
SUMUS LEONES

April 2020

Learning at a Distance

By Zoe Edelman, Junior

The final day of in-person learning for students at Washington Latin was marked with an air of excitement. Students celebrated at the prospect of a few days off from school work, followed by several days of simple digital learning. Few could have predicted just how long digital learning would last- transforming from a six day stint, into weeks of limbo before the announcement of its continuation through the end of the year. Despite the challenges painted during these trying circumstances, students remain upbeat, composing strategies to complete their work and keep life interesting.

Junior Graham Evans described distance learning “as a bit annoying,” before admitting “it’s not bad, just very different.” The glaring difference, he said, is “I don’t have to interact with everyone as much,” which both takes “a great load off,” while also “making it harder [to do] all of my work at home.”

Being home, Graham and many other students echoed, “is somewhat relaxing at times,” although “trying not to be distracted or to procrastinate is difficult.” Graham’s key to fighting off procrastination- and breaking up the monotony- is “to do some art or just play music,” even when inspiration may run low. “I also try to go on walks or exercise to clear my mind.” Just how long his work takes him ranges, from between 6 to 10 hours, “depending on how much I have or how long I take breaks.”

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Junior Hawa Sturr seems to have the key to mastering procrastination and distance learning, explaining “my communication with teachers... has improved.” She further spoke about her growth, stating, “I’ve actually been getting my work done more efficiently, and my procrastination has gotten a lot better.” Not completely immune to the struggles of quarantine, Hawa did mention, “I miss social interaction,” to which she copes by “sleeping in or FaceTiming friends.”

Junior Catherine Sherman too admitted “I definitely miss my friends and classmates,” before conceding that her overall distance learning experience has been “pretty good, because I find it helpful to have all of my work laid out for me and then just be able to do it in whatever order I want.” She explained that the distance learning, which takes her between one and four hours, has opened up time to spend “doing chores around the house, watching a lot of tv and [having] a lot of family time.” While the circumstances may not be ideal, she clearly accepted “why we need it,” stressing the importance of quarantining.

Senior Kemari Bolden struck a similarly positive note, declaring that her overall experience has been good, if “kind of boring.” Where distance learning prohibits her from seeing “friends throughout the day,” it also helps her avoid waking up early, of which she is not a fan. She is also not totally without social interaction, explaining that during “extra time... I walk around my neighborhood or just sit on my porch and talk to my neighbors.”

Upper school Latin teacher, Mr. Yonker, also revealed that he’s “settled into a rhythm” during these unusual times, which includes time for reflection. “I feel lucky in the sense that I have a job and can work from home. I feel very privileged in that way.” Due to this, he adds that he is “pretty relaxed” and can focus on his role as a distance teacher. Distance teaching is not the same, however, as he clarified that for him, it is “more work with less payoff.” The payoff comes from “interaction with students,” of which there is currently a glaring lack. The bright spot in that part is tutorial time, though it disappoints him to see students “not taking advantage of video tutorials.”

Whether they break up their distance learning by spending time with family, exercising or talking to friends, Washington Latin students and faculty have clearly been making the best of their days. Despite the level of uncertainty which this time comes with, they seem determined to keep pushing as, in the words of Nicki Minaj, “Your victory is right around the corner. Never give up.”

The Balancing Act

By Josie McCartney, Eighth grade

While many students and faculty members are trying to fill their newfound free time that has come with distance learning with new hobbies, some teachers at home with their young kids are trying hard to find time to teach, plan lessons, and grade because they have to take care of their kids.

Seventh grade English teacher Ms. Peale said, “we definitely have a routine.” She described a pattern where her 11 year old son, Jake, does his work in the morning and she works in the afternoon. However, she noted, “he doesn’t have a lot. I’m not as impressed with what his school is doing than what [Washington Latin is] doing.”

“He does the work mostly by himself, but I have to help him every now and then,” says Ms. Peale. “But I’m making him edit his writing, which drives him insane, because I’m an English teacher.”

Ms. Peale reflected on how watching her own child cope with his own obstacles from learning online affects her teaching and grading.

“[Being at home with Jake] makes me more patient and more forgiving of the quality of work I’m getting from other kids. So when I’m grading, I constantly have to remind myself that [my English students] probably did one hundred percent on their own. In a classroom you can set expectations of the work, but you have zero control over that [when teaching online].”

Ms. Peale did describe some silver lining, “on a positive front, I feel like we’re just so much more rested and I want him to get as much sleep as he can.”

