



Valley High School West Des Moines, Iowa April 24, 2020 Volume 58 Issue 7

SPOTLIGHT

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What is one positive result of the coronavirus situation for you?

President Trump and Congress pass historic \$2.1 trillion Stimulus Bill

By Carsen Codel

On Friday, March 27, President Trump signed a stimulus bill containing over \$2 trillion in relief funds in an effort to help citizens and businesses fight back against the COVID-19 pandemic. The bill was drafted in the Senate, passed in the Senate Thursday, Mar. 26 and passed in the house the next morning.

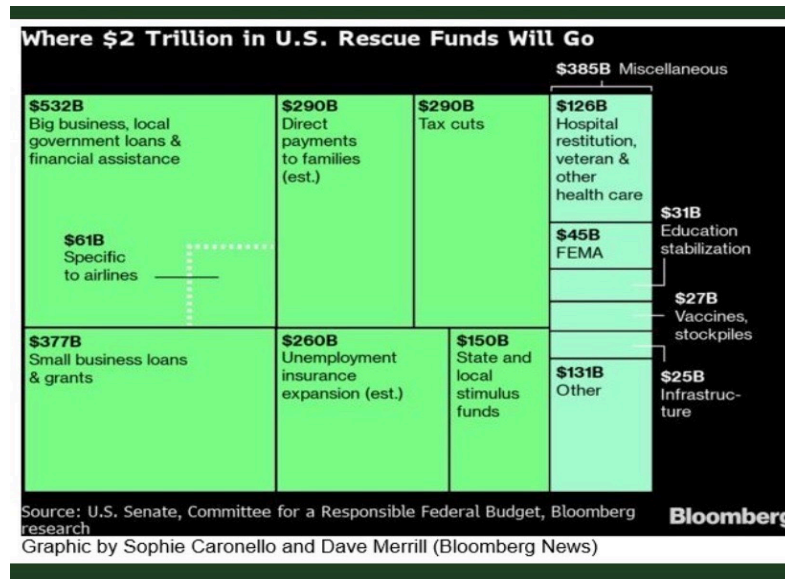
The bill delegates its funds to specific areas. \$532 billion will go to big business through the form of government loans and financial assistance packages. \$61B of that \$532B is specific for airlines, which are struggling right now due to less people flying during the pandemic. \$260B will go to expanding unemployment insurance. \$126B will go to help fund hospitals through the crisis.

One of the most discussed aspects of

the stimulus bill, however, is the estimated \$290B going directly to American families in the form of checks. Adults will receive \$1,200 (\$2,400 for couples). All children under the age of 17 will receive checks for \$500. Whether someone qualifies for a check is determined through means testing; checks would start phasing out at \$75,000 annual income and any adult making more than \$99,000 annually would not qualify. As of the week of April 13, stimulus checks have begun being sent out or deposited into direct deposit accounts.

In addition to delegating funds, the bill suspends all federal student loan payments through Sep. 30. The bill also protects against foreclosures and evictions. Those struggling to keep up with mortgage payments can apply for a federal mortgage loan to help assist with

payments during the pandemic. State officials are also doing what they can to assist their constituents during the pandemic. On March 23, Iowa Governor Kim Reynolds announced the creation of the Iowa Small Business Relief Program, which will provide financial assistance grants ranging from \$5,000-\$25,000 based on a completed application. The program also assists businesses by withholding taxes



Gun sales surge in Asian American populations due to xenophobia

By Sahithi Shankaiahgari

As the coronavirus outbreak continues, racist ideologists are subsisting in our society and creating intense fear and panic in the nation's minority population. Due to this fear, gun shops in Washington and California are experiencing an immense rise in their sales from first-time Asian American buyers.

Since the pandemic began in Wuhan, China, Chinese Americans have experienced a series of racial attacks through social media, bullying and physical harassment. Asian populations are being linked with the virus and the terror it has caused, leading to extreme xenophobia.

In response to this xenophobia, many minorities are fearing for their safety, causing an increase in gun sales in first-time Asian American gun buyers. Even though ethnic Asian populations have low gun ownership rates, this virus has caused such mass panic that numbers are rising.

The threat of coronavirus has the entire nation on edge, forcing stock market prices for gun and ammunition companies such as American Outdoor Brands, Vista Outdoor and Strum, Ruger & Co. to escalate.

After President Donald Trump declared

a national emergency over this epidemic, Americans are fearing the undermining of their rights. During any crisis of uncertainty or despair, our history has shown that people feel as though their rights are being violated. They believe safety is in their own hands, leading to a main factor in firearm transactions.

"Certain things impact ammo sales when people feel their rights may end up infringed, but this is our first experience with a virus leading to such a boost in sales," Alex Horsman, marketing manager of Ammo.com, said in a statement obtained by USA Today.

In addition to the rising gun sales, the FBI has reported a leap in background checks prior to gun purchases. According to CNN, the agency's analyzed data shows a 41% surge in background checks, leading to an overall 3.7 million checks to occur in March, surpassing the previous number set by FBI's National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NCIS) in 1998.

As our country remains in constant fear and panic over COVID-19, issues of xenophobia and racism are arising, leading more and more citizens to feel unsafe.

Economy takes hits amid COVID-19 pandemic

An overview of current economic conditions

By Carsen Codel

As the COVID-19 pandemic worsens daily, many government officials, economists and everyday citizens are eyeing the economy with fear. With social distancing measures leading to closures of restaurants, salons, retail establishments and other businesses deemed “non-essential,” the economy is suffering.

As businesses close and employees are laid off, the unemployment rate appears to be climbing every day. The jobless claims numbers from April 16 report 5.245 million initial claims and 11.976 million continuing claims. Over the past four weeks, 22 millions jobs have been lost at some point. The unemployment rate is likely nearing 18%. This number will continue to rise as large retailers continue to furlough and layoff employees, such as Macy’s and The Gap, and small businesses struggle to survive.

