
SUMUS LEONES

May 2020

Car Commencement

By Mary-Kate Wilson, Senior

The details of Washington Latin's 2020 graduation ceremony are still uncertain at press time. Just a few weeks ago, students were notified via an email from Ms. Smith and Ms. Brady that the event would be held at the Family Drive In in Stephens City, Virginia. However, after a plumbing issue at the venue, the theater cancelled the celebration. The class of 2020 is once again waiting with bated breath to find out where it will graduate.

"The managers of the theater tell us that they will need to dig up the area and that the theater will be out of commission from June 15-19," reads a newer email, sent by Ms. Brady and Ms. Smith on May 28. "So back to the drawing board. We are not willing to change the date as they suggested, so we are now looking for another venue."

Before the cancellation, when students initially heard the news for an in-person graduation, they were thrilled.

"We talked about it in advisory," said senior Kim Montpelier, about hearing the news. "I'm really happy about how much thought the teachers put into it!"

Although not completely crazy about the movie theater venue, most were still excited.

"In general, I think people are just happy it's not virtual," explained senior Thea Davtyan. "And I think most people think the movie thing is cool."

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However, the news was not exciting for everyone. “I was definitely bummed when I first found out,” revealed fellow senior Owen Fox-Whelpton, “because I think I was still holding out hope for a traditional graduation, even though that’s kind of ridiculous given the current circumstances.”

Overall, the idea of congregating together for such an important event after months of solitude left many seniors excited and buzzing about the possibilities. Kiya Tucker, another member of the class of 2020, was thrilled to hear the news.

“I was in love with the idea,” she wrote. “I think it’s creative and resourceful, and I’m glad our team was able to come up with a safe way for us to see each other IN PERSON!”

Although the venue in Virginia is no longer available for the June 15th date of graduation, the team planning the event has not given up.

“We are determined to find a site to host an in-person graduation,” wrote Ms. Smith and Ms. Brady in their email, “and will just move all of our planning to that place.”

One of the seniors eagerly prepping for an in-person send off is Kim Montpelier, who was recently voted to be the senior graduation speaker at the event.

“It’s been so hard to try to encapsulate what we’ve gone through for the past eight years. I’m pretty nervous!” Kim said.

The chance to reflect together one last time is rare. Countless senior classes across the country will not get any semblance of a ceremony for high school graduation.

“Most of my friends outside of Latin were not given the opportunity to have any kind of in-person graduation,” says Kiya Tucker. “It seems like a bunch of schools decided to just do away with the ceremony altogether, which sucks.”

Owen echoed Kiya’s sentiment. “I’m really happy that we have a chance to get together and have some form of ceremony. I can’t wait to see everyone, even at a distance. It’s been way too long.”

Even as an opportunity for happy reconnection, it’s clear that this uncertain ceremony represents an ending. “[Graduation] means moving on,” mused Thea Davtyan. “I think that meaning is amplified in ‘quarantimes.’”

After so much time apart, this event will be as much of a convocation as it is a graduation. A chance to reconnect as well as to part ways; to say hello just before we have to say goodbye. “Usually at graduation, you’ve been around everyone. But we haven’t,” Ms. Brady explained.

“You’re driving into the setting sun,” she reflected, as she explained the journey to the drive-in. “And I think that’s really unique when you’re thinking about endings and closings, and you guys are finishing your time at Latin. Driving into your setting sun on high school.”



Stephens City’s Family Drive-In Theater, pictured above, was the planned site to host Washington Latin’s 2020 graduation before plumbing complications shuttered the facility on the planned graduation day, June 15.

Lockdown Abroad

By Nina Jobanputra, Sophomore

It has been months since quarantine began. Everyone in the DC area is hunkered down in homes waiting for stay at home orders to be lifted. While people may know a lot about the precautions the United States is taking to fight COVID-19, they might not know what countries around the world are doing.

Laura Carrazon, one of Latin's exchange students was sent back home to Spain, where she said they are doing an overall great job. "Right now we are in phases, which mean that two weeks ago, kids were allowed to go for a walk, since last week everyone is allowed to go for a walk or do some exercise in determined schedules, next week we might be allowed to meet up to 10 people in the street and small stores and bars are going to open, and progressively like that."

