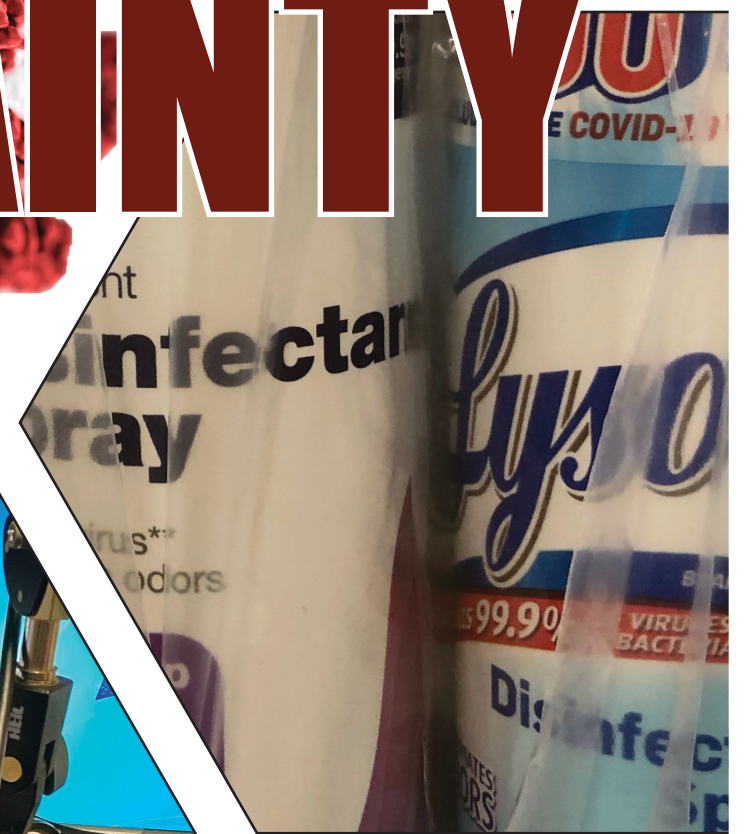
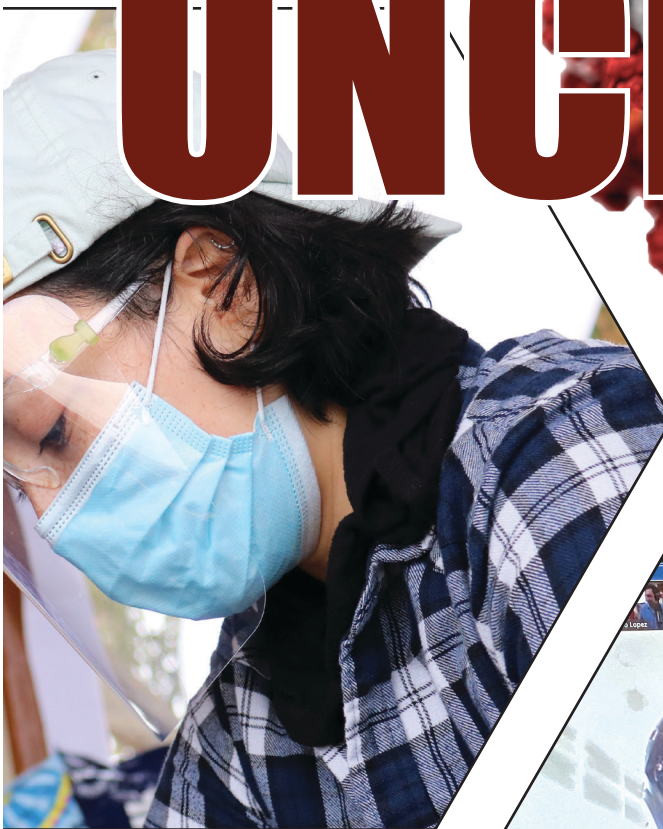
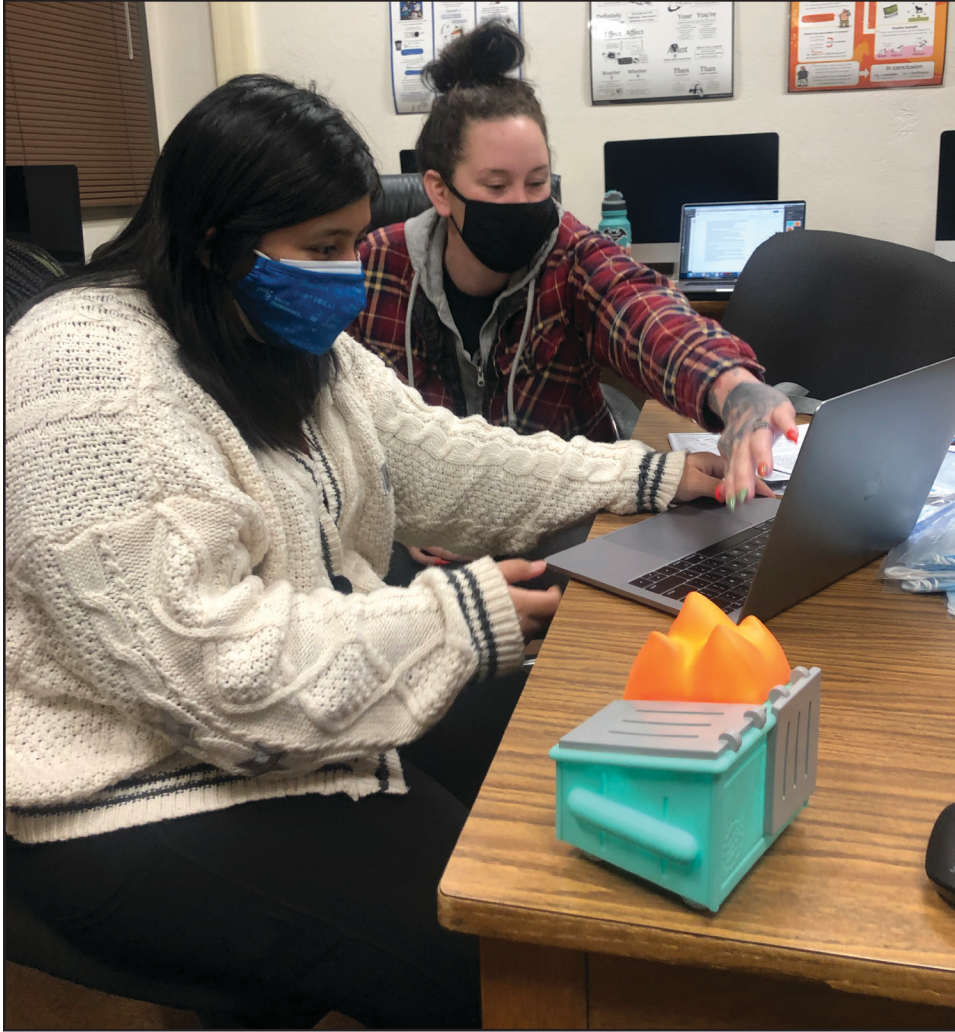


