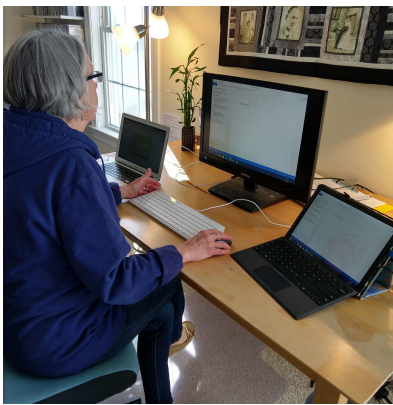


Phew, what a year huh? At least It'll all be over soon and the outlook for next year is far more optimistic. It's looking like the end is in sight for the great pandemic at last. On January 20th to be exact, the end of the Trump-16 virus. I'm sure he will fade into a quiet relaxed retirement and we'll never here from him again. Hah! At least we will get a well earned respite from all the winning. I was growing tired of all the whining, I mean winning.

I think I'm the least affected person by the whole virus thing. I've always lived in my single person bubble and I tootle along just fine. All this interacting with other people thing is just annoying. I'm as deaf as a post so I can't understand them anyway. I never was a touchy-feely person so the whole not hugging and touching other people works just fine for me (apart from grandkids of course). Not going to bars, restaurants, music shows has saved me a fortune. Admittedly at the expense of some quality of life, but I'm already living the American dream, sitting at home in my underwear, watching the soaps, drinking Bud, munching Doritos and living off Christine's enormous wages. Covid? What's that all about then?



Christine, like lots of others has been working from home for most of the year, a big change from driving all over the New Hampshire. She is now Queen of Zoom, a right little online guru. It was just a few years ago she gave us the famous “the *#&@!~% printer isn't working again!!!”, “Have you turned it on?”, “#&@!~%!!!!”. Or the “What do you mean I have to double click! What idiot designed a stupid system that needs two clicks!”. Now she's sitting in the spare bedroom, errr I mean 'home office' surrounded by a dozens of high tech gizmos and rapping on in technical terms that I can't understand. What a weird turn of events. There is no returning to the old normal.

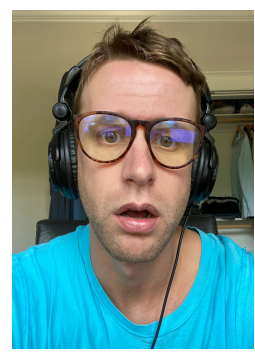
The kids are all doing fine. Ellie plopped out another baby in September, a boy for a change. James came three weeks early on 9/11 and is just as cute as his sisters (Lyanna 4, Audrey 2). I told them they should have called him Osama in honor of the date but wisely they ignored me. He definitely looks more like a James than an Osama. Jamesy to his sisters or I prefer Jimbo which is much more 'merican and completely suits him. I decided that I wasn't going to be besotted by this one. It's not going to plan at the moment.



We saw a lot of the grandkids this year. Ellie shipped the family up for several months during the dark times in Covid-stricken NYC. It was cosy here with four adults and three kids and an imbecilic cat but we all survived remarkably well. With three working adults we had three home offices setup around the house. Big Papi Day Care worked overtime for a while. I decided to change the name of the business to Big Papi Day Care Total Landscaping to gain a marketing edge. I was even thinking of hiring Rudy Giuliani as the corporate lawyer but then I thought about it and decided that I'm not a complete idiot.

The whole Covid mess turned out pretty well for us. Having the grandkids around for long periods meant getting to know them as real people not just as cute kids. It was all non stop controlled chaos and lots of noise but great fun. I forgot how happy young kids are most of the time. Lots of singing, smiling and laughing brightens up the place and almost makes you overlook the damn childproof locks on all the cupboards, aaaarh!

When the kids were here several household items went missing, baby bottle, sippy cups, spoons etc. We searched everywhere with no luck. We (Christine) went through the garbage to see if they somehow got thrown away. Nothing. Later we noticed that Audrey liked playing near the diaper pail. Hmmm.... I wonder.... Nope, there is nothing so important that entails searching through a bin of used diapers. Chalk it up to a mystery and jump on Amazon two day delivery.



It's great when they all arrive and it's great when they all leave too. There is no peace and quiet like the few days after the kids leave. Finding kid dropping around the house for weeks always brings a smile though. Christine even got sentimental about the smudge marks on the bottom foot of all the windows. And just as we get use to the tidiness and boredom they'll be back for another visit.



Working from home has had strange hirsute repercussions in the family. I decided to grow a ponytail (because I never got to buy a Porsche during my mid-life crisis). It goes well with my bandana mask and Red Sox cap. An eclectic style that most people couldn't pull off but I just rock it. Or as Christine says, I look bizarre. We social media influencers are often seen as avant garde but you'll all try to look like me one day. I know, a scary thought. Gregory even out-bizzarred me. He decided to only shave one half of his face, the right half. A mountain-man bushy left side and a pristine teenage looking left side. Damn, I wish I'd have thought of that.

Have a great Christmas but remember to refrain from all that unnecessary hugging and kissing, you don't know where these people have been. Here's looking forward to a much better 2021.