Weekly initial unemployment claims in 2020

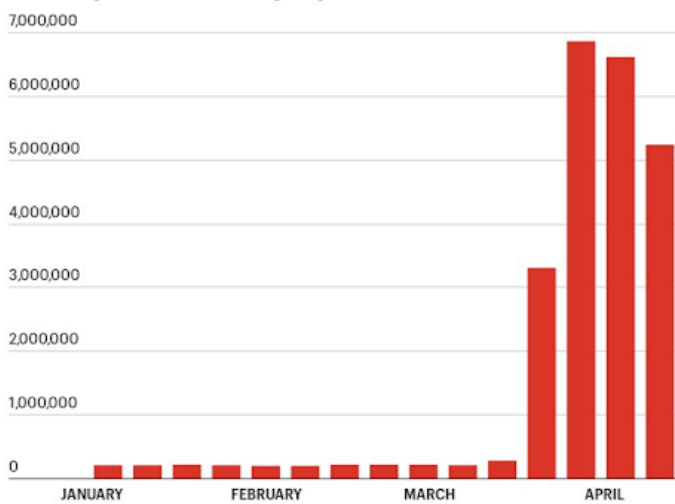


CHART: LANCE LAMBERT - SOURCE: U.S. EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ADMINISTRATION FORTUNE

With many citizens out of work, consumers will be spending less and businesses will lose revenue. This could lead to closures of businesses. Small businesses especially may suffer because of their size; a large chain corporation is better equipped to handle economic struggle. Additionally, big retailers such as Walmart may stay open due to selling “essential” goods, but can also continue selling “non-essential” goods available in-store, outcompeting small business retailers as a result.

Since the end of the Great Recession in 2009, the United States stock market has been on the longest bull run in its history. With the COVID-19 outbreak, though, the run seems to be ending, as the Dow Jones Industrial Average had its worst week ever in mid-March, and the S&P 500 and NASDAQ had their worst weekly performances since the financial crisis in 2008. Year-to-Date, the DOW Jones Industrial average is down 17.52% and the NASDAQ Composite is down -4.9%.

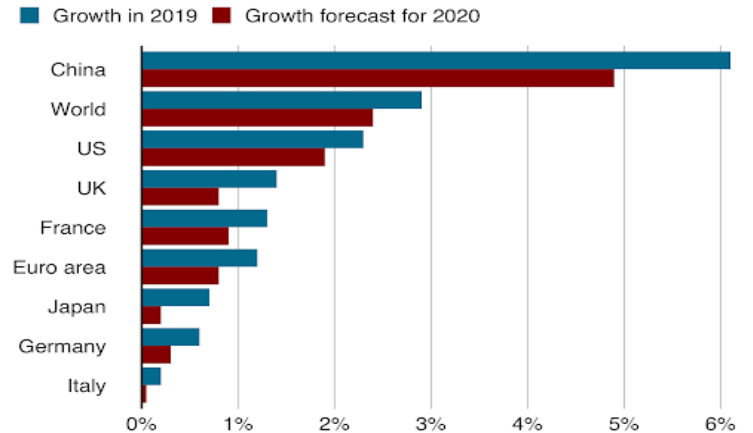
The coupling of high unemployment with business closures could lead to the first recession caused by the service industry, aided by a large drop in consumer spending. Usually, for a recession to take place, a sector of the economy must fail, such as banks, the housing market or important financial institutions. However, no recession or depression has ever had its root cause in the service industry.

Additionally, recessions usually are associated with a refusal for consumers to spend money in certain areas. However, with the pandemic stretching many families finances thin, economic struggles will be rooted in a lack of ability to spend at all.

Given social distancing measures, however, businesses that specialize in person-to-person interactions are being hit the hardest. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) is expecting U.S. GDP growth to slow from about 2.3% to 1.9% for the 2020 fiscal year. This dip in growth is likely to come from businesses whose structure suffers under social distancing standards, resulting in loss revenues. Since consumer spending makes up about two-thirds of the United States’ GDP, a drop in spending will have a large impact on GDP.

OECD downgrades growth forecasts

Economic growth (GDP) expected to slow down in 2020



Source: OECD

BBC

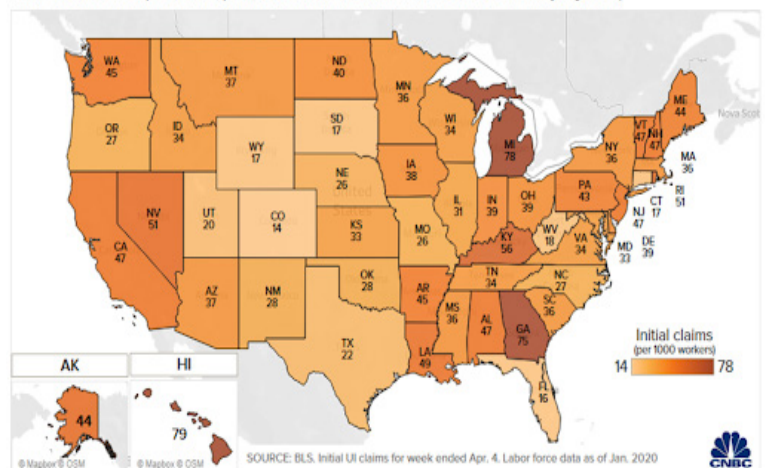
Gig workers, such as Uber drivers and food delivery workers, are also struggling. Because of their unique work situations, it is difficult for them to receive financial assistance through federal and local institutions. However, government officials are working to help ensure every worker has the assistance they need during the pandemic.

The oil industry is suffering as well amid the COVID-19 crisis. Oil prices are reaching all time lows, oil stocks are plummeting, and fossil fuel businesses are struggling as the demand for fuel lowers due to people being stuck at home and avoiding travel. The WTI Crude price has dropped to \$-37.63 per barrel, signifying that demand for oil is so low that oil companies will pay to have their oil taken. WTI Crude is down from \$61.17 at the start of 2020.

Overall, the United States has months of struggle ahead. Many small businesses and “Main Street” stores will close and likely never return. Local economies will be hit the hardest. It appears the US is likely to head into its worst economic period since the Great Recession.

Coronavirus job losses

Here are the the latest week’s initial claims for unemployment, adjusted for the size of each state’s workforce. (Claims in the week ended Apr. 4, 2020, per 1,000 workers in state labor force, not seasonally adjusted.)



Mapbox © OSM

Mapbox © OSM

SOURCE: BLS. Initial UI claims for week ended Apr. 4. Labor force data as of Jan. 2020

CNBC

Staff Editorial: Dear Seniors,

When we left for spring break on March 12th, we didn't think it would be our last day ever. In fact, most of us left in a hurry: impatient for spring break, fantasizing about beaches and sunshine, cherishing a week off amid a busy senior spring. Some of us even forced our parents to call us out early because we "weren't doing anything" in our afternoon classes (guilty).

No matter our plans for the week ahead or even our rising concerns of COVID-19 as it wiped toilet paper from shelves, no one anticipated being done with high school forever.

