

I have heard a lot of complaints from people who are “bored” with the pandemic and not inclined to do anything to protect themselves from infection if they must wear masks and avoid too much contact with other people to keep themselves and others from becoming ill.

If it is boredom, there are plenty of ways to circumvent that. I understand that people want to see their families and their friends. All of us would be glad to have everything go back to the way it used to be, but that isn’t what is reality at this moment. In time, we will probably look back on this year—or maybe, even another year—as an unpleasant episode that became eventually just a bad memory. But, in the present, we have to deal with it.

For a person who is healthy and stays that way, to be “tired of the pandemic” is a condition that can be ameliorated with a little creative thinking and doing.

First, why not just make a list of all the things you never have time to do and choose some to pursue during this time when your social life is restricted. Each of us is different, but these are some of the ideas that appeal to me, and some of them might make your life easier, too.

This is a time for projects. Instead of entertaining for the holidays, it is entirely possible that the same amount of time might result in worthwhile accomplishments of a different nature. Here are some of my projects for the pandemic months:

1. I finally have time to spend working with wool. I brought my spinning wheel up from the basement. It usually is an after Christmas project, January being the prime time for “projects,” but this year, with less on the calendar, I can find time right now to spin yarn. I took out some small packets of wool I had dyed a year or so ago. There was a quantity of dark brown wool I had colored with the hulls of black walnuts. A lighter brown—kind of a warm, rosy beige—came from the berries and twigs of the high bush cranberry. And, a sunny yellow made from the goldenrod blooms gave me a color scheme for a pair of mittens.

I have spun the yarn and knitted one mitten now, making up the pattern in the different colors as I went along. One more to go, including a little more spinning of one of the colors, and I will have a nice gift for someone.

2. Then, there is the warp that is still on the loom. Any time I have a few minutes, I can sit down at the loom and weave. The warp is in stripes, blue and white cotton, and I am making dish towels. I have woven 15 and am working on number 16. There is probably warp on the loom for three or four more. And, it is interesting—each one can be a little different though the warp threads are the same.

3. This is a good time to try new recipes. If we are not going to stores like we do in ordinary times, most of us have more basic pantry supplies. It is fun to see what we can do with them. Magazines, the internet, and the cookbooks we have on hand can provide ideas for new ways to use those same old ingredients. Or, we can use our own ingenuity and come up with something new all on our own. A friend recently gave me a subscription to a magazine that has some recipes in each issue, and I experimented with a

chicken/squash dish that has plenty of garlic and the color and flavor of paprika. And the four or five wrinkled up apples—the last of the supply—provided flavor for a fresh apple cake, a standby that my mother used to make. The recipe was not new to me, but I had not used it for a long time. It was just as tasty as we had remembered.

4. Letter writing is a skill and a pastime that is not very common these days, but probably even more valued than in times past. Keeping in touch with friends and family by phone, e-mail, texting, or social media is fine, but a handwritten letter, coming through the mail—especially unexpectedly—is a real treat. It is something to savor—both by the writer and by the recipient. Going to the mailbox is something to anticipate when there might be a letter from a friend waiting.

5. Going through our own books, re-reading old favorites or thoroughly reading a book we had purchased sometime in the past but had never taken time to read is another rich source of “something different.” Reading for pleasure is something we enjoy, but sometimes, it is also good to read for our own edification. Most of us who are readers have bought books we always intended to read to learn something new but then, never got around to taking time we needed to inform ourselves about a new subject. In our library, we have animal husbandry books and books about regenerative agriculture that I have not read. It is time I did this, and those books are coming off the shelves now. With less social time these days, there is more time for learning.

Everybody has a different list of possible projects that might be good to pursue these days. It just takes a little thinking about all those things we have intended to do, but “never had the time.” Now, we do have that time.