly more demanding.

Daniel Griffin MD PhD @DanielGriffinMD [A newly published papers shows that] Patients with a high viral load on admission (Ct < 22) had a significantly greater odds of mortality (OR 4.2).

Dr. Griffin (along with other doctors, I'm sure) has been saying that he wants Ct values from PCR tests administered to covid patients, and this new paper supports his wish for that information.

Washington Post: President Trump urged fellow Republican Brad Raffensperger, the Georgia secretary of state, to “find” enough votes to overturn his defeat in an extraordinary one-hour phone call Saturday that election experts said raised legal questions. / The Washington Post obtained a recording of the conversation in which Trump alternately berated Raffensperger, tried to flatter him, begged him to act and threatened him with vague criminal consequences if the secretary of state refused to pursue his false claims, at one point warning that Raffensperger was taking “a big risk.”

I listened to excerpts of this call, and it's just as bad as you would think. Criminal, anti-democratic -- Trump sounds like a mob boss giving instructions to the politicians he owns.

I'm signed in, once again, to a kickoff session before we start texting for Fair Fight. There are a couple of hundred people here; other groups have been texting all day. Wow, less than 200 names. This'll be quick.

Michael Beschloss @BeschlossDC Can you imagine how many calls like this he might have made over the past four years that we don't yet know about?

[Noah Bookbinder @NoahBookbinder](#) The President of the United States has been caught on tape trying to rig a presidential election. This is a low point in American history and unquestionably impeachable conduct. It is incontrovertible and devastating. Congress must act immediately.

Could Congress actually get an impeachment together in 16 days?? I guess they couldn't get it to the Senate, but the House could act. That would be wild.

[Joshua Matz @JoshuaMatz8](#) I'm a lawyer who worked on the impeachment. Trump was charged with a plot to subvert democratic elections and sabotage checks & balances. We \*expressly\* alleged this

was a pattern in his behavior. And we \*expressly\* urged removal because it was clear he'd attack democracy again.

Yes they did. I clearly remember that being a centerpiece of Adam Schiff's closing argument.

[Chris Murphy @ChrisMurphyCT](#) It's important to understand the context of the "Listen, all I want to do is this, I just want to find 11,780 votes" line. It comes 40 min into the call, after Raffensperger has destroyed each fraud claim, and right after Trump makes the reference to jail time.

[Chris Murphy @ChrisMurphyCT](#) At the end of the call, the President of the United States repeatedly asks for access to voter data that he knows is barred to him by law. He wants access to the data through a quiet, back door agreement. That's a big deal in and of itself.

[Carl Bernstein @carlbernstein](#) In any other conceivable moment in US history, this tape would result in the leadership of both parties demanding the immediate resignation of the President of the United States.

Monday, January 4

I haven't looked at the coronavirus world map for a while. They've added a new color to highlight the countries with the most cases, and the US is the biggest splotch of maroon on the map, followed by Sweden, the UK, Portugal, the Netherlands, the Baltic states, a few central European countries, and a few more. Lots of countries are colored red and orange, including Canada, most of Europe, Russia, South Africa, and much of South America. That is a lot of hot spots. They say at least 85M people have been infected (certainly a lot more) and at least 1.8M people have died worldwide.

Our World in Data is publishing vaccination statistics, though I think they're saying that the data is not complete. In terms of doses per 100 people, Israel is the clear leader, having vaccinated over 12% of their population already. Perhaps being on a war footing all the time offers some efficiencies that elude other countries. The next few countries are Bahrain, the UK, and the US (1.28% as of 1/2).

My iMac is out for delivery!

[Kyle Cheney @kyledcheney](#) [POLITICO reporter] NEW: As Raffensperger suggests Trump's call may be the subject of a local DA inquiry, two Dem lawmakers — Reps. Lieu and Rice — write to FBI Director Wray and urge him to launch a criminal inquiry based on prima facie call evidence. w/ [@QuintForgey](#)

I went to PT. Aditi suggests I start tapering off, maybe ending in a couple of weeks. That sounds fine to me. She can give me a home exercise and stretching program, and I'll stick to it!

The so-called UK variant has now turned up in NY, in a man who hasn't traveled. I think it's pretty obvious by now that it's everywhere.

Texting for Fair Fight again -- 18 zoom pages x 25 people per page = well over 400 people ready to text this evening. The usual reminders: no advocating for any candidate or party, stick close to the script, raise questions in Slack after reading the detailed information document to see if your question is addressed there. Wow, 1142 names. A big one tonight.

I signed up to text again tomorrow morning, election day, which should work out even though I'll take a break for my session with Ken.

Covid Tracking: the data hasn't settled down yet after the holiday season. New cases: around 200K per day; deaths: maybe 2.5K per day. Hospitalizations are still increasing -- over 128K now.

There's a lively conversation going on in many forums about ways to get more people vaccinated given the limited supply of vaccine. (Of course the immediate problem is not the amount of vaccine, but the mechanics of getting it to people, but people think we'll hit the limitations of the supply soon.) Plan A: Stop holding back the second dose and just administer first doses freely. The risk of this is that people will only be partially protected while they wait for their second dose. Plan B: Reduce the volume of vaccine provided in a dose. This seems particularly risky to me, because this is something completely untested. I think the UK is actually planning to

experiment with these variations; the US is not yet doing so.

And it looks as though it won't: "[Dr. Stephen M. Hahn @SteveFDA](#) FDA has just released a statement from me and Dr. Peter Marks, our [@FDACBER](#) Director, regarding authorized dosing schedules for [#COVID19](#) vaccines." Their statement includes this: "We have been following the discussions and news reports about reducing the number of doses, extending the length of time between doses, changing the dose (half-dose), or mixing and matching vaccines in order to immunize more people against COVID-19. These are all reasonable questions to consider and evaluate in clinical trials. However, at this time, suggesting changes to the FDA-authorized dosing or schedules of these vaccines is premature and not rooted solidly in the available evidence."

Bloomberg: the US has administered 4.66 million doses of vaccine.

Tuesday, January 5

It's run-off election day in Georgia, and I'm just signing in to the kick-off zoom session for Fair Fight. I'll get started with them, then break for my workout with Ken, and then be back with them until 1:30. They're rolling in fast -- 13 25-person zoom pages and counting. The host says things are going well so far and there are lots of people voting. They want us to collect data from people who are reporting any kind of problem, especially if they're currently waiting in line. (320 participants now) OK, over 1100 names.

All sent and responded to. Mostly opt-outs. Several already voted. Several planning to vote later today. One person asking where they can vote, and I have something useful to say to them!

I've now spent the afternoon monitoring ThruText while I set my my new iMac. My neck is actually a bit tired, so I'd better take a break. I'm most of the way there anyway.

WHO says that the UK's move to postpone the second dose of vaccines by up to 12 weeks is not supported by scientific evidence. I'm glad the FDA is not recommending such experiments.

Wednesday, January 6

Last night was a suspenseful time, watching the vote come in in Georgia. We went to bed when the numbers were trending Republican, but the analysts were telling us that some very Democratic counties had yet to report their mail-in vote — and we wake up to Warnock being declared the winner, and Ossoff with a small lead, making it look as though he will win, too. What an excellent birthday morning! We won't know for sure until Friday, maybe, when the overseas and military votes come in. The ballot cure teams will start work today, too, and Polly says they cured 20,000 ballots for Biden, which is more than his margin of victory. Ossoff's current lead is better than Biden's already — 16,370 with 98% of the votes reported.

The covid news, on the other hand, is all bad. Arizona is being overwhelmed. The vaccine rollout is not picking up speed yet. 4.8 million people have had at least one dose. The NYT has now added a vaccine tracker, and I can see that a few states have passed 3% of their population having at least one jab [US to US word of the year, according to Lynne Murphy] while others haven't yet reached 1%. NJ's right in the middle, though I have hopes that a good system is being put in place.

For that matter, NJ case numbers continue to be higher than they were last spring, though the hospitalizations are about half that level. I assume that's because more mild cases are being detected now, because testing is quite available.

(I keep being distracted by aspects of my computer transition, and that'll keep happening for a while. Why aren't my text messages showing up here? How do I get my old trackpad working?)

Scientists at the NIH are investigating whether half doses of the Moderna vaccine would work.

Cool, another birthday present on a day that is already a happy one: email from Pfizer saying that they would like to vaccinate all trial participants before March 1, and asking us to fill out a survey identifying our place in the



queue. I'm a healthy member of group 1c, over 65 years old.

Apparently several vaccination sites are about to open in NYC, some running round the clock, which is terrific news. I suspect that managing the qualification process will take more time than administering the actual shot! OK, New Jersey, your turn.

Angie arrived, so Henry and I went to walk around the Newport Mall, because Henry needs a very regular walking surface and it's warmer in the indoor mall. I hope it was safe to do that. We wore masks and we avoided people. We came home to read about the extraordinary drama taking place in D.C. Trump addressed a crowd of his supporters, who then attempted to storm the Capitol. Inside, the Republican Trumpers are objecting to Arizona's electoral college results being accepted, but they are guaranteed to be outvoted.

Trump supporters have breached the Capitol building, and they have overwhelmed the police.

In the meantime, there's an update about the new variant, now being called B117, which is increasing in prevalence in Denmark even as cases there decline. That's the first evidence we've had outside England, I think, that it really does spread more rapidly.

The U.S. Capitol is on lockdown. The crowd is carrying all kinds of flags — the US flag, the Confederate flag, the Blue Lives Matter flag — all the while attacking police. Pence had to be evacuated. The entire Senate has been evacuated. The Defense Department has denied a request by DC officials to deploy the National Guard. Man, it keeps going on. They vandalized Pelosi's office, and the National Guard has been called out after all, and somebody's been shot inside the Capitol. She later died, and that's all we know about it.

Jon Ossoff has been declared the winner of the second Georgia Senate race. Jesus, what a day.

The news continues to be very high-pitched and dramatic — some of the Trumpy Republicans are backing down, and both houses are meeting to

continue their process now that the Capitol is safe again. Improvised bombs were found in the neighborhood; the insurgents erected a cross and a scaffold on the Capitol grounds.

And yet here I am at the Wednesday AA meeting hearing someone tell her drinking and recovery story, which includes severe DTs, a grand mal seizure, psychosis, hospitalization.

Both houses of Congress are back in session, and I don't think we're going to hear many objections at this point to accepting Biden's election. They are a somewhat chastened bunch of rebels.

Covid Tracking: It is unsurprising to see that the number of hospitalizations is another new record, over 132K, and the number of deaths is also quite high — 7-day average greater than 2.6K. No break in the case numbers, either.

I follow quite a few Black activists on twitter, and they have been making the point, over and over, that if the rioters (or insurrectionists, or mob) who invaded the Capitol today had been Black, the Capitol police would not have been as friendly, there would not have been so few arrests, and there would be a lot more injuries.

Ossoff's lead continues to widen, so it appears that there will be no recounts and he'll be sworn in later this month.

NJ is about to begin vaccinating firefighters and the police, who are members of group 1b, even though the vaccination of healthcare workers and nursing home staff and residents is not complete. Good move. (Though I've seen so many cops hanging around without their masks on that they don't really have my full sympathy.)

A bunch of fairly low-level WH employees are resigning. It's not much of a statement with two weeks to go, and if everything up until today was ok with them.

A bunch of state capitals were apparently mobbed by Trumpers today, too, according to Mother Jones: "As news of the takeover in Washington, DC,

spread, likeminded pro-Trump demonstrators gathered in multiple cities across the US, including [Salem](#), Austin, [Sacramento](#), Atlanta, [Los Angeles](#), [Olympia](#), [Columbus](#), and [Topeka](#).” Fascist mobs all over the country.

Thursday, January 7

Congress finished its business last night, despite the objections of a handful of senators and the majority of the GOP members of the House, if I’m not mistaken.

I just noticed that my daily mail from Politico NJ reports the number vaccinated in NJ. Today’s report says 137,829 vaccines were administered out of 406,500 distributed. Murphy says that’s an undercount.

There were four fatalities yesterday at the Capitol, one from a gunshot, a woman who was climbing in a window. The other three were from “unspecified medical emergencies,” says WaPo.

I’m almost surprised I slept well, but I did. Probably everyone feels a bit hung over today, but it’ll be interesting to see how the day unfolds.

Ken asked for a postponement of the workout appointment, and since I was all ready to go, I did stairs for 20 minutes and then one set of ab wheels, keeping the weighted vest on.

Calls for impeachment or invoking the 25th amendment are increasing — lots of Democrats, unsurprisingly, but also a Republican Congressman and the National Association of Manufacturers. I’d like to see it happen before he can pardon everybody who invaded the Capitol yesterday. Or can they be charged locally? Apparently not, because DC isn’t a state. We need Trump out fast.

[Andrea Ducas @andreaducas](#) Just a reminder to stay COVID safe in [#JerseyCity](#). 53 deaths in the last two months alone. Also saw the single largest number of cases in a day (274) yesterday. // Do not spend time unmasked and indoors with anyone

I had a good PT session, and my back is better and better.

Eric Swalwell points out that rioters/insurrectionists left the Capitol with documents taken from various offices, and the Capitol Police let them do so. It is now suggested that some of those documents had national security implications.

The WSJ Editorial Board calls for Trump to resign.

112 members of Congress have signed on as cosponsors of Articles of Impeachment drafted by Ted Lieu and others. I think there's another set of Articles being circulated, too, by Ilhan Omar — or maybe they've merged efforts.

Covid Tracking: cases climbing, hospitalizations and deaths setting records.

Two Cabinet members have resigned, Elaine Chao and Betsy DeVos. God knows what the point of that is.

The story of the Capitol Police, the DC Police, and the National Guard is very tangled. Did the Capitol Police ask for backup and then have to wait too long, or did they refuse backup? Did Trump refuse to allow the National Guard to come for 90 minutes? (Sounds like it.) Are some police in the hospital while others were chummy with the invaders? (That sounds right, too.). This will all come out at some point, but there are a lot of questions now, along with the question of the lack of preparedness when the extreme right has been talking about this day on social media for weeks.

Friday, January 8

Fiona Hill: "The president was trying to stage a coup. There was little chance of it happening, but there was enough chance that the former defense secretaries had to put out that letter, which was the final nail through that effort. They prevented the military from being involved in any coup attempt. But instead, Trump tried to incite it himself. This could have turned into a full-blown coup had he had any of those key institutions following him. Just because it failed or didn't succeed doesn't mean it wasn't real."

At first I thought it was hyperbolic to call it a coup attempt, but it's starting to sound right. Much of the GOP has been fully on board, and haven't climbed down at all. Maybe they never will. Thank God the courts and the military did not join them.

George Conway asked on twitter who paid for the rally that led to the assault on the Capitol. The answer seems to be Alex Jones and a dark money group led by Republican Attorneys General.

I'm about to go for a walk with Sheree in Cheesquake State Park. It'll be a good distraction from this tense moment.

Yes, this is pretty much what Lindsay Graham just tweeted: [Ashley Nicole Black @ashleyn1cole](#) Now that I have punched you in the face it's time to heal and move on. Assigning blame as to which of us did the punching and which got punched would only serve to divide us- a punchee and a puncher- even further. Now that my punching hand stings a little, I call for unity.

There was bow hunting going on in Cheesquake Park, so we walked on the towpath instead. It was a good long walk and kept me away from the news for several hours. Lots of news kept happening, and maybe I'll just try to note some highlights — impeachment is being prepared, a few more people resigned from the administration, Trump has been permanently kicked off twitter, there's apparently a lot of ugly talk going on on Parler (where right-wingers gather), several people have been arrested.

Big news for me: I got email from the vaccine trial. Sure enough, I'm in the control group, and I was asked to say when I'd like to come get vaccinated! I'd like to come this minute, but I suggested Friday, because I wouldn't have to reschedule anything. I'm so excited! I wish everybody could get vaccinated right away.

Saturday, January 9

I'm up in the middle of the night, feeling worried and frightened. I remind myself that I have done my work, all the work on elections I've done over

the past three years. I can make more donations, I can write to my representatives to thank them for supporting impeachment. I'll work on those things tomorrow. But the main work here is out of my hands. The FBI will have to track down and arrest the right-wing extremists. If Trump pardons them all, the FBI will have to arrest them again the next time they do something. The Congress will have to impeach and remove Trump. Lisa Murkowski, and maybe others, have to decide whether to leave the Republican Party. The military leaders have to make sure Trump doesn't do something insane in the next 11 days. I can't do any of these things.

Hypervigilance.

The Covid Tracking numbers yesterday were as bad as ever. Everything's increasing, hitting new records in all categories regularly: cases, hospitalizations, and deaths. The NYT reports nearly 22 million cases and nearly 370K deaths; as always, those are official and therefore (probably) undercounts. Every state but Hawaii currently falls in their category "where new cases are higher and staying high." Deaths are increasing in more than half the states. The US is completely out of control. Not many countries on the NYT world map look as bad — a handful in Europe, one in Central America.

Let me see if I'm ready to get a couple more hours of sleep. Fortunately, I have an easy schedule tomorrow.

Well, I got a little more sleep. I decided the sleeplessness was caused by my body's utter confusion and dread about Trump and covid together with excitement about getting vaccinated on Friday.

I just started the zoom room for the Saturday morning AA meeting. It's good to be here.

And I'm just up from a sorely needed nap.

The news keeps trickling in: arrests, resignations, editorials. The RNC has doubled down on Trump, as if nothing had happened. Another phone call has come to light, in which Trump pressured the Georgia elections investigator to "find the fraud." Ted Lieu and Mondaire Jones have

submitted a letter to the NY State Bar requesting that they investigate Rudy Giuliani to disbar him. The articles of impeachment to be voted on in two days have been co-sponsored by 180 people.

It's hard to continue logging the covid numbers when the pattern doesn't change. Every day more cases, more hospitalizations, more deaths. There are more people vaccinated as well, but that's still going very slowly.

Sunday, January 10

NJ has vaccinated 2,000 people. We keep hoping to see that ramp up as more vaccination centers open. What's the holdup? Is it staffing? I've seen efforts to recruit retired medical people to give injections. Maybe they need to be vaccinated first!

I'm saving this link here because I want to reread the essay by Timothy Snyder, the author of "On Tyranny," about our political situation: <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/09/magazine/trump-coup.html>

I'm listening to TWiV, where the guest is Emily Travanty, who runs Colorado's public health lab, and they're finally going to have a serious discussion about B117, the variant first identified in the UK. They were the first to identify two cases of it, in members of the National Guard. She says that the US is increasing its sequencing effort. They didn't discuss its infectiousness, so that question is still open for TWiV; Emily didn't make an argument for increased infectiousness, either.

[Evan McMurry @evanmcmurry](#) BREAKING: The country is not happy with Pres. Trump, per new [@ABC](#) News/Ipsos poll: 67% blame him for Wednesday's deadly Capitol siege, and 56% believe he should be removed from office before inauguration.

I see that Ilhan Omar hasn't merged her articles of impeachment with the single article written by Ted Lieu et al (which now has 210 cosponsors), because she's written two (one for inciting violence, one for attempting to overturn election results in Georgia) and she'll present them tomorrow.

I still suspect that the right-wing rage is being amplified by the pandemic.

It'll be interesting to see if some of their newer adherents drift away after we finally manage to tame the virus. I don't know if some will drift away after the insurrection, having perhaps seen where all their drama leads.

And now, time to take a break from these two threats. I can remind myself again that my ability to combat them is limited, and that I have done what I can, as one lone citizen. I worked hard on elections over the past three years as my way to combat the threat to our democracy, and I volunteered in a vaccine trial to combat the virus. Time to take a break and do a little tai chi.

I did a couple of rounds, and then it looked so enticing outside that I went for a walk along the water. It's a beautiful clear afternoon, with no breeze.

Back to twitter, and here's a bit of comic relief: "PGA will be cancelling all tournaments and instituting a lifetime ban of ever holding events at Trump Courses including stripping Trump of hosting the 2022 PGA Championship, insider says."

I can't believe that I was text banking for the Georgia election 5 and 6 days ago. It feels like forever.

Covid Tracking: My god, how can the new cases just keep increasing and increasing? As long as they do, there's nothing to stop the hospitalizations and deaths from following. It's such an incredible disaster. We're looking at a quarter million new cases a day, leading 3,000 deaths a day and more, increasing pretty steadily for at least the past 90 days.

Monday, January 11

It looks as though the US has vaccinated about 8 million people now. Slow, slow, slow. I think I read that NJ has used only 20% of the vaccine it has — though I'm happy to see that people I know are now getting vaccinated: my physical therapist, another PT who is a friend of mine, my long-time therapist. My two nieces in healthcare, a nurse in California and an audiologist in Alaska, may have had their first shots by now.

[Jess Gartner \(she/her\)](#) [@jessgartner](#) Imagine going back to 1988 and



telling people that the guy who wrote *The Art of the Deal* is trying to overthrow the government but *The Terminator* had some very reassuring words for everyone about democracy.

[Aaron Katersky @AaronKatersky](#) "Armed protests are being planned at all 50 state capitols from 16 January through at least 20 January, and at the US Capitol from 17 January through 20 January," according to an FBI bulletin obtained by [@ABC](#)

Polly told me a wonderful story about Parler. I don't understand the technical details, but the upshot is that internet activists have hacked Parler completely and downloaded all the messages exchanged there in the run-up to the storming of the Capitol building. They even downloaded messages that people had tried to delete afterwards, because Parler had merely flipped a bit to "delete" without actually deleting them.

A NJ Congressional Representative, Bonnie Watson Coleman, just tweeted that she has tested positive for SARS-CoV-2. She sheltered in the Capitol building with "several colleagues who refused to wear masks." It's outrageous that so many GOP members hiding out on January 6th refused to take this simple precaution to protect themselves and others from the virus. I see from her picture that she is not a young woman. She seems like a perfect candidate for antibody therapy. (And that's exactly what's happening.)

[Maggie Haberman @maggieNYT](#) A lot has happened in the last week, including the president losing his Twitter feed, impeachment coming to the fore and the PGA withdrawing from Trump National. He's "gutted" by the PGA move, a person close to the White House says. // He's angry about impeachment, people who have spoken to him say. But the reaction to the PGA decision was different order of magnitude.

The news keeps rolling in: people identified and arrested; vaccination still slow, with rules so strict that vaccine has been thrown out; funding sources drying up for the insurrectionist Republicans; people losing their jobs; threats of further armed actions, which will surely continue after Biden is inaugurated. Republicans keep saying that impeachment would threaten national unity, but those same people don't issue calls to accept Biden's

election, so the hell with them. Deutsche Bank is cutting ties with Trump — good good, they hadn't done that earlier? After all the investigations? GOP members tweeting all day about how many followers they've lost — this is because twitter has killed accounts for big QAnon accounts, so I don't know why these Republicans think it makes them look good to complain about losing a bunch of terrorist sympathizing followers.

The US has administered 9.27 million doses of vaccine. I would like to know why NJ is doing so poorly, with only 221K doses administered. It looks like a below-average performance among US states.

Cranberry morpheme — on the Lexicon Valley podcast, John McWhorter referred again to this charming term. Wikipedia: “In [linguistic morphology](#), a cranberry morpheme (or fossilized term) is a type of [bound morpheme](#) that cannot be assigned an independent meaning or grammatical function, but nonetheless serves to distinguish one word from another.” In other words, it's like the “cran” in cranberry or the “twi” in twilight. Other examples: “mit” in permit, admit, transmit, etc; “ceive” in receive, perceive, and conceive; “cob” in cobweb.

I had a quiet day — rescheduled my mammogram for after I'm fully vaccinated; went to PT; did a little bit of preparation for the tai chi class I'll be teaching tomorrow.

Tuesday, January 12

Another Democratic Congresswoman has tested positive after hiding out with unmasked Republicans on the 6th, Pramila Jayapal. This is so awful, and so cruel.

Cuomo: Starting yesterday, New Yorkers in Phase 1b groups are now eligible for vaccination. I'm not sure exactly where we are in NJ.

NJ Spotlight: Gov. Phil Murphy and New Jersey's top law enforcement officials said they are aware of and planning for what are being called “peaceful armed demonstrations” in Trenton and other state capitals throughout the United States on Sunday, part of a string of antigovernment actions that began with the riot at the Capitol last week and are expected to

continue through Inauguration Day. // Murphy made a plea for counter protesters to stay away, saying, “Even if your heart is 1000% in the right place, stay home. Stay home. There is just no need to get in the mix.” // New Jersey law enforcement has recognized “domestic extremists” as a major threat for many years. Jared M. Maples, director of the New Jersey Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness, released a report earlier this year and updated it in September in which he outlined potential dangers.

NJ Spotlight: NJ State House dysfunction has stymied marijuana legalization. Some of the things they’ve been fighting about: tax rates, location and number of commercial outlets, licensing requirements, distribution of anticipated revenue. (Well, those are all important questions, worthy of a bit of fighting, aren’t they?) The latest issue to be settled is what should happen to those under 21. Should they be punished at all, or does that just enable stop and frisk policies?

NJ has added vaccination data to its covid dashboard, covid19.nj.gov, so it’ll be easier for me to see how it’s going. 199K first doses administered; 15K second doses.

Whew, that was a good workout.

[Carl T. Bergstrom @CT\\_Bergstrom](#) We’re going to hear more and more about various COVID mutations in the coming weeks and months. Their names, N501Y, D614G, etc. seem cryptic, and they are, but they are not arbitrary. Recall that proteins — in this case, the spike protein of SARS-CoV-2— are strings of amino acids. // The number 501 refers to the 501st amino acid in the protein. The letters refer to the amino acids themselves. So N501Y means the original strain had an N, asparagine, in position 501. The mutation switched this position to a Y, tyrosine. // What about names like B.1.1.7? These are names of \*lineages\*, based on a hierarchical notation. B is an original Chinese lineage, B.1 is the lineage that seeded the Italian outbreak, B.1.1 a European lineage derived from that, B.1.1.7 is the currently exploding UK lineage.

There’s a continuing string of contribution “suspensions” to any member of Congress who voted in favor of objecting to the election results: AT&T,

Verizon, and Comcast have joined the list.

northjersey.com: NJ health department explains the lag in vaccinations by saying that 214K doses have been set aside for congregate care facilities; 70K of the 651K doses will be delivered this week: 50K more shots may have been given in recent days and not yet counted.

[John Harwood @JohnJHarwood](#) from Reuters: “Secretary of State Mike Pompeo cancelled his Europe trip at the last minute on Tuesday after Luxembourg's foreign minister and top European Union officials declined to meet him, European diplomats and other people familiar with the matter said”

I haven't put any graphics in here, but why not start? This captures one of the things I've been feeling this week, that we are barely paying attention as the covid numbers soar to unimagined new levels.

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Another Democratic member of Congress has tested positive for the virus after the 6th, Brad Schneider from Illinois.

Three Republicans in Congress have said that they'll vote to impeach.

And in the department of closing the barn door after the horses have escaped, we have this:

[Sam Stein @samstein](#) House is about to make wearing masks mandatory on the floor and will put a fine system in place for non compliers. \$500 fine for first offense. \$2,500 for second office. "Fines will be deducted from Member pay (no use of campaign funds or MRA for fines)," per aide.

covidtracking.com: Everything still increasing, it seems. Deaths still climbing for sure, over 3K per day. I'm sure we're all more than ready for

those curves to flatten, but we're only 11 days from the end of the holiday season.

Azar is now pushing the states to disregard the CDC's tiered vaccination plan, or at least to push things along, and start vaccinating people over 65 and people with pre-existing condition. They say they will release more vaccine to the states so they can do that. Every governor and state health department is going to have to figure out what to do with that advice after they've worked so hard putting the original plan in place — well, some governors have. Other states are doing it differently — in Florida, they're vaccinating older people already, and nobody seems to know what the hell is going on in California. Florida is using eventbrite, I think, an application normally used for buying concert tickets, to allow people to schedule appointments. I hope Henry is going to be taken care of the our primary care people at Vanguard, and I hope it won't be too long.

Pelosi has named the impeachment managers for tomorrow — a different set than the first time. Names I recognize: Jamie Raskin, Joaquin Castro, Eric Swalwell, Ted Lieu.

Wednesday, January 13

Today, the House is expected to conduct their impeachment hearing, and 5 Republicans have said that they'll join their Democratic colleagues in voting to impeach.

My calendar for the day: PT at noon, Board meeting at 4, AA meeting at 7:30. All things I enjoy doing.

What's happening to Trump now absolutely didn't have to happen. The election, though not close, could have gone another way due to our undemocratic Electoral College. A couple of Secretaries of State or judges could have caved in to Trump's pressure. He could have decided not to make a big fuss about the election! And then he would still have Deutsche Bank, and his precious golf tournaments, and his platform on Twitter, and a dozen or more companies wouldn't have decided to withdraw funding for Republicans who refused to acknowledge the election results. He's pretty much gotten away with all his odious behavior so far, and so he just had to

keep reaching. It's like something I noticed when looking for fraudsters at at&t: In the area of fraud I was looking at, if they contented themselves with small amounts of money, something under \$10K a year, say, they could get away with it forever. It would never stand out in the sea of data. But some of them, at least, keep reaching and attract attention and get caught. That's the very nature of greed and hubris, I guess.

Chinese companies have developed a couple of vaccines, but haven't been very forthcoming about their data. They've been generous, for their own reasons, about making vaccine available to many other countries, something the world desperately needs. Now Brazil says that one of them, CoronaVac from Sinovac, has a disappointing efficacy of just over 50%.

Oh boy, NJ will expand vaccine eligibility to those 65 and older in the next couple of days! I hope Vanguard will vaccinate Henry very soon.

The House is debating a rule (I'm not even sure what it is), and after that process is completed (and surely the rule will be approved), they will begin to vote on the article of impeachment. One MSNBC commentator suggested that the House should have delayed so that each accusation in the article could be fully substantiated by investigation; Neal Katyal says that would be advisable if this were a criminal proceeding, but shouldn't be necessary in an impeachment trial.

People who ought to know are optimistic about the forthcoming J&J vaccine, but the NYT reports that they've "fallen as much as two months behind the original production schedule," which pledged "12 million doses ... by the end of February, ramping up to a total of 100 million doses by the end of June." "Carlo de Notaristefani, lead manufacturing adviser for Operation Warp Speed, the federal vaccine development program, acknowledged a delay, but said the company might be able to catch up with initial production goals by March."