In Germany, which has been known to have had great success in controlling the spread of the virus, former Washington Latin student Ella Norlen who is currently living there said, "We've already opened up stores, and restaurants can open now too - but only with outdoor seating." Ella went on to mention how Germany has been able to accomplish this, "Germany has a LOT of ICU beds and ventilators, so people who need a hospital bed can almost always get one. Secondly, our lockdown was very restrictive. Basically as soon as cases began appearing, the entirety of Bavaria, Germany went on lockdown - we had curfews, there were selected times for elderly people to go to the store, and you could only leave your house for exercise, to walk your dog (or other animal I guess), or buy food. Masks are also required everywhere you go. This has been very effective - I believe that in the town I am living in and a few towns around us have only seen about 350 or so cases, and only 16 people have died."

Charlotte Lin, who has relatives in Taiwan, said that Taiwan "has taken this crisis way more seriously from the beginning. People started wearing masks when Covid-19 started spreading. So far it has been helping a lot and there have only been seven deaths and the majority of the people have recovered."

When asked how these efforts were compared to the US, Laura said, "I think that we are doing a better job because our quarantine is real quarantine, not like [the US's]."

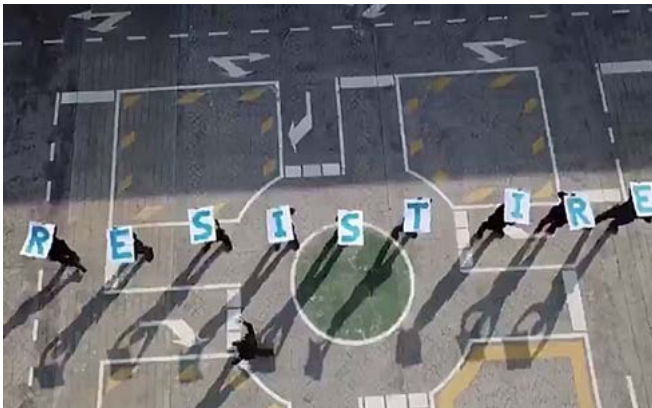
Ella agreed, "I think that Germany has definitely done a much better job than the US, for sure [...], [because] I am pretty sure that basically all stores are open at this point, and German kids have gone back to school." Germany has been able to speedily contain this virus and are now able to open back up without a huge fear of the virus resurging.

Charlotte explained, “I do think they are doing a better job than the US because most people there are constantly wearing masks, washing hands etc. and overall taking the pandemic very seriously. [...] no one goes out unless it's for work and everyone is wearing masks.”

Despite the countries' successes, they could still improve. Laura said, “I [am comparing] what are we doing right now instead of what we are actually doing.” Laura points out that there is a difference between what they have proposed and the reality of the situation and behaviors of the people in Spain right now. Though they do have “the police in the street making sure the citizens followed the rules and they [give] mouth masks to everyone.”

Ella said that one thing Germany could improve, “is that they could keep us in lockdown for a little while longer, but the German people really love socializing so that won't happen.”

In all, no matter how people may feel about quarantine, it can be reassuring to know they are not alone in their isolation. Many countries and maybe even the whole world have gone inside to wait this outbreak out. The most important part of these countries' successes is that their citizens stayed home and wore masks, they had people like the police making sure that guidelines were followed, which in the end brought their case numbers down.



Photos of Spain in lockdown, courtesy of Laura Carrazon

Zoom with Caution

By Josie McCartney, Eighth grade

When Washington Latin sent its students home on March 13, faculty and students alike wondered how online classes would function. Many members of the community were curious if there would be classes via Zoom, a video conferencing platform.

Soon, Zoom became an integral part of people's lives as distance learning progressed. Tutorial, advisory lunch, and, most recently, synchronous classes have been conducted using Zoom. In addition to using it professionally for work and school, Zoom has been used to connect family and friends. As Zoom has become increasingly in use across the nation as well as at Latin, questions of Zoom's safety, reliability, and service arose.

In New York City, public schools didn't use Zoom from April 7 to May 7, citing privacy and security risks as the reason for abandoning the platform. Teachers and schools in New York City were directed towards other platforms such as Google Hangouts and Microsoft Teams. The decision to allow Zoom again came after Zoom answered the city's safety concerns. In public schools in DC, on April 1, Zoom was cautioned for similar reasons, though many DCPS parents and students say their schools continue to use it.

