

For close to twenty years, my workday mornings have been the same. I enjoy my morning coffee in my easy chair, and then, I bring a cup to Kathy upstairs, in her office doing what she does for the Mission of Love. After I shower and dress, Kathy will ask me what time I am going to work, and I will tell her either that I am on my way to court, or I will be spending the day at my law office. I will ask her what her day looks like. She will usually say "I'll be here", or more likely, "I'll be at the warehouse". Maybe she will explain to me that somebody is bringing a truck load of donations, usually school supplies, but often, medical supplies. Sometimes Kathy will be meeting up with volunteers to gather donations, often from the office of a physician who is retiring, or a friend who has excess inventory of medical supplies. This is what the Mission of Love does. Then, everything is sorted, shrink wrapped and palletized, ready to be shipped. This is a hell of a lot of physical work just to collect stuff.

I used to wonder what she is going to do with all of that stuff, but several years ago I came to learn that she is going to put the stuff on a truck to send it to the Lakota Sioux indigenous people in South Dakota, or to put it on a plane to send it to our special place in Guatemala. I knew it, because I have been there to watch the stuff being loaded onto United States Air Force jets at the Youngstown Air Reserve Base in Vienna, Ohio, and I have been there to watch the stuff off loaded from those same jets at the Guatemalan Air Force base in Guatemala City, Guatemala.

This past March, I was with Kathy and a group of Mission of Love volunteers in Guatemala. We were in the mountains, planning to work on projects there for the Mayan people, and we knew that there was a plane load of supplies due to be delivered to the air force base in a few weeks. We were out in the countryside with sporadic Wi-Fi, and, we had little idea of what was happening in the country that we had left only four days before.

On our third day in the country, a Friday, Kathy received word that due to the corona virus, the plane with the supplies wasn't coming as planned. I didn't get it. Why were things being changed because of the flu? On our fourth day in Guatemala, still pretty oblivious, we were having lunch in a restaurant, and planning an evening get together with friends. We were unaware that the world was spinning out of control. Kathy called a friend to invite him to join us for dinner. That is when we learned that the president of Guatemala was closing the airport to all incoming flights from the United States. I knew that meant that outgoing flights were going to be cancelled as well. We had to leave, and quickly!

We were back in Guatemala City on that very night. We had confirmed reservations on a Delta Flight on Thursday. We were going home, and I thought that we were golden. We weren't.

Kathy went right to work early [Sunday morning](#), and booked flights on Spirit Airlines for the following day. I wasn't crazy about buying tickets on another airline when we had confirmed reservations, but I trusted my wife. She, of course, was right again. As it turns out, Delta cancelled the flight on Thursday and we would have been stuck. Our flight on Spirit was the last scheduled flight out, and we got the last two seats.

We arrived home early [Tuesday morning](#), and grabbed a few hours sleep. I was determined that MY life was not going to change just because politicians were having hissy fits. The morning started routinely. Kathy asked me what I was doing and I said that I was going to the office. It was St Patrick's Day. I put on a green sweater. We weren't ready for the new reality. It didn't take me long to find out.

I don't have to tell you what happened in our country in March, 2020. People were suddenly sick and dying, and some people thought that it was a hoax. The rest of us, including me, were terrified. In the meanwhile, medical personnel didn't have the necessary supplies to deal with the influx of very sick people coming into the emergency rooms, and going to the ICU, and too often, to the morgue. The hospitals needed PPE, personal protective equipment such as gowns, gloves, and cleaning solutions, and there was none available.

The president made a speech, and the governor closed the state. I wasn't going to court in the morning anymore, but Kathy was certainly going to the Warehouse. So, I went with her. I suddenly had time on my hands.

She had stuff, lots of stuff that she had been gathering, day in and day out at that warehouse. It was already organized on pallets and shrink wrapped, awaiting transport to either South Dakota, or Guatemala. It was hard to tell

what it was because there are no lights at the warehouse, but using a flashlight we found gowns, gloves, cleaning solutions, bouffant hats, and shoe coverings.

A wonderful friend who knows things told us about a small country hospital that services a small town, as well as migrant farm workers from Guatemala, and prisoners from a nearby federal prison. The farm workers and prisoners were particularly susceptible to the virus.

Kathy filled her white “grammy” van with supplies and headed to the hospital. She did this for consecutive days. People in business suits came out to the sidewalk and helped unload the van. They were very grateful. They took Kathy’s picture and told her that when it was all over that they would say something in the newspaper. The supplies were needed, and appreciated.

By the fourth day, local service organizations began to make cash donations to the hospital as well. The service organizations took pictures handing checks to the people in the suits and sent them to the newspaper. I was irritated, still am. I know how much hard work goes into collecting and storing those precious medical supplies. Kathy told me that it didn’t matter because people needed help. I needed to get over myself.

The reason that I am telling you this, is because every workday, this grandmother that I married, goes out and collects stuff. Then she puts it in a cold dark warehouse. Eventually, the stuff winds up where it helps to save lives. This time the stuff found itself in the hands of doctors and nurses who didn’t have any of it because the somebody wasn’t paying attention and didn’t notice that a pandemic was about to hit the world.

We all wait for the time when life will be more like it was. When that happens, if that happens, I know that the Mission of Love warehouse will again begin to fill up with stuff and that somebody, somewhere, will benefit because of it. Just because somebody that I know cares about the world around her.

Bob Price