Ms. Barroso, who teaches Y.E.S. (Youth Empowerment Seminar), AP Human Geography and ninth grade World History, talked about her routine with her husband and sons, Zayn who is seven months and Xavier who is four years old. “My husband works in the morning and then I work in the afternoon. At around 2:30 is when we pass the baton, so to speak.” She works a lot after her sons are sleeping, often until 12 or 1 am.

She described her son Xavier’s Zoom “classes” that he has twice a day. “It’s pretty hilarious, I mean just imagine a bunch of three year olds on a Zoom meeting. They usually do activities but it’s not super productive.”

“[Being at home with Xavier and Zayn] affects my teaching a lot. I just don’t have the time to give to [teaching *and* parenting] and I’m literally just trying to keep my head up above water and it doesn’t feel ideal but it’s the best I can do right now. Ms. Smith and the administration know it and they’re very sympathetic,” Ms. Barroso said.

Mr. Green, a Y.E.S. and seventh grade English teacher, said, “it’s pretty hard to balance teaching and parenting just in general [but especially under the distance learning circumstances]. I’m not really able to do any school stuff [like grading or lesson planning] until 8:30, 9:00 at night.” Mr. Green and his wife have a son, Graham who’s seven months, and a daughter, Louise who is three years old.

Mr. Green also talked about the online Zoom classes, which at the time of the interview had not yet started.

“Some of the teachers were talking about doing something where they have a class meet on Zoom all at once, but I just would not be able to pull that off during the day. It’s just too hard for me to do when I have both of my kids here and my wife is still working.”

His daughter, Louise, has class Zoom calls like Xavier, Ms. Barroso’s son. “Everyday at 10am [Louise’s DCPS PreK 3 class has] a Zoom circle time with the other PreK 3 and PreK 4 kids, but [Louise] doesn’t really like it. She just doesn’t like being in that Zoom kind of setting.”

Mr. Green did remark that he enjoys the chance to be with his family, saying, “I love being able to spend as much time with my kids as I am. I think there are a lot of positives to look at.” He added, “It is also definitely exhausting, I’ve pulled a lot of late nights given that I don’t really have any breaks during the day to do work.”



Left: Mr. Green reads the Sunday comics to Louise (3) while holding Graham (7 months);
Right: Ms. Barroso works with her sons Xavier (4) and Zayn (7 months).

Is it So Bad Being Homeward Bound?

By Nina Jobanputra, Sophomore

It's been more than a month since the school has shut down, and now the government has issued a stay at home order leaving everyone hunkered down in their houses. While quarantine may be boring at times, okay so most of the time, that doesn't mean there aren't benefits. Everyone is at home with plenty of time on their hands, what could they do with all that time? Many are moping around because people can't see their friends, or go outside as freely as they would like. But are there any positives of all this time at home?

Bruno Bakel, a sophomore said, "I get lots of sleep now. I also have time to clean my room, now I have organized piles of crap instead of unorganized piles of crap."

Juliette Warga, a sophomore said, "You now have time to do things you wouldn't get to do regularly like, reading, carving [wooden] rings and spoons, or making good food."

Samantha Martinez, a freshman said, "I can do more stuff that I want to do, like baking or sleeping."

Ella Hankins, an 8th grader uses her time refining her skills, she said, "Other than work, I have been using my time to catch up on shows, hangout with my family, take walks, and try knitting (which I am really bad at). One thing I now have time for is organization. I just sorted all online work from my past 4 years of middle school, into folders on google drive, so now I can actually find my stuff." Other than catching up on work Ella has found other pros to the time she has to spend inside. "As cliché as it sounds, being with my family is definitely the best part. We have started reading Anne of Green Gables together and playing lots of games of Heads Up. I have also enjoyed sleeping in, not having to wear a uniform, controlling my own schedule, and not having to interact with people I don't like."

Since the school has gone online students are faced with even more upsides to digital learning. Camille Tate, a sophomore said, "I can do work on my own terms." A number of other people have also agreed with this sentiment because online school has taken over their lives and they are faced with the freedom of choosing when to complete work.

"Distance learning all the time," said Bruno, "it's more work but it's easier."

Ella Kramer, a freshman said, "I have more free time. I get to eat a lot more, I eat pretty much 24/7 because I now have more time to eat and I don't have to be on a predetermined schedule, which I like."

Though through this hard time people find that they are missing their social interactions, while some friends may Facetime or Zoom, or students go to advisory lunch, it's just not the same. Bruno said, "I look forward to advisory lunch," a sign that the school community is somewhat still intact.

There are a number of activities to fill these endless days, even if it feels like each student is in an isolated bubble. But this is still a time to earn a skill, video chat with friends, clean that space that students have been meaning to clean the past year, watch all the Star Wars movies, or catch up on much needed sleep. Essentially, the choices are endless.