When asked about the decision to use Zoom over other video conferencing platforms, Director of Information Technology Mr. Lyon said, "We looked at a number of options... The two main [platforms] we were deciding between were Zoom and [Google] Hangouts [another video communication program]."

"We tested both Zoom and Google Hangouts, and Zoom was ultimately the better product. Google Hangouts had a lot of issues with what settings the teacher could control during a session, and the quality of the video was also worse. Zoom is easy to manage and understand," Mr. Lyon said.

On the topic of security, Mr. Lyon claimed, "Zoom is secure if you know what settings to use and what steps to take to keep it safe. Obviously, there have been a lot of stories in the news about "Zoom bombings" and similar disruptions in Zoom sessions."

He mentioned that the school has taken the maximum precautions to keep meetings safe, such as installing a "waiting room" for teachers to decide whether or not to let someone into the video call, creating a password to join a session, and allowing only teachers to share their screen.

On Friday April 3, Ms. Malchionno’s eighth grade advisory was “Zoom bombed” during their weekly advisory lunch. Ms. Malchionno ended the meeting immediately when it was clear a non-Latin student had joined.

Eighth grader Kennedy Cawley said, “Someone entered our advisory lunch and displayed sexual content on their screen.”

When asked if she felt differently about Zoom and its safety after that experience, Kennedy said, “Maybe a little bit. I think it should just be more safe, especially when schools are using [Zoom].”

“Zoom is a good program. I just wish more of the teachers in our grade did group class Zoom calls,” said seventh grader Julia Hallam. “We’re not really doing Zoom because most of my teachers don’t like doing calls with the students not showing their face.”

Eighth grade science teacher Ms. Barlev has been holding synchronous Zoom classes on some Mondays in addition to her advisory lunches and tutorials. She said, “I think that Zoom is a very powerful tool, both for education and other [purposes].”

“I think the bottom line is that nothing is going to be perfect right now, and everything is challenging and so we have to do the best with what we have. Zoom is just another tool to help us do the best in times where the quality of learning and of existing is just harder,” Ms. Barlev noted.

Teachers and students have adapted to teach and learn during these tough times, but should that come at the cost of community members’ safety online? Regardless of security concerns, Zoom continues to be used at Latin.



Ms. Reed’s sixth grade advisory on Zoom

What Washington Latin Watches

By Nile Thaxton, Junior

With so much time at home, people can really do anything they want, within constraints obviously. Some have been productive with their days, working while others sleep and relax. But between the day or night, pretty much everyone has been watching TV. Here are some shows people have watched:

Yao Calhoun, a junior student, has been continuously rewatching *The Office*. "I watch *The Office* because it never fails to give me a good laugh, and [it] has many episodes to keep me entertained for days on end."

Senior John Parker has watched several shows. "Welp, shows I've continuously watched on Netflix, have been *On My Block* and *You*. One show has a theme on Youth, while the other can truly leave you on edge with shock and fear and wanting more. It's a good mix of shows where I find their takes on the themes to be quite entertaining."

Ajania Thaxton, junior, is watching more upcoming shows. "I've been watching this new show on Netflix called *The Midnight Gospel*. I watch it strictly because I find it weird and entertaining. Also *Hunters* has a really intriguing, action-packed lore."

Ms. Raskin, a math teacher at Latin, has watched a variety of television. "I've been watching the news. I like watching competition shows before going on a run. I've been intrigued by some fun shows like *Lego Masters*."

Ella Hankins, an eighth grade student, has watched a couple shows lately. "My family still uses cable and watch live tv shows. But people have recommended *Tiger King* and *On My Block*."

Josephine McCartney, an eighth grade student, has watched a variety of things. "I've watched *Outer Banks* on Zoom Party with Kai McFadgion and Kennedy Cawley. We've also been watching throwback movies." "A Glimpse of a Sports-free World

Ode to Class of 2024

By Ella Hankins, Eighth grade

For the class of 2024, this is our last year of middle school. Soon, we will graduate to high school, some of us staying at Washington Latin, others leaving. Like all grades, we have lost opportunities due to quarantine. We will never have an eighth grade field trip, spirit week, advisory competition, or graduation. Although we, the class of 2024, are missing some of our last opportunities to make memories together, we have plenty of other moments from middle school to look back on.