NAVIGATING THE YEAR OF UNCERTAINTY



FINDING OUR WAY IN A COVID WORLD



Like people all across the nation, the Collegian staff has gone through a great shift to continue to serve our campus during the COVID-19 shutdown

Two weeks to flatten the curve.

The statement is haunting now. It gives pause. It hits differently. We didn't know then. But in those early pandemic days, it gave us hope that the path to beat COVID-19 could be swift, deliberate, and without controversy. On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a global pandemic. Two days later, a majority of the campus community spent their last day — ironically a Friday the 13th — in classes. *The Collegian* has just shut down operations for Spring Break, after a feverish push to finish the third issue of the semester.

On March 13, schools in San Joaquin County's K12 system began announcing shutdowns through April 6. By March 17, Delta College faculty, staff, and students were put on notice that we too would be transitioning to remote learning with "minimal staffing" on campus, according to an email from President/Superintendent Dr. Omid Pourzanjani. The email noted that Delta would continue "monitoring all communications at national, state, and local levels in addition to communications from the Chancellor's Office."

That monitoring continues as San Joaquin County remains in the purple tier of the Blueprint for a Safer Economy indicating a "widespread" risk level as of March 24. Hopes to move to "substantial" red tier were dashed earlier this week when the case numbers per 100,000 went up again.

Within a matter of weeks, Delta College — and the world — was tasked to do the unthinkable. Every class moved to online only instruction. Every student who swore they would never take an online class suddenly had no choice. Every instructor who shied away from learning the Canvas learning management system had to quickly catch up. Student services transitioned from its mostly DeRico-based environment to suddenly serving the campus through digital means.

We were struggling to catch up while pushing into the future all at once. For *The Collegian*, the pivot felt like a crash. The well-oiled machine that is a newspaper staff is built around deadlines and structure. We suddenly had none. We rebuilt the scaffolding that holds us up. We made mistakes (and still are). We let ourselves hit the wall in order to break through. But we didn't give up.

Resilience is an oft-talked concept in pandemic times. But so is protecting our peace. We have struggled with pushing to put out the best product possible, while trying to reconcile the constant tearing down of our mental states from the constant stress and sadness.