A Glimpse of a Sports-free World

By Nile Thaxton, Junior

All school sports have been shut down for the spring due to the March 13 closure of Washington, D.C. public and private schools. Participating in a sport is one of many popular ways to stay active. But with sports absent for the near future, Latin students are struggling to stay fit and engaged without the enticement of daily sports practice or competitive games to watch.



But some students have found ways to stay active, even while staying close to home. Josephine McCartney, an eighth grade student, is part of a community soccer team outside of school. She and her teammates have been doing footwork exercises and agility training for points in a competition. Josie said "It's a competition within the team, so whenever this is over, the top three players who have the most points get a prize, there's a US Women's National Team jersey, a ball."

Mr. Callum, the upper school track and field coach at Latin, is missing daily outdoor practice with his team. "Not having that connection in real time and at practice and competition with my athletes/mentees in the track and field world was the last thing to ever cross my mind. This is something that brought me so much joy, and it definitely takes away from me growing as a coach and helping these young ladies and men grow as athletes." He feels that the work missed will inevitably be made up.

Even neighborhood pickup sports have been put on pause due to social distancing. Junior Nazareth Fisher is sad about basketball hoops being taken down in most cities: "I think it's kinda crazy how they can do that. Hooping for some people is what keeps them going. Personally I am lucky enough that I have a court close enough to me that still allows me to hoop. But also I have to be very careful and make sure while I'm hooping not to interact with anyone." Clearly it will take a while to socially readjust to partaking in contact sports once more.

Oliver Spiva, a senior captain of the indoor track team, felt disappointed to miss his last sports season at Latin but motivated by this occurrence. "I am really disappointed and frustrated that I won't have my last season because I was getting into some ridiculous shape. Honestly this changes nothing, I'm keeping my head down and continuing to work because that's what made me who I am. Whenever my next race is, I will be ready."

Happy at Home?

By Ella Hankins, Eighth grader

Due to Covid-19, people across the world have been quarantining themselves either due to government orders or choice. Schools all over, including Washington Latin, have closed. For students at Washington Latin, their last day of school was March 13. In the beginning, the city said that school would resume on April 1st, then April 27th, but now there is no end in sight. Although quarantine is encouraged and has a beneficial impact on stopping the disease, it can get very lonely and boring being alone or with the same few people everyday.

As a way to cope, many have taken up new hobbies and done activities that they would normally not have time for.

Ms. Shapiro, an upper school physics teacher, has been passing time by playing hockey. She has made a set up in front of her house, and her “friends and neighbors are starting a betting pool on how long it takes (her) to break a window.”

Senior Mary-Kate Wilson, and her sister chose a different approach, a bit fancier than hockey. “My sister and I planned out a tea party, one day, when we got bored. We baked scones, assembled sandwiches, brewed tea, and put on dainty outfits. It was ridiculous, but a very fun way to pass the time,” explained Mary-Kate.

Upper school English teacher Ms. Foley, like Mary- Kate, has also dressed up during this quarantine, but for different reasons. “I am dressing up in my orientation videos every day as a way of trying to maintain student interest and make students smile,” said Ms. Foley. Her daily costumes range from a cowboy to Snow White to Kermit the Frog.

Camsey Noonan, a sophomore, was convinced by her sister to download the popular app, TikTok. Little did Camsey know, she was putting herself in danger by doing the popular TikTok dance called the Renegade. “[My sister] smacked her elbow on my dresser. I accidentally punched her twice and I hit my hip falling onto my bed, laughing at how bad I looked. I do ballet quite often but we learned that I'm certainly not a TikTok dancer. I do know how to do the Renegade dance, but I have a pretty nasty bruise on my hip and I still fail at "throwing it back."

Another sophomore and TikTok user, Sheridan Easterling, has been doing many things to use up time. “Some of the stuff that I've been doing recently is actually some of the stuff that I wouldn't traditionally do on any given day. Such as playing video games, practicing some boxing, strangely enough practicing TikTok dances like that 'Renegade' thing, and taking apart some old

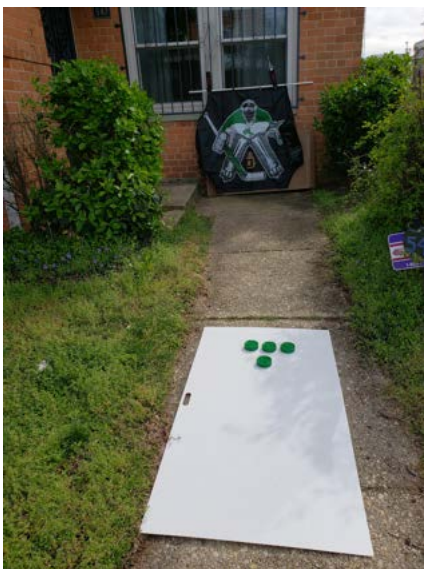
technology. I've also been doing some exercises like throwing a 20 pound tire, lifting weights, riding my bike, etc.” he said.

