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[COVID Diary submitted by Charleston/Coles County, IL resident and musician, Elaine Fine]

APRIL 3, 2020 through NOVEMBER 22, 2020

April 3, 2020

By the academic year of 2019, musical life in Central Illinois had finally lost the shackles of the Great Recession, and concert attendance was up, participation in music ensembles was up, and the number of young people studying stringed instruments was up. In Charleston we were at a kind of “golden” spot where the performing organizations connected with Eastern were increasing in quality. The concert series at Doudna, which included excellent out-of-town musicians and excellent faculty musicians (finally, we have a faculty filled with people who really can play—and sing), was impressive.

Between playing with the Champaign-Urbana Symphony, the Eastern Symphony, and the new Eastern Camarata, my schedule of orchestral playing in March and April was packed. I play in a Renaissance and Medieval ensemble, the Charleston Consort, that was planning on playing a concert of Senfl in June, and play in a string quartet, the Wild Indigo Quartet, that was planning a concert of Haydn Quartets in April. It was going to be our first concert together.

My viola and piano duo with John David Moore had a concert of Irish music scheduled on St. Patrick’s day, and another concert on May 29th of music by Smyth, Bosmans, and Barns as part of Women’s History and Awareness Month.

On Friday afternoon, March 13th I played with a student at her grandfather’s funeral. We were already wary that the virus might be lurking, but since no cases had been reported in the county, people were still hugging one another. I kept my distance, but observed a rather loud man in his 60s proclaiming, as he hugged the widow, “Everyone’s going to get it anyway.”

Later that evening the first case of Covid-19 was reported at Sarah Bush Lincoln Health Center. The infected person, who lived in Cumberland County, was told to stay isolated at home. The next morning John David Moore and I thought it would be best to postpone our March 17th concert.

By the middle of the next week all concerts had been cancelled. Spring break was extended for an extra week, and then university students were told not to return to campus. Our governor closed all the public schools. Restaurants were only open for take out. Banks did all their business through drive-up windows.

I started teaching all my lessons via FaceTime on March 15th. My students, who didn’t have any activities outside of schoolwork that they were doing at home had time to practice. The struggles I have with remote teaching (having to evaluate sound through computer microphones, having the signal cut out from time to time, not being able to play with my students, having to rely on them to write fingerings and bowings in their music) are kind of balanced by the fact that they are all spending serious time with their instruments, and are making improvement.

It is hard to plan for the future musically. Our Summer Strings orchestra, which was going to begin the last week in May, will not be happening this year. People of all ages from all over the area (some drive more than an hour to Charleston) look forward to Summer Strings as a way to play music together. Terry Coulton and I always enjoy having the chance for our students to play together with other people for fun, without the pressures of performing in solo recitals. This is the first time in more than ten years that Summer Strings will not be happening.

There were also concerts scheduled around the world of pieces I have written. One was a premiere in Chicago of “Nuit de Vielle” played by the people I wrote it for. I was also supposed to be given an award for things I have done in the community musically by the Coles County Arts Council. Everything was cancelled.

My Downstate Strings Quartet has weddings scheduled for July, September, and October. We don’t know if any of these will be possible.

I have been spending my time doing what I normally do, but with some modifications. I don’t have the heart to practice viola, so I have been practicing violin. I have been fairly disciplined in my practice, working on solo

Bach, Rode Etudes, and the first violin parts of the Beethoven Opus 18 Quartets. I have written one piece for string quartet, and, at the request of a friend in Italy, made an arrangement of the Finale of Tchaikovsky's Sixth Symphony for string sextet. I made arrangements for solo viola of "Amazing Grace" and "Scarborough Fair," for the March 13th funeral, and I made those, along with the string quartet piece and Tchaikovsky arrangement, available in the IMSLP. Michael and I continue to read together every day. We see our children and grandchildren via FaceTime. We take a two or three mile walk every day. Michael talks to his mother on the phone every day, does the crosswords, and makes daily posts on his Orange Crate Art blog. We watch movies together, and try to only watch a little of the news on television. We both read the *New York Times* and spend more time online than we normally would. Many members of our family live in areas that are densely populated, and, in spite of the fact that they are diligent about remaining safe, we still worry.

The actions of our federal government are shameful. We feel helpless to have the fate of so many in the hands of people who stretch the meaning of incompetence and personal greed to new lengths. And they seem to do it daily.

The Illinois map of Covid-19 activity is filling up quickly, but Coles County is still free of the virus. It is probably because (for the most part) people have been keeping their distance when outside, and staying home as much as possible. Michael and I have the leisure to do so since we are both retired and our expenses are low. It is strange to observe just how little money we spend these days. We have gone to the grocery store once since March 13th, and spent \$250.00 or so on groceries. We have a full tank of gas in our car, and will need to get some gas to fill our mower soon. We get take-out once a week from the Thai restaurant, and are planning to get take-out from El Rancherito on Sunday. We hope that we can help keep these businesses solvent. We give them big tips.

I made some face masks for Michael and me to wear next time we go to the store, which might happen in the coming week, and I made one for our son Ben in Boston, which I put in the mail today.

So I'm up to speed for the day. I started working on the Bach Chaconne this morning, so I think I'll go back to it this afternoon.

April 4, 2020

It's odd the way you look at objects in a time of crisis. Last night I saw a video about how to make a very simple face mask out of a normal bandana and two rubber bands. I showed Ben how to do it (Michael made a video) so that if he wanted to go out this weekend, before the mask I sent to him yesterday arrived, he could.

Today I noticed that one of my favorite linen shirts had sprouted holes. I immediately thought about using it as mask material, but the weave of linen is too loose to be effective. I threw it away.

Yesterday the president made an announcement about the CDC recommendations for everyone wearing masks, whether they feel sick or not. He said that he wasn't going to wear one. I will wear mine proudly in defiance of him.

Practicing the Bach C major solo sonata this morning was very rewarding. So often, in times of playing concerts, practicing is about learning a specific set of pieces in order to play it, at a minimum, correctly and at a maximum beautifully. Sometimes it means staying in shape between concerts and rehearsals so that when the onslaught of work comes, you don't injure yourself.

But practicing in a time where there are no concerts in the foreseeable future is different. Practicing becomes more of a means to a personal end. A chance to have some satisfaction and personal/musical happiness. A chance to accomplish something—to finally actually practice passages that have bothered me for years. A chance to feel the pleasure of being able to play Bach, and have it sound good—as if all the years I have spent practicing have brought me to this time and this moment.

