

Alexandria positive Covid tests

What a year.

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year.

Like everyone else, we spent a lot of time looking at 7 day moving averages. This is Alexandria’s positive cases (harder to see, fortunately, deaths attributed to Covid in red). Sadly, this chart has 365 daily data points – a full year of this pandemic.

The year of “Fine...”

Always with the dot dot dot. Because there was always a “but” coming after the fine. But tired of staying home. But friends are sick. But travel plans demolished. But college tours on hold. But looking for work.

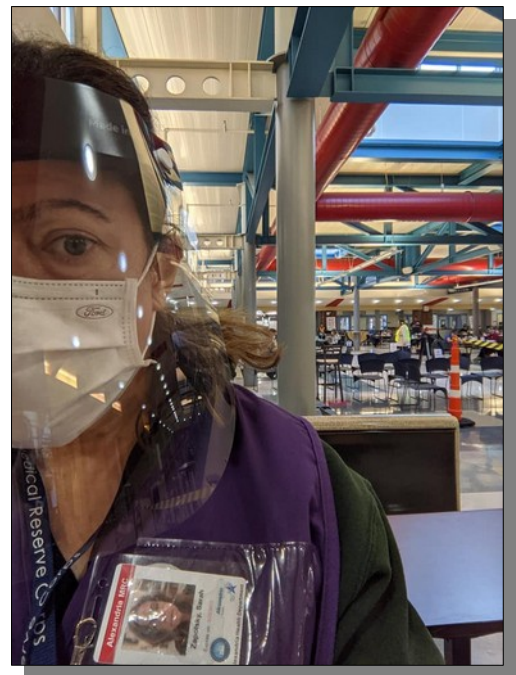
And like last year, delaying the federal tax deadline only happens in extraordinary circumstances – which these clearly are. Last year was 90 days, this year 32; let’s hope for a normal tax day next year.

We are fortunate to have telework ready jobs, and that in our immediate circle of family, friends and co-workers there

have been no big health issues. One step further removed, and a lot of friends of friends have been devastated in the last year.



Setting up Sarah’s birthday surprise



Sarah in PPE at vaccination site

Sarah jumped in early on; she joined Alexandria’s Medical Reserve Corps. Initially working in the call center answering questions about testing options, contract tracing and general concerns. Since the vaccine started to arrive late last year, she has worked one or two vaccination sites a week. The MRC seemed to really do well by Alexandria. Which is perhaps a double edged sword: with the volunteer support working as well as it has, the city has grown very dependent on those volunteers and maybe not looked as quickly for national guard level help.

Her volunteering was made easier by the three day a week schedule she negotiated with HUD. David remains a five day a week PTO employee.

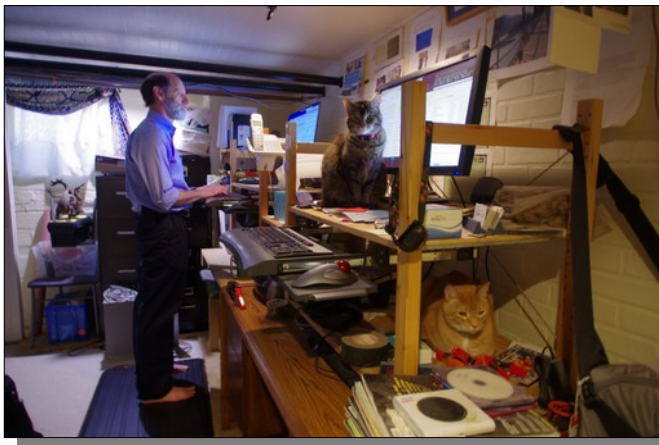
The year of staying home.

We found a good configuration for telework and remote schooling. While David went back to the (empty) office in July, Sarah continues to work from home. Robert, now a junior, started going back to TC Williams (recently renamed Alexandria High School) two days a week just about a month ago. Getting to see some of his friends in-person, even if at a distance, has been a huge boost. Unfortunately, the volleyball season was another victim of the virus. On the silver-lining side, to get access to the gym for practice, the team is well on their way to being a formal school sport instead of a club sport.