In 5th grade, we went to Calleva where we participated in multiple team building exercises, in hopes that our grade would become united.

In 6th grade, while learning about ancient battle tactics with Mr. Staten, we made shields out of cardboard and charged at him on the field. The day resulted in some broken shields, and Mr. Staten having glitter on his suit for the rest of the day.

In 7th grade, many of us took a day trip to New York where we saw “To Kill a Mockingbird” on Broadway. Not only did we see the play, but we also ate pizza together, went to the Hershey Store, and listened to Mr. Green singing Taylor Swift’s “Welcome to New York”, over the bus's speaker. This caused all of us to take out our phones and record the pitchy entertainment.

Our class also went on the famous Echo Hill field trip in seventh grade. A trip that eighth grader Giaan Kalsi says is his favorite middle school memory. “It wasn't like real school. It was just us 7th graders messing around with our counselors and our teachers.”

Like Giaan, many other eighth graders talk about Echo Hill when favorite memories are brought up. Echo Hill gave us a chance to run around, without being yelled at by teachers for knocking down other students in the halls. We sang, built campfires, and immersed ourselves in nature. Placed into groups, chosen by our teachers, we spent time with students who, after 3 years of being in the same grade, we still did not know.

It was not always the planned events that our favorite moments came from, but also the everyday antics that our grade caused.

There were times when our whole grade would start clapping and laughing in the MPR because of something that happened at one lunch room table. In the halls and classrooms people would start dancing and singing randomly. On the field we would gather in large groups stealing the

soccer balls from each other, shooting them into the damaged nets and over the fence into the nearby street.

Devyn Scott said some of his favorite memories came from his 7th grade Ancient Civilizations class with Mr. Wills, referencing the debates and amusing things our classmates did, he said “That was pretty fun... that was one of my favorite classes last year... we had all the funny kids in our class (B period).”

One of the last memories we, as a grade, had together was taking our class photo. After many minutes of teachers trying to get us into uniform and sit still, we were finally close, until bees came near us. Half the grade got up and ran for their lives, while the other half sat there laughing.

We left school on March 13, unaware we would not be coming back for the rest of the school year. We thought the quarantine would be temporary and we would be back in our classrooms soon, but that was not the case.

Eighth grader, Shreya Kelly, said “If I had known that March 13th would be our last day of school, I would have been more prepared with my books and saying goodbye to teachers and friends.”

Another eighth grader, Kennedy Crawley, agreed saying “I would have hugged my friends a little tighter.”

The effects of the pandemic has not just harmed our eighth grade experience, but also has the potential to hurt our high school lives too. Eighth grade not only wraps up students’ middle school experiences, but also prepares them for highschool, both academically and socially, skills that are hard to work on when your education and social interactions are through a screen. When asked whether they felt prepared for high school, both academically and socially, Kennedy, Shreya, and Giaan seemed confident for the most part, but all expressed some worry with the academic aspect.

Kennedy said “I feel pretty much prepared, the only thing is math.”

Shreya shared Kennedy’s worry about future classes. “I mostly feel prepared for high school, but it’s difficult to be fully prepared regarding AP classes.”

Giaan said “I think no one is fully prepared for the future. I think that distance learning has made me realize how much I value my free time, so I don't honestly think I'm ready. I'm going to take the next four years as they come.”

Devyn, however, focused more on the social side of high school saying, “Academically I feel great... I feel prepared. I'm a little scared socially, but I'm also not scared. I'm still going to have the old friends from middle school, but then there are going to be new people coming in and I am actually really excited about the new people because they don't place an image on me right away... Whereas the rest of the people I have known for 4 plus years I am a certain person, I have a certain image, but to them it's a blank slate completely.”

Covid-19 has prevented us eighth graders from making some final memories together, but we still have some amazing ones to look back on. As far as the future, it is never clear, but one thing is for sure, we, the class of 2024 are ready for it.