I heard a comedian on the radio today who said that really dark comedy about the Coronavirus is healing for a lot of people, because it makes them laugh, and thus gives them some "dopamine squirts." Watching someone laugh is not the same as laughing yourself. Watching or listening to someone play, no matter how beautiful it is, does

not give me the same pleasure as playing myself. I am so thankful to Bach for giving us musicians this way to make daily affirmations about how valuable for our sanity his music is.

April 5, 2020

Today, after spending around two years away, I re-joined Facebook. Everything there was still intact, and I was able to get in instant touch with my friends from long ago and far away, and could see how they are doing in their various places of isolation. I left Facebook so that I could engage more in real life relationships—actual experiences with people, and now that such relationships are not possible I'm very grateful that Facebook is there. Wherever there is.

I practiced the last two movements of Beethoven Opus 59/1 today, and will be ready to play it with a recording (my own personal Beethoven year project) by the end of the week. It is hard and high, and some parts go really fast.

Michael and I went to get gas for our mowers today, and there were more cars on the streets in Charleston than you would probably see in New York, Chicago, Boston, or Los Angeles. I learned from a Facebook friend that 53% of people in Charleston are staying home. I'm not sure where that number comes from, or how true it is. Tonight, with mask and gloves, Michael is going to pick up take-out food from El Rancherito. Our kids, who grew up eating there, are very excited. We will send pictures that they can see in their homes in Los Angeles and Boston.

April 6, 2020

I like to imagine a future where we can play music together again, but I fear that the changes that will happen in the musical world after the virus has been eradicated will be lasting. It took more than ten years for musical life in my part of the country to recover from the audience loss that happened as a result of the recession. How can we be sure that people who like to go to concerts will have the money to support performing organizations, or even buy tickets, once we are able to play concerts again?

The online professional musical possibilities for musicians are expanding, I guess. More and more people are figuring out how to teach through various video platforms. Some people boast of their great success. What if this becomes the new normal after the virus is gone? What will happen to the profound kinds of musical interactions that happen between students and teachers when they can play together and make one another's instruments vibrate because of resonance. Not being able to really hear what is coming out of a student's instrument because of the lack of high-quality reception means that I am not able to accurately tell if a solution I suggest is really working. Do other people experience this as a frustration, or am I just a fish out of water, a relic of an older kind of musical life.

And now is as good a time as any for a passage from Fernando Pessoa:

I'm like a playing card belonging to an old and unrecognizable suit--the sole survivor of a lost deck. I have no meaning, I don't know my worth, there's nothing I can compare myself with to discover what I am, and to make such a discovery would be of no use to anyone. And so, describing myself in image after image--not without truth, but with lies mixed in--I end up more in the images than in me, stating myself until I no longer exist, writing with my soul for ink, useful for nothing except writing. But the reaction ceases, and again I resign myself. I go back to whom I am, even if it's nothing. And a hint of tears that weren't cried makes my stiff eyes burn; a hint of anguish that wasn't felt gets caught in my dry throat. But I don't even know what I would have cried over, if I'd cried, nor why it is that I didn't cry over it. The fiction follows me, like my shadow. And what I want is to sleep.

[Section 193 of "A Factless Autobiography" from The Book of Disquiet translated by Richard Zenith]

April 8, 2020

Why is this first night of Passover different from all other first nights of Passover?

Because all over the world people will be celebrating in their own private spaces, unable to share the meal and the ritual with family and friends. Because our connections in isolation are made possible through the magic of the internet and cell phones (who could have imagined this a few decades ago?), we can reach out to one another (around the world!) and communicate asynchronously or in real time. We can all share the pain of the plagues, both physical and psychological, that are literally (and I mean literally) infecting different parts of our world at different times, and with varying degrees of acuity as they move from place to place.

Some people will be participating in seders through computer apps like Zoom. We prefer to celebrate in our own way at home. I'll share some additional thoughts here for my celebration of Passover this year.
The virus itself would be enough to bear. Dianu.

Knowing about the federal officials (in various places) who tried to cover it up would be enough to bear. Dianu.

Hearing, seeing, and reading about the federal official who called the virus a hoax would be enough to bear.
Dianu.

Seeing the people who believe that federal official, and hearing they say that it is just a flu, and that everyone is going to get it anyway would be enough to bear. Dianu.

The Florida governor who ignored advice about closing beaches during spring break would be enough to bear.
Dianu.

The university students who spent spring break in Florida passing the virus to one another, and then bringing it back to their communities would be enough to bear. Dianu.

The federal official who is making the simple act of getting personal protective equipment to health care workers nearly impossible would be enough to bear. Dianu.

The supreme court voting against a state governor who wanted to postpone an election for reasons of public health in a pandemic would be enough to bear. Dianu.

The federal official who tells people that he is not going to wear a protective mask, thereby giving the message that his supporters don't need to wear one either would be enough to bear. Dianu.

The people who believe that the virus is God's punishment for holding gay pride parades would be enough to bear.
Dianu.

The people who continue to hold religious services during a time when social distancing is the only way to prevent the spread of the virus would be enough to bear. Dianu.

The obscene number of people who are dying every day from this virus would be enough to bear. Dianu.

The obscene number of health care providers who die from this virus would be enough to bear. Dianu.

The obscene number of people who are dying because the polluted air in the communities they live in has compromised their lungs would be enough to bear. Dianu.

The tragic number of people who cannot grieve properly after losing people they love because of the virus would be enough to bear. Dianu.

The obscene number of people exposed to the virus who do not have health insurance, and, by the actions of a certain federal official, can't enroll in the Affordable Care Act would be enough to bear. Dianu.

The number of victims of domestic abuse who are unable to leave their homes because of the virus would be enough to bear. Dianu.

The number of elected officials who refuse to put the health and safety of the people they represent over their own political ambitions and desire for more wealth and more power would be enough to bear. Dianu.

The economic and psychological toll that this (at this point endless) period of fear is taking, and the extraordinary burden of (eventually) recovering from it would be enough to bear. Dianu.

Once this pandemic has run its first course, and once we have a vaccine to prevent it from ever returning, will the experience of it change the way we live our lives and run our government? Will the professions of public service ever progress (at least in the American Republican party) towards something akin to what the words are supposed to stand for?

When we say, "Next year in Jerusalem," I hope that we, in America, will be looking forward to a politically reorganized country involved in the complicated process of healing.

