



# **A Cure for COVID-19**

**Story by: Michael Hilger, Emeriti  
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*After earning a PhD, I taught in the UWEC English department for many years ago until I retired quite a few years ago. When COVID-19 hit, I became a hermit and took refuge in TV, mystery novels and listening to popular songs of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This kept me safe and allowed me to escape the everyday sad news, but it came with a price. I became hooked on cozy romantic shows like Firefly Lane, and I developed a taste for Perry Como and Doris Day songs. After years of teaching close analysis of texts, whether they be literary works or films, I abandoned most of what I learned when sitting in an easy chair reading a detective novel or watching movies on TV. This did help me avoid COVID-19, but it also filled me with doubts about myself and the price I was paying. Was I becoming just a superficial, sentimental person, or was I developing senile dementia?*

*After deciding that my mind was still working, I chose to give it a rest by staying put in my easy chair and completely giving in to TV, mystery novels, and all those nice old songs on Alexa.*

*Soon never-ending Netflix TV grabbed me with movies in which the death of a hero, or young lovers overcoming seemingly impossible obstacles left me gushy, even though the sleeping part of my brain would have known that those stories are standard patterns in such shows. I also started to live more in the past when watching a TV series like Cobra Kai, which brought me back to the good old days of the original Karate Kid and dreams of the old romantic struggles.*

*So, how did I finally manage this trade-off between escaping COVID-19 and surrendering to those old-fashioned emotions?*

*The answer turned out to be easy. As time went on, and I got tired of life in an easy chair and ventured out to take my turn in the vaccination line. That got me moving and my mind woke up. Then I remembered what I had learned about living a thoughtful, active life, and I forgot the temptation of that easy chair. If you experienced anything like what I did as an old-timer, hopefully you, as young-timers and middle-timers, will take you place in the vaccination lines, and then remember yourself and what you learned before COVID-19.*

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**Artist: Sierra Lomo, Instructional Designer  
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Sierra Lomo is an illustrator and fine artist based in Wisconsin. They received their BFA in Illustration from UWEC (2018) and their MFA in Illustration Practice from the Maryland Institute College of Art (2020). Themes important to their work include health and health care, nature, and identity. See more of Sierra's work on Instagram @Sierrmo.

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