Somebody posted on twitter a Harvard Business School article about humble bragging. It's pretty wonderful — well, it's 70 pages long, and I'm just looking at little bit of it. The authors consider both "complaint-based humblebrags" and "humility-based humblebrags." Examples of the former include "I lost so much weight I need to get new clothes, on top of all the

things I do” and “It is so hard to choose between Lexus and BMW.” Examples of the latter include “Why do I always get asked to work on the most important assignment?” And “I don’t understand why people hit on me when I spend 10 minutes getting ready.” I have a sneaking suspicion that I have humble-bragged in the past, and I’ll watch myself in the future! “We then show that both forms of humblebragging—complaint-based or humility-based—are less effective than straightforward bragging, as they reduce liking, perceived competence, and compliance with requests. Despite being more common, complaint-based humble-brags are less effective than humility-based humblebrags, and are even less effective than simply complaining. We show that people choose to deploy humblebrags particularly when motivated both to elicit sympathy and impress others. Despite the belief that combining bragging with complaining or humility confers the benefits of each strategy, we find that humblebragging confers the benefits of neither, instead backfiring because it is seen as insincere.”

CDC says that 75% of all nursing home residents have now been vaccinated. NJ has now vaccinated over 250K people, per Gov Murphy. And starting tomorrow, people over 65 and people with medical conditions that increase the risk of severe covid are also eligible. That means my husband and my daughter-in-law!

[Joe Walsh @WalshFreedom](#) It’s reported that many of my former Republican colleagues are afraid to vote FOR impeachment because they fear for their personal safety. They fear death threats. Welcome to the club. What do you think I & so many others have endured these past few years? Do the right thing.

Donald Trump was just impeached for the second time. Ten Republicans joined all the Democrats in voting to impeach. McConnell is unlikely to take this up until after Trump leaves office, but surely Schumer will try. And McConnell has confirmed that. He claims that the Senate will spend the next week focussed on “facilitating a safe inauguration and an orderly transfer of power.” Well, what can one say? Those are important goals. Somebody on MSNBC pointed out today that a Senate trial will be quite an opportunity for Democrats to subpoena important records.

Ayana Pressley’s husband, sheltering with her during the invasion of the



House, has tested positive for SARS-CoV-2. It really is turning into a super-spreading event.

PT was good, my board meeting was good, and now the AA meeting is starting.

One of my neighbors told me that he joined the Novavax vaccine trial, inspired by me! He just had the first shot and he's doing fine. He got his mother vaccinated in the Bronx, and his father is in the hospital with covid-19 and not doing great.

covidtracking.com: Deaths still high and rising. Could it be possible that cases and hospitalizations are flattening out? That would be great news, though they're both at dreadfully high levels — well over 200K new cases each day on average; over 130K people in the hospital.

And the arrests continue, and will do so for a while: [Ali Velshi @AliVelshi](#). An 18-yr veteran of the Houston Police has been relieved of duties & has resigned after participating in the storming of the Capitol. Chief Art Acevedo says, "There is a high probability this individual will be charged with federal charges and rightfully so."

Thursday, January 14

What a terrible 8 days this has been. It's been very difficult not to be weighed down and filled with dread every minute. The hopeful side of the last four years has been the emerging progressive energy, and it's pretty awful to see so clearly the energy on the other side, so violent and hateful. Washington DC is filled with soldiers for protection, and every statehouse is beefing up security for the coming days. Even in NJ, these militias and white supremacist groups exist.

I hardly mentioned the impeachment yesterday, because it has been so grim that it hasn't really lifted anyone's spirits. They're trying to keep guns out of the Capitol now, but many GOP members reportedly just breeze past the Capitol Police. The new GOP representative Lauren Boebert, a fan of QAnon, insists on bringing in her gun, and there is some evidence that she was encouraging the invasion on the 6th, even tweeting information about

Nancy Pelosi's location while it was going on. Naturally, Democratic representatives don't feel safe having her armed inside the chambers.

I had to remind myself that I'm not required to feel bad just because a lot of bad things are happening. Having a workout with Ken helped, and so did taking a walk with Henry before lunch. We went to Alliance Health near Grove St, because we had heard they were offering vaccinations. They turned Henry away, though, because he didn't have a confirmed appointment. He had tried to make one yesterday, but the web site didn't respond when he hit return, so we'll have to try again. We haven't heard a peep out of Vanguard Medical for a while, and they were unhelpful when I tried their online chat yesterday.

Timothy Snyder @TimothyDSnyder The more we learn, the less this looks like a coup bound to fail, and the more it looks like plain luck that all of our legislators and our vice-president were not murdered.

[David Axelrod @davidaxelrod](#) The more we learn about the siege of the Capitol, the more you realize how close we came to an even more catastrophic outcome. "This could have been a slaughter; the decapitation of the legislative branch of government," a former senior homeland security official told me.

Kyle Griffin @kylegriffin1 Election deniers in the Georgia state Senate have been stripped of their chairmanships: Lt. Gov. Geoff Duncan demoted three Republican senators who backed attempts to overturn the presidential vote over baseless allegations of irregularities.

New research just published in the Journal of Virology shows that NSAIDs dampen antibody response to SARS-CoV-2 in mice. I had to look up NSAID to remind myself which OTC drugs fall into that category, and it's just about everything you would take for a headache or sore muscles — aspirin, Advil, Aleve, the whole works. Oh, Tylenol is in a different category. Since I'm about to get vaccinated, it's something for me to consider.

Washington Post: Dozens of people on FBI terrorist watch list came to DC on the day of Capitol riot. [Most of the individuals are suspected white](#)

[supremacists](#) // The presence of so many watchlisted people in one place — without more robust security measures to protect the public — is another example of the intelligence failures preceding last week's deadly assault, some current and former law enforcement officials argued.

I just attended my first AA District Meeting. I am ignorant about AA service beyond the meeting level, so everything is news to me. I didn't even know what the organizational boundaries are, though it looks like an **area** is roughly a state or a portion of a state (there are two in NJ) and a **district** is roughly a city (this meeting was composed of representatives of Hoboken meetings). So a **section** must be somewhere in between — a few adjacent cities or towns.

covidtracking.com — Once again, there's the glimmer of a hopeful sign. For the past few days, new cases might even be declining; hospitalizations look flat. Maybe the holiday rush is slowing down?

Friday, January 15

I get my first vaccination today! Oh boy, something good is happening. I only wish Henry — and everybody else — could also get vaccinated this early.

I told Henry there was good news this morning, and that was that there's no new bad news today yet.

NJ has still distributed less than half of the vaccine provided.

As I was driving in to the city to get vaccinated, I was aware of how very much I wanted this. It made me think of the way buddhists talk about greed, that's how intense my desire felt. It was a little uncomfortable, actually, so I reminded myself that I want it for other people, too. I hope that if I could help someone who needed it more by declining to get vaccinated, that I would do so, because I felt a little bit like I would be willing to shove people out of the way to get to the front of the queue. It made me think about what else I have wanted that urgently, and all I could think of was the recent election outcomes. If I reach back through time, other things come to mind — for Henry to survive and recover when he was so ill four years ago; to

become pregnant when I was trying so hard in my very early forties.

They took blood and did a nasal swab, and then I got the injection! Today's news tells me again how lucky I am about this, because Azar recently promised to release the rest of the government's reserve supply of vaccine, but it turns out that has already happened. What we have now is all we're going to get for a while.

Henry's persistence seems to have paid off, because he has an appointment at Alliance Medical on the 19th. I hope that continues to be true, and I hope they'll still have the second dose once he's ready in a month.

covidtracking.com: The trend continues, with possibly even a slight decline in cases and hospitalizations. Do we dare hope?

The news is rough today. Vaccine problems; tracking down white supremacists, who are showing up all over the place; warnings of the Capitol invasion were ignored. A few rays of hope: Biden will have a scientist in his Cabinet; Georgia might prosecute Trump for election interference.

Saturday, January 16

I went to bed pretty early last night, so the vaccination may have been making me tired — but there's plenty of reason to feel tired in this maelstrom we're living in. My left arm is quite sore. That's about it, though.

I spent some time organizing my notes so I can lead the business meeting of the Wednesday Hoboken women's meeting this week. That should be pretty straightforward, I think.

There's quite a lot of chatter about SARS-CoV-2 variants — B117 in the UK, 501Y.V2 in South Africa, P1 in Brazil. Kai Kupferschmidt in Science Magazine: How these new variants are affecting the course of the pandemic is still unclear. In Manaus, for example, P.1 might have nothing to do with the new surge in infections; people's immunity might simply be waning, says Oxford epidemiologist Oliver Pybus. In a press conference

today, WHO's Mike Ryan cautioned that changes in human behavior are still the major driving force for the resurgence. "It's too easy to just lay the blame on the variants and say it's the virus that did it," he said.

"Unfortunately, it's also what we didn't do that did it."

I don't think I'll try to keep up with this story in any detail; I'll leave it for the scientists. But one of the important points is that this virus is mutating faster than people originally expected of a coronavirus.

[Laurie Garrett @Laurie\\_Garrett](#) Two things are happening among the indicted insurgents that undermine [#GOP](#) claims that [#Trump](#) shouldn't be impeached: They are saying in their defense that they were inspired by Trump, and they are asking him to pardon them.

I just heard Dr. Daniel Griffin say, on TWiV, that we don't have full protection until two weeks after the second dose. Sigh. Even early birds like me have a long wait ahead of us.

I just got up from a nap. My fatigue could have been caused by many things — the injection, our exhausting political situation, a feeling of letdown because my injection isn't going to free me from constraints for a long time.

Sunday, January 17

I went to bed early again, convincing me that my sleepiness and fatigue are really results of the vaccination. I may have to cancel a thing or two next time.

Wow, this is seriously disturbing: [Kamlesh Khunti @kamleshkhunti](#) Our study of 47,780 people hospitalised post [#COVID19](#) led by [@DanAyoubkhani @ONS](#) At follow-up of only 140 days: 29.4% re-admitted 12.3% died

I am so grateful to be getting vaccinated, and that Henry has an appointment in two days.

I'm back to myself today, I think. I did my usual stretches and PT, attended

sword class, and took a walk in the late afternoon.

covidtracking.com: Wow, it's becoming clear that hospitalizations are decreasing (from over 132K to under 125K), and probably cases are as well. Deaths will take a couple of weeks or so to start declining, probably. Oh, I see how to look at NJ results on this side. Hospitalizations are flat for about a month; cases and deaths have been increasing but might be starting to turn down.

Monday, January 18

Fortunately, it was peaceful yesterday in DC and at all fifty statehouses. There were two or three arrests in DC, and I think that was it. I'm sure nobody has changed their mind, but the show of force by the government may be keeping them at home for a while.

A few years ago, Henry and I had the practice of repeating to ourselves a useful thought that helped us orient our thinking, like "plenty of time." I got the idea from a book called "Buddhism at work" (or similar) in a chapter about a very busy nurse, who repeated "plenty of time" to herself so that rushing all day didn't make her tense and separate her from her patients and their families. My useful saying for these times is this: "Just because terrible things are happening doesn't mean that everything is terrible." I've been falling into that trap my whole life, talking myself into melancholy and even depression by focussing on bad news or a few bad experiences. It reminds me of another Buddhist saying, this one from Joseph Goldstein, who suggests adding "and the sky is blue" after noting or mentioning something unpleasant that's happening. I used that one a lot when Henry was in the hospital. I would sit with him in the ICU, taking extensive notes, watching him in an induced coma, and worrying intensely, and I would add, "and the sky is blue" (or gray, as appropriate). It did help me to feel a sense of a larger world, a world outside the ICU. (Of course that awareness was not always entirely helpful, because Trump had just been elected president. One day I would cry about Henry, and the next day I would cry about the election.)

I'm seeing this phrase in tweets about a new clade in California: Is this clade being carried by the surge or is it causing the surge? That's a very

simple way of pointing out that, just because a new variant is growing, it may not be causing the growth in the number of cases.

NBC San Diego web site: Calif Urges Stop on 1 Vaccine Batch After Allergic Reactions in San Diego / On Wednesday, six health care workers who were given the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine at San Diego's "Vaccination Super Station" experienced allergic reactions

That's a pretty small number, but I guess they found it unsettling enough to warrant an investigation.

NJ Spotlight: Total infections recorded in the United States now top 24 million, and nearly 399,000 have died here, according to the [Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Center](#).

I went to see the doctor and have my last PT appointment. Though the PT confirmed again that the knot of muscle in my back is much smaller, I'm frustrated that it's still there, so I was convinced by the doctor to get a medical procedure wherein I'll get three or four injections in my back. Of what? I think I got confused. I don't think it's anything fancy, though, because I rejected the fancy procedure — this is just something to break up the muscle and increase blood flow to the site. I have to get a covid test on Thursday, and then go for the procedure next Tuesday. When I was finished talking with the doctor, I noticed that I was really sweaty and short of breath — I think I was just really nervous to talk with him! If I think about it, sweating and breathing heavily are pretty good reactions to being afraid. It beats tensing up all my muscles or having stomach pain.

Bloomberg vaccine tracker: 14.7 millions shots have been given in the US, 4.5 doses per hundred people. In NJ, it's 4.12 doses per hundred. 336K doses, of which 40K are second shots. So we're still below average.

In another day, over 400,000 Americans will have officially died of covid-19.

Tuesday, January 19

Henry's nervous and excited about getting his first vaccination this afternoon. I have to teach at 1, but I can walk up and meet him when he's finished so I can hear all about it.

I'm pretty scattered this morning. A couple of very big things are going on the world, and many small things are going on in our lives. I keep telling Henry I'd like to go to sleep and not wake up until after the inauguration is complete.

Goodness, what a day. I had a good workout with Ken, then I showered and prepared to teach tai chi with Angie. While we were in class, Henry left for Alliance Health Care to get vaccinated! After class, Henry texted me that he was finished, and I walked quickly to meet him. I wanted to walk him home and hear his story. He said it went smoothly — in and out, no negative effects. And now, miraculously, we've both had our first shots! It's hard to believe, when so many people are scrambling to get vaccinated without having any luck.

Our World in Data reports that the US has administered 12.3M doses of vaccine. Remember when the WH claimed it would be 20M by the end of December? They just dropped it off with the states and washed their hands.

Kamala Harris resigned her Senate seat and her replacement was sworn in. Ossoff and Warnock's elections have been certified, so they can be sworn in tomorrow.

I am physically tired. It was one of my goals for retirement to become more physically active, and it has certainly been a goal for remaining healthy during the pandemic, and I have been achieving it enough to wear myself out now and then. I'm feeling good about another less-articulated goal to construct myself another social community, something I lack the gifts to do easily. My need isn't high, and was met by visiting Evan, Jeremy, and Michele once a week, seeing people twice a week for tai chi classes, and occasional visits with friends. Most of that fell away last March, though. I thought doing political work might fill the need, and it might have with in-person activities, but the zoom sessions weren't enough. So I'm extremely happy that I started going to AA meetings again and found a place for myself in two women's meetings. Even if we move to Princeton in the next year or two, I think I'll be able to sustain that activity.



covidtracking.com: It's still true, all the numbers are turning down. Whew. That's a good note for Biden and Harris to start on. It's happening in NJ, too, I think, though the signals aren't quite as strong.

The Empire State Building is red and blinking. I thought it looked like an alarm, but no, it's a heartbeat, part of the memorial services for those lost to covid-19 inspired by the Biden/Harris ceremony in DC.

This is good to be aware of: [Helen Chu @HelenChuMD](#) Grateful to receive dose 2 of my Pfizer vaccine. I had a fairly severe reaction - fevers, chills, muscle aches, joint pain starting at 6 hrs but recovered by 36 hrs. I was totally out of commission. It was 100% worth it but I wish I was better prepared

Wednesday, January 20

Oh my god, this is the day we see the back of Donald Trump.

I'm sorry I didn't pay more attention to the memorial activities last evening, because I'm learning that moving ceremonies took place all across the country.

Henry is having more of an emotional reaction to his vaccination than a physical one. He's powerfully aware what a life-saver it was.

I'm watching last night's Daily Show, and Trevor Noah is using an expression I haven't heard before: "Miss me with that bullshit." What's the equivalent? It's not "leave me out of it," it's more like "don't try to pull that around me." It's very concise and very clear.

Trump pardoned a whole ton of white-collar criminals like himself, but he declined to pardon any of the insurrectionists of January 6th. The hard-core white supremacists probably aren't all that surprised; they have their own agenda and their own program. But I wonder what the QAnon and other MAGA people make of it, because idolatry was their whole shtick. Do they think this is just another play in Trump's great game, or are they starting to wonder?

I don't know if I've ever actually watched an entire inauguration, but I did today, and I didn't really start to relax until Kamala was sworn in. Once Joe was sworn in, I knew it was over.

Henry and I went to walk around Short Hills Mall again on this chilly day, so that we could be out of the way while Angie cleaned the apartment. After we got back, I napped for a while. Henry's napping now.

Whew, the inauguration went well. On the WaPo site, we're watching the Senate change hands. Schumer is a happy man.

Sure enough, there's news coverage about the extreme confusion being experienced by some QAnon believers, who were expecting something almost supernatural to happen at the last minute to prevent Biden's inauguration. The Proud Boys, on the other hand, know exactly who they are, and are condemning Trump for his weakness in walking away from the fight.

covidtracking.com: cases and hospitalizations still declining, but there's an enormous spike today in the number of deaths reported. As I learned earlier, it's not just that deaths occur after what may be many weeks in hospital, but it can also take weeks to register the death certificates.

So many wonderful executive orders: US is back in WHO, represented by Fauci; end of the Keystone Pipeline; end of the Muslim travel ban; US is back in the Paris climate accord; there will be a serious attempt to reunite children separated from their parents at the border; something called the 1776 commission is cancelled or rescinded; and more.

Some good personnel changes as well, with some particularly noxious Trump appointees being shown and door, and some of Biden's nominees were confirmed. What a day.

I just led a business meeting after my AA meeting, my first task as a new GSR. My face is still beet red from nervousness, but it all went well. I missed a couple of hours of news, but maybe that's a good thing.

Thursday, January 21

I was both agitated and emotionally overwhelmed last night, and I'm not fully sorted yet. It may take a few days. The largest issues are covid and the national government of course, and then Henry and me getting vaccinated. Some of the smaller things are my busy schedule, my new AA responsibilities, and the procedure I'm having on my back next week. And then there's the bill I got from the PT place last night! It's very large and it looks wrong, with no mention of Medicare, my primary insurance coverage.

Today's schedule: call the PT place, work out with Ken, go to Hoboken for my coronavirus test, and a couple of overlapping zoom meetings this evening — something about the Liberty State Park project, and our condo board meeting.

I called about the bill, and they acknowledged that there seems to be a mistake. Then I had a good workout with Ken, and added some of my PT exercises. So a good deal of my tension has been burned off.

Wow, twitter is suddenly a cascade of good news. It's awesome. (Not counting the terrible virus numbers, but at least the current surge seems to be at or after its peak.). Some of the WaPo front page: Biden ushers in sweeping change; At hearing, Buttigieg cites 'generational opportunity' on infrastructure; Biden administration to pause deportations, curtail arrests; Pandemic plan aims to expand access to testing and vaccines, and reopen schools; Fauci praises WHO leadership in pandemic, signaling break from Trump era; Biden to sign order requiring masks on planes, trains, buses and at airports.

Vanguard Medical is now doing a good job with their communication about vaccination. Last week, they were making appointments for people 78 and over (in addition to medical workers and first responders); now 75 and over. I'm glad Henry and I have been able to make other arrangements, though!

I took the light rail to Hoboken to get my virus test -- a prerequisite for the back procedure. I was a little uneasy about using public transport, so I wore two masks (medical mask over KN95) and made a point of sitting near a door. It went just fine. I took a bit of a walk along the river once I got back home, because all the wind had died down and it was lovely still

winter afternoon.

Then I settled in on the couch for some serious loafing, listening to Marc Maron interview Andy Zaltzman. As always, his interviews with fellow comedians are my strong favorites. They talked about how life after SARS-CoV-2 is presently unimaginable — will we find ourselves changed? Will pre-pandemic comedy still work? Will everybody want to pretend that this never happened?

I turned on the TV to watch last night's Colbert and Daily Show, but I got hung up watching the WH press briefing, if you can imagine that. I was watching Anthony Fauci, and he looked so different, completely relaxed and engaged, not having to watch his every word to make sure he didn't openly contradict or upstage the president. It was really striking, and quite an example of our new environment.

I'm logged in to a presentation about so-called "active recreation" in Liberty State Park after the new section is redesigned and reopened. It's not a topic I'm especially interested in, but Sam Pesin requested that we all show up to support FoLSP against the depredations of the golf club billionaire, so here I am.

[Daniel Griffin MD PhD @DanielGriffinMD](#) Residents randomized to bamlanivimab (the Eli Lilly neutralizing antibody treatment) have up to an 80 percent lower risk of contracting COVID-19 versus residents in the same facility randomized to placebo. — In that study (not yet peer reviewed), "In trucks equipped with mobile labs, medical staff sped to nursing homes the moment a single infection was detected there. As soon as the workers arrived, they set up temporary infusion centers to administer the drug." (NYT)

Friday, January 22

It's so amazing to get up in the morning, look at the news, and see so many good things happening. I can't take it in yet.

WaPo: On his first day in office, President Biden issued a sweeping executive order making it clear that gay and transgender people are

protected against discrimination in schools, health care, the workplace and other realms of American life; [Biden to increase federal food benefits among executive actions aimed at stabilizing economy](#), The president will ask the Department of Agriculture on Friday to allow states to increase food stamps and to expand by 15 percent benefits awarded through a school meals programs for low-income students.; [At Voice of America, a sweeping ouster of Trump officials on Biden's first full day](#) With a veteran reporter taking the place of controversial overseer Michael Pack, the dominoes started falling in other top offices; President Biden on Thursday appointed Rebecca Kelly Slaughter as acting chairwoman of the Federal Trade Commission, a move that positions the Washington watchdog agency to take on a more aggressive role in policing Facebook, Google and other tech giants in Silicon Valley. / Biden also designated Jessica Rosenworcel to serve as the acting chairwoman of the Federal Communications Commission. Rosenworcel is a fervent supporter of net neutrality and has called on the FCC for years to put its muscle behind a massive effort to [build out broadband](#) to the country's most unserved communities.

[Jonathan Lemire @JonLemire](#) WASHINGTON (AP) Schumer: Pelosi will transmit Trump impeachment article Monday, triggering trial of former president

As much as we might rather never hear the name Trump again, this has to be done.

I'm trying to think how many times I've been tested for the virus. I was tested twice at Mt Sinai as a routine part of the trial; I was tested twice when I had cold symptoms, once by for the trial and once for myself (which I learned that I needn't have done, because they were going to tell me if I tested positive), and once yesterday as a precaution before next week's procedure. I don't think Henry's been tested at all.

I was preparing to attend two tai chi classes this afternoon, but I just felt sick and exhausted, so I went to sleep instead. I was thinking about other times in my life when I reached a goal I had worked for a longed for, and remembered that I sometimes became depressed at those times. When all the struggle is over, there's a deep disorientation and exhaustion that can set in. My stomach is very unsettled and I am very fatigued. Henry seems

to feel the same way. I should be able to avoid depression this time — maybe I wasn't even depressed then, it's just that I didn't yet know the difference between fatigue and depression. Either way, I know a lot more now about how to give myself some room to absorb the big changes that are occurring — all more than welcome, but still disorienting.

NJ has detected two cases of the variant B1.1.7, the so-called UK variant. Boris Johnson said today that it may be more fatal as well as more transmissible.

Saturday, January 23

I had the first conversation with the nurse about Tuesday's procedure, then I logged in for the orientation for today's Area Assembly. I can't say I learned much except that I should seek a service sponsor, and I like that suggestion. Now the moderators are struggling with all the zoom illiterates so that their position and meeting are shown. If this says anything about what the meeting is going to be like, I'll definitely be doing some crossword puzzles this morning. Now the meeting has started, and it's going to be well organized after all.

It was impressive but loooooong. I now have great sympathy for schoolchildren. I was on from 8:30 to 2:30, with scarcely a break, and found it pretty hard to bear. An afternoon walk in the brisk — hell, cold — outdoors was very helpful.

Sunday, January 24

I'm still adjusting to how different life is now. Here's what it's like: I've been pushing really hard on a door for a few years now, and suddenly somebody opened it from the other side, so I lost my balance and fell through it. I'll be falling for a while, I think. And maybe there are two doors here — the election door and the vaccination door. And of course all of my/our problems haven't been solved in either category. There are still 50 Republicans in the Senate, some of whom are going to be fully uncooperative, and in statehouses all across the country, and people are still dying of covid — while other people continue to deny that it's happening.

The pace of vaccination in the US is picking up, but when states administer it efficiently, they soon outpace their supply. There seems to be great optimism about the J&J vaccine. I even heard Fauci speak optimistically about it on Rachel Maddow's show, and surely he wouldn't do that unless he had seen interim data that looks very promising.

The honeymoon feeling of Biden's first few days won't last long, as the real political fights begin. But we can still take comfort in many things: government positions being filled by competent, responsible adults who aren't just grifters; an enormous reduction in quarreling with the media; a blizzard of executive orders putting things right. And there's some relief, too, in the clear fact that this recent huge wave of infection is beginning to subside. I think many people are afraid that it won't continue to decline as the new variants cause transmission to increase; I certainly hope that doesn't happen.

Jersey City just announced that it would be accepting #5 plastic for recycling. Could it be that my email to James Solomon a few months ago is one of the reasons this happened? Wouldn't that be cool!

And what did I do today? A bit of vacuuming, stretching and PT, sword class. A zoom session with the family, the first in many weeks.

Monday, January 25

For those who say we should just move on: US Justice Dept. court filing says 81 US Capitol Police officers and 58 DC Police officers are injured from the US Capitol Insurrection on Jan 6.

More than 500K people in NJ have now received at least one vaccination. Murphy says their infrastructure is ready now, but there's very little vaccine coming to the state.

I'm starting to feel normal — that didn't take so long. I'm glad I've learned to allow space for these emotional and cognitive transitions to take place. I think that allows them to move through me more quickly without getting stuck. I'm not worried about depression at this point.

It's been a nice day — workout with Ken, a conversation with one of the nurses about tomorrow's procedure on my back, finishing up my workout with PT and a few other stretches. After lunch, I attended the Monday tai chi class for the first time in a while, and really enjoyed it. I cut up the cauliflower and potatoes for the dish I'm going to make for dinner, and soon I'll take a shower.

I just dropped in on the Bellcore zoom call, and the conversation is all the ins and outs of the vaccine system in NJ — how did you get your appointment, what lists are you on, what did Azar do, what did Murphy do, and so forth.

The CDC now reports 293 cases of the so-called UK variant, B117, in 24 states. I guess it's everywhere by now, and the only reason we don't know it is that our surveillance is limited.

The new article of impeachment has been delivered to the Senate; they plan to start the trial on February 8. In the meantime, Dominion has added Giuliani to the list of people and companies that they're suing for peddling lies about their voting machines. Hey, will they sue Trump himself?

Tuesday, January 26

I'm back home after my medical procedure. There was a lot of paperwork and waiting and then a short procedure — three local anesthetic injections near the spine, and then deeper anesthetic injections. The idea, I guess, has to do with blocking nerves that might be generating pain signals. I suspect it was a waste of time, because the problem is really a knot of muscle, but time will tell.

I was back home in time to teach with Angie, and then spend the rest of the afternoon in welcome idleness.

NYT: "As a whistle-blower report would later reveal, in January [2020], Department of Health and Human Services officials effectively dismissed an offer from one of America's few remaining N95 manufacturers, Prestige Ameritech, to expand its production lines"



On CNN: [@ASlavitt](#) at the [@WhiteHouse](#) to [@ChrisCuomo](#): "First, we're giving states predictability. Every state and territory will have at least a 3-week window: how many vaccines are coming. Second, we've learned we didn't have enough vaccine contracted. We've taken care of that."

Covid Tracking: New cases and current hospitalizations continue to decline, but all the numbers are still more than double what we saw in the first and second waves. On average, 3,000 people are dying each day. I'm very grateful that there are signs of progress, but reversing these terrible trends will take time.

Wednesday, January 27

I'm having a nice quiet day — no appointments until my evening AA meeting. I did my PT and had a shower to wash off the last of the betadine solution from yesterday, because it seems to give me a rash. (I'll have to remember to mention that to people!). I watched the SARS-CoV-2 briefing by the new team — Fauci, Slavitt, the new head of the CDC, and a couple of other people. They're being as clear as they can be, I think, and working hard.

At about 3:00, we got a call from the salesperson at the senior community. If we're willing to step down to a smaller unit, we could have priority on something that will be ready in a couple of months! We'll go down tomorrow to have a look.

Thursday, January 28

The variant from South Africa, B.1.351, has been spotted in South Carolina, in people who have not traveled. P.1, the strain first identified in Brazil, has also been found here, and also in people who have not traveled. So they're all here, and we'll see how that plays out. The virus manufacturers are already working on boosters, in case we need them. The CDC is working on improving surveillance.

I vacuumed the apartment and did some stairs, so I've moved my body today. The rash on my upper back is pretty itchy and a little sore, but it isn't

so bad that I can't be distracted from paying attention to it. Henry and I will leave in about half an hour to head down to the senior community. We have decisions to make!

Friday, January 29

[Daniel Griffin MD PhD @DanielGriffinMD](#) Preliminary Data suggests Novavax Protein Based Vaccine 95.6% against the original COVID-19 strain and no severe cases in the vaccinated individuals. Trouble with the South African Variant so protein payload may need to be updated for that one.

Apparently efficacy dropped to 60% in subjects in South Africa, and even lower for subjects living with HIV. The number of subjects there was smaller, so the number has to be treated with some caution.

J&J results are being announced today, too, and they look remarkably similar. It prevented 85% of severe infections and 100% of hospitalizations and deaths.

We looked at a few units at the senior community yesterday, and were most interested in a standalone cottage that is along open land, protected land belonging to the county. Henry is going to send a check this morning to put down a deposit, and we might really be moving in two months. I'm kind of freaked out and not quite ready to write about it yet. Soon.

The arrests from the invasion of the Capitol on January 6th continue amid FBI warnings of further right-wing violence.

Well, I'm ready to say something about the senior community now. We looked at an indoor unit and a couple of cottages, and put down a deposit on a cottage. What grabbed us is that it backs onto public land — an agricultural field separated from the yard by a narrow strip of wild land. It's a little smaller than the apartment we looked at, and smaller than our current apartment, so it'll be a bit of a challenge figuring out how to live comfortably in it. While Henry was taking care of FedEx-ing checks to secure our (refundable) claim on the cottage, I spoke to someone at a company that helps seniors downsize and move. We could use some help

figuring out good layouts, especially of the bedroom we plan to turn into a shared office.