April 9, 2020

I remember watching "Romper Room" as a kid on Saturday mornings, and I remember wondering if Miss Jean would ever look through her magic mirror and say my name. There were not enough people named Elaine around to make saying my name worthwhile, I guess. She never said it. Ever. And it was through that experience that I learned that the television screen only goes one way.

If I talked, Miss Jean wouldn't hear me.

Groups of kids (like Cub Scouts and Brownies) would go to be part of an audience for Boomtown (which I watched) or Bozo (which I also watched, not knowing that the guy who played Bozo was the father of one of my eventual high school classmates). I used to look at the audience and see if there were kids I knew in it.

Who knew that a mere fifty years into the future those screens could go both ways, and that you could carry them with you? Who could have imagined that everyone throughout the whole world would have a period where they would have the majority of their daily interactions through a screen because of a virus that came from a bat? That was the stuff of "Twilight Zone," "The Outer Limits," or maybe "Star Trek."

I have a history of being an anti-technologist. The first personal computers for home use came out in the early 1980s. I used a Displaywriter for work, so I did not have the fascination that Michael did for having one for his own use. We bought a computer for him, and a baroque flute for me. I needed to grow musically more than I needed to grow technologically. And growing musically for me meant going back to basics.

We had to return the computer because something about it didn't work, so we ended up with an electronic typewriter that had a pretty nifty memory feature, where you could store a few lines of text. Michael used that until we got an Apple //c.

I have still been on my quest to grow musically, and that growth is a slow process. I spend my practice time trying to get from one note to the next in a satisfying and meaningful way. I spend my teaching time asking my students to do the same. When they listen to what I tell them to do and do it, they sound pretty good. I think.

I say, "I think," because I can only hear them through the microphone on their phone, tablet, or computer, a signal (that is often too weak) that is transmitted up to a satellite, and delivered to me through the speakers of my iPad. But all I can really give them is feedback about their intonation and their rhythm. I can see (and hear) if their bows slide on the string, and can ask them to concentrate. I can help the beginners learn to read music, and I can advise more advanced students about playing the correct notes.

Most of all, particularly with beginners, the parental involvement in a student's practice has increased a good deal.

And that's a good thing.

I have thought, from time to time, that in this period of isolation I might consider making a musical video, playing something on violin or viola, or learning to do the split screen thing, and doing both. But after doing all this "through the two-way mirror" teaching, I find myself to be more self critical than ever. And I fear that the main thing that would project across the screen would be that self criticism. Sometimes, when I use the iPad to record a passage I'm working on, I see how my eyes look so critically at my bow. When I do something right, it sounds pretty good, but watching and listening it is not a musical experience. It is a working experience. I don't find joy in sharing the dirty laundry of my working experiences with anyone, particularly people I don't know.

Playing actual concerts for and with actual people is different. It is a chance to get out of myself, and trust that all my preparation will come together in the service of making music with people and for people, who are equally engaged in what is happening in the music during the very moments that it is being played. I am unable to imagine the psychic reactions of a hypothetical audience for an online concert (though I can, strangely, imagine a person reading what I write here, or playing a piece I have written).

I applaud people like Augustin Hadelich who can make meaningful music on the videos they share in isolation. Actually, there are no "people like Augustin Hadelich." He is unique. I imagine that when he practices he uses great powers of scrutiny, and when it comes to playing for people through his videos with his in-house pianist (himself), he gives both parts of himself the luxury of playing in a way that is totally musically driven. Under normal circumstances he is used to maintaining the divide between practicing and playing, because he plays so many concerts. Maybe that is why he is able play so beautifully for the camera even without an audience of breathing and listening humans in the room. Or maybe it is because he is simply a giant: the kind of complete musician we should all aspire to be.

April 10, 2020

I watched and listened to a broadcast of the Bach St. John Passion from Leipzig. One singer, one percussionist, and one harpsichordist who also played organ. They were performing a good distance from one another. And then there was a chorus of five or six singers also spaced at least six feet apart. The chorales were assembled videos of singers from different choirs, who made videos of themselves from home.

It looks like we won't need to go to the grocery store for another day or two, so we are staying home, with a forty-five minute walk. The Spring is really beautiful. The pink and white flowering trees are doing their pink and white flowering. The grass is green, and, aside from one hot day, things are still pretty cool. I made meatloaf for dinner, and that's what we're going to have tomorrow too. We are down to about six bottles of wine.

Bernie Sanders suspended his campaign on Thursday, and now he is trying to figure out how best to keep his "our revolution" platform going, even though he is not the candidate. I'm hoping it will work.

I'm spending too much time checking Facebook, Twitter, and Gmail, and that is starting to feed my isolation. Lots of superficial contact is not equal to a little bit of substantial contact.

April 12, 2020

Michael and I watched a live-streamed violin and piano concert played by Igor Kanlin and Rochelle Sennet on the iPad today. It was the same program that we heard played in person about six weeks ago. The playing was wonderful—perhaps even better than the concert we heard before, but the audio quality of the live stream was not great. It didn't do the playing justice at all.

I miss hearing music played in real space. The only music I hear in real time and real space is played by me.

I imagine that with all this violin practice and all this technique-building stuff I'm doing, I am getting to be a better violinist. But I'm no Igor.

We have seven cases of Covid 19 in Coles County now. I'm feeling lousy, but I don't think what I have is Covid. But I haven't been exposed to any germs that live outside of the house, so it isn't another virus. Perhaps it is just stress-induced vertigo combined with some aches and pains from practicing and not sleeping well.

I had a long phone conversation with a good friend today. I think using the phone to talk to people is a good thing.

April 15, 2020

Yesterday, after a FaceTime lesson, my student's mother told me that the mother of another of my students, whom she knew from a student recital back in February, was one of the first two people diagnosed with Covid19 in the county. She is apparently recovering well, but I haven't heard from her personally (I sent a text message yesterday).

I had played with my student (her daughter) at a family funeral on March 13 (and wrote about it in my first entry). I'm not quite sure how the math works, but, with the number of people (many from out of town) who came to the funeral, it is possible that she caught the virus there. Or, since she had what appeared to be a cold, she might have had the beginnings of her disease then and there.

I kept my distance from her, but, since I was playing with Mia, was unable to keep distance from her. I certainly hope that the rest of the family is OK.