Eighth grader, Mackie Boone, said “I’ve been watching *Grey’s Anatomy*, baking, and crying.” She elaborated on her crying by saying “this huge change in all our lives is so overwhelming, that all I can do is cry.”

Junior LiQian Shoag and her older brother have been having fun over zoom with their baby cousin during free time. “We were sticking our tongues out at our cousin. And then he licked the table and you hear in the background “Aaron, stop licking the table!” Also later in the call my brother played the song ‘Whip my Hair’ by Willow Smith. So we were all shaking our heads with our baby cousin.”



Ms. Foley’s epic costumes and Ms. Shapiro’s hockey set-up



Parting is Such Sweet Sorrow

By Mary-Kate Wilson, Senior

On April 15, Ms. Brady and Ms. Smith sent out an email to Latin's senior class with some disappointing news about the cancellation of senior rites of passage.

"Let us begin with this:" They wrote, "we are so sorry." The email revealed what many seniors had suspected: No students would be returning for the end of the school year. No seniors would get to finish their final months on the campus of Washington Latin.

"Prom, a proper graduation ceremony," said senior Zoe Dickerson, as she reflected on the memories she had hoped to make in senior year, "all the end of the year celebrations that people do. Parties and stuff. Right when senior year was supposed to be at its peak, we didn't have that experience."

Prom was one of the several occasions to be cancelled due to the outbreak of Coronavirus. "We have considered virtual alternatives," wrote Ms. Brady and Ms. Smith, "but feel that there is really no appropriate substitute."

Seniors are not only missing formal events like prom; they are losing their final seconds on the field, on the stage, and in the classroom with their favorite teachers and classmates. They are missing the chance to socialize with peers they have known for eight years, but may never meet again.

"I miss all the people that I got to see on a daily basis but never saw outside of school," said senior Perrin Brady.

Zoe, who was set to be a co-captain of the girls' varsity lacrosse team, was disappointed to lose the Spring season. "This was the first year I've ever been captain, so I was excited for that. And a coach from Sweet Briar College was going to come watch me play."

College decisions away from the CCO have not been easy for students, nor their counselors. "You [seniors] used to run into my office, excited with your decisions," reflects Ms. Latham, director of college counseling, who misses the daily face-to-face sharing of positive news. "It's disappointing, in that way."

Ms. Latham also says that ensuring that students are up-to-date on necessary college information is "a little difficult [because] I'm used to you guys just wandering into the CCO."

Wandering the halls, socializing, and simply existing in the Latin building are activities some seniors never realized they took for granted. “I really miss the senior class,” says Perrin Brady. “I miss the senior locker room, honestly.”

Even when the foreseeable future appears to exist only at home for Latin students, not everyone has lost hope.

“Regarding the other end-of-year events for seniors,” penned Ms. Brady and Ms. Smith, “we are still hopeful, perhaps naively so, that we might be able to get at least some of them in. These include the Junior/Senior overnight in early June, Valediction Ceremony, the Senior Lunch, and, most importantly, Graduation.”

These events will likely not occur as seniors once expected them to, but could still offer members of the class of 2020 the closure that they are seeking, albeit over Zoom.

On April 23, Ms. Brady sent out another email to seniors, requesting input on how end-of-the-year events should take place. Options were offered for a drive-by graduation, or one completely online. She also asked students which other events were most important for the school to attempt to preserve in some way; among them were the senior roast and June overnight trip.

Despite the lack of physical connection to Latin and their peers, some seniors are doing everything they can to participate in many of the “lasts” that they had expected this Spring.

“I submitted to Lit Mag,” says Zoe Dickerson, “and I was thinking about singing at The Hook virtually.” The Hook will take place online on May 15, 2020 for students and teachers to watch

seniors give their final musical and poetic goodbyes.



The events that seniors may experience in this time are nothing like they had anticipated or hoped for, but nobody can say that they are not memorable. Whether it is a final club meeting, class event, homework assignment, or even a newspaper article, WLPCS seniors are still making their last moments at Latin matter.

Cartoon

By Anja Pratt, Eighth grader

CORONA Starter Pack



A Walk Down Memory Lane







