



"One Day in May"

(May 15, 2021)

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Class Year:

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

Describe your day on May 15, 2021. Tell us whatever you'd like at whatever length you'd like. We think future students will especially appreciate hearing about concrete details -- What can you see and hear from where you are right now? What did you do for fun today? Did you cook or eat anything special? Did you work or do chores? Who did you spend time with? What did you learn?

Earlier this week the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) issued new guidelines on mask wearing, saying that fully vaccinated individuals do not need to wear masks in public, with a few exceptions such as hospitals and public transit. That very day, I was on a Zoom call with the college's parents advisory council, and of course there were lots of questions about what the new guidelines might mean for Hanover, especially in the fall. It seems like there are just as many contingencies to plan for this year as there were in 2020, with the main exception being that last year our planning was framed by questions of just how bad things might be and this year we're thinking more in terms of how much better things might be. That's a very welcome shift in perspective.

My wife, Julie, has been fully vaccinated for a few months now. I actually contracted COVID-19 in early February and received an antibody infusion, and just yesterday received my first dose of the Moderna vaccine after waiting the recommended 90 days. Today was the first time in quite a while that we had a Saturday to ourselves with nothing that "had" to be done, so we spent part of the morning in downtown Madison, had lunch at the Downtowner, then on to an afternoon hike at Clifty Falls State Park. We have lived here almost a year and this was our first time in the park. I don't know that I've spent a day in the past year in which I encountered so many people not wearing masks. Even my usually very cautious, works in a hospital wife only donned a mask in the most crowded of downtown shops.

Another highlight from today: Our daughter and son-in-law live in Virginia and we haven't seen them since January 2020. We learned today that they're planning a trip to visit us in mid-June. They're driving here on a Saturday with their two dogs, then our son-in-law will drive back on Monday or Tuesday with the dogs and our daughter will stay through the following Sunday. Her husband can't take much time off from work, but since starting her new job as an attorney with a big D.C. law firm in January she's been working entirely remotely. So, she'll be working from MY home office through the week. It turns out that her firm recognizes Juneteenth as a holiday, so she'll have Friday off.

I guess I would be remiss if I didn't also note that, unlike last year, Spring Term is taking place this year and there's lots of activity on campus. As we finished our day with s'mores on the back patio of our campus house, we could hear the sounds of students having a good time drifting through and over the trees that separate (sort of) our backyard and the north end of campus. It's been a good day.

What do you think you'll remember most about surviving the pandemic? Tell us what whatever you'd like at whatever length you'd like. We think future students will especially appreciate memories that help them picture your life and relationships -- Have you taken up any new leisure activities in the last year, or

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have you changed how you eat, or cook? If you're on campus, what was it like in classrooms or dining spaces or locker rooms or offices? Have you been able to stay in touch with family or friends (including classmates and other Hanoverians)? How? What have you missed the most in the past year?

The prompt doesn't specify positive vs. negative memories. If I remember nothing else it will be that my father-in-law died just shy of his 85th birthday due to COVID-19 complications. That has colored and affected pretty much everything in our lives since Christmas, when he first became ill. Here are a few other random things I'll remember:

Having COVID-19 and having to isolate from everyone for 10 days.

Using grocery pick up and prepare-at-home services like Hello Fresh.

Getting used to Zoom meetings, including not having to worry about rushing from one building to another.

Modifying how we interviewed potential faculty, and how having the option of on-campus interviews helped us land at least one of our top candidates.

Not seeing my mother (in Chicago) for a year and a half.

Not going to church much.

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