I have been dealing with dizziness (vertigo) for about a week now. I don't know if it is my reaction to having the virus, but I think that it might be unrelated. Michael is not sick, and I feel tired and dizzy, but basically well.
April 17, 2020

I have been spending the last few days hard at work on a "Birthday Piece" for viola d'amore and piano. I have been doing this every year for the last twelve years, and now that I have reached a nice round number, both in number of pieces and in age (I'll be 61), I'm finishing the set. Today I'm going to try to make a video recording of it with viola d'amore and computer-generated piano.

I gave myself a haircut today (I did the front, but Michael did the back) so I look a little less of a mess, so now all I have to do is play well on an instrument that I haven't actually practiced on in a long time. I use it as a viol for collegium, but don't really have to use its chromatic powers for that.

April 21, 2020

It is a beautiful day in Charleston, and I will spend some of it outside mowing. The rest I will probably be spending inside practicing or reading. Michael and I are reading *Jane Eyre*, which is a real delight. No news from my student's mother, but one of the people who had the two first Covid-19 cases has recovered. I take that to be her. I'm afraid that I won't be seeing my student again though, since her grandfather was the engine behind her violin playing, and he is no longer alive.

Maybe she will return. These are not the best of circumstances, though.

I finished my "Birthday Piece," and find it to be dark and gloomy. I tried making a recording with viola d'amore and computer-generated piano, but it just didn't sound right. I settled for a computer-generated one. But what can I expect. Darkness and gloom hover even though the day may be beautiful. Nature has a way of continuing to do her thing. I suppose that the virus is part of nature as well.

I'm glad that at least some of the people in the county are being sensible and not getting antsy about this "opening the state" nonsense. I don't think I will be going anywhere without a mask anytime in the future. Not until there is a vaccine, and everyone is vaccinated.

April 22, 2020

Today was crazy town on the television. Trump held court during the dinner hours for what seemed like an eternity (it was actually around two hours—his usual time for spewing propaganda and lies). It is just one crazy claim followed by another. Saying something, and then saying the opposite. Reading prepared statements (statements prepared for him) and then ad-libbing whatever he feels like saying. He moved the person in charge of developing a vaccine elsewhere because that person said something negative about the “wonder drug” that Trump had been touting (in reality it has been proven ineffective, and has killed people who used it). And then the head of the Centers for Disease Control warned that there would be a second wave of the virus coming concurrently with the flu. Trump made him say something different for this television audience.

April 25, 2020

Trump craziness: the other day he started “ad-libbing” about treating Covid with bleach, suggesting that if it could be used inside the body to kill the virus that could be a good thing. Yes. There were people who drank bleach after he said that on television. What a sorry lot the American people are. Maybe it is just a flaw of human nature to follow a leader—even a completely crazy one.

Here, inside the house, with only the windows of the various screens to show us the outside world, we are bearing up. I have been writing violin studies—miniatures that use limited sets of notes. There will be twelve in all. I’m working on numbers four and five now. I also got a commission to write a piece for euphonium and woodwind quintet. So I have lots of things to do.

We had our first Covid-19 death on the county yesterday. I feel that we as a community all feel extremely sad, even though nobody knows who this person is or what part of the county s/he is from. I really feel for the hospital workers who are working so hard to keep this virus contained.

May 1, 2020

It is a beautiful (though cold) May Day, and yesterday I had a wonderful birthday in physical isolation from most people. Michael and I went to County Market for one of our twice-monthly shopping trips. It was early in the morning (6:30 or so) during the senior hour. We saw a few people we knew, and knew well, because this is a small town: my best friend Marjorie Hanft was there, my former “boss” at WEIU-FM, Joe Heumann was there, and my good friend and quartet-mate Judy Barford was there. It is awkward encountering good friends while wearing masks. Kind of like Halloween in the 1960s where every costume had a mask.

The virus count in our county today is 22, and has been that way for five days, but as people recover, there are still new cases. And cases in Champaign county are going up. People are protesting the state still being “locked down,” and they are getting tired of being in isolation and wearing masks. Those people are acting like children.

I have been very productive. All the concerts that have been cancelled because of the virus would have been finished, and aside from not preparing for Summer Strings, which would begin in three weeks, and playing Haydn quartets, things are kind of the way they would be for me normally. Whatever “normal” is.

May 8, 2020

Dale Righter wants to open up businesses in our area far sooner than I believe they should be opened. There have not been any new infections reported in Coles County for a week, so people are itching to open businesses that are not termed essential. I understand that small businesses are having a really difficult time right now, since they aren’t able to sell anything, but I also wonder how many non-essential things people want to spend their money on right now.

We really never buy anything aside from things that you can get at “essential” stores anyway. At least stores in town. There was that dress we bought for Talia at a boutique in Mattoon last year, but that’s about it.

I worry, of course, that if Charleston were to open up all of its stores, bars, and restaurants, people would come here from Champaign who might not be as disciplined with social distancing as people in this area. I also fear for the reckless religious people who might feel like they are divinely protected. And if social gatherings are

permitted here, but not in Chicago, you can bet that people in Chicago who are eager to sell drugs, will make the trip down to do so.

Tomorrow at 4:00 we are having a drive-by birthday for Herb Hanft's 99th birthday.

May 11, 2020

What I have lost this March, April, May, and into the summer:

The opportunity to perform recital pieces I spent most of January and February of 2020 rehearsing.
The opportunity to play orchestral pieces that I had been looking forward to rehearsing all season.
The income from those concerts.
The chance to rehearse and perform the music I arranged for Summer Strings 2020.
Having the experience of working with my Summer Strings colleagues.
Having the chance to prepare and perform a Haydn Quartet program.
Having the chance to learn more Haydn with my good friends.
My weekly consort rehearsals.
Having the chance to perform a Senfl program with my consort.
Getting an award from a local arts organization.
Hearing premieres of pieces I have written.
Teaching my adult recorder group.
Being able to play together with my students.

