

# PERSPECTIVE



NASA

American astronaut Christina Koch, shown here in June 2019 inside the vestibule between a cargo craft and the module of the International Space Station, recently returned from nearly 11 months on board the space station and was asked for advice for those of us trying to survive lockdown here on Earth.

## Cooking from my pantry and what I'll miss about self-isolating

BY MARGARET HAWKINS

Astronaut Christina Koch, recently returned from nearly 11 months on board the International Space Station, was asked if she had any advice for those of us trying to survive lockdown here on Earth. She said when she felt cooped up and missed the feeling of wind on her face she tried to focus on what she'd miss about space when she got home — views of cosmic auroras stretching into infinity, for instance.

Also trying to look on the bright side, I made a list of what I'll miss about quarantine. It includes things like not having to worry about whom to hug, permission to drag my ill-mannered dog away from other dog walkers with a wave and a smile before he has a chance to embarrass me, and the reduced likelihood of dying in a fiery car crash. The No. 1 thing I like about lockdown, though, is what everyone is calling *Cooking from Your Pantry*, which is just what I call cooking.

I understand, to spruce up this idea for the daily news feed it's necessary to act like it's something fresh when for most of us it's not. Personally, after years of being terrorized by foodies and searching for (or feeling guilty about not searching for) obscure ingredients, I feel my time has come. Even Sam Sifton, food editor at The

New York Times, who says recipes are like sheet music, admits that some music allows for interpretation and devotes Wednesdays to recipe-less meals.

What a relief. I like cooking without recipes, or when I'm really trying, getting halfway through, then going rogue. I'm prone to experiment, and I'm not above slipping humble replacements into otherwise fancy food. I love to use stuff up.

I inherited this last trait from my father who, if he were here now, would get an A+ in *Cooking from Your Pantry*, never having thrown out a morsel of non-rancid food in his life. He loved to cook, and particularly he loved to remake leftovers. Eat it now or eat it later, reinvented — that was his kitchen policy. Or rather it was his lifelong campaign, born of equal parts frugality, creativity, salesmanship and stubbornness. He called leftovers “meals in progress.”

I think about my father a lot now, how he would have handled this situation. (He would have scoffed at the word “crisis.”) My father was born at home in 1917. The next year his mother gave birth to his younger sister, Maybelle, at the height of the Spanish flu pandemic in the town's newly built hospital, then fell ill with the deadly flu. Since all visitors were banned, my grandfather scaled the hospital wall and climbed in her window. My grand-

mother sent him home — for ingredients so she could make herself a healing poultice. She lived another 50 years.

Now that's cooking from your pantry. My brother points out it's too bad she didn't pass the recipe down to us, though it occurs to me it might have been her do-it-yourself attitude as much as the particular ingredients that did the trick.

That's what I like about this kind of cooking, that exhilarating DIY feeling. Every time I make something I make something up. It's like art, being the little god of a world you create. I made a one-pan dinner the other night (not including a boost from the microwave). I threw together aging Brussels sprouts with frozen meatballs, half of an onion that had seen better days, a wilting carrot, one potato and a box of less-than-fresh mushrooms. I added some soy sauce and red wine, butter and oil. The results? Not a cosmic aurora but, as my father, patron saint of adaptability, might have said, not too shabby either.

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### VOICE OF THE PEOPLE

#### R. Kelly editorial misses mark

We were disheartened with the editorial (“Why, even now, defendant R. Kelly belongs in custody,” April 24) regarding the New York court's decision to deny R. Kelly's bail, which the Tribune Editorial Board linked to U.S. District Chief Judge Rebecca Pallmeyer's decision in Chicago to grant a different detainee bail. The editorial board entirely missed the point, as well as an opportunity to educate the public.

The Metropolitan Correctional Center in Chicago, where both detainees were then being housed, is in crisis. The number of detainees and MCC personnel stricken with COVID-19 has risen exponentially, and the virus will continue to rage there in light of its conditions, coupled with its lack of an effective response. The MCC has no idea of the rate of actual infection, and social distancing at the MCC is impossible.

Mr. Kelly, and all MCC detainees and personnel, are at serious risk of unnecessarily suffering through a painful and prolonged illness and facing the prospect of death. It is of paramount importance to protect pretrial detainees like Mr. Kelly, not only because they have not yet gone to trial and are presumed innocent, but also because morality requires it. The MCC cannot protect them, which is why Mr. Kelly requested limited release, under terms of home confinement and electronic monitoring, at least until the pandemic passes.

For those same reasons, the Tribune's attack upon Judge Pallmeyer's decision to grant a different detainee bail was gratuitous and again missed the primary issue — whether the MCC could adequately protect him. Judge Pallmeyer is highly respected — here and nationally — and it is well known that she never issues a ruling without a complete and thoughtful analysis. Instead of putting forth easy, headline-grabbing material in the form of an editorial, the editorial board and the Tribune would have better served its readers by reporting on the crisis at the MCC and thus explaining the context for these two bail motions.

— Steve Greenberg and Mike Leonard, counsel for R. Kelly

#### Reporting of woman's death

The family of Renee Mounia-Stuckey is deeply disappointed by the article “Data disparity and death” (April 11) with respect to the misinformation reported regarding her final days.

In the story on Page 1, reporters wrote that “doctors were never able to say what happened to her, according to her family,” and they wrote that Tariq El-Amin, husband of Mounia-Stuckey's stepsister, said that her death was possibly an undiagnosed case of COVID-19, with the implication that it was likely transmitted by her stepdaughter.

These statements were irresponsible. The fact is doctors indeed communicated Mounia-Stuckey's condition and prognosis to close family members during her hospitalization, and leading up to the days of her death. El-Amin was not present for these discussions.

