

Letters to the Library



Describe yourself in a sentence or two, for example your age and occupation (or, if you do not have one, what you like to do). What is your household like?

I work as a Data Analyst. I recently just finished my graduate degree, and still live with my parents. My parents are a little on the older side, which has made everyone feel more than a bit anxious.

What is your day to day routine like now? What has changed? What has not changed?

I managed to secure a job just months before lockdown, and it was able to transition to a remote one easily. I'm thankful to have had the ability to keep working while my people my age can't. I'm also thankful that I live in a suburb, which has made it easy to go on daily jobs while avoiding contact with other people. That being said, while my day to day is fairly productive, the lack of offline social interactions with my friends is fairly draining.

What precautions have you taken against the virus? How have you prepared? Were there any difficulties (shortages, high prices etc.)?

I've taken the standard precautions - Mask on when I go outside and to only go out when I need food. Practicing good hygiene is clearly important as well. The shortages on Chicken has created a massive shift in my diet, but shifting to other foods such as beans is likely better for the world anyways.

What have been the biggest challenges for you during this time?

Sadly, the biggest challenge I've faced is convincing my older relatives that COVID-19 is a real problem and that they shouldn't go out to breakfast.

How have you stayed busy?

I had a backlog of media I wanted to catch up on, so quarantine has allowed me to catch up on many of those. I also spend a good deal of time writing, doing pixel art, and coding a few simple programs.

Have there been any positives to this situation?

Quarantine has allowed me to be more reflective as a whole. I've had time to consider the problems facing this world, the actions of the people/groups trying to fix them, and my place relative to those people. Coming to the conclusion that I want to be a part of the people working on solutions has made me excited for the future, rather than dreading it.

What local Wallingford places/businesses do you miss most?

Excluding the Library, I miss going to the local YMCA. Working out was a great way to manage my thoughts and stay healthy.

How have you stayed social while social distancing?

Messenger applications such as Discord have been great for staying in touch.

What is the first thing you are doing when things go back to normal?

Frankly, I'd like to just hang out with my friends somewhere. Location doesn't really matter compared to that.

How did you celebrate the Holidays? Did you see family in person, digitally, or not at all?

I had a few calls with family members during holidays such as Easter and Mother's day.

How will you be celebrating Wallingford's 350th Jubilee? If you were here for the 325th Jubilee, do you have any memories you would like to share?

N/A

What do you miss most about the Wallingford Public Library? What is the first thing you will be doing when you can come back into the building?

I miss going to the Writers Club. I've gotten fantastic advice from its members over the past year, and its fun to see so many passionate people in a single room. While we still have online meetings, I still can't wait to see them in person.

More Thoughts:

I think the running joke about 2020 being the worst year ever is a bit of a lie. For example, COVID-19 is a disease which started in 2019. It's in the name, guys. Stop blaming 2020 for 2019's muckup. Or, better idea, stop assigning cumulative tragic events to specific years and start looking at them as a string of events that are clearly connected. For example, stuff's on fire in Australia because climate change was decided to be a problem that would only be addressed when absolutely necessary instead of when it was just an inconvenient hurricane Katrina or two. Survey is still up on if the wildfires are an effective wakeup call. Multibillionaire Jeff Bezos did donate multibillions to climate change research, which is a little reassuring. What's less reassuring is the reliance on billionaires to solve global problems, but that's a topic for the future when Amazon buys half the world. Billionaires with too much power aside, what's actually been so bad this year? If you ignore the back to back days of Koala's going on the endangered species list and Donald Trump almost starting World War 3, the only really awful thing that happened this year, according to most, was staying inside. To me personally, that's like a flick on the wrist. I don't care if I have to stay inside. I already don't have friends and I hate morning traffic. Working from home is fantastic and I think a lot of well-off white people agree with me. After all, the working class, primarily people in minority groups, are a large percentage of the people dying from COVID-19 in the United States. So yeah, not my problem. I just get to hide behind my computer and hang out with my pets all day.

I also have to be home when my 19-year-old cat has a stroke and the life fades from its eyes. But, pros and cons, right? Sure, I can't handle being in the kitchen where my old kitty had a stroke, but it's fine. It's fine. I mean it's not fine, but maybe if I say it enough then I'll convince myself it is.

So yeah, losing my childhood pet is rough, but... he already was starting to not eat the past day. At least this way I didn't have to make the decision to put him down. It was given to me. I didn't have a choice, so it'd be pointless to feel guilty. Also, it wasn't COVID-19 related. Which inherently means that the death is less tragic than a death associated with COVID-19. That's just basic science. I have nothing to feel bad about. It's not like I work from my bed half the day now, or my afternoon jogs have been cut in half because I feel like I've lost all motivation. Those things have no association with the uncomfortable combination of grief and staying at home.

Y'know, I was talking with my therapist about all this. She said I should write a memoir about my cat's passing. Go through every year I had it instead of just focusing on the last week of its life. I think that's what this useless ramble was meant to be originally, but I'm having trouble doing anything right at the moment. Maybe that would help though. Sometimes, it's nicer to look at the warmth in the past instead of the troubles of the present.

Speaking of present, my phone blew up in the middle of writing this sappy monologue. Apparently, the state of Washington has reported sighting of the Giant Asian Hornet. Kinda. I think we're using the name "Murder Hornet" in the US instead because we need to ensure everyone is terrified before we let the news out. I'm going to stop rambling about my dead cat now, because this is clearly more important than dealing with grief. According to NPR, I'm hearing that the state of Washington found this invasive species very early and they have a clear plan on dealing with it in the upcoming months. It seems we have a good window to take care of this before they murder our honeybees. I'm cautiously optimistic. Experts make it sound like we can handle this. But even though that's what I heard on one end, some New York Time article is telling me the Hornet spreading across the country is only a matter of when, and not if. That's the one everyone is sharing on my social media too. Even though the other one sounded way less sensationalist and more rational, people decided to share the scary one. That kind of news is also the type causing people to kill our own native bees and hornets. Which is just... fantastic. It's always wonderful to see how proactive humans can be when they see problems.

I've never heard anything more American than solving a problem first, then understanding what the problem actually was afterwards.

The same fear-based reasoning is probably why people are protesting against lockdown. After all, COVID-19 is a lab made virus created by Bill Gates to take over the world with his hidden garage of UFOs. Oh right, we had a freaking UFO confirmed by the United States government at some point this year. That should be insane, but it's not good enough in 2020. Although, at this rate, I'm sure we'll get an alien invasion of half-virus half-giant wasp lovecraftian horrors by the end of the year. Even if they're benign, they'll probably be called "Super Mega Death Virus-Wasp."

It's funny, in the middle of editing this incoherent rant of first world problems, a honeybee flew into my room. I'm not sure how it got inside, but it felt wrong to hurt it when I had just finished writing a paragraph about my concerns for honeybees. I had to take off the screen of my window just so it could get back outside safely. It was a minor inconvenience, and the consequences may never be seen, but it still felt worth it. I feel like a lot of global problems could be solved if people endured those little inconveniences together. The more adamant people on quarantine probably have the same line of thinking. I wish everyone in my country was like that. Have you heard about New Zealand's tier 4 lockdown? The abridged summation is that it was incredibly inconvenient for everyone involved. But because of that protocol, and everyone working together under it, they managed to 'beat' COVID-19. I know geography, population density, and culture play a large part in that success too, but you gotta wonder how many problems can be solved if everyone just decided to take those inconveniences together. I hope that's a lesson people take from this hot garbage. Maybe if we do, 2021 will be a bit better. Or we could stop trying to put meaning in arbitrary things as a year and just try to make things better when we can.