Unexpected ways I have grown musically these past few months

I have become comfortable with teaching lessons through videochat.
My students are practicing and improving.
I have practiced violin (rather than viola) diligently.
I have learned so much from watching Augustin Hadelich's videos. I apply what I have learned from him every time I practice.
This has made me a better teacher.
And a better violinist.
I have written a good amount of music, and continue to write every day.
I have made new friends with musicians all over the world through Facebook. I find the Facebook experience much improved these days. It has become more like interactions in real life.
And I found some of those new friends through video recordings they made of pieces I have written.
I observe an almost daily climb of technical improvement in the multi-track and multi-image video recordings I see online.
Recording in such a way has suddenly elevated (and evolved) itself to a new art form. And I believe that art form is here to stay. Musicians who produce these videos are learning valuable skills.
Musicians who engage in making these videos practice carefully with a metronome. And they find that practicing with a metronome does not have to result in music making that is stiff and regular.
It can be beautiful while remaining in rhythm.
And people making these videos have the opportunity to work with other isolated musicians towards a common goal.
When we play with a recording of another person, we are still engaging. People who may have had trouble following other musicians in the past, are now learning to be better listeners.
I know how important music is.
I know that writing music for people to play is important, and that people like music I write.
I know that through music we will continue to make the world a better place.
I sense a collective "we" among musicians.
I hope that never goes away once we are able to play together again.

May 13, 2020

Last night I watched a livestream of a county board meeting where people were voicing their hatred of the Governor's executive order to keep non-essential stores closed. This week we have had more and more people testing positive for Covid-19. 16 one day and 17 the next. Today there were only four more cases. Since we now

have drive-up testing at Sarah Bush, there are more people being tested, and therefore more positive people being found. We are now in the 60s, and people want to believe that they have been home long enough, and that things should get back to normal. There is no normal in the future. There will be a new normal, which will involve all sorts of changes. I don't know if the people who do the most complaining are the kind of people who will be willing to make the necessary changes.

There are people around here who don't want to wear masks. They believe in the fairy tales that Trump is telling them—that it is time to “open up” the country. They want to go to church. They want to go to bars and restaurants. They want to go to work.

The going to work part, I understand. The essential businesses that are open are owned by big corporations: Walmart, Walgreens, CVS, County Market, Aldi, Gas stations, fast food restaurants. There are a few locally owned restaurants that are open (Siam Thai, El Rancherito, and Smokey's). I am fortunate that I can teach online, and that I have a commissioned piece to write. Also, we live very frugally compared to some people: we have one car, which we drive rarely these days. Our house, which is as old as I am, is paid for. We both have enough clothes. We do buy books.

May 20, 2020

Our Downstate Strings quartet cancelled a wedding we had scheduled to play in July. The family is going forward with the wedding, and having a smaller number of guests, but we decided that it is safer for all of us not to play.

Our next scheduled wedding is in September. We will see what happens then. I'm not optimistic. The CU Symphony is not going to have concerts in the Fall, and I imagine that, though EIU believes it can resume having concerts in the Fall, it will have to change that. The people who go to Eastern Symphony concerts and Richard's Camerata concerts are not the vigilante types who go to the grocery store without masks and complain that they have rights to shop and get haircuts, while not thinking seriously about safety.

Meanwhile, I'm working on a set of violin etudes for beginning violinists. Looking to the future.

May 24, 2020

Now I'm thinking of writing music designated to be performed by way of assembled remote recording on video. Robin Kearton and I have a project for kid violinist and orchestra that we are calling “My Musical Menagerie.”

Today we had 19 new cases in Coles County.

May 31, 2020

As a result of the senseless and baseless murder by a police officer of George Floyd in Minneapolis last week, there are protests all over the country. Including in Charleston. Michael and I went to one here this afternoon.

June 1, 2020

I imagine that the Covid-19 cases will be escalating everywhere as a result of these protests. We can wear masks to protect ourselves from the Covid virus, but nothing except taking responsibility for our actions will do anything to stop the widespread racism that has been brewing for far too long. Hundreds of years, actually. And in these parts there are too many people who simply do not consider people other than white people to be human beings. I imagine it is a lack of regard for non-Christians and for people with brown skin as well, but the real hatred and fear that people have around here seems to be directed towards black people.

Eastern's student community has become far more racially diverse over the past several years. Part of it is the active recruitment of seniors from mainly black high schools to become students at EIU. In some cases the students who come here are unprepared for college work, and in many cases there is not a system in place to give students the kind of academic support they might need once they arrive on campus. I do notice that though there

are many students of color on campus, it is not the “melting pot” one would hope it could be. Black students tend to hang out with black students, and white students tend to hang out with white students.

I feel much more “at home” in our town now that it isn’t almost exclusively white. It reminds me of the “real world” where I grew up and came of age. But I know that there are so many other people who don’t feel that way. I am feeling emotionally paralyzed.

I don’t understand what I see through the television at night. I understand the anger and the need to express it. I’m angry as well, but I don’t have the right or the history to be angry the way that people in the black communities everywhere have the right to be angry. I’m just left with my privilege, knowing that I can walk down the street (wearing a mask), and nobody is going to decide that I don’t belong in a particularly neighborhood, or that I must be committing some kind of crime.

But I don’t understand the setting fires and destroying and looting businesses. How does that appease anyone’s anger. So you have stolen “stuff.” So you have witnessed something burn. What does that ultimately accomplish towards the goal of having an equal and civil society?

And where are our leaders? Trump is so steeped in racism that all he can do is hide. There have been a series of “nows” where he could have stepped up and addressed issues of racism, issues of national health, issues of corporate greed, issues of national security, and taken responsibility for his actions. Maybe the Christians who want to support him (for whatever reason) might even forgive him if he were to ask for forgiveness. But he never will.

When this Covid epidemic is over, the black community will be smaller, because so many people will have died. And the members of the black community who do survive will be further marginalized and hated by the cretins who support the MAGA effort to never give power away to people who are not white. And the lingering health problems that Covid survivors will endure will probably go unaddressed in communities that cannot afford health care.

The corporations that have been subsidized will be richer. Education will be poorer, because remote education only works when you have enough of an internet connection, a computer that works, and a safe environment to learn in. And the result of a poorer education system is poorly-educated people. People not equipped to navigate in the world.

June 12, 2020

It has been more than a week since my last entry, and during that time there have been daily protests everywhere in the country. More instances of racial cruelty (and even killing) by police. There is too much to chronicle here.

I did “attend” part of a county board meeting where there were business owners complaining about the fact that they couldn’t pay their last quarter’s taxes because they were unable to do business due to the Covid-19 shutdown. It was odd to witness these people realize that the big box big corporation stores that we, as a community, welcomed to the area, were doing all the business and making all the money. They noted the unfairness. In a way I think that they normally, being republicans in a state with a democratic governor, blame the government. But they were really being shown the ugly face of capitalism at its vulture-like worst; taking advantage in an unfortunate situation.

