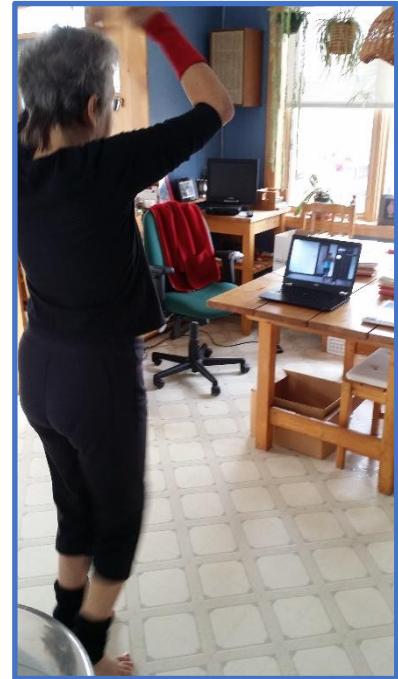


Hi Samantha,

April 10, 2020 (February 2020 letter)

Our home activities during the COVID-19 pandemic continue to be dominated by our curating and packing for our July move to BC. These have been augmented (for Fran) by Zumba and yoga classes in the kitchen. She regularly went to our local community centre for such classes about 4 or 5 times a week. Now they are done in our kitchen. It's great to see her jumping, stretching, or otherwise going through her paces on a regular basis.



She also discovered a local "Dance Latin" class on line, so yesterday our kitchen became a dance floor for samba lessons. I was a great idea because it took us back to our student days at UBC when we took dance lessons at a local club. I quickly (re)learned the most important lesson—to ignore the usual requirement that the man leads!

We also enjoy frequent walks with Linda, Mandy, and Kyle. Most days we will get a call or give them a call to meet up. We join the many other neighbours out on the road (keeping an appropriate distance), visiting along the way and checking that they are okay. It is lovely to see the many coloured rainbows in the windows. The templates have been distributed throughout the province as an option for public support. Like one of our neighbours commented "This social distancing is bringing people together!"

As usual, Fran has also been busy writing and sending cards and materials to the younger grandkids—and as you will know, sometimes to the older grandkids. Cedar, Evren, and Henry are also included on her list.



It is delightful to see her in full communication mode—with the cards, worksheets, notes, and other discoveries spread out on the kitchen table as she organizes the bi- or tri-weekly mailings. It's nice to receive the mail, emails, photos, and WhatsApp videos affirming that the kids appreciate the materials she sends. Since they have been at home Fran has been getting more specific information about the things they like, their particular competencies, and elements requiring work. As a result, Fran has switched into a more targeted mode to respond to this information.

I have been continuing with my regular Skype meeting with Charlie as part of his homeschooling trial this year. This semester we are producing videos on Climate Change as well as continuing his work on Critical Thinking. We have completed 4 videos of the 7 we planned. I appreciate the twice weekly conversations with him and have learned a great deal about the value and limits of both home schooling and online education. I'm glad that Lies and JP are there to help out since I miss so many of the cues and activities that give feedback about his reception and integration of the work.

As a retired researcher and fan of epidemiology, I have appreciated the struggle that health officials have faced when trying to get the message across that disrespecting the protocol suggestions puts other people at risk and that not showing the symptoms doesn't mean one is not contagious. The other challenge has been to figure out how to respond to the insistent demands for predictions about when the crisis will end, how many people will die, etc. As a bit of a model-builder myself, one of the most obvious answers is that they are only as good as the assumptions and the data available. In the early stages such as this, the data is sparse and imprecise, the experiences driving the assumptions are filled with different sets of initial conditions, and the development of valid and reliable indicators is just beginning. Any knowledgeable modeller would be extremely reluctant to offer suggestions at this stage.



However, the public pressure has been relentless in asking questions that are largely unanswerable at this stage—so we now have press conferences addressing these issues. I have appreciated the various ways in which the research-knowledgeable people have attempted to educate as they are providing information about the models used. I'm hoping that the public education about these matters will improve.

In sum, we are doing fine—and adjusting to the new conditions with a 2-year view of the process. This was the time it took for the 1918 flu pandemic to become just one more disease against which people developed immunity—and that was with no vaccine. We expect that we will have ups and downs in the contagion and deaths according to the following of protocols. As a result, we are continuing under the assumption that our move to BC will keep on track, although some of its elements will have to change (including our plan to visit family with Charlie as we make our way across the country). I'm hoping that I can delay getting the virus until such time as the health systems are better able to take care of those who are ill.

How have you been accommodating your life to deal with the crisis? I'm hoping that JP and family are keeping a scrapbook and/or journal of their experiences and responses. It will be valuable and (hopefully) enjoyable reading for their grandchildren and great-grandchildren when the "great COVID-19 pandemic of 2020" is mentioned in their history classes and around the family table.

P.S. Fran and I worked out a pandemic-style modification of our old dinner-dancing dates. We used to enjoy going to a place that included both as part of the evening activities. Since it is no longer possible under the current conditions, we have come up with a work-around. We hopped in the car with an audio book in the CD player (the current one is *Origin* by Dan Brown). We headed for a fast-food drive-through to pick up our dinner (last night it was Harveys), then find a nice place to park with a view of water and/or nature to eat our dinner. After dinner we came back home in time for a Skype call with our "Dance Latin" class that I mentioned above. It was a lovely way to reactivate some of our younger days! It also respects our previous agreement to only listen to the audio books when we are together in the car. In the past we have used this for listening to Lonesome Dove and *The Night Circus*.