We've experienced the circles tightening around us, as members of the staff went from knowing no one with COVID-19, to knowing people at periphery, to having a loved-one die of the virus. Members of our staff have been stricken personally as well.

We know we are not the only ones.

Our county counts more than 1,200 deaths from COVID-19, according to the Public Health Services of San Joaquin County. Nationwide, the deaths total more than 530,000 as of mid-March, according to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in Atlanta.

There are signs that we may, after all this time, be coming out of this pandemic, or at least the worst part of it. The CDC reports that 109 million Americans have received vaccines. In late February, Johnson & Johnson joined Pfizer and Moderna as the third vaccine maker to slow the spread. More than 65 percent of California is now in the "substantial" tier for risk, with more joining every week, according to the state. Three counties are at "moderate" risk. Alpine County is the lone "minimal" risk location.

California State University and University of California campuses have noted an intention to reopen for campus-based classes in Fall 2021. Students are still waiting to see where Delta College stands in the push to reopen the economy safely.

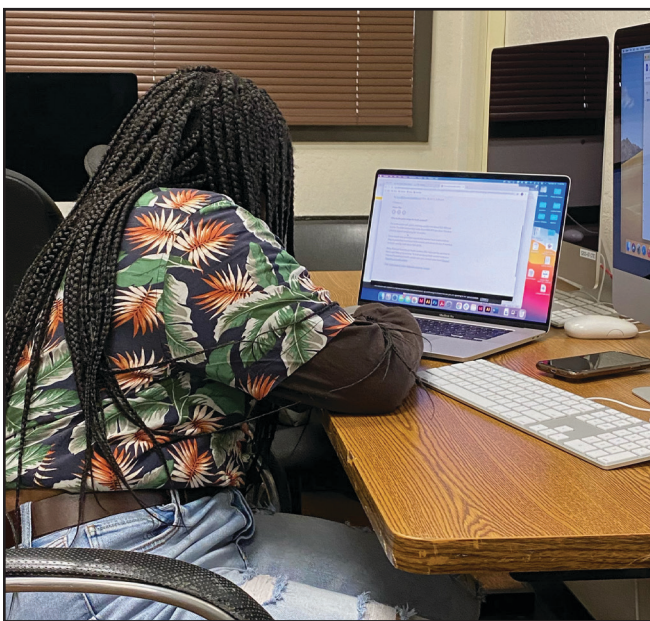
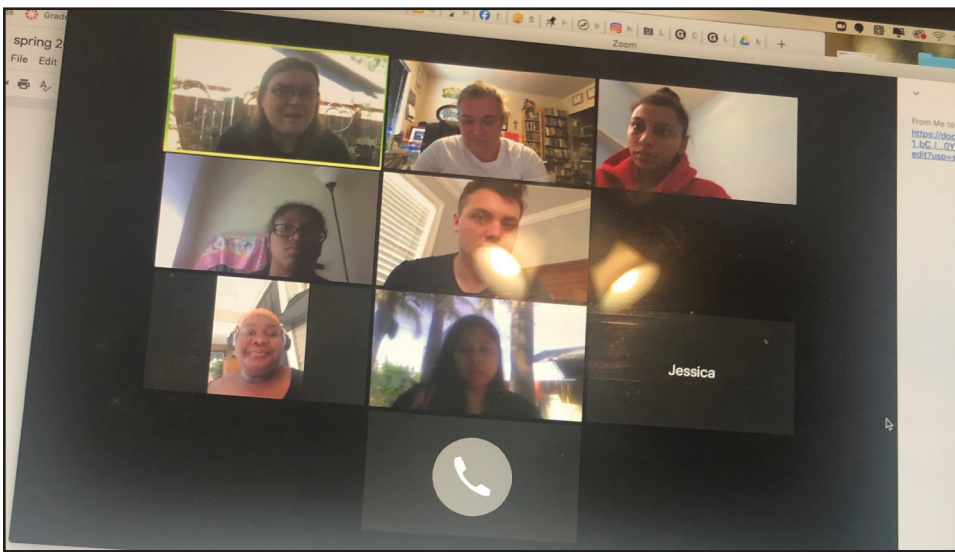
The early messaging giving hope for quick resolution has been replaced by guarded optimism. We know better now. We are cautious and suspicious of good news like many of our readers.

As a newspaper staff, we have been reporting on the pandemic since before it was officially declared. This special issue marks a somber anniversary for all of us, but also one we couldn't ignore. The stories here are a collection of where we came from, where we are, and where we hope to be in the coming months.

We make no claims that this is the end.