It's pretty terrifying, and I'll probably be the youngest person there by far — even Henry will be younger than most of them, but then he has always seemed to feel older than his years. On the other hand, it looks like an interesting area to live — Princeton offers things I haven't found here, like an Insight Meditation Society, a Friends meeting, and an adult school. I found a nearby Swing Left chapter and a couple of Indivisible chapters as well. I remember the quality of Princeton AA meetings, and the senior community is next to a sort of AA clubhouse.

Oh, and the independent living folks were getting their first vaccinations yesterday. The more vulnerable people, along with the staff, had all been vaccinated earlier.

Saturday, January 30

I took a Benadryl last night in the hope that it would help tame these hives I've had since Tuesday. I had a good night's sleep, but I don't think the hives and redness are receding yet.

I'm at a GSR training session today, and it's another overly long meeting — it's scheduled for 4 hours this time. I'm sure I'll learn a lot, but I bet they could cover this material in half the time.

Sunday, January 31

Henry and I started thinning out our stuff yesterday. Henry filled a Fresh Direct bag with office supplies, and I offered them up on Freecycle. I filled a bag of books, just taking a few from every shelf. I also prepared a bag, starting with children's books, and I'll add to it my lovely old teddy bear from the 80s, freshly washed. I offered the Instant Pot on the building's web site, and I'll get rid of the pressure cooker as well. I added a ski jacket to the pile for the Salvation Army.

SARS-CoV-2 cases continue to decline, and so do the numbers of people hospitalized. Deaths haven't started to decline yet, but that will follow.

Vaccination is moving ahead, slowly. People are madly impatient, of course, and I think we all forget how recently these vaccines were approved. The US has administered about 9 doses per 100 people, but maybe only 1 person in 100 has received the second dose. About 1.4 million doses are now being administered each day, though snowstorms are going to slow things down this week. (Sources: Covid Tracking, Our World in Data, Bloomberg) The J&J vaccine will almost surely be approved soon and available by the end of February, and it requires only a single jab.

My back is still itching like crazy, and I'm hoping it starts feeling better tomorrow.

Henry filled up a couple of bags with clothes today; I wrapped the books I'm sending to Christine, organized my old glasses to be sent to the Lions Club (just waiting for the right box to appear); picked out a couple of things to be tossed.

Monday, February 1

There's quite a storm raging outside, and snow is beginning to accumulate. What shall I do with myself today?

I didn't do much, really. A couple of phone conversations, some stretches, a nap, hiked some stairs. Someone came to pick up the Instant Pot, so that's one item moved along. The snow is a setback for the vaccination program in quite a few states.

Washington Post: New diabetes cases linked to covid-19 / Researchers don't understand exactly how the disease might trigger Type 1 or Type 2 diabetes, or whether the cases are temporary or permanent. But 14 percent of those with severe covid-19 developed a form of the disorder, one analysis found.

Also WaPo: As House GOP faces decision on its future, McConnell defends Cheney, rebukes Greene in rare set of statements / ... "Loony lies and conspiracy theories are cancer for the Republican Party and our country," McConnell said. "Somebody who's suggested that perhaps no airplane hit the Pentagon on 9/11, that horrifying school shootings were

pre-staged, and that the Clintons crashed JFK Jr.'s airplane is not living in reality. This has nothing to do with the challenges facing American families or the robust debates on substance that can strengthen our party.”

Tuesday, February 2

The Russians are reporting extremely good results with their vaccine, called Sputnik V, but scientists are cautious because the full research protocol was never published. Lots of good vaccine news lately, though the data remains a bit incomplete.

There was a discussion about variants on TWiV yesterday, which I didn't fully understand. They said that we're still not sure whether B117 changes things or not; results are inconclusive. And they're frustrated that the press keep over-emphasizing variants in a way that continues to cast doubt on the efficacy of vaccines.

This seems more than appropriate:

[POLITICO @politico](#) House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer delivered an ultimatum today : Either Republicans move on their own to strip Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene of her committee assignments within 72 hours, or Democrats will bring the issue to the House floor.

[Governor Phil Murphy @GovMurphy](#) VACCINE UPDATE: 824,028 doses have been administered as of this morning.

681,459 first doses

137,371 second doses

But alas, the state's vaccination sites are closed today. I got a confirmation for my appointment at Mt Sinai tomorrow, though, so I should be getting my second shot right on schedule!

There's a lot of talk on twitter about how various GOP-dominated state legislatures are ramping up their voter suppression efforts. If the voters don't like you, stop them from voting!

Covid Tracking: Cases and hospitalizations continue to decline, though still dreadfully high. The deaths haven't begun to drop, really — about 3500

deaths were reported today.

Authoritarian news from other countries: In Russia, Navalny has been sentence to two and a half years in prison while protests continue. Security forces are arresting reporters. In Myanmar, the military has refused to accept recent election results, and placed Aung Sun Su Ki under house arrest.

The Biden administration is going to supply vaccine to pharmacies in the most affected neighborhoods.

I just logged in to a presentation hosted by the Embankment Preservation Coalition about the Essex-Hudson Greenway. Their partners are the Open space Institute, the NJ Bike and Walk Coalition, and the September 11th National Memorial Trail. The OSI, in 2020, negotiated an agreement to purchase an 8.6 mile stretch of railway running from Montclair to Jersey City and crossing six towns between — 135 acres of new green space! It includes subterranean rights which would allow for the addition of internet access to some of the neighborhoods it traverses, which might not be well serviced. The right of way is at least 100 feet wide! It offers opportunities to create habitat for wildlife, including planting trees, adding regions that can mitigate flooding. It traverses marshes, urban and industrial areas, and woodland. It intersects, or at least comes close to, several parks. It will connect to other greenways — Morris Canal and September 11th — at its western end, and to the Bergen Arches and the Jersey City bicycle network in the east. Financing is still being worked out, with state and county governments.

Wednesday, February 3

I had a rocky night, perhaps because I didn't take Benadryl, which I've been taking for the past three or four nights to help with my reaction to the chlorhexadine. There's a lot going on! I'm still worried about the pandemic and the GOP and its crazies. I'm excited to be getting my second shot today. I'm grieving our impending departure from Jersey City, where so much has happened and where I've worked so hard to build a life after retiring from work.

I took the PATH and the subway up to Mt. Sinai. Each time, the car was about half full, and it was singularly unnerving to be around so many people. I was on high alert most of the time, and glad I had worn an N95 mask. Things were slow at the clinic because they were trying to vaccinate everybody they had scheduled for the past few days. Their appointments had been cancelled, but there are time pressures to get everybody vaccinated as soon as possible, and especially for the second shot to be delivered on time. I'm back home, and my arm isn't even sore yet. I haven't had a chance to calm down, though, because we had a phone call with our contact at the senior community, and she drives me crazy. She talks and talks, throwing in everything that's on her mind. And it's even worse on the phone, because I can't interrupt her. I finally accepted that and learned to speak only when spoken to, but that doesn't mean I've calmed down yet.

This is going to be such an emotional few months! Grief, excitement, fear. There will be losses, there will be discoveries. I will lose my shit and then have to forgive myself, or maybe apologize to somebody. I will cry. We have a lot of work to do, and I'm very much on edge about the decisions we have to make and the things we have to do.

And now Meg just asked me to be the speaker at the women's meeting tonight. I haven't told my story in a long time, and I fear I can talk for a couple of hours if I'm not careful about it! .... It went very well. I started by talking about being a bundle of conflicting feelings today, then backed up to talk a bit about childhood and my drinking years and how I got sober, a bit about things I learned in early sobriety, and finished by talking about things I learned that will help me handle my current challenges better than I would have way back then.

Covid Tracking: cases and hospitalizations are still dropping, but still terribly high — about 150K new cases and 100K people in the hospital. Deaths haven't started to drop yet.

Thursday, February 4

Henry and I were both having trouble falling asleep, so we each took a melatonin. It seems to have worked, or maybe we were just ready. At

some point in the middle of the night, I woke up and thought, “OK, then, no side effects, just the sore arm.” But within a couple of minutes, I began to feel very feverish, shaking with the chills. I put on my sweatshirt and added a blanket, and slept pretty well. This morning, I still have a mild fever — 100.3, according to the thermometer they gave me. I’m drinking extra water.

Linda from last night’s meeting texted me that her SARS-CoV-2 test came back positive. She isn’t feeling well, and she has emphysema, so she’s concerned. I suggested she get a pulse oximeter. (Of course people call the tests covid tests; it’s me that’s being picky, thanks to the influence of TWiV. But Linda really does have covid, so maybe “covid test” makes just as much sense. Does anyone with a SARS-CoV-2 infection have covid, even if they have no symptoms? Now I’m not sure about the terminology!)

I took two Tylenol and then a long nap. I’m feeling a bit better, but still fatigued and a little dizzy — probably still a little bit feverish.

In a week, we’ll go back to the senior community to meet with the salesperson and her contractor to make final decisions about walls and power. I guess they will want us to choose tile, cabinets, and carpeting on the same day so they can get everything ordered.

The GOP voted not to remove Lynn Cheney from her positions, but they seem to have decided it would be better for them if the Democrats remove Marjorie Taylor Greene from hers. They will presumably vote to do so shortly.

I was feeling better this afternoon, so I worked on the paperwork we need to do to apply to the senior community. I gathered most of what I need for the financial disclosure, and scanned the medical form and uploaded it to the patient portal for Vanguard Medical. Henry will be able to submit it as well.

My temperature is 98.8, so the feverish part seems to be almost entirely over, but I’m getting a bit fatigued again.

I’m attending a webinar about the restoration planned for Liberty State Park



— tidal wetlands, non-tidal wetlands, and uplands. The last presentation I attended was about so-called “active recreation” (mostly ball fields and the like), and this one focuses on the environment. The speaker said that the undeveloped area is currently full of non-native plants, which will be replaced with native plants later. It’s so wonderful to imagine this big tidal wetland area — mud flat, low marsh, smooth cordgrass, maritime shrub scrub. It will be full of larval fish, crabs and mussels, shorebirds. Oh, this is good — their design accommodates some sea level rise. There will be another big pond that they’re calling a non-tidal wetland — the names of the plants are great, but I didn’t have time to type them all in. There will be wildflower meadows, grassland, red cedar and mixed hardwood forests. The upland habitats have to be salt tolerant — maritime forest, maritime grasslands, a holly forest. This language is magical! And the pictures remind me of the Great Prairie in the Madison arboretum. I have to visit that place again one day. Oh, this place is going to be beautiful once it has had a chance to fill in.

I’m really excited about all the work people are doing to increase green space in Hudson County. I’ll have to come back up here a couple of times a year to watch it all take shape.

They propose a connection to Liberty Science Center, so that nature classes can be offered to young people.

Huh, my fever is back up to 101.

J&J has requested emergency approval of their vaccine! That is very good news.

11 Republicans joined House Democrats to strip Taylor Greene of her committee assignments. Parni says they seem to be representatives in suburban districts (I’m trying to type “blue-ish” and the damn spell check won’t allow me to) won by Joe Biden. Politics over principle every time. She tried to pretend that her objectionable statements were all made far in the past, but apparently she’s hoping that nobody knows about all the tweets she has deleted.

Friday, February 5

I took some Tylenol in the middle of the night because the fever was just so draining. Today I believe the fever has passed, and I ate a normal breakfast, but I'm pretty worn out. I'm going to the post office later to mail a box of presents to Christine and a bunch of old eyeglasses to the Lions Club. I was thinking I might also drive to Hoboken to drop off the teddy bear and some tinker toys, but I should probably take it pretty easy today.

Actually, I felt better as the morning went on. We prepared the apartment for Angie to clean it, and when she arrived, I took two boxes to the post office to mail, dropped by the bank to deposit two checks, and then walked along the river until I felt tired. It's a lovely day — 45 degrees and sunny.

Covid in NJ, according to NJ Spotlight: 925,579 vaccinations administered so far, mostly first doses; 3700 new cases, hospitalizations below 3000 for six consecutive days. NYT vaccination tracker: 28.9 million people have received at least one shot; 7.5 million have been totally vaccinated. Including me!

Covid tracking: Holy crap, Indiana reappraised their covid deaths over the past year and added 1500 to their total, bringing the number of deaths announced yesterday to 5,212. The number of new cases continues to drop, though it's still more than double the summer peak.

The lawsuits by the voting machine companies are having big effects. Fox just canned Lou Dobbs. Even NewsMax had to shut off the My Pillow guy the other day when he wouldn't stop ranting about voting machines.

Saturday, February 6

I was up for a while in the night feeling anxious about the move. It's just going to be that way, isn't it? Breathe, breathe.

I read a couple of long twitter threads full of concern and dire predictions about the new variants. Lots of knowledgeable people are worried about a new surge. And now there's also fear that Super Bowl parties will trigger a surge just as we're beginning to recover from the holiday surge.

I get to attend the Saturday morning AA meeting today because one of my GSR events was postponed. The reading is too God-heavy, as usual, but the women in the group are more varied in their beliefs than the writers were able to imagine. Two women at the meeting are currently sick with covid.

My workout with Ken was really good, and then Henry and I loaded the car with several bags of stuff to be donated to the Salvation Army and one bag to Moms Helping Moms. Unfortunately, the Salvation Army site was closed by the time we got there, so we'll try again next week — after the next snowstorm that's due to come through tomorrow.

I spent some time sorting tools, hats, and scarves, and made another small dent in our stuff. Henry worked with me on the tools, and then went on to work on other stuff, too.

The Biden administration is making great use of the Defense Production Act to enable Pfizer to produce more vaccine, to build factories to produce gloves for medical use, and to ramp up at home testing. It's very encouraging.

I hear speculation that the Republican Party may actually split, with Trump starting a new party. That would be an amazing thing to witness.

Impeachment starts next week. I'll watch when I can, and listen to Elie Honig's podcast summing up the day.

Sunday, February 7

I woke up at about 5, and found myself fully awake, so I got up around 5:30. I wasn't particularly anxious, just wakeful.

And who knew that Louis DeJoy is still the head of the Post Office? Give that agency some love and better management!

NYT: South Africa halted use of the AstraZeneca-Oxford coronavirus vaccine on Sunday after evidence emerged that the vaccine did not protect clinical-trial participants from mild or moderate illness caused by the more

contagious virus variant that was first seen there. / Scientists in South Africa said on Sunday that a similar problem held among people who had been infected by earlier versions of the coronavirus: the immunity they acquired naturally did not appear to protect them from mild or moderate cases when reinfected by the variant, known as B.1.351.

That's certainly disturbing news, though it may not be as bad as it sounds. "The clinical trial participants who were evaluated were relatively young and unlikely to become severely ill, making it impossible for the scientists to determine if the variant interfered with the AstraZeneca-Oxford vaccine's ability to protect against severe Covid-19, hospitalizations, or deaths."

Henry and I are doing more paperwork today than sorting, although I have identified a handful of things to ditch (a pair of tai chi shoes that's too small, a bunch of old knives). I basically completed my application; I'm just waiting for Henry to nail down a few numbers. I made an appointment to talk with my representative at Vanguard and sent a note to Henry's former co-worker at the senior community. I told the other members of the board of my tai chi school that I'm moving.

The Super Bowl is today, but we have never cared and aren't about to start caring now. I only hope people aren't giving each other covid at parties.

I just listened to TWiV. If I understood the guests today, and I will not swear that I did, then the rapid growth of variants may be in part because the other variants in the community are beginning to run into previously infected people and reach a dead end, while the newer variants may be able to infect some of those people.

Actually, maybe I did understand them. NPR: Now the city of Manaus is seeing another massive surge in cases (after an earlier surge in which up to 76% of the population may have been infected). This time around, the outbreak appears even larger than the first one, says [Marcus Vinicius Lacerda](#), an infectious disease doctor ... in Manaus. ... In many ways, this resurgence in Manaus doesn't seem to make sense because such a large proportion of the population was infected just last spring. In theory, these earlier patients should now be immune to the coronavirus. So why is the city seeing such a huge surge? The answer could lie in a newly discovered

variant.”

NJ Spotlight: 925,597 coronavirus vaccines have been given out as of mid-Friday morning. In about a month's time the state has fully immunized 179,956 residents. But it means roughly 4.5 million eligible adults remain. The Health Department is expecting a shipment of about 250,000 doses next week. That's almost double the usual allotment.

I hope all the snow in the forecast doesn't prevent the Health Department from administering all 250K doses.

Monday, February 8

We both slept well, and I know I needed it. I'm feeling energetic and buzzy, wanting to get things done. It's bright and sunny this morning, but it isn't expected to go above freezing today. We're in for a cold week. I hope that yesterday's storm doesn't prevent Pam from coming — she's the representative of Byron Home who is expected to come to measure our things and have a preliminary conversation about downsizing, room layouts, and I'm not sure what else.

Pfizer news this morning: USA Today: Pfizer expects to cut COVID-19 vaccine production time by close to 50% as production ramps up, efficiencies increase.

Henry and I are working on finalizing our applications to the senior community so we can bring them with us on Thursday. For the medical report, we have to wait for our doctor.

[The Wall Street Journal @WSJ](#) Texas Rep. Ron Wright has died after contracting Covid-19, becoming the first member of Congress to die from the virus while in office

I've heard this before: [Meg Tirrell @megtirrell](#) Dr Fauci is \*not\* on board with administering just 1 dose of mRNA vaccines. At WH Covid briefing, he says:

- neutralizing antibody titers go up 10x with 2nd dose
- suboptimal response to 1 dose could inadvertently select for mutant

strains

Pam from Byron Home just spent a couple of hours with us. She photographed and measured, and we talked about what decisions we need to make and what space we will need. She agrees with us that we're losing storage space, and comments that we might want more built-ins.

Covid Tracking: It's just so good to see the numbers of new cases and hospitalizations continue to drop so sharply. We're at about 100K new cases a day, which is still more than double the summer peak but heartening all the time; there are 80K people currently hospitalized, which is still significantly higher than the first two peaks, but there were about 130K only a month ago. Deaths haven't started to drop yet, and I've read that there are two lags there: the one between hospitalization and death, and the lag between death and a death report.

Tuesday, February 9

I had a good workout with Ken, then prepared for and taught my zoom tai chi class — well, Angie's tai chi class of students in Portland. After that, I did some very minor sorting and tidying of bags in my closet, one kitchen cabinet, and tote bags. We learned that the fireplace in our cottage can't be removed after all, which was initially pretty sad, but now I think we can probably put the TV on top of the fireplace somehow, with some help, and find another place for the piece of furniture our TV sits on. Surely there's a way to do these things.

I'm attending a zoom presentation by the organizers of Vote Forward. They don't have results yet, but they are talking about how they perform their experiments and where they get their data.

Wednesday, February 10

This has been a busy afternoon. I went for a final visit with the pain doctor at 11:15, after which I got Henry's Power of Attorney form copied, then walked around for an hour and a half before going to the doctor for my physical. Whew. I'm back home and I've had some food.

Covid Tracking: (Boy, I'm going to miss this site when they stop.) The average number of daily deaths has been at least 3K for a month, and it hasn't started dropping yet. That's a lot of deaths.

Thursday, February 11

I worked out with Ken half an hour early, and did a bunch of PT exercises beforehand. Now I'm all showered and ready to head down to the senior community.

Friday, February 12

That was quite a visit. I have to sum up what happened and we still needs to be done later today, but all in all, it went well, we made the choices that needed to be made, and it's pretty clear what the open questions are.

I did very little today, feeling utterly wrung out after yesterday. I made a few notes about what needs to be done next, made some marks on Deborah's drawing showing the layout of the rooms, and I don't think I did much else.

The Covid Tracking data continues to show improvement. New cases are down to 100K a day — still much higher than the two earlier surges, but less than half of its recent peak. Hospitalizations are down to 71K — again, much higher than earlier surges, but the hospitals must be feeling some relief. Deaths may be starting to stop, but a couple of states are recalculating, so there are some very high numbers showing up. We have surpassed 475K deaths.

The trends in NJ are similar. We still have a high level of disease. I forget whether I mentioned last Saturday that there were two women with active covid cases at the women's AA meeting. I've been checking in with them during the week, and it'll be good to see them tomorrow.

157M vaccinations have been delivered around the world; 46M in the US, to 36.4M people. Many countries have had no access to vaccines yet, because wealthy countries are grabbing all the supply. The small mailing list of former at&t employees, many of retirement age, includes many

reports of an absurdly complicated system in NJ, with people being sent to vaccination centers over an hour away. NJ started a phone system so people didn't all have to go to the web, and then had to shut it down because people were ending up double booked. I realize again how lucky Henry and I have been.

I'm keeping track of the progress of the impeachment by watching Rachel Maddow, reading the news, following twitter, and listening to a CAFE podcast, but without watching the entire thing. It's about what we expected, really. The impeachment managers are making spectacularly good presentations while Republican Senators make procedural excuses. I don't suppose more than a half dozen GOP Senators will vote to convict, and we need 17, assuming everyone is present. The Georgia DA is investigating interference in their election process by Trump and by Lindsay Graham, and that will be interesting to watch. Lawrence O'Donnell says Trump will probably spend the rest of his life defending himself against various criminal and civil charges, and that seems fitting.

Nikki Haley has decided to separate herself from Trump. She seems like a pretty calculating person, and she seems to have made the same calculations as Mitch McConnell.

The Lincoln Project, a group of anti-Trump Republicans that has run some powerful ads, seems to be falling apart. One of their founders has been exposed as a pedophile, pestering young teenage boys by text and email, and other members of the group stand accused of being aware of his behavior. There seem to be some questions about what they've done with all the money they raised, too.

Saturday, February 13

I found myself ready to work this morning, and drafted a note to send to Deborah (the Byron employee who is helping us with room layouts). I measured shelves and made notes on the drawing.

I also realized that I could start attending some events in Princeton before moving there if I want to — the Quaker Meeting is happening remotely, and so are the events at the Insight Meditation Society.



Henry and I took a big load to the Salvation Army. I spent some time working on notes about the move, confirming agreements made on Thursday and raising issues of layout and design that still have to be settled, some by us alone and some with the help of various professionals.

Newspapers are issuing editorials about the impeachment trial. NYT, Dallas Morning News: Convict.

[Ari Berman @AriBerman](#) Insane stat via [@atausanovitch](#): 34 GOP senators representing just 14.5% of population can block conviction of president who tried to violently overthrow American democracy. US Senate & American politics deeply broken

The impeachment trial is over, rather suddenly, and Trump was acquitted. 7 Republicans voted with all the Democrats that he was guilty, but it wasn't enough. It's a disappointment without being a surprise.

[Ari Berman @AriBerman](#) Shocking stat: 57 senators who voted to convict Trump represent 76.7 MILLION more Americans than 43 senators who voted to acquit

Seth Cotlar @SethCotlar. Mitch applauded the Senate Republicans who backed Trump for avoiding a "political" process of persecution, but then called for Biden's DOJ to prosecute Trump, which will unleash howls of divisive outrage from those same Republicans when they run for office in 2022 & 24.

Sunday, February 14

I mailed out the notes I prepared yesterday to the people helping us with our move. I played video games with Evan a couple of times. And I sorted through our linens and filled a bag for Angie to take on Wednesday. At the top of the linen closet, I discovered a box labeled "napkins," which is full of napkins and placemats that Henry brought with him. We went through it and culled about half. If I'd known about those, I wouldn't have bought napkins last summer!

This has been a good day's work, actually.

The CDC reports nearly 4.5M doses of vaccine administered over the past two days, out of 70M doses administered and 38M people having at least one shot.

I checked the weather, and it was actually warmer, in the high 30s, so I took a walk along the Hudson. It's the first time in a while that I've walked to the lighthouse in Newport. It felt very good to be out.

I listened to an interview on TWiV with Paul Offit. They asked him why he thinks new cases have been dropping so sharply. He thinks it's that some version of herd immunity is having an impact. There have been nearly 27M official cases, which could mean as many as 52M or even 100M infections, and now 38M people have had at least one vaccination. Some of those are the same people, of course, so you can't just add the numbers, but the amount of protection, however temporary, is now higher than it's ever been. The unvaccinated people are most at risk of re-infection from new variants. The US is finally doing more sequencing, though we're way behind the UK, but scientists have now identified a number of new variants that seem to have originated here. That makes perfect sense, of course, with the virus running rampant for a year.

They also talked about the meaning of "herd immunity," given that nobody expects these vaccines to produce "sterilizing immunity." That is, vaccinated people can become infected, and even symptomatic, but they are less likely to become seriously ill. Offit said that's true of most vaccines, with the influenza vaccine being the best known example. So if we define immunity down, so that it means avoiding severe illness, then we're growing closer to herd immunity. So far, the variants don't seem to threaten the effectiveness of the vaccines, but certainly doctors, public health people, and virologists are on high alert.

Many governors and mayors have been responding to the falling case counts by loosening restrictions, and public health experts are concerned that some are loosening them too precipitately. They're in a race with the weather now, perhaps, as well as with mutations. We're all still indoors in the northeast, but people are coming out of hibernation in warmer parts of

the country.

Monday, February 15

Henry and I spent a couple of hours this morning going through his various boxes of electronics: extension cords and plugs, power strips, computer cables and accessories, audio and video cables. We reduced the collection by about half, I think, and sorted out things to give away, throw away, and recycle. I tidied up my own drawer while we were at it. Whew. Then he came up with a few neckties and caps from his summer volunteering for CORE in the early 1960s. I found an email address at the National Civil Rights Museum, and offered to send them.

I see on the Washington Post site that the 7-day average of daily deaths has dropped below 2800. That's still shockingly high, but great news all the same. The sharp drop in cases that started in early January is finally working its way through to the death rate. That took about 5 weeks.

I attended a tai chi class, made muffins to use up some old bananas, and then did my PT exercises.

Cold weather and ice storms all across the country today, causing traffic pileups and power outages. We're supposed to get some ice tonight, but the rains tomorrow should wash it away.

The Republicans who voted to convict Trump are, one by one, being censured by the GOP in their home states.

[Yale Medicine @YaleMedicine](#) A new Yale study shows that high levels of the SARS-CoV-2 virus in a person's saliva could be a predictor of who will be more likely to develop severe disease, be hospitalized, or die from [#COVID19](#).

Tuesday, February 16

Wow, two more people I know in Hudson County with covid — my trainer Ken and his partner Robert. They're not careless, but they do go to work — Robert works around construction people and Ken does fill-in shifts at a

private gym. They don't know which of them picked it up. They're having very different symptoms: Ken feels like he has a mild flu, with daytime congestion and nighttime fever. Robert has achy joints.

Zoe Tillman @ZoeTillman New: Rep. Bennie Thompson filed a lawsuit in federal court today against Trump, Giuliani, the Proud Boys, and the Oath Keepers alleging they conspired to interfere with Congress's certification of the election, in violation of the Ku Klux Klan Act

Henry and I did some further tidying and organizing this morning, but nothing major. In about 15 minutes, we'll head to Alliance Health so he can get his second vaccination. Hurray! I'll walk around a bit while he's in there, and wonder where I'm going to get my next haircut.

I just remembered this morning that I can go back to the gym now! Tomorrow it will be two weeks since my second vaccination.

[Governor Phil Murphy @GovMurphy](#) VACCINE UPDATE: 1,411,270 vaccine doses have been administered as of mid-morning today:  
1,024,769 first doses  
386,490 second doses

I walked with Henry to get his shot, just so I could be outside on this beautiful day. It was 50 degrees and mostly sunny, which is amazing when we see so much of the country in a deep freeze or covered with ice. His vaccination went smoothly.

After dinner, I signed on to a call with the Democratic Party. The speaker, Sam Cornale, is the Executive Director of the DNC. I think this is the first time I've signed on to a DNC call, but much of my texting was done under the direction of state party organizations. (He's a Madison guy, which is kind of nice.) I did a little bit of texting for the national organization, I guess. I like it that every group is connecting with volunteers now, even when there isn't much work for us to do — Vote Forward, Swing Left, and even the DNC. (There are several Indivisible groups nearby, and a Swing Left group in Pennington. I admire Indivisible, but Swing Left might be more my speed.)

[The COVID Tracking Project @COVID19Tracking](#) Our daily update is published. States reported 1.1 million tests, 56k cases, 64,533 people currently hospitalized with COVID-19, and 1,353 deaths. / 7-day average deaths across the country are down 30% from their peak on Jan 13. / This is the fewest COVID-19 deaths reported by states on a Tuesday since Nov 3.

[Stephen Wolf @PoliticsWolf](#) A major Republican voter suppression bill in Arizona that would have removed over 100,000 voters from the state's "permanent" mail voting list has been defeated.

[Stephen Wolf @PoliticsWolf](#). Iowa GOP is considering a bill that would: Cut early & mail voting from 29 days to 18; Limit counties to 1 mail ballot drop box regardless of size; Limit early voting locations; Bar counties from sending absentee ballot request forms to voters; Ban third-party ballot collection

I'm only half listening to Cornale, because he's just going through Democratic talking points, trying to prime us to talk to our friends and family members.

Wednesday, February 17

I started my inventory of what we have in closets and storage bins. It's a bit daunting to realize how much there is — but then most of it can live in the garage in the new place.

When I see people feeling so hurt and lost because of the ongoing pandemic, I realize how lucky I am, and how much I've adapted without even remembering doing it. It would be tougher if I lived alone, I'm sure of that. Henry and I don't interact as much as chattier people might, but I'm always aware of his presence and his support. Online AA meetings help, and I'm extremely glad I reconnected the program. And then I don't seem to need a lot more — a few phone calls a week, casual interaction with people in the lobby and even brief interactions with people on the streets and in stores. We don't have young children to care for or jobs to go to; we have no financial worries. We're floating above the pandemic in our own little bubble. It's hard to remember how shocking it all was a year ago. Now

I'm not entirely sure what I'll change once Henry is fully vaccinated, as I now am. I went to Hudson Greene yesterday and bought quite a lot of groceries, something I wouldn't have done before. I'll get a haircut. I'm making appointments to see a few doctors. I'll start going to the gym in the building. I think things will change more once my friends and family are also vaccinated — Sheree, Michele. And I can't wait for spring!

NJ Spotlight: Gov. Phil Murphy vowed to spend \$100 million on clean transportation projects, much of which would be targeted to reducing unhealthy air quality in urban areas with communities that are already overburdened with pollution problems. / The projects announced Tuesday include a range of initiatives aimed at electrifying the transportation sector. That would mean funding for projects to transition to electric buses and electrifying garbage and delivery trucks. It also includes money to switch from fossil fuel used by medium- and heavy-duty equipment in cargo handling operations at ports and funding to aid industrial areas in so-called environmental-justice communities.

I'm glad to hear this funding is being directed to Camden, Newark, and other more polluted communities. I wonder if Jersey City will get a boost.

