

Nick Vondrak's COVID-19 Diary of Adventures and Experiences

By Nicholas Paul Vondrak

March 13th, 2020:

Today, it was announced to us students by our teachers that Arrowhead Union High School was to shut down immediately, and to have students attend school completely online in a virtual setting. I don't know how I feel about this or have any idea what it will be like as I've never done school virtually before, but this is definitely not how I want my senior year of high school to end!

March 21st, 2020:

It has been a week and a day since Governor Evers created a state mandate locking down Wisconsin and shutting down our high school, and now it was announced that the borders to Canada and Mexico will be closing down indefinitely. My friends and I are extremely disappointed and mad because our big senior trip was originally planned for us to fly down to Cancun, Mexico for spring break! Could this pandemic get any worse?

April 30th, 2020:

The COVID-19 pandemic has now been going on for over a month with lockdowns, stay-at-home orders, and other mandates that I never imagined I'd experience in my lifetime. Although this pandemic sucks in all ways imaginable, I still got the chance to go out turkey hunting for the first time and shot my first turkey Tom. It was a pretty awesome feeling and I'll definitely be doing it again sometime.



May 21st, 2020:

At this point in the pandemic, I now feel pretty comfortable and understand how things are starting to work nowadays, and I made the decision that I'm not going to let this virus kill the final months of my senior year, I will not be cooped up forever! Although, it seems this situation may get a lot worse before it gets better, but with school being online, I developed a completely different perspective and actually see this as one of the best ways my senior year could end. I know that sounds horrible, but hear me out:

everyday I finish online school within a couple hours and have all the time in the world to play video games, play with my dogs, walk around my neighborhood, and do other COVID friendly activities. But repeating the same old lockdown routine everyday was driving me nuts! So I talked with some of my buddies and we decided to say screw it and start going around to different ponds in the area and start taking up fishing like every other typical Wisconsin native while still staying safe and trying to avoid contracting the virus at all costs.



<My buddy will with an absolute hog we caught in one of the ponds

June 5th, 2020:

My senior year of high school has now ended, and I was able to get the chance to (sort of) have a graduation ceremony and walk across the stage and receive my diploma! My parents were just thankful I actually graduated, but I knew I had it in the bag all along. The ceremony was very COVID-friendly and each of us seniors had our own time slot to show up and walk the stage and take pictures with family on the football field and it was nice to at least have some type of celebration for all those years of hard work.



July 20th, 2020:

With summer now in full swing, and the weather being nicer than ever, I am not about to let COVID prevent me from living my life and having the best summer possible under the given circumstances. So here and there my friends and I will go out and hit the lake and wake surf, and try to beat the heat by enjoying the refreshing water of Okauchee Lake. Also, COVID tests are now available and somewhat easy to get, and my friends and I are aware that we're responsible to make sure we are COVID negative and if me or any of my friends feel sick at all, we make sure to go out and get tested in order to prevent further spreading of the virus as we are still very uncertain what the virus will do to you and how badly it could affect us, or a loved one.



My friend Nick (left), and I (right) surfing doubles on the wonderful Okauchee Lake

August 12th, 2020:

It has now been about five months since the COVID-19 pandemic started here in America, and it appears we have all accepted this COVID prevention system as the new norm. Things are also a little different now as there is a new mask mandate that has been put in place by Governor Evers and now everyone has to be wearing a mask in any grocery store, gas station, airport, e.t.c until further notice and with how this whole deal has been going so far, I think the mask mandate could last forever until some type of vaccine comes out that can fight off the Corona virus. Along with this new mask mandate, another big change is happening in my life as my friends I've known almost my entire life are starting to leave for college and go off to start the next chapter in their lives. This is pretty difficult to cope with for me with having to deal with all the COVID guidelines and lockdowns and now having no friends home to break out of reality with and go surfing, fishing, or do any other sort of activity with. But in an attempt to cure my case of the COVID blues, my family and I decided to go on vacation to Florida and stay with my aunt and uncle for a week.



September 1st, 2020:

The time has now come for me to go off to college and start the next chapter of my life. With COVID and it's protocols still lingering around and preventing a lot of the normal activities that would take place at UWEC in any normal year, there was a silver lining to be found somewhere and I guess that was that I at least got to go on campus for my first semester and get a taste of what its like to attend a university and experience college living. Although we still have to continuously get tested for the virus about every other week in order to insure that the campus doesn't have an intense Corona outbreak that would send all of us students home.



Fast Forward

March 21st, 2021:

COVID-19 has been affecting our lives for over a year now, and it has gotten better with COVID vaccines now out and easily accessible for the people of the US and the mask mandates and lockdowns are almost all done and over with. For Wisconsin in particular, Governor Evers has now lifted the mask mandate and masks are no longer required in most stores, restaurants, gas stations, and other places where masses of people would tend to gather. But the toll that the virus has taken strikes much deeper and in a much more tragic way than just the damage it has done to populations all over the world and the people it has killed, the mental health of people across the US has diminished immensely and depression, other mental health disorders, and suicide have risen due to the lockdowns and we now have to come together to not only fight COVID, but also mental health disorders. The light at the end of the tunnel seems to be

an arms length away, and we are so close to being out of the darkness but there is still much work to be done in order to get rid of not only Corona, but to rebuild our nation and others alike and recover from this past year that has been like no other.