



from Holly and Matt

2021 Was Like a Hangover

December 2021

365 Blursdays. We appreciated the relative calm of the new administration but still had a bit of a headache left over from the last one. Not to mention the pandemic.

Blah blah blah

Matt continued his introvert contentment with contract work (still messing with the ACL2 theorem prover after 30 years!), playing pickleball, obsessing about groceries, reading mysteries and political articles, watching sports and other TV, and becoming a Sudoku master wannabe. There was also a near miss with online jury duty.

Holly was mostly content this year to quilt, watch Netflix, read, and do the odd bit of volunteer and political work (she helped organize a flash mob to protest a local ballot initiative). She also took a year-long online course in art journaling. However, in late spring, she started feeling like her brain was turning to mush. She volunteered to do some reviewing for an academic journal and then got an offer to teach an online research methods course at the University of Pennsylvania next spring. All synapses firing now!

We also pushed ahead on redoing our estate planning for old age (with Holly whining and resisting like a dog on the way to the vet).

We enjoy walks twice a day and eating the same old thing every day and washing a million dishes (well, the last two, maybe not so much). As things have

opened up here (wisely or otherwise), we have both enjoyed getting out a bit more and getting together with people outdoors. We each have some pandemic buddies we walk, Zoom, have meals outdoors, or chat with over the phone — sometimes laughing about how little there is to talk about. A high point was a dinner party with out-of-town friends. The hosts had each of us take TWO Covid tests in advance — a couple of days and immediately before the dinner. We felt very safe and so enjoyed the food and conversation. Even introverts have limits to their solitude.

We had a first-hand experience of supply chain issues when our plumber told us he couldn't get parts for our hot water heater, which was still under warranty, and we had to buy a new one. Ouch. Fortunately, the new one works a lot better. We have a great plumber but the contractor in 2017 was ... well...

The Snowpocalypse

If the political climate of Texas wasn't bad enough this year, in February we were mauled by the other kind of climate: two feet of snow and temperatures in the teens –



Snowed In

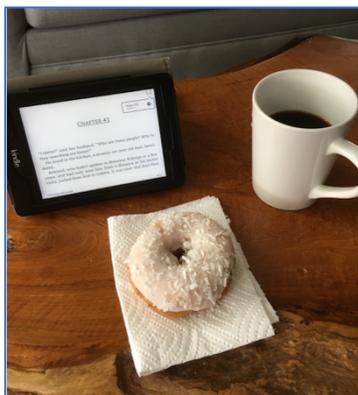
unheard of in this part of the country. Like most everyone else, we lost electricity — but *only* for 25 hours. Unlike many others, *we* still had water (though had to boil it for drinking), a gas stove for heat, and plenty of food, thanks to “Grocery Man” and “Holly Homemaker.” Once the ice melted, we were fine – no busted pipes. Our state legislature didn’t prioritize the issue that caused the massive failure of the electrical grid, instead ensuring that Critical Race Theory isn’t taught to first graders, so we can thank them for that if we find ourselves freezing in the dark again this winter. At least we’ve finally learned how to turn off the water to our house!

Anxious Travel

In June, like many people, we foolishly hoped that the pandemic was winding down. So, we made plans then for a trip to San Diego in August. We spent the next two months being anxious and conflicted as the Delta variant pushed cases and deaths up again. In the end, our non-



With Marion and Richard



The Perfect Vacation Activity

refundable airbnb helped us decide to plunge ahead, and we had a fine time. It was great to spend time with Holly’s friend Marion and her husband, Richard, to enjoy a cooler climate, go for

walks in a new place, eat outdoors, and — confession here — eat donuts. Lots of donuts. They were really good donuts!

Boring and Grateful

So, that’s us this year . . . cautious but inching towards normal, probably a theme for our lives in general. Writing all this down makes our lives sound boring, but they don’t feel that way. We are fortunate to be able to do much of what we want to do, even during the pandemic. And we are grateful for each other and the friends, family, doctors, therapists, and front-line workers that make life possible and pleasant. And donuts!



We hope that you are finding the blessings of this moment, and that 2022 brings even more.