An article by Derek Thompson in The Atlantic tackles the question of the reasons for the sharp drop in cases now happening nationwide:

- “Behavior: Maybe Americans finally got the hang of this mask and social-distancing thing”
- “Seasonality: The coronavirus was perhaps destined to decline this time of year”
- “Partial immunity: Is the virus running out of bodies?,” (“[Fifteen](#) to [30 percent](#) of American adults have already been infected with COVID-19, according to CDC estimates.”)
- “Vaccines: The shots work.”

I think behavior has to be included as one of the reasons based on the fact that there was virtually no flu season this year. The seasonality is mysterious, and I guess we have to keep an eye on countries in the southern hemisphere to see if that makes sense.

A discussion on twitter reminds me that another factor is that behavior over

the holidays probably caused the extreme spike, and some of what we're seeing is the spike subsiding.

Henry and I decided to stay in the apartment today when Angie came to clean. We wore masks and didn't linger in whatever room she was working in, but we didn't feel like contending with the cold today, when Henry's feeling pretty tired after his shot yesterday. Then Angie kindly took away most of the stuff we had gathered in our little front room for donation.

I have a board meeting in a few minutes, then an AA meeting and our monthly business meeting.

The current freezing weather is making quite a mess in Texas — people getting CO poisoning, water levels low as people try to keep their faucets from bursting. It looks as though they have to endure 3 or 4 more days of this before nighttime temperatures exceed 32 degrees. The governor is trying to blame the Green New Deal in some way, but Texas depends on oil and gas!

At the AA meeting, I've heard three covid stories already — L's friend just died of covid, S has covid, and M knows someone else who just died of covid. Boy, the numbers may be dropping, but it doesn't look like that from here. I just revisited the NJ data on Covid Tracking, and no wonder it feels like this: the NJ case numbers are still just about right where they were during the first peak last spring, nearly 4,000 a day. They're dropping, and I just hope that continues.

Thursday, February 18

Last night, I ran my second business meeting as a new GSR in AA. My face was beet red by the end of the meeting, and that makes me feel lousy. I'd say I feel ashamed to be so nervous, and that's a new shame trigger to be aware of. (That's the label I learned from Brené Brown.) My face betrays me, because I could manage to look fairly calm if it didn't turn so red. It's a physical reaction I seem to be helpless to control. So I feel out of control and weak. I sometimes have the same reaction when I'm teaching tai chi, and the same shame creeps up on me afterwards. I might have started reddening when I made a mistake, forgetting that we needed

a motion to approve the treasurer's report. What a tiny mistake, though!  
And in such a safe and encouraging setting!

I worked out with Ken this morning, and now Henry and I are back at work on organizing. I inventoried the hall closet, and Henry's going through a couple of boxes from our storage bins. Henry chose a bin full of memories, and he's having some intensely sad and tearful moments remembering his first wife Georgette.

Another snow storm is raging outside all the while.

Henry and I reviewed a couple of revisions to the layout diagram that Deborah sent us, and wrote a response. We also got email from the move-in coordinator, spelling out what we've asked for and how much it'll cost, and asking a few questions. We've now responded to that as well.

NYT: Nearly 28M people have now tested positive for SARS-CoV-2, and 493K people have died of covid-19. Covid Tracking: cases and deaths are still dropping sharply (and still higher than the spring and summer peaks); deaths are dropping slowly, but still averaging over 2.5K each day. So much death. About 2.5M deaths worldwide are attributed to covid.

[All In with Chris Hayes @allinwithchris](#) "Ted Cruz sees his job as basically being a guy who records a podcast, goes on Fox News, and tweets snarky jokes. And increasingly, that's what being a conservative politician is. It's a form of performative trolling," says [@chrishayes](#).

Ted Cruz is drowning in bad publicity right now, because he swept up his family and flew to Cancun when the power went out in Texas. All the while, Beto O'Rourke, who lost to Cruz a couple of years ago, was organizing his team of volunteers to check in on older people, and even give them rides to warming centers. Some people believe in service, and some don't.

It feels like a weekend day, and that's probably because of the snowstorm somehow.

Friday, February 19



There are a couple of sick people to be checked on today — S from the Hoboken women's meeting, who has covid; Steve from the tai chi school, who has a bad cold as far as we know, but may not be responding to texts. S responded to my text, saying that she's feeling pretty low. Her doctor is prescribing antibiotics and an inhaler. I'm not sure she should be getting antibiotics at this point, so I wonder about her medical care. I bet she never had access to monoclonal antibodies. And Steve sent email to George that he's recovering but that his energy is still very low. I don't know if he has been tested for the virus.

Henry's still busy sorting; I'm trying to figure out what has to go in each closet so I'll be ready for a discussion about closet design. We just got rid of half of our umbrellas — why do we have more than a dozen umbrellas?

My niece and her family in Texas are doing ok. They've had intermittent power losses, but they've managed with the help of a small generator.

This is good to hear:

[Andy Slavitt. @aslavitt46](#) BREAKING: President Biden announces \$2 billion payment to vaccinate the world through COVAX.

I sorted through my medicine cabinet and tossed some old tubes and bottles. We have an appointment next Wednesday to talk with the closet and cabinet guy.

I'm very scattered today, doing small chores and responding to lots of things that want my attention.

Saturday, February 20

There seem to be more and more moments when I mistake the day of the week. On Thursday, I kept thinking it was Saturday. Last night as I prepared for bed, I somehow assumed that today was Thursday and I would be working out with Ken. I hope I'm not becoming totally unmoored in time! I think staying home and avoiding snowstorms makes this disconnection worse.

The discussion at the Barrow St meeting is wonderful, as usual. I'm

reflecting on obstacles to feeling connection with other people — and oh my goodness, typing while somebody is talking is a hell of an obstacle. Stop. OK, I stopped. It's much later now, after a long phone call and lunch. The topic was laughter, and not taking ourselves too seriously, and a few interesting points were raised in the discussion. A couple of women copped to making jokes at other people's expense, which I have certainly done. That behavior is often quite unattractive, but presumably it comes from a desire to feel like part of the group — and that makes it even clearer how unseemly it is, because that's the wellspring of group bullying and other mob activities. During the conversation, though, I remembered something I must have heard in a talk by Gil Fronsdal the other day. As I remember it, he said that the chatter in our heads interferes with our ability to connect, and of course that's true, because it keeps us from being present and listening.

Washington Post: 42.4 million vaccinated / The number of people who have received at least one dose of the vaccine, covering 34.8% of the prioritized population and 12.8% of the total population.

Henry's back at work, thinning out closets, ditching an old keyboard, an old blanket. I've started reading my backlog of magazines, and I just identified a half dozen books and an old kindle that can be moved along one way or another. Henry has for years written down sentences and sentence fragments that caught his eye, and we had a couple of sessions where he read them to me and I typed them into a file in Dropbox. We reorganized first aid for feet and ankles, threw out a box of shoe polish and brushes. No massive cleanups today, but many small ones.

Sunday, February 21

The day started awkwardly. Evan woke me up and wanted to play a Roblox game. I'm not wild about Roblox, and I couldn't figure out how to play the game. I was crabby, and he was crabby. He has also picked up on the story of Game Stop and the hedge funds, and has fully bought the narrative that the Redditors are making tons of money and giving it all to charity (!), so they're heroes and they can't possibly lose money. He gave me the impression that if someone disagrees with that narrative, he won't talk to them for a while. So it was all very testy. And when he wants to

stop playing with me, he just leaves without comment. Neither of us was displaying our best emotional intelligence this morning!

He FaceTimed me later for another session, and it went better. I started figuring out how to play that particular game, and we were nicer to one another.

Henry and I had one more session transcribing his old sentence fragments, and we managed to reduce several inches of paper down to about ten sheets of paper.

I took the PATH train into the city to walk with Meret. (I had to leave and arrive using the Grove St station, because Exchange Place is closed today.). We started at Union Square and walked down to the WTC, then over to the Hudson for a little while before I took the PATH back home. It was a little unnerving to be around so many people, but it was great to be outside. I haven't taken many walks this month, avoiding the storms and the low temperatures.

We hugged when we left each other! I haven't hugged anyone but Henry since the pandemic began. [Holy cow, that's a long time.]

Monday, February 22

Today I'll take the old Honda Fit to Madison, NJ at 11 to have its drive shaft checked. There's a recall notice saying that they sometimes become damaged by road salt and need to be replaced.

That turned into a small ordeal, because the car needed the repair and it wasn't finished until 4:00. While they inspected it, I took a walk in the neighborhood, enjoying the snow. When they decided it needed the repair, I was able to get a loaner car. First I went to Trader Joe's and stocked up on nuts, and then I went to the Short Hills Mall where I was able to do a lot of walking, and then sit to have a latte and read one of the magazines I had brought with me.

As I sat there, I got a bit emotional. I think a lot of things caught up with me at once — the tension of the change Henry and I are going through, the

discomfort of the slightly testy exchange with Evan, the busyness of the past few days. And as I caught up on twitter, I saw so many powerful headlines: marijuana legalization was finally approved and signed by Murphy, the Supreme Court declined to hear 6 GOP election challenges, Virginia banned the death penalty, the Supreme Court also declined a last-ditch effort by Trump to keep a Manhattan prosecutor from getting his financial records and tax returns, and Merrick Garland is getting a hearing in the Senate to become the DA. That's a lot of good news. Oh, and the FDA told the vaccine makers that they don't have to go through the full-blown testing process to modify their vaccines for emerging variants.

In the car on the way home, I remembered a metaphor Ram Dass used. You can imagine yourself riding along on top of the ocean, feeling every change of wind and current, immersed in life's drama, or you can drop below the surface to feel some calm and quiet. It seems to me that both of those perspectives are real and have to be honored.

I'm very worn out, but I'm having a hard time not working continuously on my to-do lists.

Tuesday, February 23

Ken didn't feel well enough to train me this morning, so I went to the gym for first time since March! It was interesting — some things I used to use aren't there now, like the step-up box, and the music was even more annoying than I remembered it, but it was great to see some other equipment that I really like and I had a decent workout.

I made an appointment for a haircut this Friday! Oh boy, I can hardly wait.

I taught with Angie, and that went smoothly.

And now our Wednesday appointment at the senior community has been changed to Friday, so I'm getting haircut tomorrow instead.

Henry and I went over my notes about what we want to ask the cupboard guy to build for us, and what constraints make sense based on our current belongings and what we want in each storage area. Before I was finished

writing up our conversation, I got a call from my AA sponsee, and we had a nice long conversation. She wants to celebrate at the Hoboken women's meeting next week, and is asking me to present her virtual coin. That'll be fun!

Now I've just logged in to a Run for Something zoom seminar. I admire that organization, and would like to do more to support them. I went through some on-line training several months ago, but was daunted by (1) how much information I needed to absorb, and (2) the fact that I would be talking to strangers on the phone, trying to communicate all that information. Maybe I can try again, or maybe I can find another way in. It's a very good presentation. In a post-election survey, a couple of issues emerged for candidates: it's difficult, especially for rural candidates, to find qualified staff; fundraising is obviously tough. RFS is planning to focus particularly on offices below the state level in 2021, because many other organizations are focussing on state legislatures now. They want to help prospective staff get training, and to work hard on fundraising so they can help candidates even more.

Covid Tracking: The same trends I've been remarking on for a while — new cases are just about down to the level of the summer peak, at long last, and the same is true for hospitalizations. Deaths are genuinely dropping now, but still averaging 2,000 deaths a day, which is about the level of the initial spring peak and still double the level of the summer peak. NJ: Even though the number of cases in the recent peak (over 6K) was significantly higher than the first peak last spring (under 4K), hospitalizations never exceeded half of that level (8K in the spring, under 4K recently), and neither did deaths (over 300 in the spring, under 100 recently).

Wednesday, February 24

I just spent some moderately annoying time trying to figure out how to access the Sharepoint email I receive as an AA GSR in any of the email apps I now use — it should work in Apple mail, but it doesn't seem to. I went so far as to install Outlook, but it's fairly expensive to buy a license. If none of that works, I'll have to remember to check email on this web site once a week — maybe I'll put a reminder in my calendar.

I got a haircut! What a pleasure. I went out to Denville again, not feeling like experimenting just now. And then Henry got out the electric shaver he bought a while ago and I gave him a haircut, too. It looks perfectly reasonable, and better than the job I did with scissors earlier in the pandemic.

It's almost bedtime, and I'm feeling very disturbed again, as I did last night. I think I'm trying to do too many things at once, and not remaining calm as I do them. I'm still trying to get that email account configured, and making a list of other small things to check on tomorrow, and texting people during the AA meeting instead of just sitting and paying attention. Other AA people, but still. I need to quiet down for bed.

Underlying everything is the tension about the move, of course.

Thursday, February 25

I vacuumed this morning, then worked out with Ken. Henry and I just got back from taking another load to the Salvation Army.

I went to the bike room to check on my bike, and this is going to be harder than I thought. I remembered where the bike room is, which is a very small accomplishment, but I didn't remember what slot my bike is in, and I didn't recognize it. I even think the bike room may have been reorganized, but I sure wouldn't bet money on it. I called management to find out the slot number. Good thing I didn't put this off any longer!

We had a bit of back and forth this afternoon between our doctor's office and the folks at the senior community about missing tests and so forth. We'll meet the nurse tomorrow and try to get everything straightened out.

I went to [Apparently it went without saying that I was attending events remotely, because I hadn't attended anything in person for over a year at this point.] a women's meeting at the 124 Club, that 12 step clubhouse abutting the senior community. It was a good meeting and nice to feel that I could already be making friends in the neighborhood.

Friday, February 26

Today we head back down to the senior community. We'll meet with the contractor and the guy who makes cabinets, and then with the nurse.

Both meetings went well, and we came home worn out but happy. I don't know how much all these cabinets will cost, but they'll be worth it to us. The nurse spent quite a while with us. First she went over the information provided by our doctor, then she did an informal cognitive assessment — Henry had expected that and was for some reason quite nervous about it, but it went well. After all, neither of us has dementia, so there's no reason it wouldn't go well. Then she told us about the medical services that would be available to us on the premises and in the area, and answered a lot of question about things that could happen as we age — for example, how do we handle it if we age at very different rates, and what support is available if someone's cognitive decline makes them do things that are dangerous.

A woman I met at a Jersey City AA meeting is currently living with her parents in the Princeton area, and I told her about the meeting I went to last night. She hadn't realized there was a women's meeting there, and has been keeping away from the meetings her father attends to support her privacy and his, but maybe she'll join me there on Thursday.

Covid Tracking: There's a small uptick in cases nationally this week, possibly because the weather made it impossible for people to get tested last week. There's a small rise in the number of deaths as well; I have no theory for that. In NJ, hospitalizations rose a little. That could also be weather-related, or maybe it's just noise. We'll see. Everybody's so nervous about variants that every deviation from the current decline is scary — and I don't just mean the media, but the head of the CDC.

Saturday, February 27

I fell asleep easily last night and slept straight through till 6:30. It is forecast to be gray and rainy all day — and well above freezing the whole time, so a lot of snow is going to be washed away.

Wow, I am sleepy this morning. I took a short nap before launching the AA meeting, and I'll need another one more the day is over.

Sunday, February 28

There was little to report yesterday, because I was crashing all day from how demanding Friday was. I may be a little more active today. I started by making muffins, because we have way too many bananas.

Actually, there was a significant news report last night: the FDA approved the EUA for the J&J vaccine, a single-shot vaccine that can be stored at ordinary refrigerator temperature. They'll start delivering doses as early as next week.

I finished a couple of magazines — I'm almost finished with the July issues, and hoping to get a lot farther before we move. I made some notes about what information to leave for our buyer. Before too long, we'll reach out to the realtor who sold this apartment to us.

There's a lot of talk in the news and in popular culture about how hard it is to get an appointment for a vaccination. People I know are driving a couple of hours to get one, for instance, and these are the people who are good at the online reservation systems. Many people without an internet connection and computer skills are having quite a difficult time. Older people outside nursing homes are relying on their children to make their appointments and drive them — so what do older people do without those resources? Henry and I have been extraordinarily fortunate. I'm wondering if Pfizer will draw from their existing pool of volunteers when it comes time to test boosters!

Monday, March 1

Wow, it's March. It's a gray and foggy day, probably raining lightly. It was gray and rainy most of yesterday, though there was some sun late in the day. I should have gone for a walk, but I let myself take the whole weekend off after our demanding day on Friday. Another storm passed over us last night, I guess, but I think the worst of it followed another path.

I had a good workout with Ken. Henry and I roughly figured out the timeline of our move, and Henry offered to reach out to a realtor about selling this



apartment. Sigh. I'll miss it a lot.

I made an appointment at my doctor's office to do a couple of tests, and the doctor wants me to repeat a test, too, because my globulin level was low in my recent tests. Globulins are proteins in the blood, and they come in several types: alpha 1, alpha 2, beta, and gamma — the gamma globulins are mostly immunoglobulins, or antibodies. Hey, these sound familiar from listening to TWiV: IgG, IgE, IgM, etc. So maybe the doctor will want to test for all these globulin types to see if one of them has dropped. The main causes seem to be malnutrition, dehydration, or kidney failure. I'd be very surprised if I have any of these problems!

The biggest topics in political news are, I think, (1) the ongoing effort to pass Biden's relief package, which just passed in the House without a single Republican vote despite its great popularity with voters, even Republican voters; (2) the voter suppression efforts of Republican legislatures in state after state. It seems to be nearly their entire political strategy.

I checked some old lab reports I've saved, and they show that my globulin has been near or below the low end of the preferred range at least since 1996, so the current result isn't unusual.

I went to the eye doctor for the first time in two years, and I ordered two pairs of new glasses, one for regular wear and the other for the computer. As usual, there are a few things he's keeping an eye on, but nothing I'm going to worry about now.

Tuesday, March 2

It's cold today, with a wind advisory, so I think I'll wait until tomorrow to take a walk. I could use a walk, too — I'm on overload from everything that's going on. (Oh, I just used that key phrase from 2020 without even noticing it — "everything that's going on." [ I see that I neglected to explain that. I kept hearing people use that phrase as a shorthand to explain the drama and stress of the moment. They'd start a sentence about something they wanted to do, or couldn't do, or with a problem they were having, and they'd end it with "... with everything that's going on."]) Even the eye

appointment yesterday was mentally tiring, and I'm going to try to take it easy for a few days. [ I didn't explain that, either, but I think it means that going into the world to be around people, even just a couple of people in a doctor's office, was much harder than it used to be because of "everything that's going on." No, not everything -- just the covid part. There was always a feeling of vulnerability and nervousness from being out in public and around others. And then I was choosing new glasses but I couldn't take my mask off, so I hardly knew what they were going to look like! ]

A bunch of phone calls, texts, and emails going back and forth — I have to go back to the eye doctor's office tomorrow for a couple of measurements; Ken wants to reschedule our workouts; we received an updated renovation order for the new cottage, signed it, and faxed it back.

Some headlines in the Washington Post right now: Merck is going to help manufacture the J&J vaccine, in an arrangement brokered by the WH; FBI Director Wray testifies in Senate hearing on Capitol riot; Supreme Court to again consider federal protections for minority voters. 'The cases at the Supreme Court involve two voting regulations from Arizona that are in common use across the country. One throws out the ballots of those who vote in the wrong precinct. The other restricts who may collect ballots cast early for delivery to polling places, a practice then-President Donald Trump denounced as "ballot harvesting."'"

I taught a tai chi class to students in Portland, Oregon, as usual. We're nearing the end of the class, and I probably won't try teaching anything now until I'm settled.

I'm thankful that it's been a pretty quiet day.

Wednesday, March 3

After the recent news about the J&J vaccine, there should be enough to vaccinate for every adult in America by the end of May. The economic rebound should be fast, but certainly not for everyone. There has been a lot of damage done.

Washington Post: About 280 people have been arrested for their part in the

assault on the Capitol on January 6.

Governors continue to lift restrictions designed to limit the spread of the virus despite the continuing high case numbers and the low percentage of people currently vaccinated. The governors of Texas and Mississippi, for example, have lifted their mask mandates.

I recently subscribed to Heather Cox Richardson's email list, which became increasingly popular during the Trump administration. I'm not sure I've learned anything new from it yet, but it seems to be thoughtful and nicely written.

I went back to the eye doctor so they could take some measurements, and then went to Whole Foods in Springfield — for the first time in a year! I think I only got one thing I can't usually get delivered, but it was good to be there in any case. Now I'm doing some texting for Fair Fight — for the first time since the election. It feels good to be working again, and I know some of the worst voter suppression bills are being introduced in Georgia. There will be a lot of work as we get closer to the midterms, but it's nice to have just a little work to do now.

Covid Tracking, which I can use for a few more days: hospitalizations are still dropping, but cases may have flattened out. NY and NJ are still classified in the NYT as having new cases that are higher and staying high, along with 12 other states — including Texas. Even if cases increase, it seems possible that hospitalizations won't, because the vaccine rollout is increasingly giving protection to the more vulnerable people. In NJ, 17.5% of 'the population' has had at least one shot. Do they mean the entire population or the adult population? I think they mean the entire population, because (NYT) the CDC says that ~52.9M people have had at least one vaccination. We're now averaging 2M shots per day.

Thursday, March 4

I had a good workout with Ken, and remembered to add some of my PT exercises afterwards. Henry and I have been tidying the apartment so Angie can clean when she gets here in an hour.

I'm looking at the NJ Spotlight covid dashboard. The  $R_t$  for NJ is a hair below 1 and growing. They say something I hadn't heard before, that NJ's death rate from covid is the highest in the nation, at 2.6 per thousand people, with 3.3% of all known cases ending in death. Hudson is one of three counties with case rates over 100 in a thousand — ie, just over one out of every ten people are known to have had covid. The other two are also very urban — Passaic has the highest case rate, followed by Hudson, then Union. The county with the lowest rate is Sussex, with 66 known cases per 1K residents.

Nearly 25% of the population has received at least one vaccination.

They show that at our prospective senior community, 51 residents and 69 staff members are known to have had covid. 15 residents died.

At our doctor's office, the office staff and the nurses do not seem entirely with it. I went for some more lab work, and had to reschedule some of it — the TB test requires a follow-up appointment within 48 to 72 hours, and their office isn't even open during that interval, so the vaccine the nurse drew had to be discarded. She looked at me as though I was somehow responsible for that problem, but I'm the patient! Anyway, I'll go back on Friday and Monday, and the last medical test for our application will be done. And it occurred to me later that, after all, the request for these tests came from me and not from the doctor, so perhaps that's why the process isn't smooth.

Friday, March 5

I managed to get my bicycle tires inflated, after ordering adapters on Amazon to convert Presta valves to the Schrader valves my bike pump can handle. This was all brand new information to me, learned the other day. It took me several days to locate my bike in the storage room, since I hadn't seen it in a couple of years, and then to figure out why I couldn't attach my pump to those weird-looking valves. When it warms up a bit, I'll take it to Grove St Bicycles for a tuneup, and buy a new bike helmet.

Henry's working on his taxes, and he has reached out to the realtor who sold us this unit, telling him we're moving.

[Andy Slavitt @aslavitt46](#) Vaccination update: After the largest single day of vaccinations... First shots:

21% of adults

56% of 65+

66% of 75+

Sheree said she's been on tons of waiting lists ever since the first day vaccinations were authorized for people 65 and over, and finally she has an appointment because someone who knows how to navigate the system intervened to get it for her. She doesn't even know how it was done, but she's grateful.

The realtor called back, and we made an appointment for him to come tomorrow. He said that the next step will be for him to bring a photographer and videographer. I wonder if part of that is new since the pandemic. Anyway, I kind of freaked out at the idea of preparing our apartment for filming, and I kept looking despairingly at Henry's cluttered and fortified office.

Saturday, Marcy 6

I didn't sleep much last night. Somehow I had not fully absorbed until yesterday that, when you sell your apartment or house, people come to look at it. And having it videotaped is even worse. I am building a mental library of little mantras to reduce my stress, along with trying to remember to keep breathing. Borrowing from Joseph Goldstein, add "... and the sky is blue" after noticing what you're distressed about. "And the world is big" might work even better. And I was remembering a metaphor we used at the Thursday night women's meeting about the weeds growing in our garden — where a weed may be one of our bad habits, or character defects, or triggers, or whatever we might like to call it. There will be times when I just have to spot my weeds about to grow out of control and just close my mouth.

Henry bustled around like crazy to organize his study for Scott's visit while I was hosting an AA meeting. And then it was time. It was a good meeting. He answered several questions, and he said our apartment looks great.

We made an appointment for the videographer and still photographer to come next Friday. By then, we should be able to give him a date to put it on the market.

Then I attended a tai chi class — it felt lovely to be doing qigong again. After that, I napped and rested for a couple of hours. We were both stunned that we had started the process of selling this lovely apartment.

Covid Tracking: The rate of decline in new cases has slowed drastically, and that's pretty terrible because we're just about at the level of the summer peak, with nearly 70K new cases every day.

NYT: "We've just now recently experienced the worst surge," Dr. Fauci said Friday [during a White House coronavirus briefing](#), adding that the country had plateaued at between 60,000 and 70,000 new cases per day. "When you have that much of viral activity in a plateau, it almost invariably means that you are at risk for another spike."

NYT, further: The B.1.1.7 variant, first identified in Britain, is spreading so rapidly in the United States that data analysis suggest that, as of this week, it has most [likely grown to account for 20 percent of new U.S. cases](#). And scientists in Oregon have identified a single case of a homegrown variant with the same spine as B.1.1.7 that [carries a mutation that could blunt the effectiveness of vaccines](#).

NJ Spotlight: The SARS-CoV-2 rate of transmission has just exceeded 1.

On a happier note, 2.9M vaccinations were given today.

Also, the Democrats in the Senate passed the covid relief bill, without a single GOP vote. They seem to have learned to be a lot tougher and more ambitious during the past four years.

The Guardian: 446,846 new daily cases worldwide, and doubtless that's a big undercount, as such numbers always are. 2.5M deaths so far; 10K per day.

This is <so> far from over, no matter what some red state governors seem

to think.

Sunday, March 7

We're hard at work on preparing for the move: sorting, shredding, discarding. There are two Fresh Direct bags full of books and CDs in my car now, ready to be delivered to the kids, maybe next weekend? I'm shredding Henry's old tax returns while he goes through other boxes of papers, and taking a break now to let the shredder cool down.

[Governor Phil Murphy @GovMurphy](#) VACCINE UPDATE:

2,453,289 vaccine doses have been administered as of mid-morning today:

1,619,541 first doses

833,532 second doses

We worked most of the day today — knowing that a videographer is coming on Friday really lit a fire under us. I can barely shred fast enough to keep up with the documents Henry's clearing out. And he didn't give me any resistance when I wanted to put a large coffee table from his office on freecycle! I hope I get a nibble. That would be easier than transporting it to the Salvation Army.

Monday, March 8

After my morning workout with Ken, back to work. I sent our final paint color choice to the move-in coordinator. And I got a bite on freecycle! Someone wants to pick up the coffee table today, which couldn't be better for us. I did some more shredding, and broke down some old cardboard boxes for the recycling room.

I went to our local doctor's office for the last time, I hope, to get the TB test read. They gave me the medical test results I could send, and that should complete my requirements for the physical. I scanned them and sent them off.

We had a conversation with the attorney recommended by the realtor.

That's not a lot of sentences, but it felt like a lot of work — settling my

medical requirements, final choice of paint color, continuing to work on Henry's office. Oh, and in the evening, I spent nearly two hours on a zoom meeting fulfilling my GSR obligations, learning about the process of getting our meetings to vote on proposals to the GSO.

Tuesday, March 9

Covid Tracking has stopped updating their site, saying that official sources, especially the CDC, are now doing the job — gathering and publishing data on testing for SARS-CoV-2, cases of covid-19, hospitalizations and deaths. I'll miss their site. I haven't gotten to know any other site yet. I get NJ data from NJ Spotlight and I still use the NYT site. There are a few sites I've used to see how vaccination is going — Bloomberg, Our World In Data, and the NYT.

Trump is trying to mop up all the donations that can be raised from GOP members, and probably most of that will end up in his own pockets — he's got some serious legal bills coming up. The GOP is still trying to raise money using his name, kiss his ring, and nudge him to the sidelines at the same time — an impossible goal. No wonder voter suppression is their main strategy.

We took the tax paperwork to the post office; I taught a class with Angie; we used Docusign to sign the leasing agreement, or whatever it's called, with the realtor; we looked up the property taxes we paid last night, which is a very confusing bit of information to extract from the city's web site. Henry is back at work in his office, and there's nothing I can help him with for the moment.

Wednesday, March 10

The CDC has released guidance for how vaccinated people may interact with one another, saying a few of us can be indoors together without masks now. Someone on the mailing list for my tai chi school cautioned that we need to remember that our protection is not complete, so we should continue to use masking and distancing.

James Solomon, my city Councilperson, said this in his regular email to



constituents: “Of serious concern, Jersey City’s **coronavirus case numbers** (with a link to the Jersey City COVID-19 Dashboard) remain stubbornly high. Despite nationwide case declines, Jersey City’s cases plateaued in February and even began to rise again last week. Limited surveillance of variants combined with loosened restrictions makes the path forward even more uncertain. Loss of life this late in the pandemic is beyond tragic, and Jersey City has lost over 100 souls to COVID just this winter.”

[There's another bit of language I noticed during this period -- "souls." Whenever Gov. Murphy was reporting covid deaths, he always said we had lost so and so many "souls." I wouldn't have used such a religious word, myself, but I didn't object to it; I just noted it.]

He says there are 13 vaccine sites in Jersey City. That’s great to hear — I didn’t know there were so many. And there are 25 testing sites. I think we know there hasn’t been enough testing in NJ for months, because our test positivity rate also remains stubbornly high.

But some terrific news nationwide: [Derek Thompson @DKThomp](#)  
Hospitalization rates are really plummeting for seniors. Since early January peaks: - age 65+: down 82% - age 75-84: down 83% - age 85+: down 85%  
[https://gis.cdc.gov/grasp/covidnet/covid19\\_3.html](https://gis.cdc.gov/grasp/covidnet/covid19_3.html). At current rate\*, all groups will fall to a post-March 2020 low within the next two weeks. (\* fingers crossed emoji)

Merrick Garland is due to be confirmed as AG today. This should have happened weeks ago, for Pete’s sake. It’s been almost two months since Biden’s inauguration.

We descended on Henry’s office like a tsunami again, taking things to the trash room, the Salvation Army, and our storage locker. It’s kind of horrific how much stuff we’re sending into the void. I’m sure most of it goes to landfills rather than being reused.

