



## “Our Finest Hour” April 7, 2020

Just barely into the second week of our virtual existence, and routine has already "set in." Up at 5:30, grind the hazelnut vanilla coffee beans (wonder what a hazelnut vanilla coffee bean tree looks like), fill one of my three dozen grandkid-laden Shutter-fly mugs with the fresh, hot brew, let the dogs out (literally), grab the sassafras hand rail, and count each of the seventeen steps winding to "Deerfield upon Fellows Lodge," AKA Grandad's secret office over the garage where no one is allowed.

It is here that I now work each day, never alone, but virtually with so many others who have carved out their spaces. We see how we live. We share stories. We work. We laugh. Because it is only temporary, it is awkwardly enticing. I look forward to 8 o'clock when Administrative Council meets. Yesterday we lived, shared, worked, and laughed until almost 11:00 am. And we made decisions. More on that later.

Out the east window high atop my perch, I watch the sun rise over Fellows Lake. Read the online News-Leader, (sip the morning's brew), read USA Today, (sip a little more), read some articles in the Chronicle, (sip), and glance at a handful of higher ed pubs on my iPad that explain things like how to encourage students to finish the semester, how to support online instruction, and how to lock out the Zoom bombers.

Later I see how the other dean's live as Frank (who is doing marvelously with all this, btw) holds his Academic Leadership Council (ALC) meeting. We see, we share, we work, we laugh, and we make decisions. More on that later.

Each day, I walk up and down the seventeen steps a dozen or so times. Each day I have a bowl of oatmeal, a sandwich, then a grand supper of one sort or another, always with hot bread right out of the oven, Linda's trademark that she has enjoyed perfecting for more years than she would care for me to say. Each day is full. Each day is anxiously busy. Each day is productive. Each day is good.

Each day, the sun sets over Fellows Lake as I gaze out the west window from high atop my perch. Late at night I climb down the seventeen steps and amble into the great room where kids and grandkids gathered, and will gather again - soon, I hope. There, we watch the evening news recorded hours earlier. There we grow concerned. There we talk. Talking is good.

I lie awake late, or wake with a start at 2:00 am. Have an idea. Then another. Will run them by the department heads in the morning. Will run them by the Faculty Advisory Council in a couple days. Will run them by the Leadership Council on Thursday. More on that later.

It's 5:30. I grind the hazelnut vanilla. I wonder what that tree looks like.

David