Left: The class of 2024 at Echo Hill in 7th grade

Right, top: A class photo taken this year

Right, bottom: The class of 2024 as fifth graders at Calleva

Birthdays Without Buddies

By Zoe Edelman, Junior

Considering the classical mission of Washington Latin, it seems only right that celebrating the birthdays of non-religious figures began with the Romans.¹

Since then, celebrating birthdays has become a big deal around the world, from low-key get togethers with family to extravagant Sweet 16s. So how does COVID-19 and social distancing affect birthday celebrations? Members of the Latin community weighed in.

“I don’t think I’ve been so excited for a birthday in a long time,” sophomore Vivian Claire admitted. While this answer may come as a surprise to many, considering the elimination of the chance to throw a lavish bash, Vivian explained that “this season has been really hard on all of us so having something to celebrate is really great.”

Continuing on her positive note, Vivian detailed her plans, which included “meeting up with two friends and social distancing in Rock Creek,” before “spend[ing] the afternoon with my family, most likely going for a hike.” She did detail one key difference, mentioning “normally, I would spend my actual birthday with my family... and also have a separate day spent with friends.”

Senior MK Wilson struck a similarly positive note regarding her recent 18th birthday. “It was definitely disappointing that I didn’t get to have a party with lots of friends, but my siblings were home which they probably would not have been otherwise.”

MK went on to detail her itinerary for the day, “I FaceTimed friends, went on a walk with my sister, and had a birthday dinner with my family.” She explained how “talking over social media or FaceTime” was a decent alternative, considering “I didn’t get to go to school (obviously).” As a cap to the exciting celebration, MK noted “I’m going to have a zoom movie night this weekend as a belated gathering.”

MK also admitted the heart-touching aspect of celebrating birthdays while social distancing, “it was really nice that we still made efforts to show how much we cared on each other’s birthdays.” While it can be challenging when missing your friends, MK confessed “more people reached out this year than any year in the past which was really nice to see.”

Middle school English teacher Ms. Breitman’s big day felt “pretty special.” What did her “great day” include? “We played soccer in the park with my kids and watched *Into the Woods* and then had 2

¹ It should be noted, according to several sources, these early celebrations only applied to men. The first recorded celebration of a woman’s birthday was not until the 12th century.

zooms with high school friends and college friends.” Sharing her thoughts on the future of birthday celebrations, she explained “Some of my friends are talking about socially distanced parties in which we sit in the park 6 feet apart. That may be the new summer bday party.”

Another English teacher also had a very low-key birthday. “I don't usually do much to celebrate my birthday,” Mr. Green explained, “so I just did what I normally do, which is get some food from a restaurant I enjoy (take-out, obvi), and relax and then watch a movie at home after the kids go to bed.”

Middle school director, Ms. Bradley, on the other hand, had a big day to celebrate “a big decade birthday.” Although her envisioned birthday plan, “an all out spa extravaganza weekend to celebrate a new year,” could not occur, she carried on, celebrating with “the love and light of my family and friends.”

The day began with a surprise “rose gold balloon explosion” put on by friends, followed up by “my very own photo shoot” and cupcakes from Baked and Wired. “It was of the most importance that I had my number one dessert prepared by DC's finest. Sadly Georgetown Cupcakes was not a viable option.”

Her day was not without a big surprise, courtesy of a brief visit from a faraway friend. “One of my best friends from undergrad... drove all the way from Philadelphia to drop off my birthday gift.” Even though she had to turn around quickly “to honor a deadline for graduate school, seeing her face after all that effort was everything I needed on my birthday.”

Overall, the day was “an unforgettable one,” thanks to the belief that “the simple things in life matter the most... The celebration lived in the knowledge that I had everything I needed.”

Junior Fiona Campbell also weighed in, admitting that celebrating this year “will be a little trickier.” She noted that although “I won't be able to see all the friends or extended family I would like to,” she may still be able to do something fun, “especially since it's on the weekend.” Her planned fun? “Hike, or strawberry picking,” followed by a family dinner, “hopefully with some wings.”

“I'm slightly disappointed because I do like to have a big get together with my friends,” Fiona granted, “but it's not the end of the world, I'll have a birthday next year.”