After lunch, I walked over to Van Vorst Park. There are lots of signs of spring that I hadn’t been aware of! It’s nice to be taking walks again. I kind of boycotted the activity for the past few weeks because I’ve been so tired

of the cold.

I've signed up to do some texting with Fair Fight in ten minutes. They say there aren't a lot of texts and they'll go quickly, so I may not even get the chance, but I'm willing! Where are the Fair Fight organizations in other states??? The names were claimed in two minutes! Amazing.

The House just passed the covid relief bill, and the Senate just confirmed Merrick Garland. It's a good day.

Thursday, March 11

Andy Slavitt @aslavitt46 COVID Vaccination Update: 1 in 4 adults in the U.S. have now received their first vaccine.

I started the day by typing up the minutes from yesterday's tai chi board meeting.

After my workout with Ken, Henry and I went on a mad cleanup spree, preparing for the photographer to come tomorrow. We dusted, polished, and vacuumed; we even polished the furniture, and everything looks extra shiny. Henry moved all the boxes he could.

I finally heard from the nurse at the senior community that my medical reports had arrived. Whew. So that's done.

I'm doing laundry now that we're finished with most of our work today. It's funny to me how I keep finding things to get rid of in one way or another — a pair of socks that's too small, a clock I never liked, a bunch of brochures for a planned bathroom renovation that never happened, a little pocket calculator.

I attended the AA District meeting this evening, and I'm starting to feel a little less at sea. My face still gets appallingly red. I guess it proves to me that I have a high level of social anxiety and it's good to be so clearly aware of it. I also sweated a lot, and I'm sitting on a chair that doesn't breathe, so I had to change my underwear and my stretchy pants afterwards to feel more comfortable.

I'm not watching vaccine news as closely, but it continues to occur. I heard this evening that there's some concern that the AstraZeneca vaccine causes blood clots? I guess it's too soon to know if these incidents are coincidental or caused by the vaccine. And Novavax just confirmed a high level of efficacy in all strains of the virus in the UK and in South Africa.

Yamiche Alcindor tweeted results of a PBS NewsHour survey on vaccine hesitancy, and the group with the highest rate, 49%, is GOP men. Democrats in general have the lowest rate, 11%.

Friday, March 12

It's 10:15 in the morning, and we've just spent the past hour or so hiding nearly all evidence of human habitation, or that's how it seems to me. We've made it as easy for the photographer as we possibly can, and we've worked so hard this week that we're nearly ready for the move — a month early! Maybe we'll have some time to enjoy the spring, and visit our favorite places in the area before we leave it. There are places we haven't gotten to yet, too. We always said we were going to take the light rail as far as it goes in each direction and look around a little.

I didn't quite digest the Novavax announcement yesterday — this is a big deal. It's another brand new vaccine, and its efficacy is a hair better than the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines. There's a cautionary note here, though: "The company also announced it was 100% effective at preventing severe illness, around 86% effective against the UK variant and *55% effective against the South African variant in people who are HIV-negative.*"

We grabbed lunch at Sweetgreen to avoid interfering very much with our pristine apartment. It was a little chilly to eat outdoors, and there aren't many tables out yet in any case, so we ate in and scrubbed up afterwards.

The realtor and photographer just left. What an interesting process. He just kept simplifying each view, removing anything that takes up too much space or gives the eye too much work to do — towels off the towel rack, appliances off the counter, big chair out of the view. That tells us a lot about how we can prepare for the videographer. We both feel kind of

exhausted, and immediately ate a bunch of sugar. Henry's lying down. I should take a walk, but I'm not sure I feel like budging. I'm distracting myself with email and spotting a few more words in the Spelling Bee game on the NYT website.

On the AstraZeneca vaccine and blood clots: "The number of cases of blood clots in vaccinated people is the same as it is in the general population, according to the EU's medicine regulators"

Saturday, March 13

We got back to work again this morning. Henry's re-sorting boxes and discarding things, and I went through my desk drawer and shelves. The box where we gather things for the Salvation Army is filling up again!

I zoom-hosted the Saturday morning women's meeting, as usual.

Henry and I joined forces to do some more sorting and cleaning, and I think we're done for the day. I took a walk over the Van Vorst and around a bit — we're back to normal March temperatures, I guess, mostly in the high forties and fifties for the next week or so.

Sunday, March 14

This morning, we'll have the first showing of our apartment. We'll do a bit of work to clean it up, but it doesn't have to be as pristine as it needs to be for photographs.

Henry and I agreed that we're feeling a little stunned this morning. I think we worked so hard last week — and in the weeks before that — that we're nearly finished sorting our belongings, and now we're just trying to catch up mentally and emotionally.

[Bob Wachter @Bob\\_Wachter](#) At dinner last night, my son Benjy said, "Sounds like I'll be getting my Fauci-Ouchy in May." I'm told this has become common lingo, particularly among young folks, though this was first I heard it. In any case, now I can't think about calling the shot anything else!

Boston 25 News @boston25 Yo-Yo Ma brightened the days of some MA residents Saturday when he gave an impromptu performance after receiving his second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine at Berkshire Community College. Take a listen to his beautiful performance! #yoyoma #berkshire ( with a linked video of Yo-Yo Ma playing Bach )

ABC News: FDA authorizes new T-cell test that could be game changer for COVID-19 long haulers / The first-of-its-kind test for detecting whether someone was infected with [COVID-19](#) in the past -- using the body's T-cells -- was granted emergency authorization by the Food and Drug Administration late Friday night. / This could be a game changer for some [coronavirus "long haulers"](#) and for people who have not yet gotten a clear answer on whether they were previously infected with the virus. / ... While researchers still don't know exactly how long after a COVID-19 infection the T-cell immune response remains active, the longevity of the cells' "memory" makes for a promising candidate in the forensic work of tracking past infections.

New SARS-CoV-2 infections are rising now worldwide (WaPo), with increases in quite a few countries, large and small — eastern and Central Europe, the Middle East, Africa, South America, the Caribbean. If I look at the NYT map, a display I'm more used to, it looks as though the biggest hot spots are in Central Europe and South America. In the US, cases are very high, at about the level of the summer surge, but thankfully still trending down. The April surge in the NY area barely even shows up on the map now, the winter surge was so enormous. All the same, NJ does not look good at all. I think Murphy is watching the hospitalization numbers more than the case counts, but I'm not sure that's strict enough. Be careful, people!

In the US, we've administered 6M vaccinations in two days.

Monday, March 15

I think I'm starting to adjust to the small shift in moving stages. We don't have a lot to do for the next few weeks, so I can get back to the gym, tai chi, and taking walks, all the while trying to whittle down my massive pile of

magazines. When I started, I was reading magazines from last March, and now I'm up to October.

I went to pick up my new glasses, and now that I'm home, I finally get to see what they look like without a mask on. They're a lot bigger than I had realized! They're a bit <too> big, but so it goes.

Henry went for his first appointment for the TB test we need for admission. We're both so tired today, after a few weeks of really hard work.

I have two more medical appointments scheduled, both things that had been postponed during the pandemic: a mammogram on Friday and a visit with the gynecologist next Tuesday. After that, things really slow down for me until we actually move. I still have my AA commitments, and I sign up for political activities as they arise — I think Vote Forward is starting up next week. I hope to visit my son and his family once it warms up again, and I hope to take a walk or two with Sheree. She had her first vaccination 3 days ago, and she got the J&J vaccine.

Linda, who lives in Seattle and is part of the J&J trial there, went through the unblinding process recently. J&J wasn't as kind to her as Pfizer was to its participants — she had to make an appointment for a vaccination first, and then she was told that she had already been vaccinated — after which, of course, she canceled her appointment. So J&J is wasting a lot of people's time in their process. She had previously learned, as part of her study participation, that she had antibodies to SARS-CoV-2 despite never having had any symptoms or any known exposure. And she probably suspected that she had been vaccinated, because she had a strong reaction.

Sheree hasn't told me details yet, but she said that she also had a strong reaction — and she suspects that she had covid last spring, a bad case at a bad time, when it was very difficult to get tested. By the time she was well enough to be tested, it was too late, and her antibody test was also negative. I learned the other day that there's a new test that looks at T cells rather than antibodies, so it might have confirmed her infection, but I believe it's too late now, because the vaccine probably causes the same T cell response.

I'm looking at the vaccine tracker on the NYT, and NJ has finally joined the group with the highest share of population having had at least one shot. We had a slow start, I must say, but it looks good now. On that site, NJ is the 11th state. NM is first, with 29%; NJ has 24%. (NJ is 27th when I sort by percent fully vaccinated, which reflects our slow start.)

And yet the NYT also reports that Hudson County is at an "extremely high risk" level. Too many cases, with the test positivity rate continuing to be too high. Somerset County, where we're moving next month, isn't much better — "very high risk."

Deb Haaland, a member of the Laguna Pueblo Nation, was confirmed as the Secretary of the Interior, 50 to 41.

Tuesday, March 16

This day went by like lightning! I didn't work on the move all day, and what a nice change. I spent a little time this morning getting an insurance bill paid, because Met Life's web site is malfunctioning. I taught tai chi with Angie. I played a lot of Bloons with Evan. And what else? Nothing, I think.

More than 3M New Jerseyans have now received at least one vaccination. (NJ population: about 9.3M). (Hmm — the NYT says 24.8%. That's a mysterious discrepancy.)

NYT: Moderna begins testing its vaccine in babies and young children

Wednesday, March 17

My sponsee told me about a relative, a surgeon, who was fully vaccinated in January but has just come down with the covid. He's feeling fluish but not worried about a worse case.

Henry and I are both still feeling overloaded and anxious. It doesn't take much to make my eye start twitching. All the same, we had a good day. I had a phone conversation with my sponsee, When Angella came to clean, we took a small load to the Salvation Army, then came back to the building

and hung out in the conference room / office. I started working on my new batch of letters for Vote Forward, consisting of thank-you letters to first-time voters.

Thursday, March 18

I had a hard time going to sleep last night. So much fear about the move! Some of it is about the fact that we're not just moving, we're entering an institution.

The story of the AstraZeneca vaccine in Europe now seems to be very difficult. Gretchen Vogel and Kai Kupferschmidt in Science Magazine: The decision this week by more than 20 European countries to temporarily stop using AstraZeneca's COVID-19 vaccine has opened a rift between vaccine safety experts, who say the cases of serious clotting and bleeding that triggered the pause are alarming and unusual, and public health officials concerned that the immunization pause on a continent in the grip of the pandemic's third wave could take a heavy toll.

Yesterday, we received a packet of paperwork from the senior community. I thought it would take a long time to fill out, but I think I just did it in about an hour, so that's good. And I signed up for some more text banking this evening for Fair Fight. Maybe I'll polish off some more letters for Vote Forward now.

Evan has been invited me to play video games with him quite a lot this past week. I've spent many hours popping "bloons" with armies of monkeys. It's a lot of fun, though these games are so complicated I don't see how anyone really learns to play them properly!

Text banking is going swimmingly. I've been able to send 1800 texts inviting people to attend a volunteer training this weekend. As usual, I wonder why this is only happening in Georgia. Where are the Wisconsin, Iowa, Pennsylvania versions of Fair Fight? I hope the Georgia elections have been able to inspire some folks in other states.

I kept responding to texts while I attended an AA meeting down in Montgomery Township; not ideal, but it felt good to keep both going.



The US will surpass 100M injections tomorrow, and NJ has surpassed 3M. NJ's covid data, on the other hand, is rotten. Hospitalizations are actually increasing, and yet Murphy is going ahead with some relaxation of restrictions and pushing for schools to reopen.

Friday, March 19

I'll leave soon for the Montclair Breast Center to get a mammogram. With Henry's help, I polished off my part of the application paperwork; I played a couple of games of Bloons with Evan; I responded to a few Fair Fight text messages that arrived last night.

I'm glad to report that I do not seem to have breast cancer. That's always good news.

I came home to find Henry in a bit of a stew because the nurse says she still doesn't have the paperwork she needs from our doctor's office. Sigh. We keep trying to get that sorted out, and every simple step seems very complicated. The nurse said she often follows up, but she didn't have our doctor's phone number — we made sure to give her the phone number, but I guess she forgot about that.

A new article published in The Lancet says the authors "estimate that vaccination alone is insufficient to contain the outbreak," and that we continue to need to practice NPIs, non-pharmaceutical interventions. That's because vaccination will not be universal and the vaccines are not 100% effective.

Saturday, March 20

I had good luck with a couple of moving chores today. I rode my bike over the Grove St Bicycles for a tuneup, and because it was in very good condition, they did it on the spot. I bought a bike helmet at the same time, so those chores are done. And I helped Henry finish a few documents for the application and copied them.

550 people have now viewed our ad on Zillow; 22 have saved it. I don't

know what that means, really. As Henry said, maybe all the people who saved it are realtors.

Imran Khan, the prime minister of Pakistan, has tested positive for SARS-CoV-2. (Of course the news always says that a person has tested positive for Covid-19, but I'm still being fussy and naming the virus. Blame Vincent Racaniello.)

Cases are definitely not dropping in NJ. I really don't get it the rush to keep opening things. I'm out and about more, but I'm always masked — double masked when I can. I'm doing errands and going to medical appointments, but I'm sure as hell not going to restaurants and movie theaters. I might well make different choices if I were 40 years younger, of course.

Sunday, March 21

We have a lot going on today. The videographer will come at noon, after which we have to leave the apartment so the realtor can show it twice. I'll head up to Hoboken to take a walk with my sponsee. I have to be home by 5 in time for a training with Fair Fight.

And now it's evening and I'm really tired. Things went well with the videographer — we already kind of knew what to do after being instructed by the still photographer, so we dug in and started hiding things and moving them out of the view. After that, I walked to Hoboken. Sue and I walked north until we were just about across from the Empire State Building, so that's pretty far. I was hoping to take the light rail at the Hoboken train station, but the sign said it wouldn't show up for 30 minutes, so I walked all the way home. The iPhone tells me I walked 8 miles. My right hip was hurting, and my left ankle is now feeling hot, but I made it!

The Fair Fight training was really good. It went on for over 2 hours, but I never felt like bailing out because the training was so well designed — they kept switching speakers, and each one gave a clear and well organized presentation. I'm proud to be on their team.

Monday, March 22

I had a good workout with Ken, and then Henry and I went to the post office to mail some paperwork to the senior community. It was quite busy there, and when that happens, two women emerge from the back and start trying to speed up the line, answering questions that would otherwise be directed to the clerks behind the shielded windows. One of them said that this is a pandemic practice — they don't want it to get too crowded. I wondered about that — I know I've seen people directing traffic there before, but it's been a while.

I took a walk over to Van Vorst Park after lunch. I saw lots of crocuses and a few lenten roses. Across the street, somebody had tiny daffodils blooming in their yard. And over by Peninsula Park, there are a few trees with buds just about ready to pop. Spring comes fast, and now I'm motivated to take lots of walks again so I don't miss anything!

I think that very long walk yesterday knocked out some of my extreme anxiety and tension. I've had tunnel vision for weeks now with our upcoming move dominating my attention. (I just confirmed that it was January 28th when we visited and I became shocked and overwhelmed when Henry put down a deposit. I started photographing items to be donated on January 30th, so we clearly got right to work.) Last week, my eye was twitching pretty steadily and I started to get really acidy, and I'm quite a bit better today.

There's not much new to report about the pandemic. New Jersey's data still looks dreadful to me, and Murphy has finally said that he won't loosen restrictions any further. It's Florida, however, that's in the news, because spring breakers are congregating in huge numbers and refusing to obey curfews, so the police are tear gassing them and so on. On the news tonight, it said the police were attacking Black students, and it surprised me to imagine big crowds of spring breakers as being people of color. Silly, right? Live and learn.

Covid cases are still pretty close to the summer peak, with roughly 56K new cases and 900 deaths every day nationwide. That's clearly an enormous drop in the number of deaths from the winter peak, and that lower death rate must have a lot to do with how much less seriously people seem to be taking it now. And yes, I see on WaPo that NJ has the highest

number of new cases each day among all US states. Come on, NJ people.

The good news is that the number of people vaccinated every day keeps climbing, up to about 2.5M doses per day, and NJ is doing quite well. Over 28% of NJ residents have received at least one dose.

AstraZeneca is about to apply for emergency authorization in the US, too, making them the fourth major vaccine supplier. We may not even need it, so there may be more of a supply for other countries at last.

Tuesday, March 23

WaPo: British-Swedish pharmaceutical firm AstraZeneca may have only used partial data when it announced the results from a U.S. trial of its coronavirus vaccine, the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases [said Tuesday](#) in a highly unusual rebuke. Carl Zimmer: An independent panel of medical experts that was helping oversee AstraZeneca's vaccine trial in the United States said AstraZeneca had essentially cherry-picked data that was "most favorable for the study as opposed to the most recent and most complete."

There was another mass shooting in Boulder yesterday, only a few days after the mass shooting of massage parlor employees in Atlanta. What a mad country.

I played Bloons with Evan, went to my gynecologist, and then taught tai chi with Angie. Even though it's beautiful outside, I thought I'd do some text banking with the New Georgia Project — my first time with this group. I'm on my second batch of 300 names now.

I also signed up for a zoom session with the PA Dems. I might focus my work this year on Georgia and Pennsylvania, both critical states. Polly worked with the PA Dems last year and said they were well organized. I did some text banking with them, too, come to think of it.

[Andy Slavitt @aslavitt46](#) NEW: The U.S. will allocate a record 27 million vaccines this week across the country Triple the 8.6 million doses when we began 7 weeks ago.

Maybe I'll take a short walk before asking for more names to text .... And yes, it was lovely along the river. We had some communications from the senior community and from the folks who are going to move us. The nurse is trying very hard on our behalf to extract properly dated paperwork from our doctor, the move-in coordinator received the packet we sent this week, and the company who is moving us is setting some dates. It looks as though our move will take place in the first week of May.

Wednesday, March 24

NJ Spotlight: Coronavirus variants spreading rapidly, and testing lags dramatically / In five weeks, variant cases rose 830% in NJ, and only 2% of cases are tested for new virus strains / Recently, more than 3,000 people are testing positive almost every day in this state.

There was lots of good news today for us personally. Our medical paperwork finally showed up in the form the clinic staff wanted, which is quite a relief — Henry was especially tense and anxious about it. I went back to the eye doctor to choose new glasses. This seemed particularly self-indulgent to me, because the glasses I got several weeks ago are perfectly functional — or would be with a couple of small adjustments — but I just hate them. They're too large and too brown! I was able to choose new frames and they're being so kind to me that I don't even have to pay for the privilege.

I picked up a prescription at Downtown Pharmacy, and now I'm finished with all my post-vaccination catchup medical appointments.

The main stories I'm watching in the news just keep coming like a drumbeat — voter suppression bills keep being proposed and passed, and Senate Democrats are beginning to step up; the number of people vaccinated in the US keeps growing, as it does in just a few other countries, while most countries are being left out; the number of cases in the US has leveled off at 55-60K new cases a day, with NJ and Michigan looking particularly bad.

Rachel Levine, a trans woman, has just been approved as the assistant

secretary of health. I can't even imagine knowing what that meant when I was growing up, and it's wonderful.

The other day I, listening to a podcast, I heard the word “decarceration,” something we've heard a lot this past year as part of the BLM movement. I wonder how old that word is — Apple doesn't seem to recognize it, because it just drew a little red line under it. I just did a google ngram search on it, and it seems to have shown up in print just before 1970.

Thursday, March 25

The British-to-American English word of the year has to be “jab,” the UK shorthand for an injection. We're still saying “shot” most of the time, but “jab” is starting to show up — I just noticed in my regular email from NJ Spotlight. Maybe we're tired of how often we have to say “shot” in its other main context. Neither is an especially positive word, really, suggesting being punched or fired upon.

Also I the Spotlight news: Gov. Phil Murphy pledged Wednesday to improve the equity of COVID-19 vaccine distribution in New Jersey's urban communities in response to criticism that Hudson County — whose diverse, closely packed communities were particularly hard-hit by the coronavirus — has not been receiving its fair share of the state's shots. / Murphy's comments came the day after U.S. Sen. Robert Menendez (D-NJ) shared his “deep concern” that Hudson County residents do not have equitable access to the vaccines in a [letter](#) that cited several NJ Spotlight News reports, including a story posted last week on how Hudson had the [lowest vaccination rate](#) in New Jersey. With just 9% of its residents fully immunized, Hudson remains the only county with a single-digit vaccination rate, according to state data.

85.5M Americans have received at least one dose of vaccine.

I just learned another British word: “standfirst.” It's similar to the AmE word “lede.” They are defined this way in the Apple dictionary:

Standfirst: a brief introductory summary of an article in a newspaper or on a website, typically appearing immediately after the headline and

typographically distinct from the rest of the article:

Lede: the opening sentence or paragraph of a news article, summarizing the most important aspects of the story

I had a good workout with Ken, and did most of my PT exercises first. Then I did a bit of tidying and consolidation of cleaning products in the hall closet and under my bathroom sink, then did the same for other stuff under the sink — tossed a few things out, recycled a couple, and set some aside for the Salvation Army.

NYT: New York State officials finalized a deal on Thursday to legalize recreational marijuana in the state, paving the way for a potential [\\$4.2 billion industry](#) that could create tens of thousands of jobs and become one of the largest markets in the country.

I attended a qigong class for the first time in weeks! It was lovely.

There's going to be another showing tomorrow, so I spent some time tidying the apartment. Maybe I'll do the dusting now, and then vacuum tomorrow. Then I finished off my Vote Forward letters and sent 300 texts for New Georgia Project. They're organizing people to call UPS and ask them to stop funding state politicians who support voter suppression measures.

The wild card story in the news is that a very large container ship is stuck athwart the Suez Canal, blocking all shipping traffic. That is a very 2020 story, I must say. [That could use a bit of elaboration, right? Probably I said that because it's so odd and unexpected, and also because it's going to slow down the already slow shipping times for some items.]

Biden has just doubled his goal for the number of people vaccinated in the first 100 days, from 100M to 200M.

Georgia lawmakers have just passed a sweeping voter suppression law.

I just took a shortish walk along the water, and it was nice to be outside. There was a dense fog outside our window all morning, but it started to clear during my noon qigong class.

Friday, March 26

We prepared the apartment for another showing this afternoon — dusting, vacuuming, putting things away.

I'm making progress with my magazine backlog. I think I started with March issues, and now I'm nearly finished with November. They're not up to the approval of the vaccines or the invasion of the Capitol yet, so a lot of it does feel like ancient history already.

The first of Georgia's voter suppression laws has been passed by both houses. The Dems in Congress had better get as tough as they know how to be.

We received an offer on the apartment today — that's pretty quick, really, after only 4 showings over 12 days. It's 10% below the asking price, so there's plenty of room for negotiation. We'll see what happens. We made a counter-offer; they updated their offer.

I didn't feel like going outside, so I missed an unusual day — record-setting warmth and so much wind that the wind sock blew away!

We're actually seeing an uptick in new infections nationwide, despite all the vaccination going on. It probably continues to be younger people. NJ, Michigan, and NY are out in front, according to the NYT. Deaths and hospitalizations continue to drop.

Dominion Voting Systems is going after the big dog now — they've sued Fox News.

Saturday, March 27

It'll be a busy day. The real estate negotiations should continue all day, I'm guessing, and I have two simultaneous zoom meetings this morning (the AA meeting I host and a training session on the Sharepoint site used by the Area and District), and then visits to Highland Park this afternoon.



Though I know it's normal, it feels scary to sell this apartment before we've moved into the new cottage.

What a complicated morning! Figuring out when to start social security and how my retirement benefits work — which I keep forgetting. Reaching out to the realtor to set a time to talk. My two meetings are set up and I just have to hand off hosting duties for one so I can pay attention to the other one, when we're not talking to the realtor.

All going well. I handed off hosting duties, so I'm just following along in the other meeting. The realtor proposed a number for our next counter-offer, and we agreed.

Goodness, what a day. I had a great time playing with Evan and Jeremy in Donaldson Park — frisbee, skipping stones on the Raritan (only Jeremy was any good), getting muddy, exercising on some of the facilities, fishing for “slime molds” in the little muddy pond, listening to the jazz band practice, and generally fooling around. Then I met Sheree and we went for a walk from her house on Hill St down to the park and around the circle. It was great seeing all the trees starting to bloom in Highland Park — cherries, star magnolias — and all the flowers — Lenten roses, daffodils, even hyacinths in Sheree's back yard. Willow trees and maples are showing their early spring colors.

At 4, Scott texted Henry and me that someone wanted to see the apartment, and Henry valiantly tidied everything away all by himself so that could happen. We didn't hear anything from the prospective buyer, which could mean a variety of things.

Sunday, March 28

Oh good, and oh no, we just sold our apartment. After another offer from the buyer, Scott returned with a proposal to split the difference; they countered with a number only slightly under that, and it's done. We'll have a new contract soon, and then it's off to attorney review. It feels good and it feels really bad. I love this apartment with its spectacular views of lower Manhattan and the Hudson River.

We e-signed the new contract last year. Attorney review should be over by Thursday, and then it's a settled deal, with a closing date in late May.

Monday, March 29

I had a good workout with Ken. I'm surprised at how stiff my upper back is — it must have been playing at Donaldson Park, because I haven't done any other upper body exercise.

I went through some old paperwork which describes our various built-ins (shelving, shades, Murphy bed), and shows their prices. I want to leave a copy for the buyer, and we'll need the originals for our taxes. Henry and I will go to Wells Fargo at 2 to empty out our safe deposit box, because I need some of the paperwork it holds to apply for social security.

There are two voting machine companies suing Fox, Dominion and Smartmatic. Between them, they're suing for \$4.3B between them.

NYT: The coronavirus vaccines made by Moderna and Pfizer-BioNTech [are proving highly effective](#) at preventing symptomatic and asymptomatic infections under real-world conditions, federal health researchers reported on Monday. / Consistent with clinical trial data, a two-dose regimen prevented 90 percent of infections by two weeks after the second shot. One dose prevented 80 percent of infections by two weeks after vaccination. / There has been debate over whether vaccinated people can still get asymptomatic infections and transmit the virus to others. The study, by researchers at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, suggested that transmission may be extremely unlikely, as infections were so rare.

That's great to hear! I'd like that study to be replicated for people over 70 as well.

We went to Wells Fargo and closed our safe deposit box, and I came right back home and filed for social security. It was shockingly easy! I said I wanted to start in May, because I didn't think they could possibly start before then anyway.

I just had a zoom session with my women's group — surprisingly, our first

since the pandemic started. They're all younger than me and still working. Two have been working at home (and Jan has pretty much always worked at home, but she used to make a lot of site visits); Diane is a physical therapist, so she's one of the health care workers keeping us going this whole year.

Tuesday, March 30

I taught the final class with Angie today to her Portland students. We really enjoyed teaching together, and the students enjoyed it, too. Still, I'm glad to stop teaching until I'm settled in the new place.

Then I took a pile of my old Savings Bonds to the bank and redeemed them. I bought them for years when I was working at AT&T because the company wanted us to, and I was willing to comply at the minimum level. Some of them are about to stop drawing interest, so it seemed like a good idea to cash them in, and now is a time when I can use some extra cash.

Wednesday, March 31

Excellent news from Pfizer-BioNTech today: They've completed their clinical trial of the vaccine in adolescents aged 12 to 15, and it was, they said, extremely effective with no serious side effects. We await the FDA review.

The other covid news isn't great. There's a fourth wave in the making, and the numbers from the third wave never came down very low, so nationwide, we're about at the level of the second surge last summer. The virus keeping being tougher than we are. Michigan, NY, and NJ are still out in front, but cases also are climbing in over 20 other states.

In NJ, we didn't really have a summer surge, but after the winter surge, we barely dropped below the stratospheric heights of the 2020 spring surge, so this climb looks pretty dreadful.

The US is not alone — hospitals in Paris are overflowing, and the NYT map shows cases high all across Europe and South America.

Our housecleaner will come this afternoon, so we'll probably go to Trader Joe's and Whole Foods to pass the time. Fully masked, of course. This evening, I'll attend my regular AA meeting.

I slept over 9 hours last night, which I sorely needed. Given that the sun wakes me up pretty early, often before 6:30, I really have to be in bed by 10.

We went to the post office to mail out my tax documents, which somehow fell through the cracks when Henry sent his to the accountant. We bought several things at Trader Joe's in Millburn, then back home.

Thursday, April 1

Today feels like one of my days much earlier in the pandemic — before our apartment was for sale, before we were thinning our belongings, and even before the intensity of the run-up to the election last November. I worked out with Ken, then did my PT exercises. I made a yogurt and vegetable salad, I drafted an invitation to be sent to apprentices in my tai chi school, then joined MO for a qigong class.

In the afternoon, I took a nap. I don't think I slept enough for the past couple of weeks, and I'm being determined about getting to bed by 10 — and still I wanted a nap. In the evening, I attended a meeting hosted by the PA Democratic Party about their current plans, and they are working on voter registration. There's only phone banking for now, but there will be text banking soon.

Friday, April 2

The covid numbers continue to be bad. Cases are still rising — they're definitely higher than the summer surge, though still small compared to the recent winter surge.

I'm listening to Dr Dave interview someone on the Shrink Rap Radio podcast about Coherence Therapy, and it's making me think about my envy. My mantra for today is, "If someone else is special, that doesn't take anything away from me." It doesn't always sound true, unfortunately.

Here's a surprising story in the WaPo: Pine needles have become a lucrative business! "Three varieties of pine needles are farmed, but the discarded debris of a longleaf pine is the most sought-after — and fetches the best price — because of its unusual length and high resin content, making it an attractive, water-retaining ground cover for gardens."

I went to the doctor in the afternoon to get my new glasses, and I like them! They're red for liveliness but lighter on the face than the molded plastic ones — red metal on top and frameless on the bottom.

The buyer, who had dropped off the map, suddenly resurfaced. Our lawyer sent us the rider the buyer's attorney wants, and we spent a couple of hours filling in the information required. Somehow it made us feel dread — Henry felt it right away, and I felt it when I woke up in the middle of the night. I'm not sure why, but maybe there's something about the process that induced shame, perhaps because we're disclosing new information and it makes it seem as though we were intentionally concealing it. We'll review our notes today and send them to Scott (real estate) and Jay (attorney). We remind ourselves that if this new information makes the buyer back out, we don't really care. We didn't expect the apartment to sell this quickly in the first place, and there's another showing tomorrow. The work we're putting in on this sale will be useful even if it falls through.

Saturday, April 3

We're having a lovely quiet day, and I have very little urge to do anything. I hosted the Barrow St women's AA meeting, and have done very little since.

