

Erik Stone

Journal Entry #1 (Friday, March 13, 2020):

As a senior in high school I am quite aware of current global events and the Covid-19 pandemic is becoming worrying for the United States, with cases starting in nursing homes in Washington state, and spreading throughout the nation, especially in places such as New York. Spring break begins next Friday and our band program is going to play a show in New York during the spring break and I am becoming increasingly worried that this trip is going to fall through, even though we have been reassured things should go as planned. Throughout the past weeks my peers have mostly referred to the coronavirus as not threatening and have mostly referred to it in the context of jokes, with many joking if we will have a graduation or not, but I worry if this will become a reality.

Journal Entry #2 (Friday, March 20, 2020):

Just yesterday my band program announced the cancelation of our spring break trip that would have left for New York on Sunday; this was followed by reports coming from New York of worsening coronavirus numbers. My fellow classmates have not changed their views on the coronavirus and just a matter of hours ago our school made the schoolwide announcement that our spring break would be extended by another week to protect the safety of the students and elderly staff. This message was followed by great joy from my classmates as they would be receiving an extra week of our spring break. The teachers for the most part were not following this enthusiasm as most of them appeared quite worried about what was going on. Through talking with my peers and teachers I have noticed over half of people around me think that life will resume as normal after these two weeks of quarantine spring break, as prom was just around the corner as well as our graduations that followed.

Journal Entry #3 (Tuesday, March 24, 2020):

This morning I woke up just after 5 am in order to go to the stores to stock up on supplies for the quarantine as there was now a big rush on goods especially food and oddly enough on toilet paper as well. It was still completely dark when I arrived, many stores were offering early hours reserved for at risk people such as the elderly and I arrived at 6 am when stores opened to the major public. Stores were no longer open 24 hours as they spent from midnight to 5 am to restock the stores that were becoming increasingly empty, walking in to empty shelves on every aisle was incredibly unnerving, I could clearly tell something was going very wrong with the world around me. Every time I found an item on my list it brought me great joy if I was able to find it on the brand I usually had as it gave me a little feeling of normalcy back as I found a food that I was familiar with. Doing this early morning shopping greatly helped my family as my parents

had to work nearly the entire day and the stock of the stores was empty by the time they got off of work, even at 6am I was the person to grab the last package of beef in the entire section and to think what going at 6pm would have looked like is something I could not imagine.

Journal Entry #4 (Wednesday, April 1, 2020): Today I just received the news that Governor Tim Walz of Minnesota called schools to be closed and to institute online learning for another 2-4 weeks and perhaps the rest of the academic year if covid did not get better. At first I thought this news was all an April Fools joke but soon realized the gravity of the situation, it worried me greatly as I felt my senior year slipping away from me as I watched. Graduations are in complete limbo right now with schools announcing that traditional graduations cannot be allowed as hundreds would stand side by side for multiple hours at a time. Personally I believe this closure will remain in place for the remainder of the academic year, and maybe even impact my freshmen experience in college this fall.

Journal Entry #5 (Friday, June 5, 2020):

It has been a while since my last entry, but my predictions came to be as the rest of the school year was called off within the coming weeks after the extending of the 14-day quarantine. One thing I have noticed with the past few months is that my peers are becoming more aware of the gravity of the circumstances we are in, and starting to accept wearing masks. Though there still are still people who refuse to wear a mask and it has become a sort of political statement to wear a mask which should never be in a pandemic such as this. Today is the day of my graduation, we are not having an in person ceremony as traditional but today we will be holding a car parade where we go around the school parking lot in a zig zag seeing our teachers and getting a somewhat proper goodbye and getting in a line of cars afterwards to walk across a makeshift stage where our principle would socially distantly hand out our diploma books.

Post-Event Note: The graduation was very exciting and I got to yell out to my fellow peers in other cars and to my teachers thanking them for the years I spent with them; personally I think this form of graduation was better than every "normal" graduation that I have ever seen. It was far more interactive and got to say goodbyes to those I would miss greatly as I moved on to college, society seemed to really talk a lot about graduations and almost felt bad for my class of 2020, but personally I think a car parade graduation is something that should stay as it was far more fun and memorable than any other graduation I have seen