Instead, it's a raw look at the pandemic year as we knew it and how we've found our way to here.

Hannah Workman, Editor at Large
Dominique Williams, Editor in Chief
Robyn Jones, Opinion Editor
Esperanza Hernandez-Munoz, Entertainment Editor
David Victor, Sports Editor
Tara Cuslidge-Staiano, Adviser
Matthew Wilson, Multimedia Lab Tech

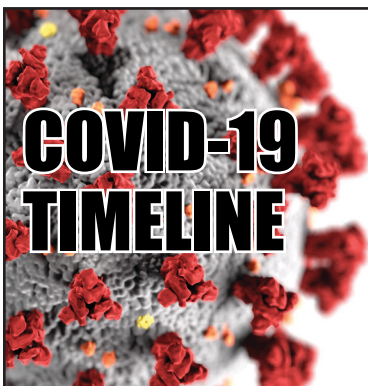


TOP: *Collegian* editors Esperanza Hernandez-Munoz and Dominique Williams work together to bring together newspaper pages. **MIDDLE:** *Collegian* staff meet together via Zoom for a morning pitch session. **BOTTOM:** *Collegian* Opinion Editor Robyn Jones works on an article during a lab on campus in late March.

PHOTOS BY TARA CUSLIDGE-STAIANO AND DOMINIQUE WILLIAMS

FRONT PAGE CREDITS

Images on the front page are from students Robyn Jones, Hannah Workman, and Andrea Tipton (Photojournalism Fall 2020), and Jaelyn Morales (*Collegian* Fall 2020). Other images come from a collection *Collegian* adviser Tara Cuslidge-Staiano has been taking since the pandemic began.



March 11, 2020

The first reported cases of COVID-19 were reported to the World Health Organization (WHO) in late December 2019. On Jan. 20, 2020, the WHO called COVID-19 a "global health emergency." On March 11, 2020, a global pandemic was designated. Countries teetering on the brink of closure began issuing shutdown orders. The world began its pandemic state.

March 17, 2020

Dr. Omid Pourzanjani sends a campuswide email moving Delta College to all remote instruction through April 6, 2020. Instructors begin the process of moving all content to Canvas during the one-week Spring Break period.





LEFT: Director of Marketing, Communications and Outreach Alex Breidler photographs a Delta College employee being vaccinated at the institution's first vaccination clinic, held on Feb. 23. **RIGHT:** Student nurse Julie Wooldridge administers the first dose of the Moderna vaccine to English professor to Dr. Phillip Hutcheon. **PHOTOS BY HANNAH WORKMAN**

No one escaped the impact of virus

During the pandemic, Delta College students' experiences have mirrored the general population, as a multitude of academic, personal struggles define life during an unprecedented event

BY HANNAH WORKMAN
News Editor

The lives of Delta College faculty, staff and students, as well as people across the globe, changed drastically on March 11, 2020.

It was on this day when the novel coronavirus disease, COVID-19, was declared a global pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO). Within a few days, the world came to a standstill.

On March 13, 2020, President Donald J. Trump declared a national emergency in the United States.

At the state level, California Gov. Gavin Newsom issued a stay-at-home order on March 19, 2020 in an effort to slow the spread of the virus and protect the health and well-being of California residents.

The order was "issued to protect the public health of Californians," the two-page document read. "The California Department of Public Health looks to establish consistency across the state in order to ensure that we mitigate the impact of COVID-19."

The intent was to slow the spread. "Our goal is simple, we want to bend the curve, and disrupt the spread of the virus," the order continued.

THE PIVOT BEGINS

California residents, including those in San Joaquin County, were required to stay home except for essential needs, such as buying food or medicine and going to work.

Many nonessential businesses in the county were forced to shut down, including family entertainment centers, gyms, hair and nail salons, restaurants and shopping malls.

Schools, including Delta College, closed the doors to their physical campuses and converted to remote education.

On March 17, 2020, President/Superintendent Dr. Omid Pourzanjani sent out a campus-wide email informing faculty, staff and students that the campus would be closing for face-to-face instruction and student services until April 6, 2020. The April return date wouldn't be kept.

In a 10-day period, 1,000 Delta College employees began working online, with 2,000 courses moved to remote instruction serving 18,000 students "learning from home," according to a March 27, 2020, post on Instagram from the college.

Students who had never taken an online course and professors who had never taught an online course suddenly had to learn how to navigate the Canvas learning management system.

Student Jennifer McKinney said she experienced "mixed emotions" upon hearing this announcement.

"I was a bit disappointed because I'm in my last few semesters at Delta before I graduate and hadn't taken classes on campus yet," McKinney said. "My first

on-campus class was one of the late-starting classes for that semester so I still haven't taken any classes on campus."

