

Sending Best Wishes to You For an Amazing 2022!



Greetings, Dear Family and Loved Ones,

Another year bit the dust and 2021 took with it several dear friends and relatives, the upper branches from one of our century-old oak trees and, most lately, a front fender from our car. Still, better than 2020, eh?

Last year's wrap-up letter was wrong about Covid being in the rear-view mirror, but right about Trump wreaking havoc after losing the election, as his treasonous mob attacked Congress January 6. We're a bit more impressed with President Biden than expected and hope he'll do even better next year. Choose hope over despair, eh?

Who was that masked couple, you ask?

It may have been us. We always mask up inside a public space or outside in a crowd. Chris went from contact lenses to glasses, so he's usually fogged out, too. Outside in uncrowded places, we'll unmask. For bigger groups, we use Zoom to see people's faces, hear their voices and join with folks who otherwise would not be able to participate, due to health or geographical constraints.

We were initially concerned about how quickly the vaccine was developed but learned that researchers started with existing vaccines and sped up the timeline by doing clinical trials simultaneously, not just one at a time. So, Mikki got the Pfizer shot. Chris got Moderna and spent a few hours feeling miserable after his second dose but soon was back up, whistling as he worked.

After enough of our friends were immunized, we wore masks less often on walks with Ray, Louise, Ellen, John, Ali, Arya, etc. We had a little vaccinated house party for Mikki's birthday. Right after, a guest reported a mild "breakthrough" infection, so back came the masks. We got boosted and went to a few restaurants, protests and public events. With *Omicron*, we're being extra cautious.

Vaccines, masks and regard for others health offer a way out of this mess, but we'll be stuck with variant surges until everybody gets on board ...

Nesting in the El Sobrante Regency House

We crossed two lifetime landmarks this year: Our 40th Meetiversary and 30th wedding anniversary. We weren't able to do much to mark the occasions, but we went out to nice dinners and got each other a fancy new TV, which we're enjoying. We are still so in love and grateful to have each other and a happy home in these times.

Once again, Mikki put lots of miles on her exercise bike and Chris played guitar and learned songs during his daily trampoline jog. We took online Pilates classes with our friend / Lakeridge Athletic Club instructor, Patti. When we could return to the gym in June, our exercise group celebrated with a pool party at Dayna's house. For a while, the risk was so low that we got to work out indoors with no mask! We were giddy, then *Delta* came. We masked up again and the Club required verification.

Chris continued to nurture our garden and terrace on the riparian zone. You should see the trails he made down to the creek: It's so much easier to go to our little patch of nature. It was fun to get visits from mallards, a blue heron, a turtle and otters (that Chris saw, but Mikki missed.) He keeps adding plants to die in the drought or get eaten by deer, raccoons and who knows what else. We recently saw a mangy little coyote run by; oh my.

We've been in record drought here in California – entire forests are drying into tinder that fuel horrific wildfires. Sadly, the drought, followed by torrential November rains weakened one of our giant oaks. It split near the base and started to tip, so we made the painful choice to cut it way back and cable it to another tree to (hopefully) save it. We still have a lovely view, but it changes the aesthetic and opens the yard to more summer sun. It looked like a house was going to be built next to us in



For one brief moment in the summer, we felt safe enough to have a live and unmasked Independence Day party and singalong!

the empty lot next door, but our wonderful neighbors on the other side of the lot saved us (and themselves) from living in a construction zone by purchasing the lot, and plan to keep it as it is – a beautiful green field with trees.

They even let Chris add more plants there! We are so relieved and happy about how this has played out.

Shooing out pigeons and fighting Gopher Wars

Uninvited guests in the attic made us seal it off, sanitize and replace the insulation this spring. In the fall we got more house pests: pigeons nesting in the eaves. At first, they were just noisy. But when they started raining poop onto our deck by the sliding door, it was time to go. Chris discovered they don't like the shiny bladders inside large Starbucks coffee boxes. So we got a 28-foot ladder to get high enough to convince them to move out ... and to block off their nesting spot. Gopher wars consumed the summer and fall as we resorted to spinners, peppermint balls, traps, smoke bombs and just added solar-powered buzzers. We can't tell if rain and cold has caused a lull in the battles or if we may have gotten the upper hand. But we have more stink bombs ready.

Virtual visiting, people pods and the real world

We didn't get many human house guests this year and none who stayed more than a day. After visiting Mary Pat, who broke her arm over the summer, helping at her lovely Entwalk acreage and hunting for pirate treasure, she dropped by our Regency house on her annual trip to visit her family over the holidays. She helped to decorate our 'tree' of dried cannabis stalks. Marci and Tom were supposed to ring in the new year with us, but *Omicron* quashed that idea. Hope to see them soon, though.