Sarah's in-home office space

A crazy year with the pandemic, stay-at-home-and-mask-up as background to everything. Time still passes though: Robert turned his learner's permit into a full-on driver's license and has taken his first solo trips in the car. And we celebrated birthdays and anniversaries in a small way, but with big balloons. We rejoiced for the weddings we couldn't attend and grieved via zoom shiva.



David's in-home office space

The year of everything being a bit different.

We traveled a lot less this past year for obvious reasons. We were fortunate in so many ways and did break away for a trip to Maine in August. It was somewhat surreal: starting with the restrictions on travel. We took Covid tests at home, filling a small tube with spit while a nurse watched via zoom. With those negative results, we drove up in a day — Robert's first big road trip with a license; he started our trip out by driving the first leg out of DC and up to Delaware.

We settled into our rental apartment and really enjoyed the kayaking around our inlet by Friendship Maine. The local grocery store had a sign up requiring masks, which we were happy to comply with. And while we did have a couple meals out, we stayed very much to ourselves.

That led to the discovery of the Wallace's Market sub sandwiches. Those became staples of our kayaking and another high-point of the trip. With cooperative weather, a huge, tasty sub by the shore was the perfect way to break up some paddling.

The owners (and neighbors) of the rental were apologetic that their kids couldn't hang



Robert's in-home classroom space



Our Friendship, Maine bay (low tide)

Intentionally sunk after WW I, the bay has the remains of dozens of ships, mostly steamers, surplussed after the war (see kayakero.net/link124). And of course we took advantage of the Potomac to get out and enjoy the weather. Robert even started to work on his kayak roll in late summer. He'll likely be set with a few more sessions this coming summer. His friend Will has invited Robert out with his family on their motor boat a couple times. They store it just past the Woodrow Wilson bridge and often motor up towards DC and tow their tube around.

The year of savoring the infrequent, small, in-person gatherings.

In July Joseph, one of Robert's former teachers, brought his camera over for "porch portraits." It was a very nice afternoon and we even lured him into staying for dinner. It was one of the infrequent in-person visits over the course of the last year. And interesting to hear the teacher's perspective on how Robert's old school is doing (a few more porch portraits: kayakero.net/link125). Seileen, another vaccinated MRC volunteer who we've known since Robert's first school years, has also joined us for a few evenings after working with Sarah at a vaccination site.



Kayaking on the Potomac

out with Robert. They promised if we come back, they would love to take him out on their lobster boat. It was impressive to watch from our kayaks as they swooped up to a bouy, pulled the trap, emptied and dropped it back in a minute or so (more from Maine: kayakero.net/link123).

While the trip to Maine was the only overnight traveling we've done this past year, we have enjoyed the outdoors around the DC metro area. We finally went to go check out the Mallows Bay ghost fleet (something that has been on Sarah's bucket list for awhile).



Kayaking (and floating) in our bay

We were shocked, saddened and scared to see the insurrection in January just across the river. The response for the inauguration brought an impressive Coast Guard cutter to the Potomac along with thousands of national guard troops billeted around DC, many here in Alexandria; providing another surreal moment in a surreal year.

The year of hope overtaking depression.

With vaccines getting into arms (Sarah is fully vaccinated courtesy of her volunteer work – David and Robert have each had one shot and will get the second shortly after you read this), we are hoping this truly crazy time is winding

down. We can't wait to be able to have folks over and visit in-person again. Zoom has been a bridge, but it is a faint echo of in-person gatherings.

Please stop by if you are in the neighborhood. If you're not in the neighborhood but want to keep up with our antics, follow Sarah on Facebook ([kayakero.net/link76](https://www.facebook.com/kayakero.net/link76)) or Robert on his blog ([kayakero.net/link75](https://www.kayakero.net/link75)) – and maybe spur him into posting something in the 2020s – or see what David has put up on his blog ([kayakero.net/link74](https://www.kayakero.net/link74)).



Tubing on the Potomac with Will



Newly licensed driver



Coast Guard cutter on the Potomac



One of Joseph's "porch portraits"