

Make Me Smart August 13, 2021 transcript

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Meghan McCarty Carino: I should start recording, shouldn't I?

Kimberly Adams: That would probably be good. I bet everybody would appreciate that in post.

Kimberly Adams: Oh, hello, everyone. I'm Kimberly Adams, welcome back to Make Me Smart where we try to make today make sense.

Meghan McCarty Carino: And I am Meghan McCarty Carino joining you today from my very special pantry closet studio. It's happy hour Friday, also known as economics on tap and the live stream is up and running. Thank you to everyone for joining wherever you are finding us, whether it's the podcast or via the live YouTube stream.

Kimberly Adams: Yes, and I have to say for those who cannot see Meghan because you're listening to the podcast, the, the pantry angle is pretty awesome. And you know, everybody gets to see a snapshot of where we are. I'm in my bedroom. Meghan's in her pantry. This is our pandemic life. What are you drinking?

Meghan McCarty Carino: I am drinking a little G&T. It's, it's pretty warm in my little pantry over here. So I went for something cool and refreshing. It's with some gin from a local distillery, LA distillery. It's called Mulholland gin, a very delicate gin that I'm drinking with elderflower tonic. What about you?

Kimberly Adams: That's pretty fancy. Gin is the devil. I'm drinking Cabernet.

Meghan McCarty Carino: Gin is definitely my most, it's on my top, top of the list. Wow. Gin is the devil. Okay, I know where we stand.

Kimberly Adams: Alright. Let's see what everybody else is drinking. Brett has a bourbon and diet Coke. Matthew Carroll from St. Louis I saw earlier has carbonated water and high contact and contact high IPA. And yes, I see the comments on the full glass because it's Friday.

Meghan McCarty Carino: Fill her up!

Kimberly Adams: I love it. I hope everyone is having a good Friday I see Bacardi on the rocks in Discord. I hope everybody is having a nice relaxing Friday, able to wind down, whether it's the

end of your week or midway through your week if you're working on the weekend. So, you know, we made it.

Meghan McCarty Carino: It's still happy hour. No matter what. Are you going to start off today with the news, gonna do the news today first?

Kimberly Adams: Yeah, I mean, I've got a quick hit. And then one that is pretty related to what you got. So I will just acknowledge the fact that the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, aka NOAA, who has recently issued a thunderstorm warning here in DC where I am right now, also sent out a notice today that it's official, July was Earth's hottest month on record. So it's not just climate change. It's global warming. And we're all dealing with the consequences. Shout out to everybody in Oregon and the Northwest dealing with yet another heatwave.

Meghan McCarty Carino: Another one, yeah.

Kimberly Adams: They, I saw a story today that here in DC we have this hiking trail called the Billy Goat trail which I overestimated my abilities one day and went ahead and hiked it but it was a lot for me. But apparently they're telling people it's too hot to hike it because they keep having to rescue people from this trail for heat exhaustion. So yes, hottest month on record. And yeah.

Meghan McCarty Carino: And this is not like, one percent or one degree—I know. My pantry, I'm gonna say, is, it's like 10 degrees over normal in the pantry. But the IPCC report, right? It's like we're, we're not even at one and a half degrees Celsius yet, we're like, this is the type of warming we're having at the baby step up. Yeah.

Kimberly Adams: But it's gonna get worse. Speaking of getting worse, onto COVID. You know, I have to say there's a reason that Ed Yong at the Atlantic won a Pulitzer that I mean, such a good writer, such amazing work writing about the pandemic, and he has yet another amazing piece out called "How the Pandemic Now Ends," basically looking at given the Delta variant and everything we know now, what the next stages of the pandemic are gonna look like, how we can prepare for it with the optimistic outlook is, what's realistic. And just heading into the weekend, you know, I've started feeling some kind of way when friends are inviting me to parties, and when I hang out, and I'm just like, hmm, I don't know. And it was a very nice piece to read to just really feel like I had a wide-ranging assessment of where we are, and that, it made me really smart. And I was very grateful for that. So that's one thing. And then I also noticed this CNBC piece that talked about sort of the divide that is deepening in this country between the vaccinated and the unvaccinated and what those two groups can and cannot do, and that it's really causing some, some additional societal divide, because it was, you know, like, okay, if you choose not to get vaccinated, you're just harming yourself. But now we have information that you're harming everyone. And people are making really tough decisions. I mean, I know somebody who just stopped working with their hairdresser who they'd been going to for, like, 20 years because she doesn't want to get vaccinated. And people are gonna start not being able to travel or go on certain vacations or to go on restaurants.

