

Since March 14, 2020, I've had roommates. Not a thing I would have expected my 56-year-old self to say. Almost 17 months of sharing living space.

In less than two weeks, I'm on my own again.

One daughter – the younger – having left the dirty inconvenience of New York as the pandemic first raged to return to it again during “lockdown” for six months then exit once more, has designed a fulfilling life here, much to my delight. She secured a challenging and rewarding job and adopted two very tiny kittens. Her new world extends beyond her childhood bedroom, so she moved into her own apartment on the other side of Forsyth Park.

The older one, subject to remote-work restrictions, has been in Savannah most of the time since two St. Patrick's Days ago. A few months back, she migrated from our main building to the carriage house, a small physical distance but a meaningful and essential change for her. Still, a bit too close for this moment, as difficult as it is to concede. She's 26; her office will soon reopen; she continues to advance professionally; her local social options are limited; so, she is heading to Washington, D.C., in 10 days.

Their mother and I expended significant energy and resources to ensure they'd leave – perhaps for somewhere far away – when college, and whatever comes after, called. Now, just eight years removed from the first freshman move-in, I'd do (just about) anything to keep them here forever. Which might be selfish or unfair, but – maybe – awesome, too.

There was a period – several months in length – when the three of us shared the main house, our sleeping arrangements just as they were when the girls were in high school, minus their mom – them: each with her own room on the top floor; me: the too-loud TV playing all night long, one level below. We ran into each other regularly during a typical day. They exercised together in the dining room. We ate in the kitchen. We shopped for each other. We took long walks.

Lately, I barely see the older. My office is right below her bedroom in the carriage house, so I hear her footfalls when I'm working (She's padding about as I type). We texted about a clever cable series across the courtyard last night. Despite her tendency towards aloofness (inherited, I'm afraid), her proximity – as irrational as this might seem – enables me to affirm, if only telepathically, how precious she is to me. I'm sure my intentions don't translate, and I come off as annoying, with each of my faults magnified up close. But she is my girl; they are my girls; and nothing feels both so indescribable and profound.

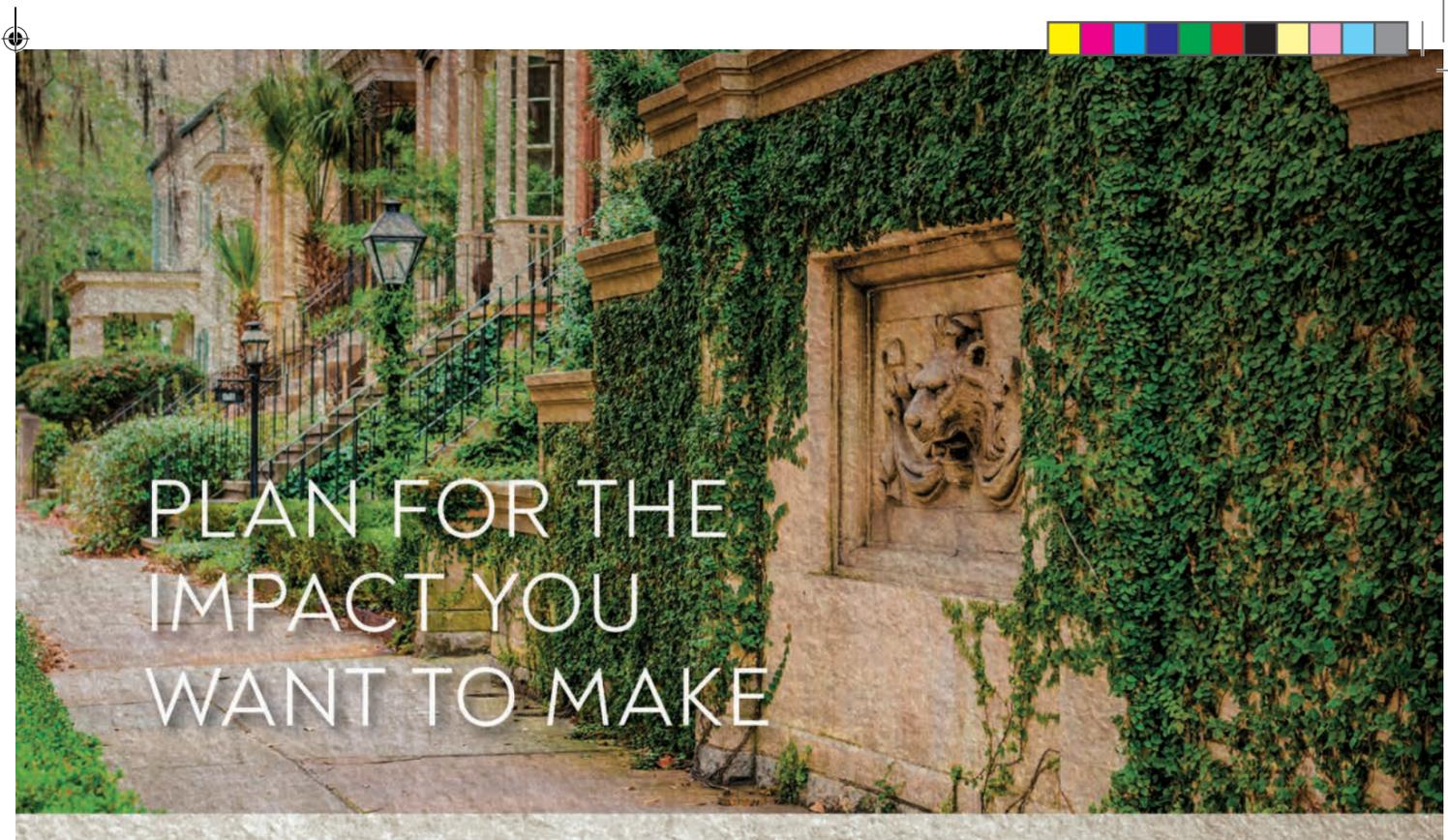
I'll miss my roommates...I already do. For now, I'll manage the house solo. They're welcome back anytime (“delta” variant shutdowns and subsequent federal handouts, anyone?). If/when my kids have kids, I have plenty of room to provide ad hoc daycare. And I hope to see those yet-to-be-born little ones nearly every one of those future-days, at least until it's time for them to move away, too.

Scott A. Lauretti



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