Once spring break began, many students canceled their trips as COVID-19's threat loomed greater. Some were already canceled, like the orchestra's Italy tour or church service trips.

Gradually, school was postponed and activities like Individual IHSSA state, the

Mock Trial State Tournament, the spring musical, Prom, and the Tigerlillies synchro show were canceled. As school districts across the country transitioned online for the rest of the year, we faced the ultimate disappointment: was our senior year over? Would we never participate in Seniors Come Home or play at our final sports game? Would we not walk across the Knapp Center stage at commencement?

Grappling with this uncertainty causes anxiety and stress. Graduation was supposed to be a reward for everything we've worked for the last twelve years, and it was meant to be celebrated with longtime friends and classmates.

It can be hard to find hope in this situation. So, fellow seniors, it's time to embrace the cheesy inspirational message that probably hung in our elementary school classrooms: It's about the journey, not the destination.

Although we may miss last performances, sports seasons--or even our own commencement--these cancelations don't extract from the fact that we've accomplished and experienced so much in high school.

We need to find fulfillment from within--from the hours of studying, struggling and learning we've experienced the last four years. If we only feel satisfied when someone pats our backs, we'll be miserable in life. As we enter the real world, we won't always achieve an approving nod from our bosses or professors; we'll need to learn to congratulate and validate ourselves.

Still, it's hard to accept that we might never see some of our classmates or teachers again. We yearn for the closure necessary to leave high school and begin our next lives.

We must remember that we're all experiencing the same anger, confusion and sadness. So reach out to friends you don't usually talk to outside of school. Send your teachers thank you emails. Try to put some effort into your online DMACC classes. Facetime your friends (and your enemies).

High School Musical was all the rage our Kindergarten year. As we finish our final year of school, let's remember what it taught us:

We're all in this together.

Keeping up with the Class of 2020 "If you could say one thing to the senior class, what would it be?"

By Regan Day

"In my Advanced World Literature course, we talk about paradox and embracing life dualities. A key idea we see in texts is that the journey is more important than the destination. Seniors may be forfeiting "destinations" like prom, senior parties and graduation, but it's the daily moments we can celebrate. Being out of school is a challenging and important reminder to celebrate what is offered to us each day. That's where meaning is found."
-Ms. Downing

"To my senior classmates, Remember this [time] and keep your head up. We will get through this together. Last year we were all looking forward to walking on the stage and receiving our diplomas with our classmates. Now we need to remember what happened in our senior year and learn from this."
-Sam Martin, '20

"I can't imagine how many emotions you are experiencing right now as you see what should be one of the most exciting times of your life being whittled away due to the Coronavirus. Prom, open houses and graduation parties, Commencement, all are being stolen away. As your principal, I am currently in conversation with other leaders in our school and district trying to brainstorm how we can provide you these once-in-a-lifetime experiences. What we will ask from you is flexibility. Some of these experiences may be virtual, some may be delayed and offered at a later time. We will do our best to provide you as authentic and genuine experience as possible. You have my word."
-Mr. Maxwell

"I would say to my senior students, spend time outside. Even if you just sit outside your house, being in nature can sometimes be the best medicine."
-Mr. Reif

"To my fellow senior class, Although this year did not turn out as planned for any of us, I just wanted to take this opportunity to say that I am so proud of all of you! I am beyond grateful that I, as an exchange student, got to be a part of the class of 2020. You are all so kind, giving and fun to be around. If there is one group of people that can manage to walk away stronger from this whole thing, it's you guys. I mean, we have to, right? Keep being kind, and keep giving to the world around you. We got this."
-Anna Larsen
Foreign Exchange Student, Norway

Spotlight

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Spotlight strives to inform readers of current news and social issues affecting the lives of Valley High School students. Letters to the Editor, guest articles and editorials are highly encouraged but must be submitted to a member of the staff at least one week prior to publication. All letters must be signed with a specific name and not a group. Spotlight reserves the right to edit all letters for space available. Spotlight is a member of the Quill and Scroll Society, the Columbia Scholastic Press Association, the National Scholastic Press Association and the Iowa High School Press Association. Questions or comments about Spotlight may be dropped off in Room 1662 at Valley High School.

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On March 12, 2020 a group of Asian American activists gathered to call out the racism perpetuated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The leaders condemn the actions being taken by society against Asian Americans.

COVID-19 pandemic does not justify racism

Misinformation and fear enables surge of hate crimes against Asian Americans

By Chloe Edwards and Ben Ahlrichs

Stemming from anger and fear of COVID-19, racist comments and attacks threaten the safety of Asians and Asian Americans. Since the outbreak, reported hate crimes towards Asian Americans have skyrocketed to averaging around one-hundred per day in the U.S. alone.

Even during the initial stages of the pandemic, Asian American populations faced economic discrimination through a drastic decline in business. Business owners in Chinatowns say that typically after the Chinese New Year, they experience an increase in foot traffic. Instead, in early February, the opposite occurred.

Although less than 75 cases were confirmed in the U.S. by the end of February, businesses in Chinatown experienced an alarming decrease of business. Oftentimes having no safety net to prevent going bankrupt in times of crisis, small businesses owned by Asian Americans were hit hard prior to a greater spread of the virus.

Before New York City had a single confirmed case, the owner of Far East Cafe experienced an estimated loss of over \$100,000 in revenue. In the San Diego Chinatown, it is estimated there has been an overall 50% decrease in business since the public heard about the coronavirus.

In downtown Manhattan, restaurant owner David Ching claimed that once news of the virus hit the States, the number of patrons dropped off by about 40%. As a result of decreased profit, Ching made the difficult decision to lay off 40% of his staff to maintain his business.

Further damaging the safety and livelihood of Asian Americans, verbal threats and physical attacks continue to increase as misinformation and racist agendas spread.

In early March, three Chinese-Americans were stabbed at Sam's Club in Midland, Texas. Two of the victims were children ages two and six. The FBI intelligence report claims the suspect committed the hate crime because he thought they were "Chinese and infecting people with the coronavirus."

In San Francisco, a disturbing video shows an elderly man collecting cans who then gets assaulted and brought to tears. Despite audible racial slurs in the background, San Francisco police still have not called the incident a hate crime.

The NYPD released footage from April 4 in Brooklyn displaying a masked suspect accused of attacking an Asian American woman, causing chemical burns. The 39-year-old woman was disposing of her trash outside of her apartment when the masked man attacked her with an unknown substance which caused burns on her face and body. She remains in stable condition, however faces extensive burns.


