

COVID 1 Year Later



People ask me all the time how we are coping with the pandemic. It has its positives and negatives for sure. Now that we are one year into this, I thought I'd give you some insight into our world.

Our New Offices are Open

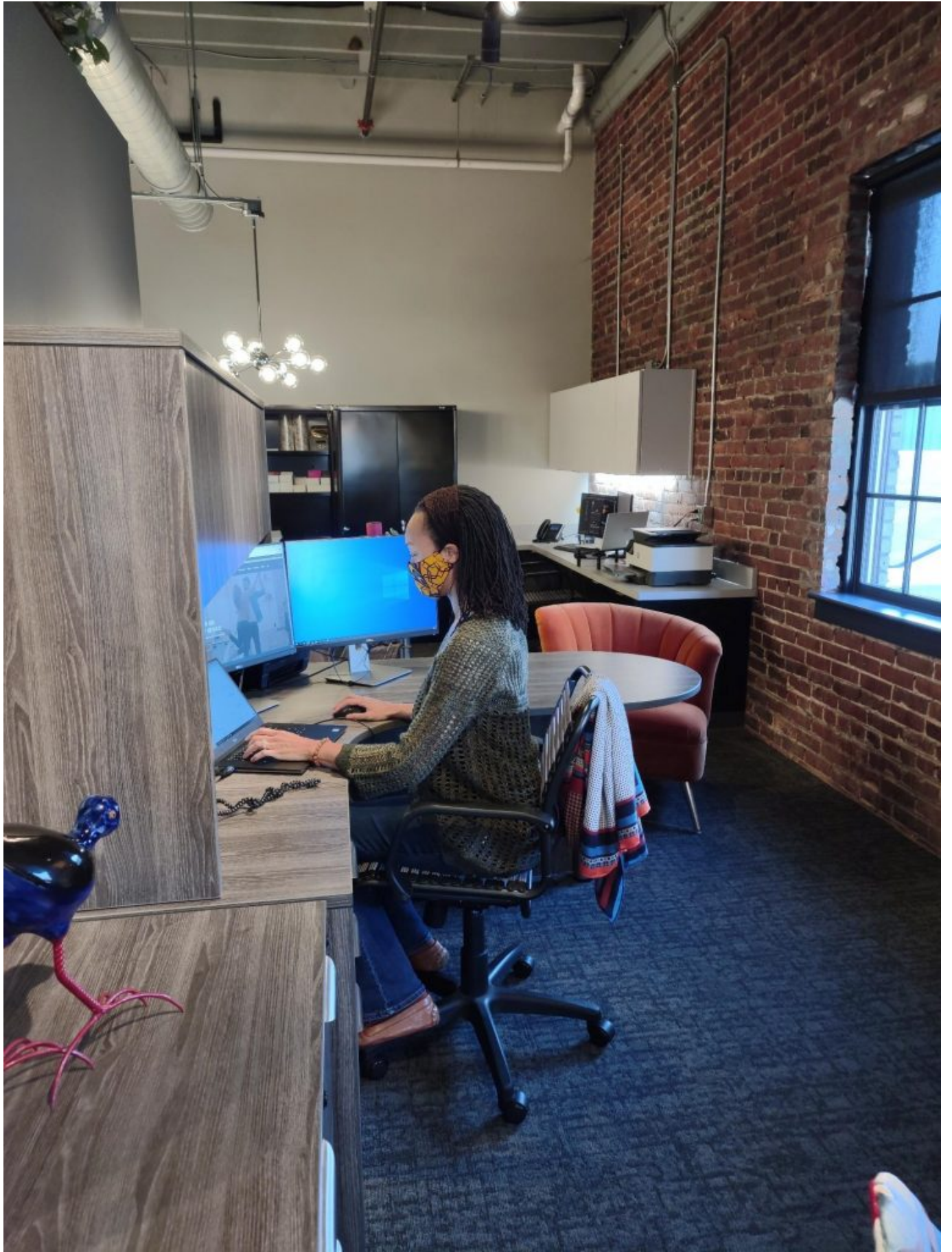
For the first 7 months of the pandemic, our shipping department operated out of our garage. We had to leave our temporary offices behind and set up shop remotely. Our brave and dedicated staff put up with working on folding tables. They made it through the summer months with the help of a portable air conditioner. Of course, the dress code was relaxed completely. Casual doesn't begin to describe it when you come to work in shorts and a tank top.

