



## Dispatches from Terra

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*Milky Way Galaxy*  
*Earthdate 10/20/2020*  
*Reporting Officer–Subcommander Zorn*

The trip from the Seven Sisters, or Messier 45, or as it is more commonly referred to as Pleiades, was uneventful. Even routine. The warp engines performed flawlessly, traveling the 136.2 +/- 1.2 parsecs (roughly 444 light-years) in a little less than 100 earth days at an average speed of warp 5. This was substantially better than the last trip to “Earth” (as the inhabitants call it) one earth year ago. I again landed on the backside of Cowles Mt.—the topography of the alluvial plane was particularly suited to hide the contours of my shuttle.

I immediately noticed that there were substantially less human transportation devices on the east-west vector known as Route 52. My handheld multifunctional sensor scanner recorded decreased levels of carbon dioxide. Human air was cleaner. It appeared that more humans were traversing the trails at Mission Trails Regional Park at a much greater frequency. There were so many of them! They were all wearing face covering that appeared to be made of something resembling cloth. Some were colorful fabrics. Some had slogans on them saying simple things like VOTE, TRUMP, BIDEN, BLM. Others were simply made of blue paper. Another unusual thing was that they were distancing themselves 1.8288 meters (six feet) from each other. Peculiar.

My previous data gathering effort included visits to groceries stores, restaurants, bars, malls, sporting events, concerts, plays, church gatherings, local schools, and offices. I looked forward to immersing myself in the local population. I was particularly looking forward to the ritual known as “the hug.” I truly loved this custom. I have not found one other species in the galaxy that is so intimate with each other. So where do I begin? I’ll go get provisions at the local grocery store.

What I saw was perplexing. The humans are standing on blue lines six feet apart. They are all wearing the face coverings. On the door is a sign stating that all entrants must wear masks and maintain “social distancing.” There are antiseptic wipes for the baskets and hand sanitizers for all to use. Interesting. But why? The aisles are one way and the checkout counters have the same tape markings as outside and the checkers are separated by clear plastic glass between me and them. I notice no hugging. Not even eye contact. It appears that the humans have become more isolated and distant from one

another. Some are even wearing rubber gloves. I must find out if this is simply an aberration in the grocery shopping experience. I surmise that was once a joy to do has now become a chore.

I know. Going to the mall was a lot of fun a year ago. I approach the mall and notice right away—there are substantially less transportation vehicles. A lot less. Many are not even parking. They are driving up and store employees are providing them with their purchases at the raised concrete dividers known as curbs. I found out this is known as curbside pickup. Once again there are no intimate interactions. No touching of the hands or the hugging embrace. What is happening? I know I will go to a restaurant. THAT is a place humans go to interact, eat, and enjoy each other's company.

The humans are either sitting outside or getting their food through curbside pickup. I also see a sign indicating you can have your food "delivered." The diners are sitting at tables that are more distant from each other than I remember. They are wearing masks until they begin to eat.

There is more joviality here than at the mall or the grocery store. But it too is more muted than I remember.

I researched what was happening. I found out that in March of this year (2020 on this planet's calendar) a virus known as Covid-19 came to this area from a place called China. It was known as a novel virus, meaning that it had never been seen before. No one had any immunity.

It was spread by air through droplets of moisture from the infected human. It was highly contagious. And it had a high mortality rate of up to 4%! There has no vaccine to prevent its spread. And the limited advancement in the medical field I reported last year made the use of therapeutic treatments a moot point. The only way to combat the spread was to wear a mask, socially distance, and wash your hands frequently—simple measures to save lives.

So—sporting events, church, concerts, plays, offices, and schools were shut down! NONE of them are happening anymore. At least not the way I enjoyed them last year. Petco Park is open for baseball. It hosted the American League playoff games. But no humans attended. Human cutouts did, however. The players needed to be isolated and tested daily. Church, concerts, plays, office work, and schools were being performed remotely on computers using a software known as ZOOM. Bet that stock did well.

To make matters worse there appears to be infighting amongst the humans. One faction does not believe the science. They are not wearing masks or socially distancing. Led by their President, they deny the science. The others are followers of Dr. Fauci, a small human with a large brain. It appears that in the next two weeks there may be a breakthrough. A man by the name of Joe is running for President. He is a good man who believes in science and may be the savior who can crush the virus, bring the folks back together and heal the scars that are so very apparent.

If not, I humbly submit that this country is not worth further observation and research. Perhaps Subcommander Quork who is researching New Zealand has more promising analysis to report. I will report the results of the election as an addendum to this report.

Subcommander Zorn over and out.