Due to racially motivated attacks like these, the United States has seen an increase in gun and ammunition sales among Asian Americans. Ammunition retailer ammo.com reported a 276% sales surge on March 10 as the number of cases rose in the US.

Many of these consumers include first-time Asian American buyers who fear for their safety as a result of xenophobic actions. The Trump Administration is contributing


to the spread of xenophobia by referring to COVID-19 as the "Chinese Virus" and the "kung flu." Not only is this racist, but it also encourages hate speech towards Asian Americans and provides a false justification for violence.

A coalition of Asian American advocacy groups is hosting an online forum for individuals to report hate crimes and speech, so they can receive help and resources. Within the first day of the forum being open to the public, it received over 40 separate responses. This xenophobia perpetrated against Asian Americans is often based on a lack of knowledge but also on stereotypes perpetuated by people in positions of power.

No virus, disease, natural disaster, border dispute, war or culture provides any justification for racism or xenophobia. Rejecting the Trump administration's hate speech and actively opposing the racism that we see in our own communities is what we must do in order to provide justice to the victims and survivors of this violence.

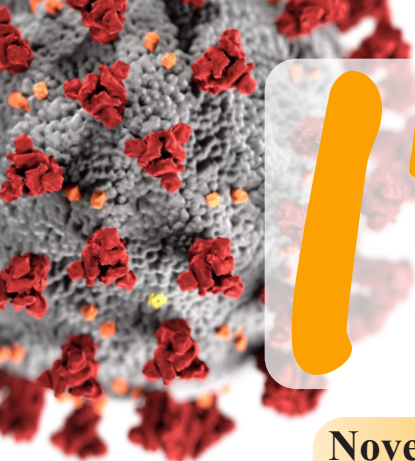
 **Donald J. Trump** @realDonaldTrump · Mar 16, 2020

The United States will be powerfully supporting those industries, like Airlines and others, that are particularly affected by the Chinese Virus. We will be stronger than ever before!

 **Eugene Gu, MD** @eugenegu

There it is. I've been deathly afraid of this exact moment where Trump turns to racism and xenophobia and calls COVID-19 the "Chinese Virus." We are in deep trouble as a nation now that President of the United States makes the conscious decision to go down this dark path of hate.

👍 216K 5:55 PM · Mar 16, 2020



In the TIMES

November
 Mid : New cases of pneumonia plague appeared
 22-27 : Analysis showed SARS-CoV-2 originated

December
 Earliest traceable, confirmed patient experience symptoms
 1 : First know hospitalization (through RNA analysis)
 Wuhan Institute of Virology reported and
 2 : published reports on seven cases
 20-29 : Wuhan Municipal Health Committee informed
 WHO that 27 cases of pneumonia of unknown
 31 : etiology; US Centers for Disease Control and
 Prevention alerted

January
 1 : Chinese authorities had identified 266 infected before 2020 (as reported in March), Huanan Seafood Market closed
 6 : US CDC issued travel watch at Level 1 from Wuhan, Hong Kong begins passenger screening
 10 : Gene sequencing data isolated 2019-nCoV
 21 : First confirmed US case in Washington state
 22 : Wuhan quarantined until further notice (Hubei Province by Jan. 24); World Health Organization emergency committee were unable to reach consensus if SARS-CoV-2 is pandemic; Trump receives the first public question on the virus
 24 : Key US Senators briefed on the virus
 25 : Hong Kong declared state of emergency; US announced plans to evacuate US citizens from Wuhan
 27 : WHO assess the risk of COVID-19 at "high at the global level"; US CDC expands travel advisory to Level 3 for all of China, avoid nonessential travel
 29 : US formally announces Coronavirus Task Force
 30 : The WHO director-general declares the coronavirus outbreak a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (likely pandemic); first confirmed US person-to-person spread in Chicago
 31 : Italy declares state of emergency (first EU nation to do so); US declares Public Health Emergency and closing borders to foreign nationals who pose threat of transmitting virus

"All countries should be prepared for containment, including active surveillance, early detection, isolation and case management, contact tracing and prevention of onward spread" of the virus.

WHO on Jan. 30

COVID VOCABUARY

- Community transmission:** COVID-19 spreading with no known origin
- Coronavirus:** a group of viruses named for the crown-like spikes on their surface; 7 known coronaviruses that can infect humans
- COVID-19:** the novel SARS-CoV-2 virus as named by WHO for the year 2019
- Essential:** workers or items that provide needs vs. wants
- Flatten the curve:** the curve refers to the projected number of cases and flatten the curve refers to mitigation efforts to ensure the health system can handle the number of cases
- Mitigation:** acts reducing the severity, seriousness or painfulness of something
- NPIs:** non-pharmaceutical interventions
- Pandemic:** an outbreak of a disease that occurs over a wide geographic area and affects an exceptionally high proportion of the population
- PPE:** personal protective equipment
- Quarantine:** a period of isolation after diagnosis, known contact or returning from travel beyond your home
- R0, or R-naught:** a measure of how many people an infectious person could infect; fluxuates with mitigation efforts; goal with social distancing and flatten the curve is to get below 1
- Social distancing:** staying 6 feet away from others not in your household, gathering in groups of less than 10, wearing a mask in public, only be in public for necessities
- Stay home order:** only leave your household for essentials, outdoor exercise is generally permitted following social distancing guidelines

February
 1-5 : New cases being reported in US almost daily; HHS Secretary Azar made formal request for funding of PPE
 5 : 12th know US case confirmed in Wisconsin, 345 US citizens evacuated from Hubei Province
 6 : Another 300 US citizens evacuated--more than 500 are now quarantined on air force bases
 15 : 338 US citizens evacuated from stranded Diamond Princess cruise ship
 21 : Italy issues the first regional quarantine/lockdown
 25 : HHS Secretary Azar testifies before the US Senate
 26 : First known community transmission in California
 29 : First COVID related death reported in Washington state