Meghan McCarty Carino: Go in restaurants, yeah.

Kimberly Adams: It's, it's a lot. So those are my two. And I think that segues pretty quickly into yours.

Meghan McCarty Carino: Well I, yeah, I mean, I really just wanted to second that Ed Yong piece if you have not checked it out. Anything Ed Yong writes is like, right in that making you smart kind of, kind of vibe there.

Kimberly Adams: Oh, I'm sorry, I have to interrupt because Adam in the YouTube chat points out it's Friday the 13th, which we totally didn't even notice.

Meghan McCarty Carino: Why?! Why did you have to point that out? I had blocked it from my mind. And now it's right there. Now I'm just like, okay. Thanks so much, Adam. Okay, back, back on track. I don't have, you know, the sword of Damocles hanging over me right now. Just think straight. Yeah, no, I feel like we're in this phase of the pandemic now, probably we should have anticipated a little bit more, but it's almost like the very beginning of the pandemic again, it's like April, May 2020, where we're sorting out how to navigate risk. And we're in this new landscape where we're just not totally sure how to navigate risk. And, you know, as in that Ed Yong piece, you know, we're hopefully going to get to a point of endemicity, where, you know, the, the pandemic does end by becoming endemic. And it's no longer like this front and center thing in our lives. It's just kind of one of, the one of the other background things happening in our human condition, which is full of worries and risks and anxieties, but it's an, it's just one of many, instead of the main one, but right now, it is very much still the main one, which leads me to, I wanted to bring back up something we talked about last week, because I feel like the discourse is changing pretty fast around it. And that is the idea of booster shots. Today, the committee that advises the CDC approved booster shots for immunocompromised, or you know, recommended that the CDC recommend booster shots for the immunocompromised. And, you know, I just think this is a first step in, in kind of like this, this discussion, moving this discourse forward of kind of what's the next thing, booster shots are on the horizon. Yes, right now, I think the science is still very much out as to the degree to which third shots will be of a major benefit for those who are not immunocompromised, they may raise neutralizing antibodies, as the previous shots did up to a certain level, but whether that will provide sterilizing immunity or long-term immunity from infection, I think it's still unclear. But, I mean, just the fact that, that it's being talked about, and it's being studied, despite all of the things that we talked about last week, all of the ethical issues with the supply of vaccine and the fact that I think less than 2% of people in developing world have gotten one dose of vaccine yet, that this, this ball is rolling forward. And I have to say, I have, I've had some impure thoughts. I want a booster! When am I gonna get a booster? I'm not, I am not going to, you know, cross the ethical line. But apparently, according to the CDC, they estimate that a million people have already gone and sort of gotten under the table booster shots at this point. I was reading, you know, some doctors on Twitter one said his patient told them that he went and got two additional doses, which okay people, put the brakes on here, we need a little bit more information. I understand that some of the inequities are

already sort of baked into the system unfortunately. You know, the US has already, has a really big supply of, of these vaccines, the Biden administration has already bought 200 million additional doses for children, which, of which I think there are about 50 million children who, you know, haven't been vaccinated. And so that is almost like the supply that we would need to do third booster shots, and we're seeing, obviously, Israel, we're seeing some, some data from there that seems to, preliminary data, seems to show the vaccine effectiveness going up in the age group that got the third booster shot, but again, really want to stress that the science is not settled here on whether, you know, a temporary boost in neutralizing antibodies from a third shot is really going to be the thing that, you know, that gets us to the next, next station.