Alexis Madrigal, in *The Atlantic*, argues that vaccination availability and vaccine hesitancy are going to shape the pandemic in the US in the next phase, so that now it will be like tornado, touching down in regions and hitting them hard while other areas are unscathed. "Cases are rising sharply in several different cities, but the patterns look different. In Michigan, some smaller, whiter counties have [vaccination rates](#) twice as high as in Detroit, where rising cases are concentrated and the vaccination rate among the city's mostly Black population is still low. According to [national survey data](#), in line with political divergences over masks and

social distancing, vaccine hesitancy is now highest among Republicans and white evangelical Christians. In Philadelphia, zip codes that are relatively whiter but have lower educational attainment have experienced the most case growth over the past 30 days. Baltimore's outbreak is growing too, but the data are messy."

[Governor Phil Murphy @GovMurphy](#) VACCINE UPDATE: 4,587,122

vaccine doses have been administered as of mid-morning today:

- 2,842,733 first doses of either the Moderna or Pfizer Vaccine
- 1,741,026 fully vaccinated New Jerseyans

... which is great, but our  $R_t$  is still above 1 and cases are increasing disturbingly fast.

WaPo: 104.2 million people have received one or both doses of the vaccine in the US. Over 4M doses were given today, as vaccination continues to ramp up.

Sunday, April 4

We mailed our lengthy comments back to the lawyer. I'm sure he wasn't expecting so much! Let's see what he can do with it. And there's another showing today, because we can continue to show the apartment during attorney review. We're getting good at doing the quick cleaning and tidying that these visits call for.

We had another quiet day, except for a kerfuffle about the Fresh Direct delivery, where some concierge here stuck it in the cooler without logging it into the system. Our weekend staff is less alert. We took a walk when Scott showed the apartment, and it was lovely out. I'll have to make more of an effort to get myself out into the world this week.

Monday, April 5

We got a revised version of the rider back from our attorney, and we feel much lighter. We still have a few questions, but it's kind of amazing how gloomy and anxious we were all weekend, as if Poe's raven was rapping on our door. Our feeling of doom was all out of proportion to the situation,

and we hope we remember this about ourselves, how easily we shift to a very dark place.

P.1, the variant of SARS-CoV-2 first identified in Brazil, is spreading all over South America, according to WaPo. “Hospital systems across South America are being pushed to their limits. Uruguay, one of South America’s wealthiest nations and a [success story early in the pandemic](#), is barreling toward a medical system failure. Health officials say Peru is on the precipice, with only 84 intensive care beds left at the end of March. The intensive care system in Paraguay, roiled by protests last month over medical shortcomings, has run out of hospital beds.” And vaccination? “That has left inoculation as the only way out. But coronavirus vaccines are South America’s white whale: often discussed, but rarely seen. The continent hasn’t distributed its own vaccine or negotiated a regional agreement with pharmaceutical companies. It’s one of the world’s hardest-hit regions but has administered only 6 percent of the world’s vaccine doses, according to the site [Our World in Data](#). (The outlier is Chile, which is [vaccinating residents more quickly than anywhere in the Americas](#) — but still suffering a surge in cases.)”

There are outbreaks in many European countries as well, exacerbated by their slow vaccine rollouts.

I’m listening to a TWiV episode about convalescent plasma, which I thought had been abandoned. But apparently it’s extremely effective when used properly — it should be used early, within 3 days of the onset of symptoms, and it should be used locally, increasing the chance that it provides protection against local variants.

Tuesday, April 6

One or two people from Byron, the company organizing our move, will be here at 1, and we feel prepared for that. There’s another showing at 3, unless the contract is signed by then — which look doubtful, since we weren’t able to speak with our attorney yesterday. Well, we were able, but he seemed to be unavailable.

The walkthrough was easy and efficient. We have a few minutes before we

have to vacate the apartment for the realtor, so we faxed something to the accountant and I sent a furniture update to the person at Byron who worked on our floor plan.

We went for a walk along the river so Scott could show the apartment, and what a perfect day it was — nearly 70, clear and sunny.

The White House announced that they 150M injections have been delivered. There's definitely still an equity problem, because getting an appointment is easier for people with computer skills.

Wow, Michigan looks terrible. The current surge is nearly up to the number of cases in December, and it's still climbing fast. Hospitalizations are climbing, too, and deaths are increasing in their wake. They're vaccinating people reasonably fast — 31% with at least one dose. (Though I see NJ is significantly ahead, at 37.2%, while the US average is 33%. After a slow start, NJ is now the 8th best.)

The world-wide data looks just about as bad. Western and Central Europe, Turkey, South America, the US, Canada. Which wave we're in depends on where you look — a region can be in its second, third, or fourth surge right now — or in a time of decline. The UK looks really good right now, for example, with cases declining.

Scientists are still trying to work out whether there's a connection between the AstraZeneca vaccine and blood clots.

There's a messy debate going on about "vaccination passports," but I don't even know how that would work in the US, with our health care system so decentralized. Biden says the federal government isn't getting involved, so is each company going to make up their own system? We have our paper vaccine certificates, but using those is going to be very inefficient.

Wednesday, April 7

We finally had a conversation with our attorney to clear up our last questions before he can send the contract back to the buyer's lawyer. That seemed like a good time to review all the remaining tasks ahead of us



before the move — address changes, calls to utilities, that sort of thing — so I put them on my calendar. And while I was in calendar mode, I added three neighborhood cleanups and a Caven Point bird walk to my schedule, keeping me busy on several Sunday mornings in April. Thank goodness there are things to do that have nothing to do with the move!

I just read this on Vox: Senate Democrats just got some wonky procedural news that has some pretty big implications for President Joe Biden's agenda. / On Monday night, the Senate parliamentarian — an in-house rules expert — determined that Democrats would be able to do a third budget reconciliation bill this year, a massive development that gives lawmakers more room to pass legislation without Republican support.

That doesn't help them with the voting rights bills, but it should make it more likely that we'll see the infrastructure bill pass before long.

In STAT, this disturbing headline showed up: 1 in 3 Covid-19 patients are diagnosed with a neuropsychiatric condition in the next six months, large study finds. "Six months after being diagnosed with Covid-19, 1 in 3 patients also had experienced a psychiatric or neurological illness, mostly mood disorders but also strokes or dementia, a large new study shows... Anxiety, mood, and substance use disorders were most common, but the researchers also found worrying, if lower, rates of serious neurological complications, especially in patients who had been severely ill with Covid-19. In all Covid-19 patients, 0.6% developed a brain hemorrhage, 2.1% an ischemic stroke, and 0.7% dementia." It was published in Lancet Psychiatry, and it's based on data from 62 health-care organizations in the US, covering 81 million patients.

I just downloaded another 20 Vote Forward letters.

I took a check to the bank, then walked over to Van Vorst Park. Trees in bloom everywhere! It was lovely.

Interestingly, the B.1.1.7 variant, the so-called UK variant, is now the most common variant in the US, according to the CDC.

Thursday, April 8

Played with Evan for a little while, had a good workout with Ken, talked with Sue on the phone.

In the afternoon, I hung out along the river with two women from the Hoboken meeting. It was fun to meet them in person. One is taking care of two toddlers, and she spends a lot of time walking their stroller back and forth; the other is on disability because of her persistent migraines.

In the evening, I attended a District Meeting — thankfully, it was short.

CNBC: CDC Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky said hospitals are seeing more and more younger adults with severe Covid-19.

Maybe it really is true that some of the new variants are making people sicker.

There were two mass shootings in the news today.

NYT: But the era of “[hygiene theater](#)” may have come [to an unofficial end this week](#), when the C.D.C. updated its [surface cleaning guidelines](#) and noted that the risk of contracting the virus from touching a contaminated surface was [less than 1 in 10,000](#).

It’s good to see the risk quantified; otherwise, I think we’ve known that for months.

Friday, April 9

Robyn texted me that she has a migraine and can’t take Linda to her vaccination appointment, and asking whether I can take her. So I did. The appointment was in Belleville, which turned out to be right next door to Branch Brook Park, where the blooming cherry trees are so beautiful at this time of year. We both had some time to spare, so we walked in the park for a little while.

Geez, I hadn’t realized this — Conrail suddenly backed away from the negotiations that were leading up to the Sixth St Embankment plans. They

have given no explanation for their behavior.

I'm about to do a texting shift for All On The Line, one of the organizations working against gerrymandering.

The campaign in Alabama to unionize an Amazon warehouse has lost the vote. How disappointing.

AOTL is quite new to the world of text banking, but I did send 2500 messages telling people about the one of the current voting rights bills.

Exciting news: [Pfizer Inc. @pfizer](#) BREAKING: Today, with [@BioNTech\\_Group](#), we submitted a request to US FDA to expand emergency use of our COVID-19 vaccine to adolescents 12 to 15 years of age.

And I hope this isn't too optimistic: More Perfect Union @MorePerfectUS BREAKING: More Perfect Union has obtained new details about Amazon's illegal actions to defeat the union. The violations make it overwhelmingly likely that the NLRB will overturn the results and give workers a second election.

Saturday, April 10

The AA "mini-conference," as they call it, just ended. It was long, but at least there were things to do to keep me engaged. When I could grab 20 minutes before, during, and after the session, I cleaned and tidied the apartment so it would be ready for another showing, 40 minutes from now. (Henry did his bit while I was in the meeting, I assume.) We're waiting for our prospective buyer to decide whether he wants to take a chance on the dog, I guess, or maybe he's looking at another apartment; who knows?

We took a walk along the river while the apartment was being shown, and it was good to be outdoors.

Sunday, April 11

It's a damp and foggy day, and I didn't sleep enough last night, so perhaps

I'll take a nap this afternoon. I just prepared 20 letters for Vote Forward — these are going to Texas in support of a special election on May 1.

Monday, April 12

After my workout, and just when we were wondering if the buyer would ever come through, we received the updated contract rider for our initials. I blithely went ahead and signed; Henry wants to review it.

In the meantime, I did 8 address changes, including the post office.

After some wrestling with their e-signing application, we got it signed, and poof — we're out of attorney review. That means everybody starts working on yet more paperwork — we had to fill out a form with all kinds of arcane information, copy our marriage license and Georgette's death certificate, then locate our title insurance.

Tuesday, April 13

This morning, I walked the paperwork to the lawyer's little office on Brunswick. It was a nice morning to be out for a walk. After lunch, I'm going to zoom with the Oakland, CA group for some letter-writing — I have another 20 letters printed out.

The use of the J&J vaccine has just been paused because of 6 instances of unusual blood clots. Like the AstraZeneca vaccine, this one uses an adenovirus vector. The number of cases associated with each vaccine is so low that it's uncertain whether the vaccines are causing the blood clots, but doctors are cautious and people are nervous. Laurie Garrett on twitter: "All clot cases are young women. Estrogen is usually CVD protective: Pause is warranted to figure out why not now. If birth control use is linked, can steer hormonal B.C. users to other vaxes." (Wednesday: none of them were taking birth control pills.)

Wednesday, April 14

I'm anxious and excited about the move, I suppose, because I'm not sleeping enough and I'm actually playing Bloons on my own — that's my

favorite of the video games I play with Evan.

Jeremy told me that their Highland Park landlord wants to sell their house this spring. J&M would have liked to buy it, but they think it's out of their range, so they're looking for something they can afford. I sent them another check — I've been giving them money for the past few years for this very purpose, and now it's happening.

New cases of the virus are finally decreasing in NJ. Actually, the bar charts in the Times and in NJ Spotlight show that they've been dropping for over a week, but I wasn't ready to trust it until now. We finally made it into the "higher but going down" category on the NYT. And yes, recorded cases are still high, higher than the first peak last April, but thank goodness we're seeing progress at last. 43% of NJ has had at least one vaccination, and I believe demand is still high.

Across the country, cases are still rising. On the NYT map, Michigan is the huge standout, with Minnesota and northern Texas not looking great. Michigan is in real trouble, and Gov. Whitmer doesn't dare call for more restrictions, because the opposition would be extreme. Even in the first round, armed men occupied the statehouse and plotted to kidnap her.

There's an interesting story in the Times about the Muldrow Glacier, one of the glaciers on Mount Denali. Apparently it's doing something called surging, when the rate of movement suddenly speeds up (now as much as 90 feet a day) in response to some sort of imbalance. It's a known phenomenon, not necessarily a response to climate change. Muldrow surged in the fifties, pushing ice several miles beyond its usual terminus, and that ice is now covered by tundra. It'll be interesting to see what happens over the next few months.

I've nearly run out of moving chores that I can do right now. It's a little too early for tagging items or calling utilities. I just sorted through my file cabinet and cleared out a couple of inches of old paper. Maybe I'll do a couple more address changes.

Henry and I went to Bayonne to walk along the Hudson there while Angie was cleaning our apartment. It's an interesting walk, with a nice view of the

golf course and the water, but also a bit depressing — very industrial, with plastic trash all over the shorelines and the mud flats. It makes me glad to be moving to a more rural area!

Thursday, April 15

I had a good workout this morning — all told, nearly an hour and a half of warmup, working out with Ken, then PT exercises for my back. Whew. Afterwards, Henry and I cleaned out one of our storage bins to make packing and moving simpler. Our exchanges were a bit testy, leaving me with some residual distress.

The home inspector came at 1, along with the realtor for the buyer. He was very thorough, running all the appliances, trying to get the cover for the circuit breakers off the wall, and so on. It was a lot more daunting than I thought it would be. I sat there with a lump in my stomach playing Bloons to calm myself. Luckily we were able to take naps afterwards so I'm feeling a bit better.

Friday, April 16

I had a little conversation with Henry about our testy exchanges yesterday morning, and now I feel better.

After breakfast, I went through some of my things in the closet in Henry's office, and I found two more things to get rid of. I'll go to the Salvation Army on my way to the chiropractor and take the small pile we've accumulated in the last couple of weeks.

Time to type up the minutes from the NYSTCC Board Meeting on Wednesday. We had a discussion about what might be involved in teaching a hybrid class, with some students in the room and some at home. It'll be interesting. Someone will have to keep an eye on the screen, be it laptop or monitor, watching the students and making sure a teacher is visible. We'll need to be sure that our studio has excellent wifi.

With respect to the virus, Michigan is still a disaster (though 37% of Michiganders have had at least one vaccination); NJ continues to improve

(44%). Best of luck, Michigan.

On the way to and from the chiropractor, I listened to two wonderful episodes of Shrink Rap Radio. The first was an interview with Francis Weller called “Grief and the Absence of the Ordinary.” I thought he was a bit tedious at first, but I came to appreciate a range of topics he touched on. He talked about the meaning of initiation and apprenticeship in pre-industrial societies, and how they prepare people to be useful members of their cultures, taking responsibility for their communities and their land. He contrasted that with our self-centered, even adolescent, approach to personal growth today. He made me appreciate how deeply the culture of service is embedded in some of my communities — my tai chi school, where I’m an apprentice teacher who has gone through some taxing initiation processes, and AA, where people begin doing service for their meetings long before they reach the 12th step itself. It made me feel better about how tiresome I find some of my duties as a GSR for the Hoboken meeting.

The second interview was with Corinne Masur about a particular case study published by D. W. Winnicott. It made me think about how much I could have benefited from the loving attention of a psychologist when I was small and my mom had her fourth and fifth children, the twins, when I was only 4. I have also long wished that Ann and I had realized therapy could be useful to a child as young as Jeremy was when he came back to us after having been abused by his stepmother. He had an excellent psychiatrist when he was 6 and having great difficulties in first grade, but some of those difficulties may not have occurred if we had been able to get help for him when he was so much younger. Well, one never knows — he might not have been ready yet, and maybe we did for him what he needed.

I’m so glad Henry and I were able to talk this morning. We’re both feeling better and more in sync with one another — or at least aware of the different perspectives we bring to our real estate sale!

I’m thinking of Jeremy and Michele who are going to see two houses in Highland Park this afternoon; the only two houses in their price range, as Jeremy told me. I hope they find one they like and are able to snap it up.

[Andy Slavitt @ASlavitt](#) I anticipate Monday with great enthusiasm. I remember arriving here Jan 20 with so many tens of millions of people unable to get vaccines & confusing priorities. Monday, every adult becomes eligible. (And 125 million Americans have already gotten their first shot.)

Another mass shooting, and another case of a policeman killing a brown child. Both of these things are happening almost too frequently to record. This country is absolutely mad with guns, and functionally blind to its own madness.

What the hell, man, cases of covid are increasing in over half the states now. Cases and hospitalizations are increasing in the US as a whole. Deaths are increasing in over 10 states.

Saturday, April 17

It was nice to be able to attend the Barrow St meeting this morning — no AA service meetings today.

I don't think I'll get much accomplished today — I did two address changes, but didn't succeed in doing the Verizon one. Maybe it's best to wait until Monday to do more of that.

Yesterday, a friend on Facebook offered to find a home for Henry's CORE souvenirs. So I'll keep one of those amazing illustrated neckties printed with the slogan "Jim Crow Must Go," and mail the rest to Carla.

Sunday, April 18

Robyn gave me a ride to Liberty State Park for a guided birding walk to Caven Point, and Sheree joined us. We saw many of the usual suspects, but a few birds I'm not familiar with, too, like a few gadwalls and several northern shovelers, and birds I rarely see, like oystercatchers. As we were talking about hawks, I realized that I had almost certainly seen a kestrel there one day last year — a lovely little hawk.

The conversation was lively and good. It was interesting to hear Robyn repeat a lot of the same stories to Sheree that she had told me last week,



and it was clear that these are things she wants people to know about her. It makes me wonder what the things I want people to know about me — I'll have to watch how I introduce myself to people and see what I emphasize.

Last night, I watched Jojo Rabbit, thinking I'd better watch anything interesting I've stored on my DVR before we mail it back to Verizon. I liked it a lot. The playfulness, showing the allure of the Nazis and their lies to a small boy, made that grim subject easier to take. The only irreversibly terrible thing that happened was the murder of Jojo's mother, though the deaths of the young girl's parents were also mentioned. The ray of hope at the end of the film was the hope that Jojo's father would return to care for both children.

Fauci says the J&J vaccine will probably be available again by the end of the week, and there may be restrictions on who gets it. This is doubtless based on the fact that most of the unusual clotting has occurred in young women.

There's apparently an emerging problem with fake vaccination cards; this was inevitable as soon as people started talking about vaccine passports.

NJ Spotlight: New Jersey's mass vaccination effort topped 6 million shots in this weekend's reports, with now a third of adults fully vaccinated and half with at least one shot. They'd better work fast, because we're still the second worst (after Michigan) for recent cases per 100K.

NYT: The US is averaging over 3M doses per day. 131.2M people have received at least one shot.

Monday, April 19

After my morning workout, I tackled a couple of moving chores: purchased renters insurance for the new place, and called Verizon to disconnect service as of May 5th. I'm annoyed at Henry because he wants to bring the second tv, even though I have no idea where we would put it, and the Verizon router (which it turns out we own), once again having no plan for what we would do with it. Sigh. After all the stuff we've gotten rid of, he's ready to start accumulating a whole new pile.

And two more chores — a trip to the post office to mail CORE souvenirs to Carla, and a trip to the bank.

In between all these activities, lots of Roblox with Evan.

And then suddenly we hear that our buyer hasn't been able to get a mortgage. She believed she could get one from Chase instead of the providers our attorney and lawyer recommended to her team, but because of ongoing litigation between our board and the builder, that hasn't been true for a few years. Time will tell whether she reapplies with one of the mortgage providers we've told her about or whether she backs out of the contract. We're ok either way, really, but it does make things lively.

Jeremy called to say that he's going to Milwaukee on Wednesday to say good-bye to his father. John has had ALS for several years, and a few strokes on top of it, and he has now decided to refuse food. It is assumed that he has only a few days to live. Jeremy says he isn't particularly upset at the moment, but he's aware that could change. He'll stay with Jane, his mother's sister, so he'll have someone to talk with if his father's family situation is stressful or challenging. Surely his father's wife and their two children have had a lot to deal with and digest.

Tuesday, April 20

Worldwide, the virus is absolutely raging — Europe, South America, India, Iran, Mongolia. India seems to be in crisis. In the US, we're about where we were last summer, somewhere around 70K new cases per day.

I just ordered my desk! It's due to be delivered on May 5, the day after we move in.

Then I called Comcast and made arrangements for everything to be turned on and ready for us when we arrive. We'll go down this Saturday to see how the cottage is coming along, and again on the 30th to do the final paperwork.

It's a bit dizzying. Henry is helping Scott and Jay, who are still trying to

salvage the current sale. I'm kind of staying out of it.

Michigan's population is about 10M. They've had nearly 900K reported infections, so nearly 1 in 10. So what proportion of Michiganders have been infected — 20%, 30%, 50%? And there are over 7K new infections reported every day. Hospitalizations are high, deaths are rising.

North Jersey News: Officials Optimistic COVID-19 Third Wave Has Peaked in NJ

I check on my Social Security application every few days. The text says, "A representative in BALTIMORE MARYLAND started reviewing your application on March 29, 2021. For most people, this review takes 2 to 4 weeks." It's 3 weeks, 2 days now, and that's stage 2 of 3.

Wednesday, April 21

What a perfectly apt dream I had — I suddenly remembered that we had a huge storage area in the attic. It was chock full — a desk, dressers, cabinets, chairs, coats, books, beaded decorative items, a whole bunch of Crest toothpaste, winter coats. We hardly wanted any of it, and hadn't even remembered it was there, so we were going to tell the person from the company that's moving us that they could dispose of all of it.

I took a little walk along the water, and I could really see how nervous I am about the move. I don't know what mistake I'm afraid of making, but I'm somehow very worried about overlooking something. Sigh. Henry's more worried about the sale, and about making a big financial error. We don't think either of our fears are particularly reasonable, but we have them nonetheless.

I don't think I've done any chores today, but that's fine. I definitely needed a break. I've been reading the last New Yorker from March, so I'm just about into the current month — amazing! And I've played games on Roblox a couple of times with Evan. And now our realtor asked if he could show the apartment again, in case the current buyer never gets their act together to obtain a mortgage.

Oh, I did manage one address change after the mail came in.

NYT: An unvaccinated [health care worker set off a Covid-19 outbreak](#) at a nursing home in Kentucky where the vast majority of residents had been vaccinated, leading to dozens of infections, including 22 cases among residents and employees who were already fully vaccinated, a new study reported Wednesday. / Most of those who were infected with the coronavirus despite being vaccinated did not develop symptoms or require hospitalization, but one vaccinated individual, who was a resident of the nursing home, died, according to the study released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. / Altogether, 26 facility residents were infected, including 18 who had been vaccinated, and 20 health care personnel were infected, including four who had been vaccinated. Two unvaccinated residents also died.

Thursday, April 22

NYT: The health effects of Covid-19 not only can stretch for months but appear to increase the risk of death and chronic medical conditions, even in people who were never sick enough to be hospitalized, a large new study finds. / In the [study](#), published Thursday in the journal Nature, researchers looked at medical records of more than 73,000 people across the United States whose coronavirus infections did not require hospitalization. Between one and six months after becoming infected, those patients had a significantly greater risk of death — 60 percent higher — than people who had not been infected with the virus.

The more we know about long covid, the more concerning it is.

One caveat about the study referred to: “But the Veterans Health System patients in the study may not be representative in other ways, including that 88 percent of them were male and their median age was 61.”

200 million vaccinations have been delivered in the US.

I’ve had a very slow and quiet day, just one of those days when I slowed way down in response to all the hustle and stress. I had a good workout this morning, and then barely did anything useful all day. Whew.

WaPo: ... an analysis of 63 million medical records by data scientists [shows that while reinfection is possible, it is rare](#). Out of about 400,000 people with positive tests for the coronavirus, only 0.4 percent tested positive twice in a period more than 90 days apart, according to the study by health-care software company Epic Systems.

I've seen a few articles recently arguing that we don't really need to wear masks outdoors. I haven't read them, to be honest, so I don't know what caveats they suggest.

Friday, April 23

A social security representative, Donnie Brown, called yesterday and then called back this morning to give me the numbers for my two options — claiming against my own record or, temporarily, against Henry's. It looked better to claim against Henry's until I turn 70 next year — less money, but no reduction in his or my future benefits.

The situation in India is desperate. Inadequate testing, inadequate sequencing, inadequate hospital capacity, inadequate oxygen, inaccurate data.

Excerpting from a long thread:

[Trevor Bedford @trvr](#) When variants of concern were first identified in late Dec, the US was not where it needed to be in terms of genomic surveillance. However, with considerable ramp up by the CDC, state labs and academic groups, we now have a remarkable genomic surveillance system. ... However, with investments in sequencing capacity, the US had rapidly increased this count, ramping from 100-300 in Dec 2020 to over 30,000 in April 2021. This is a remarkable achievement and I'm no longer worried about novel variants escaping detection in the US. This increase in sequencing has been driven by the CDC and by non-CDC groups (mostly academic labs and state lab health departments). Much attention has focused on proportion of cases sequenced, where in the past 30 days the US has sequenced about 1.7% of cases, behind countries such the UK (30%), Switzerland (5%) and Germany (2.5%). However, for variants in particular, analysis focuses on frequency, where we particularly care about

variants that are increasing rapidly in frequency across different geographies. In this case, having a very large volume of sequences with good turnaround time should be sufficient to characterize variants while they're still at low frequency. With ~30,000 genomes in the past 30 days, we can reliably catch variants at a 0.02% frequency threshold in the US (geometric distribution with 99% probability of detection). Again, this is remarkable. However, SARS-CoV-2 variants are emerging throughout the world and only focusing on improving genomic surveillance within national borders is short sighted. The primary goal of this surveillance is to be able to formulate vaccine updates with sufficient lead time. ... International investment is incredibly important here. I'd so much prefer an additional 1000 genomes from South America or Africa to an additional 10,000 from the US or Europe.

Even the annoying David Brooks says that Republicans (Trumpians, at least) seem to be having a “venomous panic attack.” He goes on: The level of Republican pessimism is off the charts. A February [Economist-YouGov poll](#) asked Americans which statement is closest to their view: “It’s a big, beautiful world, mostly full of good people, and we must find a way to embrace each other and not allow ourselves to become isolated” or “Our lives are threatened by terrorists, criminals and illegal immigrants, and our priority should be to protect ourselves.” / Over 75 percent of Biden voters chose “a big, beautiful world.” Two-thirds of Trump voters chose “our lives are threatened.”

Oh, this will cheer me up — an opportunity to do some texting for the DNC. They’re recruiting people to do phone banking next week, so these are virtually all friendlies. And sure enough, it is cheering me up — but it’s also beautiful outside and I need to get out there. I still need to do my 20 Vote Forward letters, too, and I’ve had AA meetings the past 2 nights.

300 done, requesting another 300, and then one more batch. That seems like enough for one day. I went for a walk on this lovely, but chilly, spring afternoon, and then came back to pick up another 300 names.

[Laurie Garrett @Laurie\\_Garrett](#) VOTE is 10 yes, 4 no, 1 abstain: The [#ACIP @CDCgov](#) has voted to bring the J&J [@JanssenGlobal](#) [#COVID19](#) [#vaccine](#) back into emergency use in the United States, with no specific

limitations.

I'm a little surprised they didn't encourage some limitations, I guess, given that nearly all the blood clots have occurred in women.

I've been remembering a conversation I had last year at the door of the Soho tai chi studio. This must have been early March, shortly before things began to shut down. A friend said something like this: given what we're seeing about the death rate, it's not as if this is the big one, meaning the viral epidemic that we'd been fearing for decades, and I said, "But this IS the big one." Apparently I was already listening to the right people. The NYT has an article today asserting that the "excess deaths" number for 2020 seems to be about 16% above normal, which is higher than the best estimate for the 1918 flu epidemic. "According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, about 10 percent of the deaths last year can be directly attributed to Covid-19, which overtook other leading causes of death — like chronic lower respiratory diseases and unintentional injuries, such as car accidents and overdose deaths — to [become the third biggest killer](#), after heart disease and cancer."

Cases continue to decline slowly in NJ, though we still have a ways to go to get to the summer level. We're seeing over 3K cases a day; last summer, we had one tenth that many.

Starting this week, anyone who is at least 16 years old (or is it 18?) is eligible to be vaccinated, yet the daily rate of vaccination has slowed a little and is now under 3M per day. That's still not shabby. But let's see if getting J&J back will help.

Saturday, April 24

I decided to skip the GSR/DCM workshop this morning. I still have to take a shower, host the Saturday morning AA meeting, respond to texts that came in after texting closed yesterday, and work with Henry to prepare the apartment for two showings later today — all before we leave for the senior community at about 12:15. That seems like plenty for one morning.

And what an afternoon. Our cottage is coming along beautifully and will

definitely be ready for us to move in on the 4th. The only thing we noticed that wasn't quite right was that the bedroom and office hadn't been painted light green, as I had requested (and paid for, or rather, agreed to pay for). We chose an outdoor carpeting for our little patio. I took pictures of the cottage and the plantings in front. What else? We took another tour of the building, looking at the art studio, the library, the gym and the pool. Then we got takeout dinner at a middle eastern restaurant in a nearby mall, and had a look at the giant Shop Rite a couple of doors down while we waited for our food to be ready.

And how's the covid news? The situation in India is dire. My friend Parni sent email today saying, "Due to short supply of the vaccine in India they have delayed the second shot to 8 weeks (instead of 4 weeks) and now there are numerous instances of people getting COVID after their first shot and dying of it. I have heard of 5 fatalities in my own circle in the last 3 days. And the virus is everywhere...in every city, every apartment complex and now even remote villages that were relatively safe. We should send all COVID-deniers to India."

Headlines in the NYT about the situation: US is under pressure to export more vaccine supplies amid India's deadly scourge; India's crisis could bring to a halt Africa's vaccination campaign, which has 17 percent of the world's people and relies on vaccines produced in India; As 20 die in another hospital tragedy [when oxygen supplies ran low], fears grow that India is undercounting Covid deaths.

Apparently the US is sitting on a stockpile of the AstraZeneca vaccine despite the fact that it hasn't been approved here.

NYT again: Case numbers have started to slowly decline as conditions have improved in [Michigan](#), [New York](#) and [New Jersey](#).

That's a piece of good news. In NJ, 49% of the population has had at least one jab, and case numbers are dropping for nearly a month. They're still way too high. I yearn for the low numbers we had all last summer.

I'm surprised I haven't mentioned the Derek Chauvin trial. I don't think I dared to pay very much attention, being so accustomed to cops getting



acquitted of killing black people. But wonder of wonders, he was convicted on all three charges. Of course other cops killed other black people almost immediately, so the story continues.