March
 1-2 : NY, OR, RI, and NH report COVID cases
 3 : Ohio Governor cancels the Arnold Classic due to COVID concerns (viewed as radical at the time since Ohio had no known cases), AZ and NC reports COVID case
 5 : NV, CO, TN, and MD report COVID cases; WA state announces 31 new cases

of COVID-19



March

- 6: HI, UT, NE, KY, IN, MN, CT, SC, PA and OK report COVID cases; six more deaths reported
- 7: VA, KS, MO and D.C. report COVID cases; new death reported with total US deaths now at 19
- 8: IA and VT report COVID cases, 22 total US deaths; Italy expands regional lockdown
- 9: IA Gov. Kim Reynolds signed Proclamation of Disaster Emergency (Iowa's COVID cases 8 statewide); OH gov. declares state of emergency after it reports first case; AL, AK, ID, ME, MI, MS, NM, ND, SD and WV not reporting cases; AR, DE, MT and WY have suspected cases; 26 total US deaths; Italy goes into nationwide lockdown
- 10: SD and MI report COVID cases; NY, MA, WA expand mitigation measures; 31 total US deaths
- 11: Confirmed US COVID cases surpasses 1,100; WHO officially uses the word pandemic to describe COVID-19; AR, DE, MS, NM, ND and WY report COVID cases; more colleges and universities suspend face-to-face instruction; NBA suspends season after a player tested positive; 37 total US deaths
- 12: 1,629 total US cases; most major league sports suspend season currently in session; MLB cancels spring training; public school closures announced in 12 states; more states declare state of emergency; 41 total US deaths
- 13: 1,896 total US cases; more public school closures and more state of emergencies; 50 total US deaths
- 14: 2,234 total US cases; 57 total US deaths; NY announces first death; Spain announces nationwide quarantine/lockdown
- 15: Gov. Reynolds recommends IA schools close for four weeks ending April 13; IA has first case of community spread; 22 total IA Cases; 3,487 total US cases; CDC issued guidance against gatherings of > 50 for an 8-week period; more states declare state of emergency; more school closures
- 16: 23 total IA cases; 4,226 US cases; Pres. Trump issued new guidelines to avoid social gatherings of > 10 people and to restrict nonessential travel; the US Supreme Court postponed oral arguments
- 17: 27 IA cases; Gov. Reynolds issued State of Public Health Disaster Emergency closing restaurants/bar to take-out, delivery only and fitness centers, theaters, casinos and senior citizen centers; 7,038 US cases; at least 91 total US deaths
- 18: 38 IA cases; 10,442 US cases; 150 US deaths
- 19: 44 IA cases; 15,219 US cases; 206 US deaths; Gov. Reynolds suspends penalties and interest as it relates to property taxes and suspends some evictions; more states expanding stay at home and/or mitigation efforts
- 20: 45 Iowa cases; 18,747 US cases; 255 US deaths; CA, IL, and NY issue stay at home orders statewide
- 21: 86 IA cases; 24,583 US cases; 301 US deaths
- 22: 90 IA cases; 33,404 US cases; 414 US deaths; Gov. Reynolds closes all salons, medical spas, barbershops, tattoo establishments, tanning facilities, massage therapy establishments and swimming pools
- 23: 105 IA cases; 44,183 US cases; 556 US deaths
- 24: 124 IA cases; 54,453 US cases; 781 US deaths

March

- 25: 145 IA cases; 68,440 US cases; 1,028 US deaths; Congress agreed to a stimulus bill
- 26: 179 IA cases; 85,356 US cases; 1,296 US deaths; Gov. Reynolds suspends all elective and nonessential medical and dental procedures, extending and expanding retail business closures, ordering health care facilities and nursing homes to engage in health care screenings; total number of confirmed US cases surpass China
- 27: 235 IA cases; 103,321 US cases; 1,697 US deaths
- 28: 298 IA cases; 122,653 US cases; 2,222 US deaths
- 29: 336 IA cases; 140,904 US cases; 2,592 US deaths
- 30: 424 IA cases; 163,539 US cases; 3,150 US deaths
- 31: 497 IA cases; 186,101 US cases; 4,064 US deaths

April

- 1: 549 IA cases; 213,144 US cases; 5,114 US deaths
- 2: 614 IA cases; 239,279 US cases; 6,088 US deaths; Gov. Reynolds closes schools through April 30 waiving time requirements as long as the school districts provide a continuous learning plan
- 3: 699 IA cases; 277,205 US cases; 7,139 US deaths
- 4: 786 IA cases; 304,826 US cases; 8,496 US deaths
- 5: 868 IA cases; 330,891 US cases; 9,636 US deaths
- 6: 946 IA cases; 374,329 US cases; 10,895 US deaths; Gov. Reynolds calls on law enforcement to assist in enforcement of the mitigation efforts
- 7: 1,048 IA cases; 395,011 US cases; 12,868 US deaths; NY's COVID related deaths surpass the number killed on 9/11
- 8: 1,145 IA cases; 427,460 US cases; 14,811 US deaths
- 9: 1,270 IA cases; 459,165 US cases; 16,712 US deaths
- 10: 1,388 IA cases; 492,416 US cases; 18,747 US deaths; Italy announces continue non-essential stay at home orders until May 3 (stores are slowly be allowed to re-open)
- 11: 1,510 IA cases; 34 IA deaths; 525,704 US cases; 20,577 US deaths
- 12: 1,587 IA cases; 41 IA deaths; 554,849 US cases; 22,105 US deaths
- 13: 1,710 IA cases; 43 IA deaths; 579,005 US cases; 23,640 US deaths
- 14: 1,899 IA cases; 49 IA deaths; 605,390 US cases; 26,047 US deaths; NYC deaths over 10,000
- 15: 1,995 IA cases; 53 IA deaths; 632,548 US cases; 32,443 US deaths; worldwide cases surpass 2 million mark
- 16: 2,141 IA cases; 60 IA deaths; 661,712 US cases; 34,619 US deaths; IA Region 6 was upgraded to a 10 so further mitigation required; IA Regions 5 and 1 were upgraded to a 9
- 17: 2,332 IA cases; 64 IA deaths; 690,714 US cases; 37,147 US deaths; Gov. Reynolds closes schools for the remainder of the school year
- 18: 2,513 IA cases; 74 IA deaths; 720,630 US cases; 39,014 US deaths
- 19: 2,902 IA cases; 75 IA deaths; 746,625 US cases; 40,575 US deaths
- 20: 3,159 IA cases; 79 IA deaths; 776,093 US cases; 42,514 US deaths

Sources: CDC website, WorldOMeter, Iowa's Department of Homeland Security, NY Times, Washington Post, Iowa Department of Public Health

Saving lives through sewing



By Caroline Ash

As COVID-19 continues to infect hundreds of Iowans and overwhelm healthcare centers, members of Valley's community are aiding in the relief effort by sewing and donating CDC-certified Olson masks.