Chris' siblings have updated their bond with texting and virtual get-togethers every few months. We used to see them once a year if we were lucky. Mikki's family had a bris online, birthday parties and various other events. We went to public meetings, panel discussions, town halls, Patients Out of Time, Hempfest and Rainbow gatherings: All from the comfort of our own home.

And yet, every so often we managed to go out into the physical world for something other than groceries.

Maggie and John live right up the hill, so we just walk over to see each other.



Mikki's sister, Shelley, and Jesse had us over a few times and had a September retirement party for Shelley at an outdoor venue. We got to see Brian and Dianne when they visited their daughter and boyfriend. Niece Alethia and Mike got a new house and

World's record fiber hemp.

hosted a backyard pool party. We had some delicious dinners with Ellen and John, and took a hike with Eric when he and June came to the Bay Area from Maryland.

We went to a few in-person events, including to witness the world-record-tallest hemp field, but we're still not comfortable in big groups. We went to the NCIA expo at the end of the year, where Chris did a book signing.

In November we attended an actual, live, indoor concert event with Shelley, Jesse, and cousin Valerie – a 40-piece orchestra playing the Beatle's White Album!



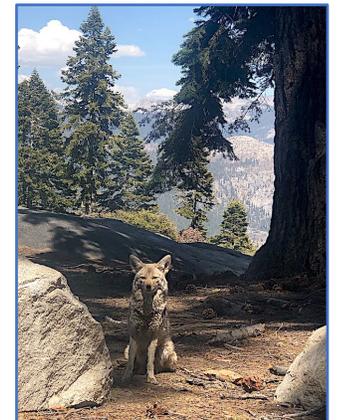
Chris got to visit the New York Conrads on a trip East in the spring.

Eking out a little travel time

Early in 2021 we had three cannabis business prospects lined up: Facilities in Mississippi, New York and Greece. Travel restrictions kept pushing everything out all year long, but Chris went to MS twice and visited brother Fred in Georgia. He also went to NY, where he visited sister Rosie, nieces Andie and Veronica's families and hung out at Tom's impressive Japanese garden.

Coyote visitor at Yosemite.

We took a great trip to Yosemite with Mikki's sister Dolly, her son Geoffrey and his friend Marcela in May. We stayed at Shelley and Jesse's Bass Lake timeshare. Yosemite Valley was beautiful; but water levels were very low due to the drought. We took gorgeous hikes to Lower Yosemite Falls and Mirror Lake and savored the vistas from Glacier Point. This was before all the fires hit – but it was already clear that things were dry, crispy and at a high risk. We saw a few controlled burns there, but they didn't affect the air too much, fortunately.



Mikki flew to LA in August to spend a lovely sisters' weekend at Andrea's beach house in Oxnard with Dolly, Andrea and Shelley. It was wonderful just to hang out and enjoy each other's company, so it was a short but



Norris sisters hanging out. sweet getaway. In SoCal, we connected with friend and former

bandmate Tina, and visited Ned and Kris.

Meanwhile, we had planned a trip to Hawaii this fall to visit friends and celebrate Jennifer’s 50th birthday, but it got postponed when the governor told tourists to stay home. So, we had a virtual birthday party and hope to go this year – since we already have tickets that need to be used. And who doesn’t want to go to Hawaii?

Cleaning up beautiful El Sobrante, over and again

As it turns out, we aren’t the only people who are sick of trash. Even our little niece Nova, in Thailand, told Chris’ brother Bob they had to go pick up litter and asked “who would throw stuff around like that?” Who, indeed!

Mikki and Ali at the Public Library on Cleanup Day. Holly and Ken with Chris.

We put our campaign into high gear this year to clean up litter and trash in El Sobrante. It’s great to see the visible effect of cleaning up litter, but roadside trash starts accumulating as soon as we’re done. Mikki feels pretty frustrated and compelled to constantly cleanup an area she has informally adopted near our house as Chris prunes back the foliage.



Over the summer a lot of our focus went into organizing a local September 18 “National Cleanup Day” (aka Coastal Cleanup Day) event. We organized an 94803 area-wide event with our team. Mikki and Teri walked from business to business to get support. Our county supervisor secured a dumpster and printed flyers to hand out. The Chamber of Commerce donated some funds for equipment. We made and posted big banners around town, mapped out work zones and equipped and dispatched groups to cover as many hot spots as possible. We hosted an after-event at the library, with a band, info tables and food donated by local shops and the Sikh Center. About 75 volunteers of all ages joined in, and we posted a video about it at the new website we created, KeepElSobranteBeautiful.info, which is full of good resources. Our Green Team shifted the energy from the event into monthly “Third Saturday” cleanups.