The building of our new offices was over a year behind, but they finally completed the project in October. Depending on the circumstances some folks are working part of the time remotely and others are in the office. I "accidentally" designed a socially distanced office. Everyone has plenty of room to stay away from each other and we wear our masks if we are going to be closer. The building is mostly vacated at the moment with other

companies working from home, so we feel pretty safe. And it's a lot nicer than working out of a garage!







We Got a New Kitty!

On the personal side, many of you know that our 20-year-old cat, Tattoo, died in July. By the end of August, I was ready for new life in the house to join our other cat Titan. We went to the rescue society and picked out Chooey. We named him after the Chattanooga Choo Choo, the historic old railway terminal, which is now a hotel and entertainment complex covering 30 acres. We live right behind the complex.

Chooey has been a COVID dream. He's a perfect distraction from the frustrating parts of a pandemic on a daily basis. He came to us at 2.5 pounds. Now he's up to 7 pounds of boundless energy. He and Titan have become best buddies. They sleep together, groom, and play. Titan has lost weight just because Chooey is around to keep him moving.



Chooey has decided he needs to help in the kitchen. He will sit on the door of the dishwasher as you load it and see if maybe there's a spoon he can lick in the silverware tray. That's not so bad but we have had a challenge in teaching him how to stay off the kitchen counter. I've raised cats for decades so I know eventually, he will comply.

My Mask

Early on in the pandemic, I wrote a column complaining about my mask. I had a hard time with the mask riding up into my eyes. If I looked down my mask would literally get in my eyes. On more than one occasion it scratched my contact lens and I'd have to replace it. Frustrating. You would think I'd do something about it.

I had heard that the surgical masks I had were the best short of a KN95 and those were not available then. I figured I had to muddle through. We ordered them very early on and in those days, you had to order 250- minimum. I figured I had masks that would last me a lot longer than the pandemic.

Then I got smarter. Only took me 9 months but I finally got online and typed in "masks for people with small faces." And voila! Took me a few orders to find one that fits but it's way worth the \$14 it cost me. I ordered some KN95 masks too; now that you can get them. They are too big for me, so my husband is wearing those.



TV

People all over the country have become extraordinary couch potatoes. We are no different, but we don't really have that many hours of the day to watch TV. We start off our evening catching up on the news. I watch more of that than necessary. With all the cable news networks you can get lost in all the politics 24/7.

There are other things we are watching. One thing I was determined to do is watch documentaries so I would learn something. The first one we watched was Ken Burn's long explanation of the Civil War. Since we moved to the South, I thought it would do me good to learn about the battlefields surrounding our area – and more. That took weeks to watch.

We have watched several more documentaries on different topics. One highlight for me was one on the history of the Bee Gees. I'm

not ALL news and weather.

We turned Friday nights into Stand-Up Comedy Night. We curl up in the den with our dinner and watch a new stand-up performer each Friday. I have discovered new comics I never knew existed! And some good ones! When I want something short on a different day, I am hooked on Comedians in Cars Getting Coffee. I'm even something of a car nut so that's attractive to me. And you can't beat Seinfeld for funny.

Cooking

I've done 365 days of cooking. The Plan Z website has been a beneficiary of that. I have posted quite a few new recipes. I've shared them with our ArcaMax newsletter readers too. Haven't been to a restaurant since March 15, 2020. I miss that a lot but I read that you increase your chances of getting COVID by 50% when you eat out. I've done curbside pick-up a few times but I've never been a fan of food in a bag. Never tastes as good as when it's served in the restaurant. Lots of folks in Tennessee don't seem to be taking the mask-wearing thing very seriously, either. Unless it's mandated you see only about 50% wearing masks. And don't get me started on the local dog park. No one wears a mask at that place. I'm glad I don't own a dog.

Travel

We have only taken a couple of day drives on the weekends. It's a nice way to get out of the house but we only go maybe an hour in one direction, drive around some town, and then drive home. My husband has not been on a plane since last March. He used to travel up to 225 days a year. His new nickname is Velcro because he's always with me. It's nice that we get along so well. A trip to Target is a trip for us right now. In business, Zoom meetings dominate the activity.

Change

We were talking the other day about how our lives have changed since the beginning of the pandemic. Our associate Jessica talked about how much she has appreciated slowing down, and taking stock in what's important.

Take time to smell the flowers. The daffodils are popping up here in Tennessee. Spring can't be far off.

Cheers,