Seamstresses include Ms. Divine-Koch, junior Molly Wilkerson, and seniors Tishara Slater, Abby Wagner and Kayleigh Lewis. They have sent masks to UnityPoint Health (among other healthcare centers), directly to healthcare workers, and to their friends and family.

The Trump administration recommended in early April that Americans wear face coverings if they go out in public. Wearing masks reduces the virus's spread, especially between unknowing, asymptomatic carriers.



Language Arts teacher Ms. Divine-Koch has sewn and donated 115 Olson masks so far.

"I transport the masks in separate Ziplock bags to combat the presence of germs. I usually act as a drive up window. I have people meet me somewhere, and I hand them off as fast as I can with little to no contact. I also mail them or drop them off at [people's] houses," Slater said. Slater has made over 50 masks so far and continues to sew everyday.

"I've really enjoyed giving back to my community in this icky time, and I know that with our joined acts of compassion, love, and humility, we will come out of this stronger and closer than ever," Slater said.

Divine-Koch, veteran seamstress of 40 years, has made 115 masks since mid-March, when she learned UnityPoint Health in Cedar Rapids was facing a shortage. She encourages anyone interested to watch a tutorial on YouTube, check with their county Emergency Management office and start making masks.

"I feel really good about making the masks. I've felt quite helpless since being out of school and this makes me feel useful... It's just another way I can contribute other than social distancing--which is super important," Divine-Koch said.

Seamstresses have faced some obstacles, like gathering materials and determining which hospitals accept masks. However, by checking with their county's Emergency

Management office, they determined who needed masks and what type of masks to make.

"It's a little stressful sometimes... there is new information everyday about what we can or can't do, where we can or can't donate, and I get nervous that my masks won't be able to be of use. But until I get told otherwise, I'm going to keep donating them," Slater said.

Although the pandemic leaves many feeling helpless, donating masks gives these seamstresses a purpose.

"It makes us feel like there is actually something we can do to help. These people are on the front lines and we believe that if there is anything we can do to help them, we want to do it," Wagner said.

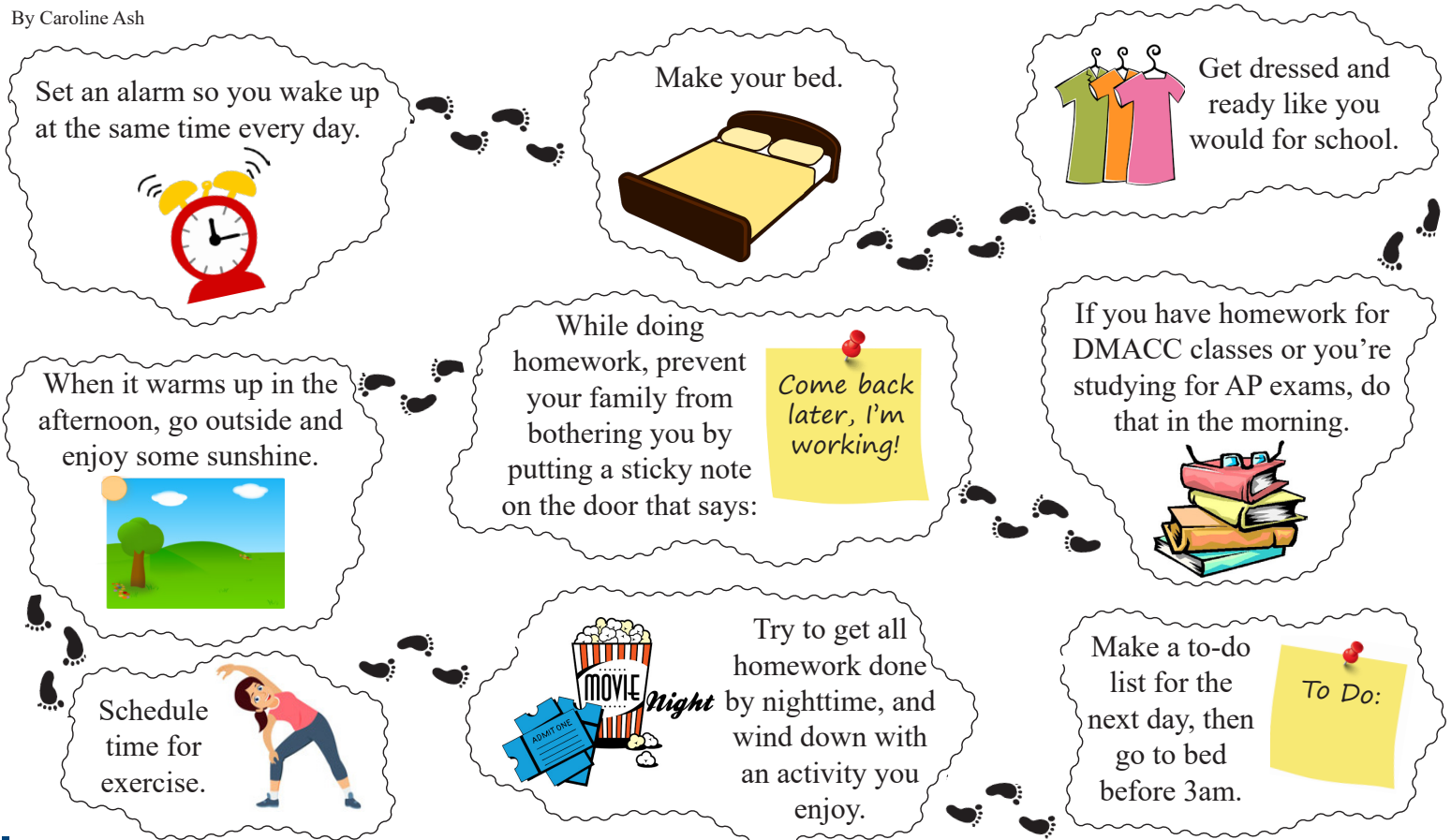


Sewing is one of senior Tishara Slater's favorite hobbies

Establish routine during chaos

How to overcome laziness and have a happier quarantine

By Caroline Ash





COVID-19, the environment, and our responsibility

“A war on nature is ultimately a war on ourselves.” - Rachel Carson

By Ben Ahlrichs

According to The Guardian, humans have destroyed ten percent of the Earth's remaining wildlife and habitat. The destruction of this land has direct, detrimental effects on the environment and endangered animal populations. The destruction of this land could also cause unprecedented effects on virus control and human health.

