



"One Day in May"

(May 15, 2020)

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Class Year: I'm an alum - class of 1981

Connection to the College (student? faculty? alum? friend of the College?): Faculty/staff

Describe your day today -- did you go out? what did you do for fun? did you cook or eat anything special? did you do work or chores? who did you spend time with?

May 15, 2020

This was a quiet day in the COVID-19 times. The only bit of business that was set on my agenda was helping my daughter with her cat. I got up, bathed, and checked my emails, sending off a few. Then it was time to head to the car. My daughter and middle son live together in an apartment off Frankfort Ave. here in Louisville. He is a rising senior at Bellarmine University. My daughter is recently enrolled in an intensive one-year nursing program at Bellarmine. One of her professors unexpectedly switched an online meeting. That is why I had to help with the cat, taking her to a veterinarian appointment. Along the way, I stopped at a Kroger grocery store to pick up a gallon of milk for my daughter and two bags of Paqui Ghost Pepper Chips for my son – a snack inedible for most folks, but he dotes on these beyond-flaming-hot tortilla chips.

As I drove up to the apartment, Penny, my daughter's black and white Turkish Van cat was sitting on a bolster, gazing out the picture window. She eyed me and I eyed her. I phoned my daughter to unlock the front door and let me in. Penny watched me as I headed up the front walk. By the time that I reached the front step, she decided that I was too close for comfort and disappeared into the apartment. Unfortunately my daughter did not grab the cat as she headed to the rear. By this point the presence of a cat carrier had tipped Penny off to what was in store. Not pleased at the prospect of a trip, she made herself scarce, and we had to drag her out from under a bed. Once in her carrier, Penny loudly expressed her displeasure, though after a few minutes in the car she subsided into an occasional mournful mew.

Because of the general lockdown and mandated social distancing, owners of animals are not allowed into the veterinarian clinic. The procedure is to park outside and then phone the office, alerting them to your presence. One "patient" at a time, assistants emerge from the clinic and pick up the dogs and cats. I politely put on my mask when it was my turn and handed over Penny's carrier.

I started reading Captain Basil Liddell Hart's *The Real War, 1914-1918* while I waited. Liddell Hart was a veteran of the First World War who became one of the twentieth century's most influential military theorists, as an advocate of armored warfare and the "indirect approach." This book was originally published in 1930, and it is still one of the most pungently argued and best-written accounts of the Great War.

The veterinarian eventually emerged with Penny. I slipped on my mask, and we exchanged a few words. Penny had received a couple vaccinations and otherwise passed inspection. After the indignities of her trip to the doctor, the cat was subdued on the way home. When we opened the door of the cat carrier at my daughter's apartment, Penny took off for cover. I sympathized with her. If I had been unwillingly hauled off to a doctor, I would have done the same thing. Happily, by the time I left Penny had reemerged and was even thoughtfully sniffing the carrier.

Back at home I handled some more business by email and read further in Liddell Hart. At four, I took part in a celebratory party for Kay Stoke, who had led Hanover College through a successful

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reaccreditation visit by representatives of the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). Of course the party, like the visit, was conducted on Zoom. Sociability by screen is the new norm. Following that, it was time for dinner. Then I watched a couple episodes of Blake's 7 on Youtube with my eldest and youngest sons. Blake's 7 is a 1970s British science fiction series that has attained cult status amongst science fiction fans. I first watched this back in the 80s while I was in graduate school. Now I am introducing it to some of my children. Following this, more emailing, including a highbrow discussion of film Noir with G.M. Curtis, Larry Thornton, and others, and more Liddell Hart. Then to bed.
Daniel P. Murphy

What do you remember best about being on campus in May of other years?

Teaching my Mood Noir class in Spring Term

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