On right, Middle School Director Ms. Bradley celebrated her “big decade birthday” during quarantine

On left, Vivian Claire spent time on her birthday with family

A Digital Display

By Mary-Kate Wilson, Senior

On the afternoon of May 15, 2020, more than 80 members of the Latin community joined a Zoom call to participate in the school's first-ever virtual Hook.

The Hook is a bi-annual student led open mic, and has been a Latin tradition since it was first started by former Washington Latin student, Micah Carol. Since then, it has become an important community event, allowing any high school student to showcase her artwork, poetry, songwriting, or any other talent.

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, many school events can no longer take place. However, a team of students worked since our school's closing to ensure that their peers would have a creative outlet to connect with each other and express themselves while in quarantine.

"For this year's Hook I prepared the way I usually do, which is not very much," says senior Trinity Rich, who was a member of the Hook Committee, an MC, and was also a performer. "I found a poem the day of. One of the reasons why I love The Hook is because it's such a supportive environment to just share what you want to share, and that felt no different this year."

Many people love the Hook for the joy and excitement it sparks among students and teachers who attend.

"I was so pleased and relieved that it kept its magic," writes Mr. Hotchkiss, the teacher advisor for the Hook. "Performances still had their same power and surprise. A thing that's always special about The Hook, to me, is being startled by how talented our community is. 'She wrote THAT?!' 'He can SING?!' Even though we were stuck staring at boxes on screens, I was still blown away by what folks were able to do."

Rather than be squished into the bookshelves in the back of the library, attendees were miles apart in their own bedrooms. Despite their physical distance, the closeness many felt when hearing their classmates play guitar or recite poetry was still present.

"The room was and felt packed," says Mr. Hotchkiss. "The same way we usually cram into the library, we nearly exceeded our 100-attendee Zoom meeting restriction."

Meg Grieve, a member of the class of 2019 and former Hook Organizer, attended the online event along with several other Latin alumni.

"The Hook has been and always will be an event of passion, vulnerability, and community," she says, "and that remained true even on Zoom. And it never goes exactly as planned, so any hiccups caused by the online format were perfectly on par with the norm."

Out of the more than a dozen acts, there were a few moments that stood out as particular examples of this unique vulnerability. For Meg, it was hearing Mr. Hotchkiss read a poem he wrote about entering the school building after classes prematurely ended this year.

“Hotchkiss’s poem was extra special because it was the first time a teacher ever read a poem, which is an extra level of rawness, showing how comfortable teachers and students are with each other at Latin.”

For Mr. Hotchkiss, there were several performances that inspired this feeling. “As ever, I was moved by the seniors,” he reflected. “It’s the last time I’m guaranteed to see them share their art with the world. Trinity and MK’s thoughtful verses. Damian, Nora, Chrislyn, and Owen’s melodies. Because I’ll miss them terribly, I found myself intentionally savoring their every word and note.”

In their last weeks as a Latin student, Trinity also felt the significance of their last poetic performance, despite how strange it felt to read to the camera. “I don’t think I connected in the same way that I usually do,” they reflected, “but I think it was a very beautiful experience, and I’m glad we did it.”



Left: Students held an in-person hook earlier in the school year, December 2019



Right: The first every virtual Hook

A goodbye note from Mary-Kate:

I'm thankful to have spent the past three years as the editor of Sumus Leones. I'm thankful to have my last article with this newspaper be about a topic I have loved dearly while in high school. I am thankful to Zoe for her amazing work on the paper so far, and because I know she will do more amazing work with it next year. And lastly, I am thankful to Ms. Breitman, for her dedication to Sumus Leones, and for pushing me even when I was a stubborn, lazy senior.

Virtual Graduation Cartoon

By Anja Pratt, Eighth grade



Help the effort against COVID-19 and earn community service hours

Using the OpenStreetMap platform, students have the opportunity to create maps of communities in developing countries for the use of international aid organizations. This is especially important now in light of the COVID-19 pandemic as communities are struggling to get access to resources they need. Using this online platform, students will trace buildings, roads, and rivers in uncharted areas to give aid organizations vital information they need to locate communities, provide assistance, and understand the population. Students will also earn service hours for their work. To get involved contact Alicia Campbell at acampbell@students.latinpcs.org