As we approach Earth Day on April 22nd, it is important to look at the ways that human society is impacting the environment. With the recent outbreak of COVID-19, there are many unknown possibilities about the impacts that this will have on the environment. Stories of goats descending from the mountains into Dutch towns to graze, ducks taking over the fountains and ponds of Rome and wild boars reclaiming the abandoned streets of Italy have taken social media by storm. While these stories are cute and give hope in a time of fear, the truth is a lot scarier than a group of elephants getting drunk in a wine garden.

Ever since the dawn of industrialization in the mid 1800s, more and more of the environment has been consumed and destroyed by factories, animal agriculture, and coal fields. This destruction has had detrimental effects on non-human animal populations as well as the release of carbon into the atmosphere.

The exploitation of South Asian countries has been especially destructive to the environment. Economic imperialism perpetuated by Western countries has continued into the 21st century. In the last 40 years, one billion hectares of rainforest

(the size of Europe) has been destroyed for factories and animal agriculture. The destruction of rainforests poses a threat to indigenous communities who are often ignored in environmental issues. It also creates hazardous and dangerous working conditions that some people have no choice but to deal with.

The exploitation of rainforests and jungles has forced non-human animals into cities and human developed areas. Jungles act as natural barriers between species that should not be interacting with each other. The Ebola virus spread to humans after chimpanzees and fruit bats were forced into the same habitat due to human caused climate change and unnatural habitat loss. Fruit bats are carriers of the Ebola virus and the virus especially affects primates. When humans interacted with the chimpanzees they then were infected with the virus. This is not a random situation; this story has been told over and over again and can be seen as the root causation for almost every pandemic.

This current strain of coronavirus, COVID-19, was caused by animals being forced into close proximity with humans so that they could be sold and eaten. Wet markets are live animal auction sites that often harbor diseases.

Contrary to popular belief, wet markets are not exclusive to China but appear in almost every country in the world. Anywhere where animals are forced into unsanitary conditions in close contact with humans becomes a hazard to human health and can lead to the rise of another pandemic.

A drop in emission levels in countries affected heavily by the virus narrates a frightening tale of using COVID-19 as a means of achieving environmental justice. While the coronavirus does highlight how society must change in our relationship with the planet. Justifying the deaths that COVID-19 has caused by including facts of how it is improving the environment leads to dangerous ideologies such as ecofascism. COVID-19 can be seen as a sign of how capitalism and our consumption needs to change, but we must not forget the victims and those who we have lost due to the virus.

As conservationist, author and marine biologist Rachel Carson once said, “A war on nature is ultimately a war on ourselves.”



The Fate of Spring Activities & Exams

Students comment on the cancellations, postponements and alterations to Valley's typical spring schedule in the wake of COVID-19.

By Maddie Cason

MARCH Dance Marathon

A Dance Marathon may not immediately come to mind when considering iconic high school milestones, however, at Valley, disappointment surely radiated throughout the student body when the beloved Dance Marathon was deemed canceled in light of COVID-19.

On March 23 Valley junior Lauren Schulze and other Student Council, StuCo, members received word about the cancellation of this year's Dance Marathon, originally scheduled for March 27. The news came shortly after notifications on March 17 about a possible postponement of the event, although graduation and other end of the year activities inhibited the ability to reschedule.

Schulze, who co-directed Dance Marathon with fellow junior Sydney Clark, lamented, "The decision to cancel the event was extremely devastating for all of us involved. Besides Dance Marathon being a celebration of the Miracle kiddos lives and all the money the school has raised for them, it is a rewarding night for StuCo to see all

of our hard work pay off."

Last year's event raised a total of \$10,589.88 for the Children's Miracle Network and UI Stead Family Children's Hospital, an unprecedented amount for a Valley Dance Marathon. The night included a variety of fun activities in addition to a touching tribute to Valley counselor Becky Sinram's young son A.J.. No doubt, this year would have been just as special and exciting.

"I was really looking forward to Zumba and haircutting," Schulze said. "We have had a Zumba instructor come in years past and everyone who participates in it always has a lot of fun!"

Nonetheless, even without the event, the students of Valley High School still made an impact for this great cause and Schulze acknowledges the positive result from StuCo's hard work, "I know that all of the time we put in was not a total waste because we still raised over \$5,385!"

MAY AP Exams

Advanced Placement (AP) Exams, the both frightening and exciting annual culmination of a year's worth of rigorous content all placed into one final test in May to potentially earn the well-deserved college credit.

Typically for Valley students, these tests take place at the West Des Moines Christian Church or the high school and take approximately three hours to complete the various sections in different formats. However, the COVID-19 outbreak has forced CollegeBoard to abandon their usual handwritten exams and rely on at-home online testing for the 2019-20 AP Exam administration.

This year, students will undergo an online test of one or two free-response questions, no multiple choice sections, that lasts only 45 minutes. Additionally, courses will only test on material covered prior to March as different regions of the country have missed more school than others. Exceptions to these new plans include AP art and world language courses that will now focus solely on portfolios and speaking exams to test their students. Yet, the changes do not end there.

Similar to many college-level exams, this year's tests will be open note, allowing students to utilize their textbook and class notes to answer the timed free-response questions. However, it is important to note AP designed these questions while aware students will have access to other materials, therefore test takers must prepare to apply concepts in unprecedented ways rather than copy past work.

Still, Valley junior Keeley Downey appreciates the decision. "I'm okay with the exams being open note. Since this test format is different from what everyone was expecting, it is the least they can do to help us make the change."

Furthermore, CollegeBoard has also boosted their impressive test security even with at-home administrations. Students will verify their work, submissions will undergo plagiarism detection software and

even a student's own AP teacher will receive their work to recognize inconsistencies. Finally, CollegeBoard requests students to refrain from exam content discussions or face the cancellation of their scores.

Despite the alterations to format, content and time allotment, CollegeBoard plans to score students on the usual 1-5 point scale and scores will come out most likely on time in early July. Between school cancellations and format changes, exams have been pushed back to May 11 through May 22 and additional dates are offered in early June. Even with this news, students do not have copious amounts of time to prepare, especially when many AP classes at Valley include dual-enrollment at DMACC, which now has shifted to required online learning for the remainder of the year.

Between fulfilling DMACC requirements, studying for the AP exams, and also understanding the new format of testing, AP students are investing lots of time and effort into a single, shortened test. Downey says, "It's irritating that I've been studying and working hard on these courses the whole year for them to just rely solely on one or two free-response questions. It's unfair to us because now if we don't know how to solve or answer one of the questions, our whole score is in jeopardy. I think that they should be very forgiving when they grade."