So much challenging news is coming to me from other people. My son (stepson) Jeremy went to Milwaukee to say good-bye to his father, who died shortly thereafter. My friend Polly's mother just had some bad medical tests and Polly's going to fly down to be with her while she undergoes some tests in the hospital. My friend Meret's daughter's new baby is profoundly deaf in both ears, so there's a lot to learn about how to proceed. All of regular life goes on while political fights and pandemics rage along.

Sunday, April 25

I was up too late last night and I'm up too early this morning. I have a busy brain, but maybe I'll manage a nap later today.

After playing some Roblox with Evan, I perked up and got some work done — I made a first pass at organizing the papers we got at the senior community yesterday, finished off my 20 Vote Forward letters, and did a load of laundry. And now lunchtime.

I did two more address changes.

Monday, April 26

I realized that this is the first time I've moved in retirement, when I didn't have work to distract me from the anxiety of moving. Henry and I have *way* too much time to think about this. I look forward to my workout in half an hour, and I think there will be a texting opportunity this afternoon as well. And it's a beautiful day! Maybe I'll get myself outside.

Yesterday, the Biden administration announced that it would send help to India, including freeing up some supplies needed to manufacture vaccines.

Henry and I spent a little time looking at some of our busier closets and figuring out where in the new place things will be distributed. That made me feel a little better, but I'm still pretty tense.

I'm texting for the DNC. The introductory message today is this: "Hi, [person]. It's Deborah with the Democratic Party. I'm reaching out because this week marks President Biden's first 100 days in office! There's so much to celebrate, with the passing of the American Rescue Plan, and the recent announcement of the American Jobs Plan. Have you heard about the progress that the White House has made so far?" I did 300 of those, and then volunteered to reply to some other abandoned messages. I think I'll take a break shortly and go for a walk, then come back for more.

From Heather Cox Richardson's newsletter, something I had missed: On April 19, the United Mine Workers of America, the largest coal miners' union, backed Biden's plan to move away from coal, so long as miners get government support to transition into similar jobs. In a plan endorsed by Democratic Senator Joe Manchin of West Virginia (who is well known for delivering for his constituents), the union asked for funding to plug abandoned oil and gas wells, clean up mining sites, and train workers for new jobs in new energy technologies.

We had a nice walk — it's blue and brisk and springy. Back for another 300 names to text.

Tuesday, April 27

We have to clean up for another apartment showing late this morning. And I have some text messages to follow up on when texting reopens at 10. Otherwise, nothing scheduled for today.

NJ's rate of transmission of SARS-CoV-2 is .93, just that little bit below 1 that should keep cases dropping. The NYT still rates Hudson County, NJ as being at a "very high risk level." Actually, that's an improvement. It's usually at an "extremely high" level.

Since we had to be out of the apartment for the showing, Henry and I went out to lunch. This was actually our first time eating in one of those plastic bubbles, at Bistro La Source. It's a cool day, but it was much warmer in the bubble, and it was a treat.

I'm back to texting. But wait, I forgot to make myself some tea! I'm handling replies to texts that went out yesterday, I guess. As before, they're all over the map. Immigration comes up a lot, which can come from a lot of different directions. There's criticism from the left; there are individual tales of hardship; there are accusations straight out of QAnon; there are people calling Biden a pathetic old man.

Today the CDC issued a statement that vaccinated individuals don't need to wear masks outdoors unless they're in big groups. (That should make our visit to White Pine Camp in the Adirondacks a lot easier, if they adopt the same policy there. I'm still not sure what I think about group dinners indoors, but we have a couple of months yet.) One tricky aspect of the CDC advice, of course, is that covid deniers don't wear masks, either, and who wants to be in that company?

Worldwide, the number of new cases is reaching new highs — over 680K new cases yesterday. India is probably the worst disaster, but most of their cases are not counted. Other places look just as bad, or worse, on the NYT map — Mongolia, Sweden, France, Turkey, Ukraine, most of South America.

New cases in NJ continue to decline, but still average over 2500 per day. 50% of New Jerseyans have had at least one dose of vaccine. We're definitely in the top quintile of states.

Wednesday, April 28

Henry and I are having a little flurry of organizing, packing, and even identifying more things to discard or donate. We'll go to the Salvation Army when our housekeeper Angie arrives.

I finished off a few text responses when it opened back up at 10, but I won't start any now — maybe after we return to the apartment when Angie is finished.

Ronald Klain @WHCOS It's been a busy 100 days, and easy to overlook some of the major things that @POTUS has done -- but here's a big one: nominating a record number of highly qualified, highly diverse judges to fill

critical vacancies on the courts.

Action Together NJ: 576,529 Americans have died of Covid19

NYT: Federal investigators searched Rudy Giuliani's apartment and office. They also searched the home of Victoria Toensing, another GOP attorney who involved herself in Ukraine.

My social security application was approved today! That's some good news.

A resolution calling on Jersey City to divest from fossil fuel businesses — pension funds, I guess, and maybe others — just passed unanimously. My friend Tina has been working on it, and asked me to help. I didn't attend the City Council meeting myself, but I urged NJ-08 for Progress to help publicize the vote, and they did.

[Daniel Griffin MD PhD @DanielGriffinMD](#) A vaccinated couple flew their family to Hawaii. Their young son died of covid-19 on the trip. - The Washington Post — "He was younger than 11." Children may be at lower risk but they are not at no risk.

That is heartbreaking, and we'll have to make sure to keep Evan safe even as all the grownups around him are safely vaccinated.

Thursday, April 29

At last night's AA meeting, a woman said she was interested in volunteer opportunities, so I sent her email with a list of my favorite Jersey City groups and organizations — Liberty State Park, Friends of Liberty State Park, the local cleanup effort, the Embankment Coalition, NJ-08 for Progress, and Sustainable JC. It made me feel good about how I have spent my years in Jersey City, and maybe I have just saved someone else some time.

We spent some time this morning organizing for the move. We identified some things in storage that could be offered to people in the building, and a fluorescent light fixture I have asked building staff to install.

Now I'm going to do some texting for the DNC for a while until we have to be out of the apartment for another showing.

We had some real estate kerfuffle this afternoon — we now have a new offer, so we can allow the first buyer to get out of the contract, which she was apparently eager to do.

With so much going on in our personal lives, it's difficult to stay aware of what's going on in the country, and indeed the world. The pandemic is slowly releasing its grip on the US as spring comes and the vaccination rate rises. Many other countries are facing terrible disasters. India, in particular, is experiencing a really terrible second wave. As in the US, many of their problems are caused, or at least badly exacerbated, by their own mistakes and their own underfunded medical system. The newspapers have been showing pictures of cremation grounds, which look very unusual to American eyes: they're outdoors, with people on pyres of burning wood. I guess we don't know what they usually look like, but the reporting tells us that they're going all day and night, not really able to keep up with the flow of dead bodies. Apparently the government was promoting the idea that herd immunity had been reached after their first wave, and used that to justify opening everything back up, including huge crowded religious festival and political rallies.

I got further involved in texting, and didn't make it to the 7:00 AA meeting. That was ok with me, since I just attended one last night.

NYT: Last week, Latin America accounted for 35 percent of all coronavirus deaths in the world, despite having just 8 percent of the global population, according to data compiled by The New York Times.

NJ Spotlight: Today's estimate of the rate of transmission in NJ is 0.72. It hasn't been that low since last June.

I haven't had a haircut since February, waiting for the prevalence of Covid in NJ to come down. It's probably pretty safe in any case, since I've been vaccinated for quite some time, but I'll feel better about it when community spread drops a bit more.

Friday, April 30

Today we're going down to the senior community again, to give them large amounts of money and get our keys, and do a few other things. It's another opportunity to ask questions and take measurements. ,,,

What a day. I'm almost too tired to write it all down, so I'll be brief. The first part of our visit was a bit chaotic, with the Comcast tech there and the whole renovations team, all speaking loudly. We got to make a few requests for changes in the cottage ourselves. (I always feel self-conscious about that word "cottage," but it's what they call all the little houses there, so maybe I'll get used to it.) Then we paid our money and got our key fobs and the garage door opener. We took a little walk and found that there's a lovely little brook at the edge of the property, Beden Brook. (Funny, the spell checker wanted to call it Biden Brook.)

Jeremy texted me to say that the house they looked at today was a great disappointment, so if I'm willing to give them some financial help, they'll put in an offer on the bigger house on Grant.

We got back home at about 3 and just crashed. After dinner, I knocked off a few more address changes.

No texting today. I was tempted, but it's a bit much.

Saturday, May 1

I woke up as soon as it was light. I'm awfully tired, but too jazzed up to sleep as much as I need. I hope I'll have a few good long nights after we move on Tuesday. I did a bit of organizing before breakfast, and a bit more afterwards. It's odd to be packing up and showing the apartment at the same time, but there we are.

Matt Gaetz and Rudy Giuliani are making as big a spectacle as they can while investigations close in around them.

We went out to lunch again today, to be well out of the way when the

apartment was being shown. Eating in a Bistro La Source was quite busy, with its bubbles were filling up and some people eating at open outdoor tables. I hope they will survive the pandemic, and I wonder how other small restaurants in Jersey City are doing.

I managed to take a sorely needed nap this afternoon.

Henry did quite a lot of packing; I didn't do as much, but still got several things organized. I have changed my mailing address at 27 companies and organizations I deal with!

It's the birthday of the Empire State Building, and it's putting on an understated but pretty display of lights. That's another part of our view we'll miss — the lights at the Empire State Building and the World Trade Center.

NYT: Global virus cases reach new peak, driven by India and South America. // Worldwide, the number of new coronavirus cases has shot upward since the beginning of March, more than doubling in two months. For the past two weeks, new global cases have exceeded their previous high point in early January. The average daily rate of new cases has now been [above 800,000](#) for more than a week.

Cases are high in many European countries as well.

The US as a whole continues to improve, but there are hot spots all over the country — Michigan, Oregon, Texas, Utah. We still have almost 700 people dying every day, on average. Cases in NJ have finally dropped to a level we haven't seen since November, and maybe we'll have another summer lull.

45% of all residents of Somerset County, our new home, are fully vaccinated. The number for Hudson County is 38%.

Pfizer and Moderna have each launched trials of the vaccines for children under 12, but it sounds like they're only in phase 1 or 2 now.

Sunday, May 2

I haven't gone to sleep yet, so it really is Sunday, at 1am. I was just about ready to go to sleep when my mind went into a busy mode where it scans for problems that need to be solved, and my goose was cooked. So I got up and ordered a couple of things on Amazon, and finished a crossword puzzle on The New Yorker site, and now I'm getting sleepy again.

On twitter: the number of unaccompanied migrant children held in jail-like conditions along the border has dropped nearly 84% in the past month; there's been a shooting at a casino in Wisconsin; election results in Texas looking good for GOP. WaPo: India sets [another] pandemic record with more than 400,000 cases [and these are the ones we know about]

As bad as things got here, oxygen shortages were rare. They seem to be common in India, and what a disaster.

WaPo: Pandemic Lab: More drinking at home is linked to domestic abuse

And now it really is morning, and I've had maybe 6 hours of sleep — enough to carry me through the afternoon.

We worked so hard today! We found another motherlode of stuff to be sorted and discarded, Henry's toiletries. Then we hauled everything out of our storage lockers and moved it inside the apartment, and we kept trying to separate things into rooms to make the packing easier. We'll find out tomorrow if we're doing something useful.

It's my father's birthday today. If he had lived past 45, he would now be about 100. Or is it 99? I'll ask my brothers and sisters.

Monday, May 3

It's finally packing day. A team of four women is packing all our things into boxes and the lead is responsible for learning out what goes where in the new place. It's nearly noon, and they're well over half done, I'd say -- hanging clothing in wardrobes, dishes packed, furniture labelled. In the meantime, I called my insurance agent for a change of address, and got a whole bunch of other details adjusted at the same time -- the "risk address" for the cars, the fact that I don't drive to work, the new phone number, and



a few errors on the renter's policy.

NYT: Early in the pandemic, when vaccines for the coronavirus were still just a glimmer on the horizon, the term “herd immunity” came to signify the endgame: the point when enough Americans would be protected from the virus so we could be rid of the pathogen and reclaim our lives. // Now, more than half of adults in the United States have been inoculated with at least one dose of a vaccine. But daily vaccination rates are slipping, and there is widespread consensus among scientists and public health experts that the herd immunity threshold is not attainable — at least not in the foreseeable future, and perhaps not ever.

NYT: To prevent a new wave of infections in Australia, about 8,000 Australia citizens and residents are banned from returning home from India as of Monday.

That's exactly what my friend Parni is worried about -- her mother-in-law is in India, visiting her family. Since she is a citizen of the US, she's hoping to be able to come home in a week or so.

And what a day it was. Our apartment is a sea of boxes, and it only took about 4 hours. We had our last Jersey City dinner, takeout from Sky Thai -- pineapple fried rice.

I got a text from Jeremy saying that their bid on the house had been accepted, so they'll be house poor and building equity. I'm glad I'm able to help. And we received the contract we've been expecting from our realtor, which we will both e-sign this evening -- I'm glad we asked the packers to leave the printer until the last minute. Henry would be signing it right now, but the tax accountant called, and he's apparently listening to someone talk for quite a while.

Tuesday, May 4

It's about 9:30. The packers are finishing up and the movers are hauling everything to the elevators. I had another night of less sleep than I need, so I'm pumped full of caffeine. Henry and I bustled around tidying up everything we had used last night, and a few other bits and pieces, so

we're fully ready. We're just watching everything disappear around us. My eye started twitching, so I'm listening to Sheila Chandra to keep myself reasonably calm.

At around 4:30am, something useful occurred to me: When I'm anxious, I can try to cultivate curiosity instead. So instead of worrying that the packing/unpacking team will put things in the wrong place, I can try to be curious about what other people think is a good way to put our stuff in place. I'm going to try to remember that one. I never did relate to "turning fear into faith," as the AA philosophy says. Turning fear into curiosity is a more buddhist approach, and it seems more useful to me.

Whew, what a day. We were on the road by noon, and unpacking for a few hours. As we put things in place, I was able to identify about 5 things that didn't really have a place -- the white shelves that used to be near by bed, the torchiere from the bedroom (I really liked that, but we just don't need it), the racks we used in our showers, and Henry's little shoe rack. That's pretty good, and I'm sure we'll find more stuff to ditch as we sort and unpack. Yup, I just ditched a lamp and a bath mat.

Tomorrow, I'd like to tackle the office and the kitchen, but I'm finished for today. The bookshelves all need work, and so does the garage, but that comes later.

I have barely looked at the news today, but here's something from NJ Spotlight: President Joe Biden today laid out a plan to boost COVID-19 vaccination rates in the nation, amid the same sort of slackening in demand that's been seen here in New Jersey. Biden said the effort had three focal points, including children ages 12 and up, with Pfizer currently seeking federal approval for its vaccine among that age group; secondly, improving convenience for those who've found the vaccination process frustrating, with supplies being moved directly to pharmacies, doctors and rural health clinics; and lastly, persuading those who are resistant to roll up their sleeves with an appeal to act both in the own interest and to protect the lives of more vulnerable loved ones. Biden said those seeking a vaccine can find local supplies with their cellphones, by texting their Zip Code to the number 438829.

Wednesday, May 5

We're focussed on moving in, of course, so barely looking at the news. Delivered: a stick vacuum and a desk. Repaired: a leaking dishwasher, cabinet door that fell off, front door that wouldn't close, ditto for a utility door, the temperature of the hot water in the shower. Not yet repaired: a very loud dryer, and non-working outlet. Connected: printer, my computer, the TV. Visited: the local supermarket. Located: my tea tins, the smoothie maker. An inspector came to check the hot water -- the reason for the repair just mentioned. Two inspectors are due on Friday: water again, then electrical. Mysteries solved: the weird little protruding wires by the TV, the functioning of the gas fireplace.

We received the contract rider from our attorney, but Henry was too tired to review it. We also received our taxes from the accountant, so that's more paperwork to do soon.

We had dinner with Harry and Barbara, who are being very welcoming and helpful to us, sharing useful information of all kinds.

The AA meeting was helpful -- maybe the discussion afterwards even more so. One woman had been doing, and clearly overdoing, an assignment her therapist gave her, and the therapist just counseled her to stop, fearing that she was retraumatizing herself. I commented that she seemed to be in the Therapy Olympics, and that reminded me that I can stop competing in the Unpacking Olympics.

Thursday, May 6

I had my first really good night's sleep in quite a while -- 9 hours. When I woke up in the night to pee, I went back to sleep without making up a whole list of things to worry about.

In 45 minutes, I'll have my first workout with Ken in the new space!

Another lively morning: we responded to our real estate attorney, signed the authorization for the taxes, made menu selections for the next few days, received our first mail from the post office, received our new

cookware designed for induction stoves, kept working on organization our offices, and a few more chores.

We're watching the Republican Party fight with itself at the national level. I guess they're relying on the red state GOP governments, FOX News, and the core Trump supporters as their entire strategy.

A little bluebird just stopped for a minute on our patio and peeked in the door while we were having lunch!

I tried to take a nap, but I had forgotten to turn off my phone and Evan called for a bit of Roblox. After a while, I said good-bye and Henry and I went out for a pleasant walk around the property.

After dinner, I set up the new shoe rack and attended the local AA meeting for the first time as a local.

The number of vaccinations administered per day has dropped back from over 3 million to just over 2 million. We hear a lot about vaccine hesitancy, as it's called, but it may also be true that delivery to inner cities isn't yet what it should be. Or maybe it's the rural poor not having access? I don't know, but it's true that some southern and western states are lagging. NJ is doing pretty well.

Other covid headlines in the NYT: [Europe signals it may not support Biden's call to waive Covid vaccine patents](#), [India's vaccinations decline as its virus outbreak reaches new highs](#), [Millions of Johnson & Johnson doses sit unused across three continents](#), [Signs of an improving pandemic outlook may be emerging for younger Americans](#), [New York City plans a \\$25 million program to put artists back to work](#).

Friday, May 7

I think I just lost some comments because I mistakenly edited this file on the desktop and the laptop at the same time without reviewing how Dropbox handles that. If I want to do that, I bet I could edit it on the dropbox web site.

This morning, I wrote about how angry I became when there was confusion about how to deal with the leftover packing material from Byron, and then about how emotionally overloaded I must still be to become angry so easily.

It's been a lively day again — the dryer was replaced, two inspectors came — plumbing inspector (fail), electrical inspector (pass), the social director came by with flowers. We keep making slow progress in settling in — figuring out where to keep masks and hats and scarves, programming the xfinity remote control, finding little things that had been missing for a few days.

WHO just approved the Sinopharm vaccine, which should make a big difference throughout the world because China, instead of hoarding vaccine for its own citizens, is intent on using it as an instrument of international diplomacy.

Oh, this is something else I had copied from the NYT web site and then lost: Pfizer and the German company BioNTech have become the first companies to apply to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for full approval of [their Covid-19 vaccine](#) for use in people 16 and older. The vaccine is currently being administered to adults in America under an emergency use authorization granted in December. The approval process is likely to take months. // The companies said in a statement on Friday that they had submitted their clinical data, which includes six months of information on the vaccine's safety and efficacy, to the F.D.A. They plan to submit additional material, including information about the manufacturing of the vaccine, in the coming weeks. // "We are proud of the tremendous progress we've made since December in delivering vaccines to millions of Americans, in collaboration with the U.S. government," Dr. Albert Bourla, Pfizer's chief executive, said in the statement. "We look forward to working with the F.D.A. to complete this rolling submission and support their review, with the goal of securing full regulatory approval of the vaccine in the coming months." // As of Thursday, [more than 134 million doses](#) of the vaccine had been administered in the United States, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Full approval would allow Pfizer and BioNTech to market the vaccine directly to customers. // It could also make it easier for companies, government agencies and schools to

require vaccinations. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission [said in December](#) that employers could mandate vaccination, and legal experts [have generally agreed](#). // Many companies have been hesitant to require the vaccines, especially while they have only emergency authorization, which is designed to be temporary. Some institutions, [like the University of California and California State University systems](#), have said that they would do so only after a vaccine has full approval. // Full approval could also prompt the U.S. military, which has had [low uptake of Covid-19 vaccines](#), to mandate vaccinations for service members.

On the local front, I got a haircut and we met a bunch more people, including somebody I used to work with at Bell Labs!

Saturday, May 8

This morning, we met with a fellow on the welcoming committee. He spent most of the time, especially at first, talking about himself. He's a lovely guy but a big talker. He says he spent years as a clinical psychologist listening to other people, and now people tell him they can't shut him up. Eventually we did learn quite a bit about the place, but it took some time.

Then we did a couple of errands at the local shopping center — we haven't ventured any further yet. And we were privileged to attend a live solo piano concert in the auditorium on a fairly spectacular grand piano. Bach, Chopin, Tchaikovsky, and another composer whose name I've forgotten. Live music! Amazing.

NYT confirming what we've been seeing locally: New coronavirus cases have fallen drastically in New Jersey, where at times this spring the virus was spreading faster than anywhere else in the United States. // Over the past two weeks, the state has seen its average number of new daily drop by 61 percent, according to a [New York Times database](#). // [New Jersey's case numbers](#) are dropping along with the rest of the country's. But the state's decline is the steepest in the United States and its rate of new daily cases per person is now just above the national average.

NYT again: Norwegian Cruise Line is threatening to keep its ships out of Florida ports after the state enacted legislation that prohibits businesses

from requiring proof of vaccination against Covid-19 in exchange for services. // The company, which plans to have its first cruises available to the Caribbean and Europe this summer and fall, will offer trips with limited capacity and require [all guests and crew members to be vaccinated](#) on bookings through at least the end of October.

Sunday, May 9

I don't think we're doing any organized activities today. We're doing some work in the apartment, er, house, er, cottage, and Jeremy and Evan will visit this afternoon.

There are frequent headlines about the decline in willingness to get the vaccine in the US, with only 34% of people fully vaccinated. We're dropping below 2M per day. People in many other countries are clamoring for vaccinations and can't yet get them. NYT: Vaccinations rise in the EU after a slow start; a potentially fatal fungal infection is cropping up among India's covid patients. We're expecting kids as young as 12 to be eligible to be vaccinated soon, and BioNTech is seeking approval for a less arduous cold chain

Many countries are struggling with outbreaks now, in Western Europe, South America, Iran, India.

Monday, May 10

As usual, the day flies by and I'm barely looking at the news. I look forward to getting back to texting before long, but we're still working pretty hard to settle in. We went to the main building to make some adjustments in our meal plan for next week, we drove to a Goodwill donation center to unload a few things, we spent an hour organizing the kitchen. The plumber came back for the nth time to try to get the water temperature down so it would pass inspection. I cleared off an old MacBook Air the best I could to prepare it for recycling.

Tuesday, May 11

We had appointments with the nurse practitioner at the clinic here, so we

will be set up with our new medical providers and approved to use the gym. Henry's off at the grocery store.

The FDA has signed off on allowing kids 12 and older to be vaccinated, and the CDC advisory panel will meet tomorrow to make a ruling.

NJ Spotlight: Gas prices are rising rapidly in New Jersey and elsewhere, as Colonial Pipeline, the operator of conduits that serve much of the country, continues working with the federal government to restore service after a weekend ransomware cyberattack.

Wednesday, May 12

The crisis in India continues. The GOP just kicked Liz Cheney out of her leadership position in the party, which may trigger the formation of a third party.

Henry and I are about to do a whirlwind of chores — UPS store, Comcast, hardware store, bank, grocery store. And I just uploaded some documentation to Verizon that I hope will prevent them from making me pay an early termination penalty. We're all about the move.

NYT: Gas Pipeline Hack Leads to Panic Buying in the Southeast

I attended a board meeting of my tai chi school, we joined Harry and Barbara for dinner, and I went to the Hoboken women's meeting. (I say "went to," but you know that means zoom.)

Thursday, May 13

This has been quite an interesting adjustment. I feel as though we've entered a different universe. It's extremely social, for one thing. We're having dinners with people several times a week, which we have never done. (Presumably the activity level will die down after a while, after everyone has welcomed us.) And then with everyone vaccinated, the level of covid precautions is much lower than we've been used to, and I imagine that most people I know are still at that higher level. We do wear masks, but we take them off for dinner and conversation. And then of course



we've moved from the city to the country. In Jersey City, the only trees we could see from our apartment were the trees along the river on the NYC side; the only birds we could see were gulls and the occasional falcon. Now we're surrounded with spring greenery and hearing birds all day long.

The pipeline is back up, and apparently the company had to pay a ransom to make that happen.

In the US, vaccination is now available for children 12 and over.

I'm feeling comfortably at home today. I did some pruning and weeding out front, then made my lunch while Henry went to an event at the main building. To feel even more normal, I decided to do some texting for the DNC, sitting by my open window.

Even twitter has posted a notification that "CDC says fully vaccinated people can stop wearing masks in most indoor places."

The exceptions include buses, airplanes, and hospitals. So part of the feeling of being in an alternative universe here is a result of real changes happening in the country.

Cases are really dropping hard in NJ now, and they've continued to decline since April 2. The 7-day average is 653, and it hasn't been that low since October 2.

Friday, May 14

I did a bunch of weeding this morning — in the common areas today. The plumbing inspector came while I was out, and the place finally passed. While the housekeeper was here in the afternoon, I did some more texting for the DNC, recruiting phone bankers for the special election in New Mexico to replace Deb Haaland.

NYT: Uruguay has the world's highest death toll per capita, Singapore announces new restrictions after vaccinated airport workers become infected.

Saturday, May 15

I hosted the Barrow St women's AA meeting in the morning, and we had dinner with some new folks in the evening.

Sunday, May 16

Sheree came to visit — hurray! I love it when I have a visitor from the larger universe into this little self-enclosed world we live in now. It's a good reminder that though it is rarely necessary for people to leave the premises here, all the doors are wide open.

When we went to pick up lunch, we were captivated by the hardware store. Sheree bought a hose and a couple of other things and I bought a lopper. Then she bought a couple of chairs from Shop Rite on the way back to the car, and I think we'll pick up some of the same tomorrow.

I'm hosting our tai chi school's annual meeting at 4:30, and then talking with the alternate GSR for the Hoboken women's meeting after dinner.

Monday, May 17

Henry and I did a few local errands, including buying two chairs for our little patio. We spent a bit of time working on the garage, and I did some aggressive pruning of the biggest shrubs in front of the house.

An acquaintance from high school lives in Princeton part time, and I finally reached her — I had tried email without success, but the good old telephone worked perfectly.

Tuesday, May 18

A big topic in the news and in local conversations is the mask mandate. The CDC says vaccinated people don't need to wear masks except when they're in health care settings or on public transportation — and there may be other exceptions I'm getting about. State governors, including Murphy, aren't so sure. Murphy mentions the case of people who work in stores or restaurants and want unvaccinated people to wear masks — are they going to check everyone's vaccination status at the door? It's not reasonable.

I had some blood drawn at the clinic, then had my intake interview and testing at the gym, then went to the association meeting. We had dinner with two other couples this evening in someone's unit — a long evening of lively conversation. And now I'm tired and want to go to bed. I can hear Henry starting to breathe as if he's already fallen asleep.

Wednesday, May 19

I didn't sleep well last night, but the day is going ok. I worked with other members of the garden committee to distribute plants purchased in the plant sale, and did a bit of weeding as we waited for the plants to arrive. Then I rested for a while, reading a cheesy murder mystery, until Brooke (resident manager, or some similar title) came to give us an overview of the services that she supervised. Now we're about to go to dinner with another new pair. After tonight, we're on our own for dinner for a few days.

Thursday, May 20

Workout with Ken, some office chores, then a walk along the canal path starting from a spot in Kingston. Once again, I forgot to attend the 7:00 AA meeting. I'm going to have to set an alert!

Oh, this is great: [Daniel Griffin MD PhD @DanielGriffinMD](#) Based on a review of recent data submitted by Pfizer Inc. today, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration is authorizing undiluted, thawed Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine vials to be stored in the refrigerator at 2°C to 8°C (35°F to 46°F) for up to 1 month

Friday, May 21

I just discovered [covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker](https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker) from a tweet by Daniel Griffin, and I want to spend some time exploring it. The first page I landed on shows the proportion of each SARS-CoV-2 lineage as shown by CDC's national genomic surveillance since December, 2020. It's so interesting! At that time, it looks as though fewer than 5% of cases were B.1.1.7, and now that's the dominant lineage, showing up in two thirds of all cases (confidence interval: 62% to 70%).

Saturday, May 22

I played Bloons with Evan and his friend Finn for a while this morning. He talks to Finn over FaceTime, but couldn't figure out how to add me to the call, so he reaches me by Zoom. It's quite funny. Both Finn and I can hear Evan, but I don't think we can hear each other very well.

What else? I hosted the Saturday morning Barrow women's meeting, and it was a lovely discussion about self and selfishness. After lunch, I texted for a little while with Fair Fight, but I'm not sure I should keep working with them. They are so flooded with volunteers that they can only allocate us each a couple of hundred names; I get much more generous assignments with other groups.

Since I was not very occupied with texting, I went to the gym. I think this is the first time I've been to a gym since March, 2020, and it was great to be there. This is a smaller gym than the one at 77 Hudson, and the equipment is more geared toward older people, but I can definitely find enough to do. I wore a mask most of the time. (Note to self: wear a cloth mask because a medical mask has to be thrown out after so much sweating.)

We're having dinner with two new people tonight. .... At dinner, we heard that someone had seen or heard evidence of cicadas, the infamous Brood X, at the house that used to be the farmhouse for this property. So we took a walk over there after dinner, and sure enough, there were several cicada skins to be seen — maybe a dozen in all on various trees and on the side of a building. We didn't hear anything, though. I believe the skins were smaller than the ones I remember from childhood.

Sunday, May 23

I attended the local Friends meeting for worship over zoom, thinking that's another practice I might like to start here. It was good, though I was pretty antsy by the end. It was genuinely silent, so it doesn't seem to be a so-called popcorn meeting, with people standing up to talk with very little provocation.

Then I spent some time tidying up my desk, and reviewed where our various pictures will go, and then loafed around the rest of the afternoon, listening to podcasts and playing games on the laptop. Henry went to the gym at 4:30 or so and inspired me to head over there, too. I stopped off at the ex-farmhouse on the way, and now the cicadas are audible. I think their call is different than I'm used to, which may be another distinctive feature of this brood.

Just had a family zoom session, the first in a while. It was great to see everybody, and lots of news has been piling up! One nephew getting married this summer, a niece has changed jobs again, and a sister retiring next fall.

Monday, May 24

I'm attending my second Delaware & Raritan Greenway zoom presentation, this one about the art of the Delaware River. I'm afraid I'm a bit distracted, having left dinner early to arrive here a few minutes late. It's interesting, though, to see how many artists are depicted the Delaware River and the towns along the border. I hope we'll see some of these works in person.