If this were a fair society, those big-box stores that sell essentials (Walmart, CVS, Walgreens, Home Depot) would offer their host communities grants to offset the cost of paying taxes. For a state that needs taxes as its way of getting revenue, that would be the only fair thing to do. I imagine the extra money that Walmart has made during these past four months (and it has been four months since our first cases at Sarah Bush) would far offset the amount that businesses pay in quarterly taxes.

Personally, I have been hard at work on music. I finished a set of songs yesterday set to poems by Alice Moore (Alice Dunbar-Nelson), and am ready for a new project. This has been a prolific time for me as a composer. I’m

really glad that I have this outlet for creativity and musical interaction (at least the kind that happens between notes and on paper).

Teaching has been going well. My students are practicing and improving. They are even improving when they don't practice. And I'm very happy with the way my A Tunes book is working for remote teaching. It is going to be published by Mel Bay eventually. I signed a contract and sent the files. I don't know what their timeline is, but I do know that it is a good book and that it works for remote teaching. I have a feeling that teaching will continue to be remote for many more months—perhaps even until there is a vaccine.

June 25, 2020

There have been a small number of new cases every other day, but for the most part the state of Illinois is doing better than some. The crazy president refuses to wear a mask, and insists that the cases of Covid are going down, but aside from a handful of states (Illinois is one of them because we have a responsible governor), there is a huge increase of cases in the southern and the western part of the country. Trump held a rally in Tulsa last weekend, and I imagine that the number of cases there will increase exponentially because of it. A bunch of teenagers online spoofed him by reserving a million (literally) tickets without the intention of showing up. He was demoralized when the crowd was a tenth of what he imagined. Still, it was inside, and people were showing their support of Trump by not wearing masks.

And then there was a rally in Arizona the other day. No masks.

It is insane.

June 30, 2020

In March musicians in isolation played a lot of Bach. Solo Bach, mostly. The prelude of the G major Cello Suite was being performed by violists and cellists everywhere for a virtual audience of YouTube eyes and ears. If there were movements from other Suites being played online during March, I must have missed them. I also heard a lot of solo Bach being played on the violin. People did clever and beautiful things with solo Bach, like breaking up the Chaconne into four-measure units and creating a virtual (and otherwise impossible) performance of the whole piece. There was camaraderie in solo Bach.

And then there was "Amazing Grace," which had many really meaningful and heartfelt performances in March, and has had more painful and poignant moments in the Summer Season.

I spent my Spring Season playing Bach too, but it wasn't anything new for me. I had been doing the daily solo Bach circuit for decades. And after a few too many exclusive loops around the Cello Suites and Violin Sonatas and Partitas fishtank, I started to diversify with etudes (writing some of my own), Telemann Fantasies, and highlights of the violin repertoire. I also started practicing the first violin parts of the Beethoven Quartets, and, thanks to my vast collection of Beethoven Quartet CDs, the IMSLP (which offers full recordings for members), and YouTube, I can play along with scores of different excellent recordings.

Midway into the Spring Season, "Lift Every Voice" came out of the mouths and instruments of musicians in isolation, particularly Musicians of Color who started speaking (and playing) out about the omnipresence of racism in the classical musical community as well as in the larger community of humanity, particularly in the United States, and particularly at this time.

In the first few weeks of the Spring Season people began using video editing programs to make multi-track recordings of themselves. The technology had been around for a while, but suddenly musicians began really exploring it and exploiting its possibilities. They started subscribing to the Acapella app, which makes assembly easy, and started investing their savings in better audio equipment. And people (like me) who were not keen on teaching lessons online, started doing all their teaching through their screens.

By the end of May (which I will call the start of the Summer Season, because I can) people who follow trends in the things that classical music institutions are doing realized (finally) that Black composers were terribly

underrepresented in what has become known as the musical canon. The strides musicologically minded musicians made in the pre-Corona months of 2020 to include more music written by women in the programs that would be performed by major orchestras were strong enough to get people interested in composers like Florence Price. Actually, we don't know of any other composers like Florence Price, but I do imagine there were many. They just didn't get the (small amount of) attention that Price got during her lifetime.

I knew about Price because of a 1995 article by Rae Linda Brown about her in the Maud Powell Signature When I saw that her "Adoration" was in the IMSLP, I immediately set to work on a transcription for violin or viola and piano. It was a very easy transcription to make. Now, thanks to the helpful promotion of the transcription by Augustin Hadelich (the honorary guest artist of this festival), it looks like "Adoration" will play a part in future seasons of the Festival, and beyond.

There have been several panel discussions online (preserved as Zoom discussions) about the present and future state of music. There have also been several panel discussions inside my house, and inside my head. Today's discussion inside my head (while removing dust and grime from the downstairs floor) concerned an old topic: musical engagement.

Yesterday, after practicing some Beethoven and enjoying the way he wrote in a way that really stimulates creative expression, I had the sudden urge to play Schumann. The optimism and exuberance of Beethoven's Opus 18 didn't suit the moment, though. Only Schumann would do. And then I understood that when Schumann was writing his music to express musical thoughts and feelings that he had, he was doing it so that other people could have the same kind of vehicle for expression that he had. Once a piece is written, and all the notes, rests, dynamics, expression marks, and phrasings are in their places, it is a vehicle for expression that can be used by anyone to express what otherwise cannot or could not be expressed.

And in the case of Schumann, who could not perform his music because of the physical injuries that made it impossible to do so, it was even more important to write for other people to express themselves. And it is really all about the music, and not about Schumann. It's what Schumann gave to others that mattered during his lifetime and matters now.

When I think about what kind of a musician/person I want to be (or have found myself becoming), I like to imagine that my work is providing a way for people to express themselves. Once a piece of music is written it is no longer the responsibility or the property of the composer. It is the "charge" of the person or people playing it to fill it with their life, breath, and movement. And that way those feelings, that life, that breath, and that movement, can be shared with people who listen.

People who listen respond on many levels. People who play have the responsibility to make the listening experience a comfortable one for the listener by playing in tune and in rhythm, and feeling physically comfortable while playing. And they have the responsibility to make it a meaningful one by paying attention to the structures and balances in the music, the possible ways that words in a song can be understood, and the sense of connection and dedication they have to the musical line itself.

July 10, 2020

I just watched a video on twitter with a four-year-old girl complaining that the ice-cream truck is shut down, and MacDonalds is shut down, and the unfairness of it all. Her feelings are real. She speaks for so many of us. She is bored. Take-out food (her parents remind her that they can still get take-out from MacDonalds) doesn't cut it for this girl. She misses the play place and the music. Her parents remind her that they can't go to church either (not the first thing on this child's mind), and have to watch it on the TV. Yes, the child agrees, but she can't get the candy and prizes (and she elaborates) that they give out at church.