In light of the chaos in these last few weeks, CollegeBoard, AP teachers, and AP students alike have handled these unforeseen changes with impressive grace and flexibility, exemplifying how their problem-solving abilities go beyond the books and into real life situations.

Downey notes, "I feel less prepared than normal and that definitely stresses me out more than normal, but at this point, I've kind of accepted that it is what it is. The lack of school has definitely cut down on the amount of information and direct feedback I get, but teachers are doing everything they can to help us."

COVID-19 pandemic halts sports seasons, suspends spring musical

By Blake Morrow

The coronavirus pandemic swept the globe, wreaking havoc on even the strongest of first-world countries. On a more minor scale, the pandemic threw a wrench in many spring activities at Valley High School, including the spring musical, Newsies, and the school soccer and track seasons. With the recent announcement by Governor Reynolds, these five seniors had their activities and athletics officially canceled. Read about what they have to say as they reflect back on their four years at Valley and share the advice they'd give to younger classmen.

GIRLS SOCCER - Mackenzie Oleson & Lily Overstreet

Describe your feelings towards having your season/activity canceled. Do you feel anger? Sadness? Regret?



M: I have felt angry because this was supposed to be my senior season. I was hoping I got more time to help lead these amazing girls to a championship. Now we don't have as much time to bond with one another, we don't have as much time to practice, and we don't get to do some of our team building activities.

Any advice for the younger classmen about making the most of their time at Valley High School?



L: Personally, I would say to slow down sometimes. Through a lot of my high school career as a student and as an athlete I focused too much on the future and what I need to do to better prepare myself for upcoming challenges. I wish I would've spent a little more time enjoying the simple times with my friends, family, and teammates rather than continuing to look forward.

What is the best piece of advice you've received from a teammate, coach, parent, or friend about how to deal with this frustrating time?

M: To remain positive and hope for the best!

Was there anything you would've done differently before knowing your season/activity would have been cut short?



L: I guess I would've pushed my team harder if I would've known we wouldn't be able to practice [or play]. I think I would've reached out to the team before spring break to give them workout options to stay in shape. In addition, I would've cherished the times at Valley High School a little bit more. Although I don't necessarily appreciate or like a good majority of people at Valley, it seems like we never had the chance to say our goodbyes and make peace with those who we've grown up with.

NEWSIES - Lauren Anderson

Describe your feelings towards having your season/activity canceled. Do you feel anger? Sadness? Regret?



L: I am so sad that this happened because it's unlike anything else. This has been years of work for us seniors to get to the point we are now and earning those roles, both on and off the stage. It also stinks because so many lasts are being cut off.

What is the best piece of advice you've received from a teammate, coach, parent, or friend about how to deal with this frustrating time?



L: I think just to stay positive. Something I have done for myself is to remind myself and others that things really could be much, much worse even though it already seems terrible.

Was there anything you would've done differently before knowing your season/activity would have been cut short?



L: This year I had been actively taking many pictures and videos or everything just as a little project to put together at the end of the year so I would say there's much I would've done differently in taking in every moment. The only thing I would've done differently is reaching out and creating a better connection with people I don't know so well.

Any advice for the younger classmen about making the most of their time at Valley High School?



L: TAKE PICTURES/VIDEOS!! Also to make friends with upper/lower classmen and reach outside of your circle.

BOYS SOCCER - Braden Wallace

Describe your feelings towards having your season/activity canceled. Do you feel anger? Sadness? Regret?



B: I am definitely a bit disappointed about the season getting canceled. I feel that we had a good chance to win the state championship. But I'm not angry because I do understand we need to take COVID-19 seriously.

What are you doing with your free time?



B: I have been sleeping, eating, reading, watching television, and working out. However, I haven't done as much soccer practicing as I need to.

Any advice for the younger classmen about making the most of their time at Valley High School?



B: Since our team lost last year, I have been confident that we would have a very successful year this year and I never thought that we might not have the season. Just know that nothing is guaranteed, and you really do need to play every game like it's your last. Even when we get back to our normal lives, injuries and other things can still happen. Always play to make yourself proud if you did just play your last game.

Was there anything you would've done differently before knowing your season/activity would have been cut short?

B: I definitely will wish I cherished my last game more.

BOYS TRACK - Nate Loecher

Describe your feelings towards having your season/activity canceled. Do you feel anger? Sadness? Regret?



N: Mostly disappointment and sadness. We were getting right into the real competition phase of our season and were looking to show other schools across the state that despite losing a lot of seniors last year, we were still the favorites to win our fourth straight state championship. Track has given me so much the past three years and to know that my season won't happen kills me on the inside.

Was there anything you would've done differently before knowing your season/activity would have been cut short?



N: Remember the feelings of the previous three years. All three have been incredibly special and have given me so many memories that I will never forget. I may never get to experience the thrill of winning a state championship again or catching someone in the final 100 meters of a race, so I wish I would have cherished that a little more as they happened.

Any advice for the younger classmen about making the most of their time at Valley High School?



N: Live in the moment. Do not worry what the future holds, just live in the moment and experience everything that comes with it. You may think you'll experience it again, but that can all be taken away in the blink of an eye.

Voices of Valley:

What is one positive result of the coronavirus situation for you?

“No school.” -Mason Morrow '22

“I can sleep more.” -Uma Dukle '22

“Getting more sleep and actually feeling healthy for once this year.”
-Ana Welge '21

“I’ve gotten more in touch with my ability to paint and practice fine arts since I have more time.”
-Wyatt Glenn '21

“I now have the spare time to dedicate large portions of my day to making music and being creative.”
-Sterling Mills '20

“My mental health has gotten way better, even though I miss my friends and am stressed about this. I have had a lot of time to reflect on myself and realign my thoughts and goals.”
-Lana Mckinney '22

“The golf course I play at is still open so being able to golf all the time.”
-Eli Stahl '22

“I think the most positive thing that’s come out of quarantine for me is being able to catch up on books that I never got a chance to read and bake some recipes that I never had time to bake. I’ve also been playing a lot of board games with my family which have been fun.” -Lauren Gilbert '20

“Finding alternative ways to collaborate through music (recording projects with my quartet) and alternative ways to volunteer through music. I’ve also been recording viola pieces and sending them to patients and staff at the VA Hospital to be uplifting during this hard time, and that project has been a lot of fun.”
-Dorothy Junginger '21