That El-Amin joined the National Black Muslim Covid Coalition and that the writers want to bring attention to the plight of African Americans suffering from COVID-19 and inequities in health care are commendable. However, failure to fact-check and the use of Mounia-Stuckey's last days to add color or credibility to the article are heart-breaking.

— Joan A. Miller, Chicago

#### False fears over mail-in voting

It's puzzling my fellow Glen Ellynite Dan Schuchardt has “serious concerns about our ability to prevent substantial voter fraud” if we go to mail-in voting this November (“Concerns about mail-in voting,” April 21). Is he unaware that mail-in voting is the primary procedure in five states and can be accessed in 28 others with no cause required? Oregon has sent out 100 million mail-in votes since 2000. There was documented voter fraud in just 12 cases.

Schuchardt also ignores the pressing need for mail-in voting this November. “Sounds like a good idea, especially in these times,” as he writes, drastically understates the voting crisis we'll face if, as predicted by top U.S. virus experts, we're hit with a double whammy of COVID-19 and seasonal flu this fall.

Schuchardt doesn't detail the cause of his concern. But President Donald Trump's statement that with high “levels of voting ... you'd never have a Republican elected in this country again,” provides a clue.

— Walt Zlotow, Glen Ellyn

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## Get ready for discrimination based on coronavirus immunity

BY JONATHAN TURLEY

Antibody tests that aim to show whether a person has been exposed to the coronavirus and presumably has immunity are expected to flood the market very soon. Such tests, if accurate, could help us understand the spread of the virus and the extent of immunity in the society as well as determine who can safely go back to work.

Much is still unknown about the level of antibodies needed to make a person immune, and most blood tests have not been reviewed by the government for accuracy. But once reliable tests are broadly available, this public health breakthrough could trigger some difficult legal questions. The country may soon have to deal with a new concept of bias: antibody- or immunity-based discrimination.

Economic recovery in this pandemic will occur only to the degree that people feel safe if they venture into public spaces such as airplanes, trains, restaurants and shopping malls. With a vaccine still at least a year away, antibody tests could be used to divide the population into those who are presumed to have immunity and the potentially contagious. If you are in the latter group, the question is whether you can be denied certain services.

It is not as far-fetched as you might think. Take the airlines. Social distancing on an airplane is not economically viable. One solution is to require an antibody blood test before boarding a flight. In mid-April, Emirates airline, based in Dubai, said it screened passengers flying to Tunisia from Dubai International Airport with rapid antibody tests for the coronavirus infection before departure. Germany and Italy are considering issuing certificates to people who have immunity after their lockdowns are relaxed.

Our legal system is poorly suited for discrimination based on antibodies. Constitutional and statutory protections against discrimination have focused on characteristics like race, religion and national origin as well as gender, sexual orientation and other classifications. The

changeable status of a person's immunity from a virus doesn't fit legal tests that prohibit discrimination based on more immutable characteristics.

The other area of relevant law covers quarantine powers in a pandemic. Those laws and cases, however, focus on confining the contagious, not the susceptible population.

The issue could become more acute once we have a coronavirus vaccine. Putting aside the logistics of making a vaccine available to more than 300 million people, some people will fail to get vaccinated. The virus will be able to take hold in that population until herd immunity is achieved and keeps the disease in check.

There are three ways to maximize immunization. First, make it mandatory. Second, convince people that they need it. Third, give them an incentive to comply with or a disincentive to opt out of vaccination.

State mandatory vaccination laws were upheld by the Supreme Court in a 1905 case, *Jacobson v. Massachusetts*, involving a smallpox vaccination program. The court ruled that such a mandate was fully within the state's power to protect public health and the safety of its residents. In the coronavirus crisis, Congress could fund a national vaccinations program but leave mandatory compliance orders to the states.

The second option, voluntary compliance, is likely to bring in a great majority of the public. A deadly pandemic helps. Of course, there will continue to be a percentage of people who simply do not believe the virus will touch them, or that faith or youth will protect them.

That leaves the third option. If people face government-imposed limitations on travel, employment or schooling, they would have an incentive to choose vaccination.

Some may raise religious or other constitutional rights to refuse a vaccine. But the states have a strong argument that this situation is not the same as exercising a religious decision that does not harm others. By not complying, individuals are

fueling the spread of the disease to others, particularly more vulnerable populations.

The Supreme Court ruled in 1922 that a city does not violate equal protection under the Constitution by denying school to students who refused to be vaccinated. And in 1944 in *Prince v. Massachusetts*, the court ruled that a parent cannot make a religious liberty claim in refusing compulsory vaccination for his child, because “the right to practice religion freely does not include liberty to expose the community or the child to communicable disease or the latter to ill health or death.”

A state coronavirus vaccination program would be able to rely on these well-established legal precedents. At the federal level, Congress could encourage state mandates by tying federal funds to stricter state laws so long as they are not so coercive as to commandeer the states. Whether private businesses such as airlines could also make vaccination or immunity a condition for customers remains a question. Airlines, for example, are part of a regulated industry and could face difficulty in unilaterally imposing such conditions without federal approval.

Congress could set limits on interstate travel, and the Transportation Security Administration could impose entry requirements through security gates. But the impact on individuals could be significant, and to make such a system work, there would have to be easy proof of immunization or vaccination, perhaps something like an immunization passport.

In the end, the federal and state governments may decide to accept a certain level of noncompliance. If this is a slowly mutating virus, a second wave may be manageable with the therapeutics and ramped-up testing and contact tracing. However, if the country wants to impose a mandatory program, it will have to figure out whether it wants to divide the population between the immune and nonimmune.

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