Kimberly Adams: Megan O'Hare in the YouTube chat says, you know, something about that, that she just read that a million vaccines have expired in the States, we need to do something with all the extra, and I hadn't thought about that, like is this something that should be done with the vaccines that are about to expire? But at the same time, yeah, I just, I really get caught up in the ethics about our supply and the developing world. But if I can end this on an up note from that Ed Yong piece, there was one quote in there that just--I'll read this one paragraph. "Think of it this way. SARS-CoV2, the virus, causes COVID-19, the disease, and it doesn't have to. Vaccination can disconnect the two. Vaccinated people will eventually inhale the virus but not become severely ill as a result. Some will have nasty symptoms, but recover, many will be blissfully unaware of their encounters." And then here's the quote from one of the scientists that he talked to: "There will be a time in the future when life is like it was two years ago. You run up to someone, give them a hug, get an infection, go through half a box of tissues, and move on with your life." That's where we're headed, we're not there yet.

Meghan McCarty Carino: I literally just got chills when you read that. Oh, my god.

Kimberly Adams: It's great. It's great. I can't recommend the piece enough. But in the meantime, let's play a game.

Meghan McCarty Carino: Alright!

Kimberly Adams: This is half full, half empty, and I'm about almost half full.

Meghan McCarty Carino: I'm actually still more than half full.

Kimberly Adams: Look at you. This is where we give you our predictions on various topics and Drew Jostad is here. What have you got for us, Drew?

Drew Jostad: Are you half full or half empty on the Field of Dreams game?

Kimberly Adams: Half full. It's gimmicky, but I kind of love it.

Meghan McCarty Carino: Yeah, I mean, I, I don't know that much about it other than that it exists. And I'm gonna say half full because it's, who, it's a nice heartwarming thing.

Kimberly Adams: Sorry, there's a boat outside.

Meghan McCarty Carino: Oh, I thought that was like a sound effect Drew was dropping in there. I thought that was like, I thought we were going like, morning radio here.

Kimberly Adams: No, it's like, bad answer, Meghan. And everyone points out that I mispronounced Ed Yong's name, Ed Yong, not Ed Yong. Sorry. Yeah, I think--oh. On that note, yes, the Field of Dreams game, they basically recreated the scene from the movie just for fun. I think Stephanie Hughes, if I'm not mistaken, our colleague did a story on that. And, you know, it's a way to sort of drum up some interest and a lot of people have stopped going to games and so it's, uh, you know, it's, it's just a nice fun thing. I kind of love it. I'm half full.

Meghan McCarty Carino: I mean, why would someone be half empty on that?

Kimberly Adams: And I wonder what other--huh?

Meghan McCarty Carino: Why would someone be half empty on that? I don't know why.

Kimberly Adams: I mean, because it's gimmicky. Maybe. But I also wonder like, what other fictional games do we need to see recreated just for our own entertainment? Drew, do you have any?

Drew Jostad: No. I don't know. I don't know. The whole point was they had the cornfield and everything, right?

Meghan McCarty Carino: Right.

Kimberly Adams: Yeah, yeah, that's true.

Meghan McCarty Carino: If you build it, they will come.

Drew Jostad: And Kevin Costner was there.

Kimberly Adams: Oh, was he?

Drew Jostad: Yeah. Alright. Next topic is micro weddings.

Meghan McCarty Carino: Oh, I'm gonna go half full on that because I had a micro wedding.

Kimberly Adams: Did you really?

Meghan McCarty Carino: It was kind of like a planned elopement with just a very, very small group of, just like my parents, and my two best friends. And same with my husband.

Kimberly Adams: Yeah, I'm guessing this is people getting tired of waiting for non-COVID to get married. And I, we did do a story the other day on Marketplace Morning Report about how like, all the wedding venues are booked up for 2022 and it's super expensive to do anything. So I'm gonna go half full too, I think it's adorbs. And I, you know, good luck to all the couples.

Meghan McCarty Carino: And it's so hard to plan a big wedding right now. Things are in flux still.

Kimberly Adams: Yes, yes. Having had to plan a wedding that got, you know, at some point, you just have to realize it's not about you. Alright, what's the next one?

Drew Jostad: Next topic is universal pre-K.

Kimberly Adams: Half full! All the way full! Is there a particular story?

Drew Jostad: All I have is that the Senate Democrats' \$3.5 trillion spending proposal includes an expansion of federally funded universal pre-kindergarten.