It reminds me of the parades that we used to attend in town. The whole reason that kids wanted to go was to pick up and collect (and later eat) the candy that the paraders threw onto the street. (It occurs to me that on non-parade days parents wouldn't usually let their kids pick up candy from the street.)

Social isolation from their friends is certainly something that kids have every reason to complain about. But I like to think that my inner four-year-old would be complaining about people not wearing masks and not following guidelines for social distancing BECAUSE that is what causes the virus to spread and for people to get sick. My inner four-year-old, who would be a little afraid about starting school when she turns five, would not want to enter a building where sickness could be lurking in the air because there are people in my town who believe that wearing masks would make them look like Democrats, and maybe even show that I didn't trust in the god that people say is supposed to protect us from things that might hurt us if I am "good."

It seems to me, from what I see and read on my computer, tablet, and phone from the house where I spent most of my time, that there are a lot of people much older than four that seem to see the world the way this complaining four-year-old sees the world. "They" shut things down. "They" make rules about wearing masks. "They" tell me what to do.

These over-sized four-year-olds (and I include the current Republican president and his enablers) show exactly why America has lost credibility in the larger world. Responsible parents do their best to get their children to steer away from the cultural tendencies of selfishness and consumerism, but when other cultural factors that do not involve money or trade are not present in their lives, it is difficult to do.

When I was a teenager and a young adult, I used to think about the fact that all the things I cared about (music, art, books, nature) were kind of "extra" to the stuff that made the world work. It used to bother me a lot. I felt like an outsider. Now I embrace the things I learned, read, and experienced musically during my (relatively) isolated youth.

I like to believe that in this time of isolation, the greater "we" might be making ourselves ready for a cultural reset. Approaching the school year with the idea of universal remote learning, which would mean a lot of work for teachers (and, perhaps, more employment for people who might have retired from teaching, but could be called upon by school districts to help ease the load for teachers), would mean that we would reduce the spread of the virus significantly. State and local governments could make it possible for school districts to supply tablets to students who can't afford them, and make wifi centers (safe spaces with social distancing, responsible adults in charge, required masks, and filtered air systems) available for people who don't have internet connections. The federal government could help well, but I'm not going to hold my breath during this administration, and with this senate.

Students learning remotely could have required reading and writing (for various subjects) to do on their own time, and lessons for the day with various teachers could be archived so that students could go back to them. The teaching time of the school day could be reduced to three hours, and the student work time could take the rest of the day. It's not rocket science. And for two-parent households who can't work from home, government subsidies could be paid in order for one parent to remain at home with the kids. For single-parent homes there could be safe community spaces (large classrooms, libraries, gyms) where the students could take classes and do their work. Adults could be employed (and paid well) to "proctor" those spaces. That leaves teachers with the time and space to teach, grade homework, and prepare lessons. And those learning spaces could be spread across the community, so that one is a short walk for students.

July 12, 2020

Covid cases are up everywhere in the South and the West, and particularly in Florida. Every day sets a new record. And it's only one week after the Fourth of July weekend, and the virus takes two weeks to incubate. I imagine it will be one hell of a week since people in this country are so terribly irresponsible and selfish regarding "their" rights and "their" discomfort or "their" distrust of the seriousness of this pandemic.

Last night we had Zoom services, and the Rabbi's wife, who is an infectious disease doctor in Indianapolis said that the virus does respond to sunlight and heat, so the spread of the virus in sunlight and hot places might actually not be as great as it would be if it were colder and darker. There have (so far) more than three million cases, nearly 133 thousand deaths, and it looks like there are 948 cases per 100,000 people.

August 17, 2020

There has been a spike in daily Covid cases (in the 30s on bad days, and in the teens on better ones), and a sense of defiance among the local yahoos who think it is fine to go to bars and not wear masks. The local paper doesn't cover a lot of what's going on, and the university is opening for in-person classes next week in spite of the outcry from faculty. It looks like it is mostly 1000 and 2000 level classes that will be in person (in seminar rooms, without desks), and I imagine that will be challenging to say the least. And those classes are more often than not taught by adjunct instructors, who are taking risks far beyond what they signed up for.

We don't have spit tests here, and it seems that the only way you can get a test is if you are symptomatic.

Michael's mother had a fall in New Jersey, went to the hospital (she fractured some ribs), is now in rehab, and will be coming (thank goodness) to a care facility here in Charleston. We are driving out on Thursday (13 hours), picking her up on Friday at 6:00 a.m., and driving back. While we are waiting for the paperwork and such to clear, she will be staying with us. I have been trying to get the house to be presentable.

On top of the Covid spike, and the one to come when the EIU students start having classes, the president (i.e. 45) has been sabotaging the mail service—removing mailboxes and removing sorting machines. He's doing this so that mail-in voting will be either difficult or non-trustworthy. He is doing these things in swing states so that people who vote for democrats will have more difficulty voting.

He is a nightmare. His administration is a nightmare. My strongest hope is that so many people vote for Biden/Harris that there won't be any question about the legitimacy of his defeat I want him to be seriously defeated in all 50 states and in every territory. I want his cronies to be defeated by an unquestionable margin.

They say that it is always darkest before the dawn. It is pretty dark now.

September 4, 2020

Two weeks ago we drove to New Jersey and brought Michael's mother here to Charleston. She stayed at our house until everything was ready at Heritage Woods, and we brought her there today. Tonight is her first night there.

I feel very good about the facility, and I think that they are doing a good job at trying to keep their residents safe, but the cases of Covid are rising so rapidly in the county that I wonder if anyone is safe anywhere. And there are people in the facility (people who work there, even) who think that wearing a mask over your mouth is enough protection.

Louise is certainly safer in assisted living than she would have been if she remained in New Jersey, simply for practical purposes. She has significant memory loss, and really cannot live by herself. I know that we made the right choice, but this county is becoming a hot spot, and it is a more dangerous place than we thought it would be back in August.

We were worried about what would happen when the students returned to EIU. But clearly the cases that have been averaging thirty per day through August have not been from students. They have been from "herd immunity" believers who live in these parts. These people believe deeply in "herd immunity" the way they believe in Trump.

Charleston and Mattoon are #20 on the national hot-spot list.

