

Jon Ortner
Mrs. Rau
English IV
Coronavirus Journal

Dear diary,

My life as well as many others have come to a screeching halt. It all started back in November of 2019. The country of China had a virus that spread amongst its people. Little was said about the virus as it had just begun to spread around the world. Little did I or the rest of the world know that it would all change our lives in some way or another.

In December of 2019 very little was said about the virus still as many people were just beginning to hear about it. There was no panic and there were no restrictions put in place in the United States. My life was normal and I was busy with basketball and school. The only sickness that I was getting was the flu or the common cold. If you would've told me that everything was going to have taken such a turn I would've laughed and said you were crazy.

It then turned into January of 2020! I had big plans for the year of 2020! This was going to be the best year yet, this was going to be my year. I was still in the swing of things with basketball and school. I was also planning on visiting some more schools to figure out which college would best fit me for my football and academic career. I thought very little of the Coronavirus still at the time and just didn't see it finding its way to Nebraska. However, January is when the coronavirus started to make a little noise. Government officials were pointing at Wuhan's Wholesale Seafood Market as the origin of where the virus had started.

The first death had also been reported in China on January 11th. It would be talked about in the news, people from China were beginning to warn us, and the United States started to limit traveling outside the country. Still it was hard to believe this virus would come to our country. Kobe Bryant, a famous basketball player for the Lakers who was considered one of the best to have ever played the game had died in a helicopter crash on January 26th. This had shocked millions of people across the globe including myself. That whole next week most of the news coverage only seemed to be about Kobe Bryant and his death. However, the Coronavirus news would start back up again.

By January 29th the reports said that there were 32 deaths and 6,000 new cases reported. In February the Coronavirus hype would continue to grow. What I remember from the beginning of February wasn't the Coronavirus though. I was going through a big stage in my life as I had decided to sign my National Letter of Intent to play football at the University of Nebraska- Kearney. It was a very exciting time in my life and I just didn't see anything bad happening that would impact the United States yet alone myself. Everything still seemed normal and quite busy in my life.

As the month of February continued I remember hearing about cruise ships having to quarantine themselves after getting back to their mainlands and that new cases and deaths were starting to appear throughout the world. My basketball season was coming to an end and I was starting to prepare myself for the upcoming track season. I still thought very little of the Coronavirus which in February had its official name changed to COVID-19 by the WHO. As February ended I only had one thing on my mind however and that was that we were one game away from going to state in basketball after pulling an upset win on the number one team (Creighton) in our Sub-District Tournament.

It was now the beginning of March and my year was going really good. My grades were good, the basketball team was one game away from going to state, and I was getting closer to

Jon Ortner
Mrs. Rau
English IV
Coronavirus Journal

graduating! It was March 2nd and we were playing the number one seed in our class. The winner of this basketball game would get to go to state! I myself was super excited about this game because I would be guarding their best player who also happened to be over seven feet tall. I let him know from the very beginning of that game that he was not going to just have it easy when I was guarding him. Even though he was over a foot taller than I was he still struggled to make any impact for his team. I held him to only 2 points all night and I was super proud of that. Unfortunately though, we got our butts kicked 64-34. I was just thankful for a great season, it ended up going a lot better than how I thought it would end.

Although I was a little upset that we wouldn't be going to state for basketball, my mind all of a sudden changed. Why would I have changed my mind so suddenly you might ask? Well, it was COVID-19! Out of nowhere this monstrous virus was now storming into my life! I was in absolute shock when I heard the news that only immediate family members would be allowed at boys state basketball. Now I was actually a little satisfied that we weren't going to state for basketball. Not being able to play in front of thousands of fans in a big arena kind of takes the whole idea of state basketball away.

At this point in my life in the middle of March I still felt no impact on my life. Spring break was coming up and at this rate the flu was still way deadlier than COVID-19. For spring break my family really didn't have any special plans. I spent most of my time working out at the feedyard and for fun I would hangout with my friends. The countdown was on as school was nearing its end, I was so excited to be able to finish out my final year of high school. That all changed on Sunday night when my family and I were eating supper at our dinner table. All of a sudden my mom received a phone call that spring break would be extended for another week due to taking precautions for the pandemic.

I started to realize that this was not a game. This was being taken very seriously. That week I continued to work and life went on pretty normally still. It was nice to have an extended spring break but I was also hoping that I'd get the opportunity to go back to school and finish out my senior year. However that would not be the case as my parents received a call that we would be doing remote learning throughout the end of March. I was shocked that this had happened and I didn't know what to think. My parents seemed to be a little worried and they immediately started having us social distance with our friends. This was really hard on me as well as the possibility of missing my senior year. Doing remote learning wouldn't make it any easier for me.

As time went on we continued to watch the news and talk about what was going on. This was a very weird time. I had also qualified for state FBLA for the very first time and would be attending the state conference at the end of March. However, this as well as many other school events were either canceled or postponed. I struggled with this and was very upset but I held myself together and tried to make the best of this situation. A huge change for my family and I also included not being able to attend church on Sunday. We have gone every Sunday and have always found a way to make it workout for us to attend. The only time we never went to church is when we would be sick. My parents still did find a way to have church at our house thanks to technology. Every weekend we still have mass in our living room as we stream mass through facebook.

Jon Ortner
Mrs. Rau
English IV
Coronavirus Journal

Technology has had a huge role in the process of this pandemic. It hasn't been the most convenient but it works. I'm still keeping up with all my schoolwork as well as maintaining good grades. As time passed through April school continued to get postponed and it looked like I wouldn't be finishing my school year at school. My parents were struggling on how seriously we should be taking the situation. It seemed as if new information and perspectives were given about the coronavirus everyday. At work my dad had decided to play it safe and keep everyone as far apart as they could be while working. My duties consisted of doing office work, vertical tilling, mowing, and helping out anywhere else I was needed.

As time has passed I've gotten used to the chaos. Through this experience I've learned that you shouldn't take anything for granted, the media and government are truly corrupt, that you have to make the best out of any situation, and you should always keep extra toilet paper on hand! Today is May 7th of 2020 and I'm just finishing up school for the year! I'm super happy that school will be done soon and things are looking good as we might possibly have a graduation on July 18th. The cases and deaths seem to be going down and the world is slowing starting to reopen. Scientists and researchers believe they will have a vaccine around 2021 to stop the virus however there is hope that they may find a cure faster than that. I'm taking this all one day at a time and try to make the best of all the opportunities I get.