Meghan McCarty Carino: So this is part of the structure of care package, which is maybe not in with the, the infrastructure bill that is already decided on, this is kind of, I think this is kind of further down the road.

Kimberly Adams: Right, this is in the budget resolution, the thing that they could potentially pass in the senate without any Republican support. And there's this big sort of negotiation happening over whether, you know, some of the progressive Democrats are going to hold up the infrastructure bill while they force a vote on the budget reconciliation, and that's going to be playing out over the next couple of weeks. So, you know, maybe it'll end up in—

Meghan McCarty Carino: Outlook on there?

Kimberly Adams: I'm going to go half full, there's a ton of research showing that it makes a huge difference for people and one of the main things sort of holding up our recovery right now is a lack of childcare for many parents, especially low wage workers. Oh, you're the workplace culture reporter, you talk about it!

Meghan McCarty Carino: Yeah, no, I mean, still there, you know, there's, there's this kind of, so many childcare centers closed down during, during the pandemic and have not reopened. There are massive issues with back to school. And if you saw, you know, schools in Mississippi are already closing down, like hundreds of kids are quarantined already. The issue of childcare has not gone anywhere, and if anything, it's almost gotten worse right now.

Kimberly Adams: We have some comments in the YouTube chat about who pays for universal, universal pre-k stuff isn't free, hence, it's in legislation with money attached to it. And also, Jean

Hobbs points out what about all the small businesses that currently provide preschool? It's mostly women. Yeah. Those are all things that would have to be included in some sort of package. How do you? Do you fold those folks into it? Is it a voucher thing? I don't know. And I'd be very interested to find out because there is a lot of data showing that helps kids a lot and low income families in particular. What's the next one?

Drew Jostad: Well, I think we got an idea of how Megan feels about this already. But are you half full or half empty on Friday the 13th?

Meghan McCarty Carino: I mean, I don't want to be superstitious. Uh, but I did have a little bit of trepidation about the show because of that.

Kimberly Adams: As thunder rolls in the background.

Meghan McCarty Carino: But in terms of Jodie Foster movie, I'm gonna go half full.

Kimberly Adams: What?

Meghan McCarty Carino: The old like, Disney movie. Isn't it an old Jodie Foster movie?

Kimberly Adams: Right, right, right, right, right, right, right. Um, I'm half full, I kind of like stuff like that. I used to have a black cat and he was wonderful. I was that kid who would purposefully walk underneath ladders and step on cracks and open umbrellas indoors just to be--I know, right? Half full.

Drew Jostad: That was eight for eight half fulls today.

Meghan McCarty Carino: So how many--I know, that's like—

Kimberly Adams: We have a positive outlook on life! Look at us.

Meghan McCarty Carino: Wow. Yeah.

Kimberly Adams: Okay, I'm here. I'm here for it. Absolutely. Man, that just flew by. Thanks, Drew.

Drew Jostad: Yeah, you're welcome.

Kimberly Adams: Well, that's it for us today. Molly and Kai will be back next week. So you guys are done with me. I hope it's been a lot of fun. I've had fun with Meghan and with Andy, this has been good times for all. They would love to hear from you. And I think that Kai and Molly don't always listen when they're out of town because they're trying to, you know, have a little break. So you may need to update them and you can tattle on us for all the things that we did. If you have a thought on a previous show you want to send them or a question you want to ask, or

maybe you have your own answer to the make me smart question, you can send a voice memo or an email to makemesmart@marketplace.org or you can call us. Our number is 508-827-6278, which is 508-UB-SMART.

Meghan McCarty Carino: I am getting like, there's like sweat dripping down my back at this point. Alright, Make Me Smart is produced by Marissa Cabrera. Today's episode was engineered by Lianna Squillace. Steven Byeon and Catherine Divine produce our favorite game, half full half empty, which today was so very, very full. And they also produce the YouTube live stream.

Kimberly Adams: Right, the senior producer's Bridget Bodnar and the executive director of on demand is Sitara Nieves. And oh, Meghan, there's all sorts of nice notes in the chat for--saying goodbye and stuff. I won't miss

Meghan McCarty Carino: I will miss being in the pantry with you guys.

Kimberly Adams: Debbie says that Meghan is having a Kai in the shed moment.