

COVID 19 - A Personal Voyage by Steve McCormack - 29th

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Having retired from an at times arduous career 4 years ago, I had settled into a quiet life of jogging, cycling and learning Spanish. Time was spent keeping tabs on my aged mother. Of making sure the house is tidy, or as tidy as a male can do. Of ensuring that there is a nice meal for my long suffering wife, usually involving beef mince. A man has to know his limitations.

I then became a Heritage Volunteer at St Nick's, met a great gang of people and I got that buzz back in my life. Life was good.

Then early in 2020, there was news from China that they had a flu outbreak. "PAH. FLU". We get that every winter here. What's the big deal? I had my hobbies, family duties and interests and a nice quiet life involving rather too much daytime telly.

As the story developed and COVID 19 got closer it seemed to be getting more and more dangerous, particularly as I was at the lower end of the vulnerable age bracket.

Then my life started to fall apart.

Number 1 son got sent home to stay at my house and work from home. I opened up the front room dining table and he set up all his computers, turning the room into an office. Then, Number 2 son got sent home to work from home. His wife was stuck in lockdown in Spain with her mother, so an idea started to form in my good wife's mind. It seemed to her that to have Number 2 son self-isolating at his house on his own was not good and that he should relocate to our house. Her plan was taking shape, he turned up at the house with all his computers from work and I had to extend the dining table to accommodate them both. My posh bike, (Betsy), was relegated to the shed and I had to buy locks chains and a ground anchor to secure it. Poor Betsy.

From having a lovely quiet empty nest, Jen had her nest full again. Her boys were home. Oh joy!

The icing on this dreadful cake was when the wife was sent home from work, to work at home. There was no more space in the front room so, in came the patio table, spiders and all, and her work station was set up next to the television.

My home life was turned into a series of conference calls. *"Turn the TV off Number 1 son is in a conference call with his boss and customers". "Don't make a noise, Number 2 son is in conference with HR"*. Then, when she who must be obeyed had video ZOOM calls to her

works, I had to leave the room and go upstairs. My life had been reduced to that of living in a call centre.

Number 2 son was technical support at his mother's company so when there was trouble he was in and out. The phone was going ten to the dozen. The TV volume control had never been so busy.

Then there was the issue of supplies.

Tea bags ran out three times faster, there was never any milk and biscuits disappeared as fast as they were bought and stowed in the cupboard. My beer vanished from the fridge which led to that by now fabled outburst, *"The beer in the fridge is mine. If you want a beer, get your own. The fridge is not the biscuit barrel"*.

There was also the issue of politics; both sons have quite strongly held ideas from opposite ends of the political spectrum. So when the news was on during dinner there would be outburst of left and right indignation. I had to tell them to go to the shed if they wanted to discuss the matter further. Poor Betsy.

Hopefully, in the next couple of weeks, things will return to the new normal. Everyone back to work and I can finally welcome Betsy back into the house.

Considering all the fear, misery and sadness that others all around the world have suffered, maybe my experience has not been too bad. Stay safe everyone.

Steve McCormack