September 28, 2020

Yom Kippur is over, and we had our services by way of Zoom. I'm getting used to interaction by way of the computer, and I suppose that it will be the new normal for a long time, particularly for indoor events.

The local powers that be keep wanting to decrease the level of vigilance, and the local schools are planning to open in-person school soon. I'm not crazy about the idea. I'm glad that there is an option for people to do remote school if it is possible, but for some people it is not possible.

I am going to venture out into the wedding-playing world this upcoming weekend and next weekend. One wedding in Strausburg, with a reception in Effingham. The mother of the bride assured me that everyone is going to be masked, and that we would be able to be distanced from the guests and from one another. I am bringing two heavy-duty masks—one for the wedding, and one for the reception. Fortunately we will only be playing for one hour in each location. I'm looking forward to the playing part, and am kind of excited to have an out-of-house and out-of-town adventure on my own. Next weekend our wedding is just a reception. Two hours at the Effingham Events Center (formerly the Knights of Columbus).

I have really been enjoying playing Haydn Quartets with Ruth, Judy, and Bill. We are playing together again on Sunday (masked and outside). I'm really looking forward to that. As long as the weather is warm we can continue. But I fear that it will be a long and only remotely musical fall and winter.

Fortunately I have been doing a good amount of writing and arranging. I wrote a piece for two instruments (all modular to account for lots of combinations) designed to be played over FaceTime (it doesn't work well on Zoom). My next project will be a vocal duet. We will see how that works.

And then there's the news. *The New York Times* just broke the story about Donald Trump's multiple counts of tax fraud, which he denies as "fake news." Tomorrow night there is the first presidential debate with Trump and Joe Biden, and I am really looking forward to it. Trump's house of (credit) cards is starting to topple. I'm hoping that tomorrow night will give it a serious shove. I would love to see him arrested before the election on November 3rd. And then he would have to vacate the White House for the "Big House." That's just wishful thinking on my part, but every day brings new revelations.

Michael and I voted on the 24th (the first day we could), and we are expecting a ballot for Louise to vote by mail (or by us dropping her ballot off at the courthouse) in a couple of weeks. When we went to vote the security police person at the courthouse wasn't wearing a mask. Crazy. The anti-maskers are making life more dangerous for everyone.

October 4, 2020

The president has Covid. His wife does too. And he has spread it to member of his staff and who know who else. This is a disaster, a fiasco, and an embarrassment. The attorney general, who has been photographed at White House super spreader events talking with people who now know are infected is refusing to get tested. There are senators who are refusing as well.

What hospital would admit a person with symptoms of Covid without giving a Covid test?

Every day presents a new set of revelations, and every day presents new possible fictions from the White House. We see staged photos suggesting Trump is doing fine and at work at his desk at the hospital, and then we hear leaked reports about oxygen levels and such.

The vigilante posture of this president acts as an example for people around here to just go about life as usual.

Yesterday I played a wedding. I was assured by the mother of the bride that they were taking all sorts of precautions to keep everyone safe. I suppose our exchanges were before mask wearing became a political statement and not wearing masks became a statement of "freedom." I bought two four-layer black masks, and planned to use them with inserts, just in case the space was not as safe as the mother of the bride made it out to be.

In Strausburg, which is about 40 minutes south and west of Charleston, republican political signs abound. There were a few masked people in the church, but most of the people in the congregation, squeezed into the pews, were unmasked. We were able to play at a safe distance, and we were all masked and distanced from one another. The wedding went well. We even gave them more music than they paid for. It was one of only two jobs we have this year, and we were enjoying ourselves musically.

When the all uttered the Lord's Prayer together, I imagine that the virus was happily trespassing and enjoying its new hosts. I am going to be watching Shelby county in the reports of Covid. I do believe that I was safe yesterday. Masks do work. And we were in a part of the church that was physically separated from the larger sanctuary.

October 11, 2020

Yesterday we played a wedding in Effingham. The former Knights of Columbus hall in Effingham, now called the Effingham Event Center, or something, had a note posted on its door that they were operating at half capacity, and that they asked for people to socially distance, or wear masks if they were unable to socially distance. That said (and posted), the only people wearing masks at this event were the four members of our quartet.

The DJ for the wedding asked for people to cheer at the top of their voices, which was deeply disturbing. When it was time to eat (there was a buffet), he asked people to wear their masks in the buffet line. Nobody had masks. Nobody wore masks. The DJ wasn't wearing one.

Nobody came near us, which is a good thing. We remained masked the whole time we were in the venue (my mask was a four-layer one, with an additional filter insert. We also remained distanced from one another. We were probably safe.

The unmasked wedding revelers, who would be spending five or six hours together in that space, were probably not safe. I imagine that there will be a bunch of people who caught the virus there yesterday. Anyone willing to go unmasked to a wedding reception is probably willing to go unmasked to other group events.

November 11, 2020

85 cases in the county today. Most days have been in the 40s, but today the case number has doubled. Sarah Bush is filled with Covid cases. Richard's Farm, the restaurant in Casey is advertising Thanksgiving dinner. People are still complaining about the governor's rules about restaurants and bars not being open for people to eat in them (we are still getting take-out every week from Siam Thai).

Trump lost the election last week, and he spends his time claiming that he won, firing people who don't like him, and refusing to concede or make a transfer of power happen the way it should and the way it always has. He is deaf to the news about how quickly the pandemic is spreading. 10.5 million cases in the US. 241,000 deaths.

The only good news, besides the fact that the Biden transition team is keeping their cool, and moving forward deliberately, and that world leaders are figuring out ways to contact Biden by going around the normal White House channels in order to congratulate him, is that pfizer has a vaccine that has been deemed 90% effective. I have a friend who is part of an astra-zeneca trial (she has body aches and a mild fever today, so she is pretty sure she is in the control group that got the vaccine). There will be more. Scientists have been moving at full speed every single day. Trump tried to take credit for the pfizer finding, but pfizer did its work without any money from the government.

Michael and I are physically well. Louise is well at Heritage Woods. Rachel and Ben and their families are well. I have been hard at work on one writing project or another since March—pretty much chain writing, and I need to take a break from it for a bit because when one piece leads into another, one piece seems to sound like the last.

November 22, 2020

EIU has gone on Thanksgiving break, and now all classes for the rest of the semester will be remote. I think it is a good thing. The hospital wouldn't have the capacity to treat all the people who would return from Thanksgiving break bringing Covid back with them. The daily case load has been a little lower this week. Most people in stores are wearing masks.