Most of our activism in recent decades has been at the regional, state, national and international levels. The pandemic set our focus at a neighborhood micro-level. It’s great to have so many local people to work on projects with us and never drive more than 10 minutes to be there! We have a new set of community activist neighbor-friends and work closely including Ramon, Holly and Teri, to name just a few. We get drawn into other projects, too, such as “Braver Angels,” seeking to reduce political tensions and community divisions, and unhoused (homeless) community issues. We took a CalTrans training when Ramon officially adopted a road.



We are so proud of our community for caring! The real answer to littering and dumping is to prevent it in the first place. Mikki chairs our Municipal Advisory Council Illegal Dumping/ Littering Subcommittee, where we brainstorm on ways to raise consciousness and address these problems. We plan to keep up this effort and set up a major cleanup event in April for Earth Day.

Fond farewells to cherished loved ones

In March, Mikki’s long-time friend, honorary brother, and *Humanoids on Parade* bandmate, Adam Rado, succumbed to a long battle with cancer. As it became clear that he didn’t have much time left, we set up two



hospital bedside Zoom visits with him and his closest friends. It was quite beautiful, meaningful and powerful for long-time friends, bandmates, colleagues from his running the UCLA ESL department, his wife Eris and her family to share memories, view a slideshow of his life that

HOP: Mikki, Tina, Adam

we put together, and tell Adam how important he has been in all our lives. He was visibly in pain, but Adam rallied himself and was cogent, with his amazing wit and sense of humor intact, as people showered heartfelt love and thoughts on him, and he told us some things that he wanted us all to know. We highly recommend pre-death celebrations of life, if possible, so people can experience the love before they pass. A former boyfriend and one of her closest lifelong friends since 1973, it's still hard for Mikki to believe he is gone. And his music lives on (See Humanoids on Parade [on YouTube](#)). We also attended a beautiful funeral memorial in LA on his birthday with a small group of friends in July.

In February we lost our friend Dion, whom we met when we lived in Amsterdam in 1993. He became a key player in the hemp, CBD and medical marijuana movements and was building a hempcrete chapel when he passed away. Chris's dear childhood friend, Wayne, also passed.



Chris got pulled into a fierce pirate battle with a band of underage treasure hunters when we visited Mary Pat on the Sonoma coast.

Mikki lost two Chicago cousins and organized virtual memorials that became mini reunions, as family from all over gathered to pay respects and be together. It was an honor to recall their lives and family histories as we put together photo slideshows for Marsha, on her dad's Norris side, and David, on her mom's Sobel side. We were moved to share such meaningful moments online and honor all the departed with high honor.

Sharing the Cannamaste spirit of cannabis

Chris still does a little cannabis expert witness work but only had a couple evidence reviews, a few days in court and testified virtually in Pennsylvania for the first time. The scene here has shifted to business law and he's not crazy about those cases, but we helped get two friends out of jail, Sam in Texas and Gianni in Puerto Rico.

Our main cannabis-focus these days is to maintain our news site [theLeafOnline.com](#) and facilitate the practice of Cantheism, a non-sectarian form of cannabis

spiritually. We speak on the topic and guide intentional ceremonies using cannabis as a shared sacrament via mindful consumption and the blessing, "Cannamaste."

Shelley's retirement party.



These have been online of late, naturally, but we had a live ceremony at the Emerald Cup, hosted by Swami and Nikki.

We're so lucky to have them and others the caliber of Jane, Mitchell, Jaene Leonard, and frequent guest speaker, Prof. Mark Berkson of Hamline U. They make each Cannamaste really special. Mark introduced us to Kylee, who became our student intern in her fall semester. It was great; she helped us with assorted projects and even guided a discussion at a ceremony. Check out [cantheism.org](#) and our [new YouTube channel](#), Cantheism Cannamaste Community.

This year marked the 25th anniversary of our victory in the first state to vote to legalize medical marijuana, California's Prop 215. Dale and Ellen of CA NORML put together a terrific event in San Francisco and we spoke on a panel. It was heartwarming to see many of our old colleagues, some for the first time in years, and share memories. We also helped to compile a memorial for activists who passed away along the way.

We never got closer to Greece than a handful of Zoom meetings. The project may be still in the works but all the delays have taken some wind out of its sails. We like the idea of going there this year, with some friends who have sailing experience, and are dreaming of sailing around the Greek islands when the time is right. We took a couple day-sails in SF Bay with Skipper Jan, Patti, Ali, and Scott and Suzanne (of the Greek project), to prepare for it. More on that, next year.

So, that's the gist of our 2021. We'd love to hear from or Zoom with you sometime before we see you next. May 2022 bring you good health, happiness, success and all good things, plus an end to the pandemic for everyone's sake. Sending you distanced hugs and lots of love,

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