This morning, after my workout, we drove up to Jersey City to pick up Henry's car and to see how the apartment looks, all emptied out. Henry feared that we had left a lot of things behind, but there were only a few. We found the charger for the Verizon router and some cleaning supplies, but not the razor charger that Henry still can't locate. For some reason, he was very nervous before the trip, and we remarked again that we regularly take turns anxious or upset about things.

Tuesday, May 25

I'm finding it interesting to reflect on previous life transitions. There are a lot of them in my life, as I'm sure there are in every life. I left home to go to college, became active and absorbed in the labor movement and left-wing political activities, came out as a lesbian and became a co-mother, moved to NJ, went to school, went to work at Bell Labs, went through a breakup, quit drinking, starting dating Martin, moved to Morristown, then Summit, started dating Henry, moved to Jersey City, retired. At every one of these

junctures, things happened — some changes involved shifts in identity, some in location. Some changes involved significant changes in my activities, and some led me to let go of people and spend time with new people.

From Heather Cox Richardson's newsletter: A new Gallup poll today finds that 53% of Republicans think that Trump won the 2020 election. But only 26% of Americans identify as Republicans. Journalist Richard Hine crunched the numbers and notes that those percentages boil down to about 14% of Americans who think Trump is still president.

Wednesday, May 26

I had a long phone call with Ann M about my new residence and about some conversations and texts she has had with the widow of Jeremy's father. Maybe more on that later, maybe not.

I've been texting Texans for Fair Fight. They swear a lot, but either they or the program replace the swearwords with asterisks. Come to think of it, I bet it's the texting software!

I took a break to go out and weed for about an hour. I have to bring water next time, at least when it's this hot — I see that it's nearly 90 degrees out there. Whew. And now back to texting for a while.

Thursday, May 27

Workout this morning, then an hour with the library committee preparing books and other media to go on the shelves, then back to the main building to learn about the upcoming election.

The political news continues to be deeply worrying; the pandemic news in the US continues to improve.

Friday, May 28

NYT: A new poll suggests that the United States could be [on track to vaccinate at least 70 percent of the adult population](#) against Covid-19 by

this summer. // In the latest [survey by the Kaiser Family Foundation](#), 62 percent of respondents said that they had received at least one dose of a vaccine, up from 56 percent in April. At the same time, about a third of those categorized as “wait and see” reported that they had already made vaccine appointments or planned to do so imminently.

NYT: South America has the highest rate of new infections in the world: Uruguay, Argentina, Paraguay, Colombia and Chile are all in the top 10 in recent cases per 100,000 residents. // [India](#) has recently reported an average of more than 4,000 deaths per day, but reported cases are declining from the peak reached in early May. [Here's what to know about India's coronavirus crisis.](#)

Ourworldindata.org: Israel is still the leader in vaccinating its population, with quite a few other wealthy countries not far behind, including the US. Brazil, however, is shown at 20% and India at about 11%.

I seem to have been able to transfer a good part of my activities down here with me: AA, political texting, working out with Ken, and tai chi, if I'm able to get that started again. And playing video games with Evan! On top of that, I'm adding the garden club and the library committee, plus the responsibility of trying to do some gardening at my own little house. There are new places to hike and to kayak. I think it will be possible to make new friends in the area and still stay in touch with some old friends. That makes me glad we made this move while I'm not yet 70 — it's harder to make new friends as we get older.

I think it's all going to work out.

Saturday, May 29

AA meeting, playing with Evan, visiting the gym, watching bits of a friend's son's wedding live streamed on YouTube. Indian weddings are very different and more entertaining to watch!

Sunday, May 30

A very quiet day. Played with Evan, cooked a pot of beans, read a murder mystery.

Monday, May 31

I sent this email to my family this morning:

*I'm thinking of Malcolm Swayne today, the only relative I can think of who did not emerge from WWII. I once asked Kingdon which of his siblings he felt closest to, and he said Malcom. The youngest child, surely cherished by his whole family.*

*I'm regretting that I never asked Mom much about her experience of the war. She told me she had a boyfriend who went off to war, but I don't remember asking what became of him! And I don't remember hearing much about how she and her family managed during the war.*

*Kingdon got a purple heart for what he described as a minor wound received at a sort of skirmish in Europe, but do I remember where? I do not. I wonder if it was his war service that led him to an international diplomatic career or if he was already on that path.*

*Uncle Jasper's life was shaped by the aftermath of the war, and that of his family even more so!*

*Don Hurd, of course, told us compelling stories of his experience of war as a prisoner of the German Luftwaffe. (My former partner Martin's father was a prisoner of the Allies, somewhere in North Africa. I always wished those two could meet and I could listen to them swap stories.)*

*As far as I know, our family has avoided all the wars since then, whether large or small, long or short.*

*What stories do you all remember?*

I took a walk in a local park with a new friend, then went to an early dinner with two other new friends here. I did some laundry, some very messy laundry, as it turned out, with what Henry and I call a Kleenex explosion that had me trying to vacuum bits of kleenex off my socks.



Tuesday, June 1

Why is beginning to garden so stressful? I suppose I feel confused and incompetent, and I don't care for that at all. Thankfully Henry is diving in with me. We went to the Belle Mead Coop yesterday and bought a few plants in pots, and they warm up the concrete in front of the house and in back. I don't know that the sage plants will survive the winter, but we hope to transplant one or both of the butterfly bushes along the side of the house this fall.

And then we were allocated a raised-bed garden plot after all, so we'll go back this morning to get cucumber and tomato plants, and maybe some lavender for the pleasure of it. It's a bit late to be starting plants from seed.

I called a plumber to get the ice maker working in our refrigerator at 77 Hudson. Since Henry and I rarely use ice, we had simply turned off the water to the ice maker, thereby avoiding any risk of leaks. The new buyer wants it working, though, and the building folks are loath to touch those valves.

Wednesday, June 2

NYT: [As the U.S. starts a return to normal, some countries have their worst outbreaks yet.](#) // The authorities in [Malaysia](#) have barred people from venturing more than about six miles from home. Covid-19 patients are spilling into the hallways of overcrowded hospitals in Argentina. In Nepal, 40 percent of coronavirus tests are positive, suggesting that the virus is [racing through the population](#). // All three nations are experiencing their worst coronavirus outbreaks since the start of the pandemic, joining countries across Asia and South America where infections have surged to record levels — a stark counterpoint to the optimism felt in the United States as summer dawns.

We're in an interesting phase here in the US. We're beginning to act as though life is normal, going to events and eating in restaurants — Henry and I just agreed to an indoor restaurant reservation when we meet some friends in Saratoga Springs in a couple of weeks. And yet lots of aftereffects linger: there are labor shortages everywhere. There's a lot of

talk here about health care workers and kitchen staff. (I'm really getting tired of people blaming it on unemployment payments. Surely it can't be that simple, and we know that's a Republican talking point.) I get email from Politico every night, and they asked their readership about shortages they're currently seeing. People listed pipette tips and centrifuge tubes; mountain bike tires (Hawaii), kitchen appliances; transformers, conduit, concrete, and truck drivers (a rural electrical cooperative in Northern Idaho); Fresca; canning jar lids; canned cat food. (The Belle Mead Co-op tweeted that watering cans are hard to come by this year.) Some of these are likely to last as the virus continues to sicken people all around the globe, and remind us that the US can't just emerge from a global pandemic all by itself.

In email: Today, the League of Women Voters of New Jersey and Salvation and Social Justice, represented by the New Jersey Institute for Social Justice and Campaign Legal Center, filed an amicus curiae brief in *Conforti v. Hanlon*, a case challenging New Jersey's use of "the line" and other misleading features in its ballot design.

We just went back to the Belle Mead Co-op and bought four tomato plants and two cucumber plants, plus a few tomato cages. I'm not sure we're really prepared for the spread of the cucumber plants, but we shall see!

Thursday, June 3

In the morning, I had my workout with Ken, we did a bunch of chores, then went grocery shopping in the afternoon.

I'm watching the last in a series of zoom presentations by the Delaware and Raritan Greenway organization. This one is about the history of activism to protect the river, starting with the victorious fight against the Tocks Island Dam in the thirties. There was another big fight in the seventies, largely a losing fight, to block a pump intended to cool a nuclear power plant and to feed development in Bucks County.

In the news, I read that Trump really seems to believe that he'll be reinstated as president in August, after some recounts have been completed. The twitter hashtag people are using to discuss this is

#TrumpsIsNotWell.

Friday, June 4

NYT: President Biden, facing a self-imposed July 4 deadline to have 70 percent of U.S. adults at least partly vaccinated against the coronavirus, tried Wednesday [to rally the nation to meet that goal](#), announcing an offer of free child care for parents and caregivers while they receive their shots and a national canvassing effort resembling a get-out-the-vote drive.

According to the NYT, 41% of Americans are now fully vaccinated, with 51% of us having received at least one dose. 63% of people 18 and over have had at least one dose. There is enormous state-by-state variation, with some southern and western states falling behind.

NYT: Financial support for Covid-19 vaccination efforts in lower-income nations received a \$2.4 billion lift on Wednesday when world leaders [met at a virtual summit](#) hosted by the Japanese government and Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance. // The funds were pledged by wealthier countries, foundations and private companies. Five countries — Belgium, Denmark, Japan, Spain and Sweden — also announced plans to share a total of 54 million doses from their domestic supplies with countries in need. // The support is primarily designated for [Covax](#), a year-old initiative promoting equity in the distribution of Covid-19 vaccines. It has shipped more than 77 million doses to 127 countries and is led by Gavi, the World Health Organization and the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations.

[Heather Long @byHeatherLong](#) BREAKING: The US economy added back 559,000 jobs in May, a bit lower than expected, but a clear sign of hiring picking up. Unemployment rate = 5.8% (down from 6.3% in Jan) \*\*Overall, the economy has regained ~67% of jobs lost in the pandemic. About 7.4 million jobs to go\*\*

NJ Spotlight: Gov. Phil Murphy today officially declared that [the state of emergency for the COVID-19 pandemic is over](#), after signing legislation that extends some of the executive orders he issued during the public-health crisis through the end of the year.

The rate of transmission in NJ has been holding steady at around .7, which is a great plateau. I remember hearing, early in the pandemic, about a paper that found that .7 was the level that would lead to the ideal balance, controlling an epidemic without destroying the economy. I don't know if any of that still applies, but it makes me happy to see NJ hovering there.

And NJ's vaccination campaign keeps rolling along nicely, too, according to Spotlight, with "4,303,321 adult residents now fully vaccinated — 91.5% of the way to the goal set by officials: 4.7 million adults immunized by the end of June."

Saturday, June 5

Since the forecast was for a very hot day, I took an early walk, two loops around the perimeter. I saw a delicate snail, many cicadas, some small white butterflies, two feral cats, and a deer. I saw song sparrows (I think) and house sparrows (I think), and robins, catbirds, mockingbirds, bluejays, crows, waxwings, a Baltimore oriole. I heard a cardinal and some mourning doves. And we hear the bullfrogs every day!

And then the morning got busy — Roblox with Evan, the morning AA meeting, its business meeting. Henry and I walked up to the main building to see if we could make dinner reservations for next week, but no — not on Saturdays. Then we learned that something we were having framed was ready, so we went over to Rte 1 to pick it up. And then it was time for me to start texting for Fair Fight in Mississippi.

Sunday, June 6

We're having a very quiet day. I played around on Roblox (without Evan!) while listening to podcasts, and then finally got moving after lunch. I gave Henry a haircut on our little patio, and then we headed over to the gym. I did a couple of rounds of tai chi in the small auditorium, too.

Wednesday, June 9

This may be the first time I've skipped two days in this journal. I haven't

mentioned covid for several days, either, and that's because it isn't very much on my mind, nor is it in the headlines in US newspapers. It's still out there, though, and not fully resolved in the US, either. Some NYT headlines: [British tourists scramble to return from Portugal to meet a new quarantine deadline](#); [The rush to vaccinate the world stalls as funds and doses fall short](#); [Mississippi has the country's lowest vaccination rates. The governor says that's not a problem](#); [India's capital will ease some restrictions on Monday, even as it prepares for a possible third wave](#).

Cases are dropping worldwide, but there are still about 400K official new cases per day.

NYT again: Peru said that [Covid-19 has killed more than 180,000](#) of its people, giving it the world's highest death toll relative to its population. South America is being hit harder than any other continent, with nearly all of its countries having among the highest rates of new infections and deaths.

The map of South America has been red on the NYT world map for quite a while, and now it's even worse, I think — perhaps because it's their winter, and this virus, like other respiratory viruses, does seem to be seasonal.

The pace of vaccination in the US has slowed, but that doesn't seem surprising, now that the unvaccinated population is shrinking and the most urgent demand has been met. About a million doses are still being administered each day.

NJ had a slow start, but is now 7th among states in percentage of its population having received at least one shot.

Henry and I have continued working on the house — trying to figure out how to organize patio and garden, principally. I spent some time organizing bookshelves yesterday, and they're looking better.

Friday, June 11

It's been a busy few days. I mostly finished off the bookshelves, got a haircut, attended a board meeting of the tai chi school and a district

meeting for AA, went for a walk with the local walking group, and supervised the hanging of pictures on our house. I just repotted or replenished 5 plants — it's handy to have a garage and a spigot, I must say. We had dinner with another new person last night. I'm looking forward to a quiet evening at home, at last — no meetings until tomorrow morning, when I will host an AA meeting over zoom and attend an Area meeting at the same time — but the Area meetings are toooooo long.

And I shouldn't pretend I don't play that video game in my spare time! Somehow it's just what my tired brain wants.

Saturday, June 12

I'm not sure I have any major moving chores left to do! I need to go to the DMV at some point, and there are a few things to be done once the apartment in Jersey City is sold, but that's about it. There's always tidying and organizing to do, but the big stuff is done, done, done.

NJ Spotlight, paraphrased: NJ has now administered more than 9 million doses of vaccine; 4.3M in NJ people are fully immunized. People are still getting covid, and some are still dying of it, but the rate of transmission is behaving itself, staying below 0.8.

Monday, June 14

I had a crummy dream last night. The plot was that I had killed two people, then killed another one to cover up the first murder, then finally got caught. I was in India, and loath to go into an Indian jail, but more than willing to face the death penalty. I was unable to provide any reason why I had killed the initial two people, who may have been my own sisters. As the dream ended, it looked as though I was going to be pardoned, but I didn't want that to happen, because how would I face anybody in my family once I got home?

I don't know what triggered this dream. I've certainly had a lot of anxiety as we make this transition into a new community with new customs and a lot of social interaction, but I don't see the link between that anxiety and this deep guilt. It's interesting because this is old stuff and I might get to learn

something about that history.

Maybe the connection is this: if people don't love me, it must be because I've done something terrible. This is the thinking of a small child, and that may be when this particular fear originated.

Tuesday, June 15

I took the car up to Summit today to get it in shape before we leave for the Adirondacks on Friday. It was wonderful to walk around that beautiful town!

Wednesday, June 16

We received all the documents in email that we need to sign, notarize as necessary, and then overnight back to the attorney.

I did some texting for Fair Fight, then attended the Hoboken women's meeting. At the business meeting afterwards, the group reached a momentous decision — to return to in-person meetings starting in July. Hybrid meetings will happen if people can figure out how to manage them, but the group has made the commitment to meeting in person either way. Other groups have already begun to do this, and some are offering remove access, and it's all a sign of the easing of pandemic restrictions.

Thursday, June 17

We have an appointment with a notary this morning to finish off those documents, after which we'll overnight them to our attorney. Done, whew. Now I'm back to texting for Fair Fight, urging people in selected states to call their senators to urge the passage of SB1, a major voting rights bill.

And Juneteenth is suddenly a federal holiday. It's a good thing, even if it's a bit of a sop — a symbolic action while the GOP refuses to vote for meaningful bills.

Friday, June 18

We're packed up and ready to go to the Adirondacks, with a stopover in Saratoga Springs. We're excited but also sorry to leave our new home.

Sunday, June 27

I didn't maintain this journal while I was in the Adirondacks. It was a good vacation — kayaking, walking, visiting with friends, hanging out with my grandson. I saw lots of small wildlife — snake, muskrat, the charming little red squirrels we see there, fish, turtles, birds.

This journal was initially created to record the events of the pandemic, so let me say how odd it was to be acting so normal most of the time. We ate indoors in a restaurant in Saratoga Springs, just like the old days. It felt a little scary at first but we got used to it. We wore masks in the local stores in Saranac Lake, like the supermarket and the smaller health food store (though I forgot once), but never wore masks with one another. We ate together in a group as we have done in prior years, and even inside at the Blue Moon Cafe. We hugged.

Quite often, we forgot and said "last year" when referring to our most recent time there, though it was two years ago. I've heard other people do that, too, as though the last year is just a page you can tear out of the calendar and then it never happened. I keep thinking of the Mad Magazine fold-in on the last page where we would fold the page to make the center disappear, forming a new image.

When Marc Maron talks about starting to do standup again, he always says that he talks a lot about the year that was and about the strange moment we're in now, as we tentatively drop social distancing and masks and eat in restaurants, and as performances begin again. He says that it feels wrong when other comedians just dive right into their old acts, or some new act that ignores the pandemic altogether, when the trauma and dislocation of the past year is still sitting right in front of us. I'm always glad to hear him say that, because he may be right that a great period of national (international?) forgetting is about to begin.

Of course they aren't able to forget covid in many other places, because the pandemic is still raging in India and South America and another wave is



starting in Africa. These are all places where vaccines are scarce.

And one more note about vaccines: The Novavax vaccine keeps sounding better, and it's based on an older method or platform. NYT: "To create their vaccine, Novavax researchers started with a modified spike gene. They inserted the gene into a different virus, called a [baculovirus](#), and allowed it to infect moth cells. The infected cells produced spike proteins that spontaneously joined together to form spikes, as they do on the surface of the coronavirus. // A similar method of growing and harvesting virus proteins is [already used](#) to make licensed vaccines for diseases including influenza and HPV."

Tuesday, June 29

I've been mostly crashing since we got back from the Adirondacks, though chores somehow got done — grocery shopping, laundry, preparations for tomorrow's closing. It seems that's what I do when returning home from a trip. I played an awful lot of Bee Swarm, I must admit. However, I was a whirlwind of activity this morning — walking, tending to the garden, buying garden supplies at the Belle Mead Co-op. Now I'm texting for the DNC, inviting people to attend a DNC "briefing."

Friday, July 1

This has been a big week on a personal level. The sale of our Jersey City apartment is complete. My son Jeremy and his family moved into their first house, and what a chaotic event that has been. I went up twice to spend time with my grandson Evan, both to give Jeremy and Michele some breathing space to do their work and to help Evan with the transition.

Tuesday, July 6

I'm losing steam to maintain this, but covid is not over yet. Things in the US are looking very good — it's summertime and the vaccination rate keeps slowly climbing. Yet some states with low vaccination rates (eg, Arkansas at 34% and Missouri at 39%) are seeing increasing case numbers. So is Florida, where the vaccination rate is close to the national average of 47%. In NJ, 55% of people over 12 are fully vaccinated and

cases continue to decline. (Those vaccination rates are from the NYT and represent the percentage of people of all ages who are fully vaccinated. In NJ, 55% are fully vaxed; 68% of those 18 and older; 82% of those 65 and older.)

I attended an in-person AA meeting yesterday. As more people came into the room, I put my mask back on, though I was the only one of about 20 who did. So I guess I'm not ready for in-person meetings yet!

Wednesday, July 7

I went to the dentist yesterday, and to a doctor today. Masking is still required in medical offices. The doctor today agreed with me that he would continue using masks in the future, because he appreciated having no colds last year.

Friday, July 23

The current spread of covid is just remarkable. The media is full of talk about the Delta variant, and they may be right, but I'm sure the fact that many people have dropped all NPI precautions is also playing a role. I'm looking at a plot of hospitalizations in Florida, and they're soaring, not too far from the winter peak.

NYT: De Blasio is calling on employers to require vaccines. Chicago will require masks in school this fall, regardless of vaccination status. Many return-to-office plans are being disrupted by the virus surge. Infection levels have soared in parts of Missouri, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Florida. In general, this is happening where vaccination rates are low.

Overall vaccination rates in the US: 60% of people 18 and older are fully vaccinated. That varies widely by state, though, with Vermont at 77%, New Jersey at 69%, and Mississippi at 43%.

Wednesday, August 25

The virus has continued to spread. Many states are having their worst outbreak of the pandemic — mostly southern states, like Florida,

Mississippi, and Louisiana, but Oregon is also in trouble. This is the second highest peak in cases and hospitalizations nationwide. There are nearly 100K people in the US in hospitals with covid; at the post-Christmas peak, there were nearly 140K in hospitals. Over 1,000 people a day are dying now and the number is rising.

Like last year, the Sturgis motorcycle rally went right ahead on schedule. Many people still think the vaccine is dangerous, though they seem happy to accept antibodies once they're in the hospital, and there's a run on ivermectin, which I guess is the 2021 version of hydroxychloroquine. Sigh.

Now that the FDA has officially approved the Pfizer vaccine, more companies and schools are requiring it. The US Army, for example, is requiring it. Delta Airlines is doing something interesting — employees must be vaccinated by November 1st or pay an additional \$200 a month for their health insurance. They argue that they have to pay for expensive hospital stays for their unvaccinated employees.

Jeremy and Michele plan to ask Evan's doctor if he would authorize vaccinations for Evan. He's only 10, but he's big for his age — probably as big as many 12 year olds — and he probably isn't capable of wearing a mask all day at school.

Here we're back to wearing masks in the common areas, and Henry just told me that he heard that someone's visitor later tested positive. This was inevitable, because we are all paying and receiving visits, including me. I'm back to visiting Jeremy, Michele, and Evan at least once a week, and we don't wear masks when we're together. I was figuring I'd have to start wearing a mask once Evan is back in school, but maybe I'll need to start sooner.

The dining room here is already operating at under 50% capacity, but I think that's because of staffing shortages more than covid concerns. We're wondering whether the dining room will soon be closed altogether.

Overall vaccination rates in the US: 63% of people 18 and older are fully vaccinated, 3% more than a month ago. NJ has nearly reached 73%; Mississippi is still last, under 46%. Apparently the vaccination rate is

ticking up again as people see this new peak bearing down on them. With more older people vaccinated, it's the middle-aged and younger people, even children, getting sick this time.

I was invited to participate in Pfizer's booster trial, but then I told them that I've been diagnosed with selective IgA deficiency, so they uninvited me. Third shots of the Pfizer vaccine have been approved for people with serious immune system problems — much more serious than mine — and they will be offered to all of us 8 months after our second shots. (It's my expectation that the third shot will be the same as the first two; I haven't heard anything different.) For me, that date falls on October 3rd. I haven't asked the trial managers yet if they will want me to come to Mt Sinai for that shot or whether I can get it locally. I certainly want to get it, especially in light of this glitch in my immune system.

Thursday, August 31

I'm updating this diary less and less often now. Wouldn't it be great if I had stopped because there wasn't much covid news? The story doesn't change as often, but it still keeps going and going.

The governor of Florida, Ron DeSantis, is in an escalating war with schools that have instituted mask mandates, and seems to be trying to blame Biden for the covid crisis in his state, where the number of cases, hospitalizations, and deaths have all been setting new records over the past several weeks. All across the country, more children are getting covid, going to the hospital, and even dying. Many GOP governors are doubling down on their opposition to NPIs, while it's increasingly clear that they are necessary — at our current levels of vaccination, in any case.

Federal agencies are debating the need for booster shots.

NYT: A NJ woman is charged with selling hundreds of fake vaccine cards.

There's been plenty of other frightening and dispiriting news in the past week or so — the messy (but long overdue) withdrawal from Afghanistan, catastrophic floods in Tennessee, the current disaster caused by Hurricane Ida in Louisiana, drought and fire out west. It's impossible to keep up with it

all, I think, though I admit that I'm avoiding much of it because it's so discouraging.

As usual, I like to keep my head down and do the work: writing letters to Virginia voters with Vote Forward, texting voters all across the country for Fair Fight.

Saturday, October 2

I went to Mt Sinai yesterday to receive my booster shot, so this seems like a good time for an update. Covid case numbers across the country are finally dropping. This so-called Delta wave has been very serious, with the second highest peak nationally that we've seen since the beginning. In the most affected states, nearly all red states, the cases and deaths set new records. It went from the southern states to, now, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, and especially Alaska.

The tragedy is that it is almost entirely among people who didn't get vaccinated, either because they chose not to or because their local governments didn't make it easy. There have been at least 100,000 new deaths (with the reported total having reached 700K this week), nearly all so easily preventable. Many of the deaths, too, were among younger people because the oldest people were more likely to be vaccinated.

The discussions at the national level about these third Pfizer shots were awkward because the data isn't entirely clear. The folks on TWiV aren't convinced they're necessary, feeling that too much emphasis is being placed on antibodies rather than on other parts of the immune system where defenses persist even when antibodies decline. As for me, if I'm going to be offered another shot, I'll take it. It might help, and I can't imagine that it will hurt.

I drove into the city, which was pretty good on the way in and pretty dreadful on the way out. It took me about three hours just to get through the tunnel.

Politics continues to be dispiriting, with red states busily engaged in gerrymandering their districts and passing voter suppression laws, and

Republican members of Congress wanting only to block Biden's program to make the Democrats look ineffective. The Democrats are negotiating busily amongst themselves, and the press enjoys portraying that as chaotic when it is probably natural and appropriate.

Monday, October 4

I was feverish and fatigued all weekend, but looking back through these notes, I see that I had a higher fever after the first vaccination. I was at about 100 degrees from the middle of the night on Friday until the end of the day on Saturday, and then just fatigued and brain foggy on Sunday. Today I feel almost normal. I had a slightly low-energy workout with Ken, but it felt great to sweat and move.

Sunday, October 24

There's been a bit of covid news here this past week. Three people tested positive — I assume one or more felt ill, and that triggered the investigation. It was handled promptly and well. Fifteen people were instructed to quarantine for the week, and many community events were cancelled. It was unsurprising, but still unsettling. We all had a quieter week than usual, and now the quarantined folks are emerging — apparently none of them tested positive. Of the three with covid, I've heard that two of them had what they described as the symptoms of a bad cold, and they're beginning to feel better, too.

It looks like a strong victory for public health — the vaccines, even without boosters, protected a group of people over 80, and basic non-pharmaceutical interventions protected the rest of the community.

Tuesday, October 26

I've been feeling very nervous and twitchy for about a week now, and I think that our small local outbreak shook me up more than I realized. There are plenty of other things I could be twitchy about, like the difficulty Democrats in Congress are having in coming to an agreement, and the outcome of the elections in Virginia and New Jersey, and so much more — and yet I think the trigger was probably this outbreak. I don't usually have

this much difficulty figuring out what's upsetting me, but it does happen from time to time. This is the sort of thing I sometimes miss, because it doesn't seem reasonable.

I just talked with Henry about it a bit, and he said it makes us doubt the vaccine — which is probably true, but also not reasonable. Three people in their eighties, who were vaccinated more than six months ago, seem to have escaped severe illness, and that constitutes a huge victory for the vaccines.

It was a clear reminder that we aren't completely safe, even in our privileged little community, and we shouldn't be confused about that.

Saturday, October 30

Mantra for this week: You are allowed to enjoy yourself. There seem to be times when I need to hear that, though I don't know yet what situations call for it. I was in bed last night enjoying the wonderful sound of the strong wind, when suddenly I tightened up, as if I'm not allowed to enjoy that sound when there is a danger to people who don't have secure shelter. I had a vision of people in Puerto Rico enduring storms after their houses had already been destroyed. Where did that tightness come from? What voice do I carry in my head that tells me enjoyment isn't permitted? I don't identify it as coming from my parents; it reminds me more of a certain variety of social activist. I wonder if it started in my emotional confusion after my father died when I was 15. There's more to learn about this.

Covid vaccinations for younger children, 5-11, were just approved, and now we'll see how many parents take advantage of the opportunity. I know Jeremy and Michele want to get Evan vaccinated.

Other covid news from the NYT: Covid numbers in the US have been dropping pretty steadily for nearly 2 months now, though we still see 85K new cases a day. Alaska is in bad shape, with the number of people hospitalized increasing since July.

Vaccinations are rising sharply in NYC, as a vaccination mandate is going into effect. That seems to happen everywhere they are required — few

people are willing to lose their jobs over this. Nationwide, 85% of people 65 and older are fully vaccinated (though the meaning of “fully” here seems to be starting to wobble); 68% of people 12 and up are fully vaccinated. Most red states still lag, with a lot fewer people vaccinated. Northeastern states: 75-80% of all residents vaccinated; Idaho: 49%. So outbreaks will doubtless continue.

It's nearly Election Day, and I'll be doing get-out-the-vote texting for the PA Democratic Party today.

Saturday, November 20

Another long interval! Covid continues to rampage around. Austria is having a nation-wide lockdown and imposing a vaccine mandate. In the US, people in rural areas seem to think the pandemic is over, but it's setting new records in Michigan and climbing all over the northeast and midwest.

There's been good news about treatments — a new Pfizer pill, in particular, seems to be as effective as monoclonal antibodies. The challenge of both of those, though, is that they have to be obtained within a few days of the onset of symptoms, which requires alertness on the part of the sick person, ready access to testing, and a doctor who knows what to prescribe. A lot of doctors are still prescribing antibiotics, so that last point isn't trivial.

The NYT shows that the unvaccinated are six times more likely to be diagnosed with covid as the vaccinated, and twelve times more likely to die of it. I keep an eye on those numbers and they don't seem to change.

The political situation continues to be frightening. The Democrats are passing good laws and the Republicans are gerrymandering state after state. A jackass white kid with an assault rifle who went to a Black Lives Matter protest and killed people was just acquitted of wrongdoing, which is unbelievable. I don't see how he can claim self-defense when he had no business there in the first place, and now all kinds of white jackasses with an assault rifles will feel they've been given permission to shoot black people.



My old friend Jim has been receiving treatment for prostate cancer since before the pandemic started. If we hadn't had a pandemic, I'd like to believe I would have been going to some medical appointments with him to keep him company through this grueling process, but as it happened, I only saw him once during the past year or more. And now he has learned that the cancer has moved to the lining of his lungs and there's nothing more they can do for him, so he's looking into hospice care. He has to do nearly all of this by himself, being divorced, though I know his two sons are surely doing what they can — he's in New Brunswick, and they live within an hour or so of him, but they work, and I don't think they have any experience with this tough situation. Henry and I visited a few days ago, and we'll visit again, any time Jim would like to see us.