

Hello to all my friends and family. What a year it has been. Certainly for many of us it has been the hardest year of our lives. Still, there is snow on the ground and I'm enjoying a nice coffee as I write to you. I feel so lucky to be able to connect with you all in this small way.



I started this year with a few days in Seattle. My friend Tyler started a new job there in late 2019, and I visited to explore his new home. Tyler was between apartments, so we stayed in a luxurious Airbnb with an excellent view of the city (see left). It was special to be able to experience Seattle with Tyler. Seattle and Madison share a notable similarity—they are both cities built on an isthmus. Madison is between two lakes: Mendota and Monona. Seattle is between Lake Washington and Puget Sound.

Like everyone, my 2020 has been primarily shaped by COVID-19. On March 17th we were told we have two days to pack up everything and get off campus. I took two large carloads of various electronics and instrumentation and holed myself up for three straight weeks in my apartment, not stepping outside my door even once. We were originally told shut-down would last eight weeks, but in the end I ended up being kept away from campus for 15 weeks straight.

The most wonderful outcome of quarantine was the opportunity to spend an entire month living in Iowa City with my parents. It was so nice to experience their lifestyle—gardening, walking with dear Karaby, enjoying food. Iowa City is a lovely place. I'm so lucky to have been with loving family for a portion of this isolated time.

I have also used this quarantine period to experience more outdoor places near Madison. I never realized how many wonderful parks there are so close to my home! Here I am at Mirror Lake, which I visited with my friend Zach. Other highlights include multiple trips to Indian Lake, running from mosquito at Cherokee Marsh, and hiking out in the dark to avoid freezing temperatures during a camping trip at Brooklyn Wildlife Area.



I continue to grow professionally. I feel very lucky that I was able to work from home this year. I was actually able to attend more conferences than normal, as virtual conferences don't require travel cost. There are a lot of people doing exciting work in my weird little world of scientific instrumentation! I was one of the very first to return to campus in June, being designated essential to the "research reboot" effort on campus. Work has been shockingly hard since then, as I am under-resourced and must personally complete all tasks. Things have recently gotten a lot better as I have hired two new student assistants. This week, staff at University of Wisconsin hospitals began receiving vaccines.

Wishing you and yours a happy new year. Stay in touch!

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