CHALLENGES ABOUND

While McKinney was disappointed, she also felt a sense of relief.

"I do have underlying health issues that put me at a higher risk, so it was a relief to reduce my chances of exposure as much as possible," McKinney said.

While McKinney was already accustomed to remote education, she faced other challenges during the pandemic, including her own battle with COVID-19.

McKinney spent nine days in the hospital after being diagnosed in April 2020.

"I still have medical issues that are a result of having COVID," McKinney said. "Mostly the fatigue, which comes out of nowhere sometimes. I finally have gotten to the point where I can do a light workout for roughly 10 to 15 minutes without difficulty breathing, but some days I can't even walk from my bedroom to the kitchen table without having trouble."

McKinney also experienced grief during the pandemic.

"I lost my cousin to COVID and a few friends, and the stay-at-home orders put me in a very unhealthy and unsafe situation at home," McKinney said.

McKinney said she became a victim of domestic violence.

Statistics show domestic violence increased during the pandemic.

The National Domestic Violence Hotline reported a nine percent increase in emergency calls from March to May 2020, when many states began issuing stay-at-home orders.

HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

McKinney said she is hoping in-person courses resume soon so she can get out of the house.

"At the same time, I can't help but feel selfish in thinking that," McKinney said. "It would get me away from the situation at home, but it would come with the cost of possibly putting too many at risk of COVID if we reopen too soon."

Student Steve Rincon said initially he "felt kind of great" when in-person classes were cancelled.

"I was really tired of going to class," Rincon said. "I'm pretty sure at the time, everyone was kind of happy that they cancelled classes because they didn't have to go to school."

Rincon said after a while, the excitement of not having to go to school wore off.

"I kind of realized how important the classes were and I kind of regretted the fact that classes were can-

celled after that because I was no longer able to ask my professors any questions directly."

Rincon said he missed the convenience of being able to wait until classes were over to ask his professors questions and receive prompt responses from them.

"I have to go out of my way to ask a question now," Rincon said. "I have to email the professor and wait for them to reply, if they have the time for it. I'm no longer able to wait until after the class is over or just casually go to their office whenever I want to."

Rincon said he also experienced boredom and a lack of motivation after being at home for an extended period of time.

"Being at school, I was able to go to the library and talk to my professors and do all kinds of things," Rincon said. "Being at home, you get more comfortable. I stopped doing homework and I stopped studying so I felt an impact."

STALLING POINTS

Rincon isn't alone. Students worldwide have reported feeling a lack of motivation during the pandemic.

According to a study from The Journal of Medical Internet Research in September 2020, 71.2 percent of students indicated their stress and anxiety levels had increased during the pandemic. Mental health issues have been linked to lack of motivation in students.

"Taking online classes really hindered me," Rincon said. "I was so used to being on campus studying and not at home studying. I wasn't used to studying at home."

Rincon didn't only face challenges at school. He also faced challenges in the workplace.

Rincon was working at Espresso Coffeehouse when the pandemic began. He said employees at the coffeehouse saw a significant cut in hours.

Rincon said his father also lost hours at work and the family didn't have much in savings.

"We were forced to move out of our apartment because we weren't able to afford living there," Rincon said.

Pew Research data taken in 2020 shows that roughly a third of adults surveyed "say they or someone in their household has had to take a cut in pay due to reduced hours or demand for their work" due to the pandemic.

Rincon said he was forced to use his financial aid money to pay for rent and groceries, and had no money left over to pay for his classes.

"I wasn't able to finish my degree on time and now I have to wait until the end of this year to graduate from Delta," he said. "I had to set my education

See PIVOT, page 8

March 27, 2020

The Senate passes a \$2 trillion stimulus deal, with direct payments set to be sent to individuals and families within the coming weeks after the stimulus package is signed into law.

Individuals are to receive \$1,200, while couples are to receive \$2,400. Families receive an additional \$500 per child.

March 27, 2020

In an Instagram post, Delta College announces their transition to providing remote instruction and student services for the remainder of the Spring 2020 semester.

2,000 classes move to online instruction, with 1,000 employees working from home and 18,000 students learning from home. The transition to remote instruction is made in 10 days.

- 1,000 employees working remotely.
- 2,000 classes online.
- 18,000 students learning from home.
- 10 days to get it all done.

THANK YOU, DELTA FAMILY!

#DeltaCollege #StillHereForYou



LATE APRIL

Delta College announces the 85th Annual Commencement Ceremony will be a virtual commencement ceremony, held on June 6, 2020.

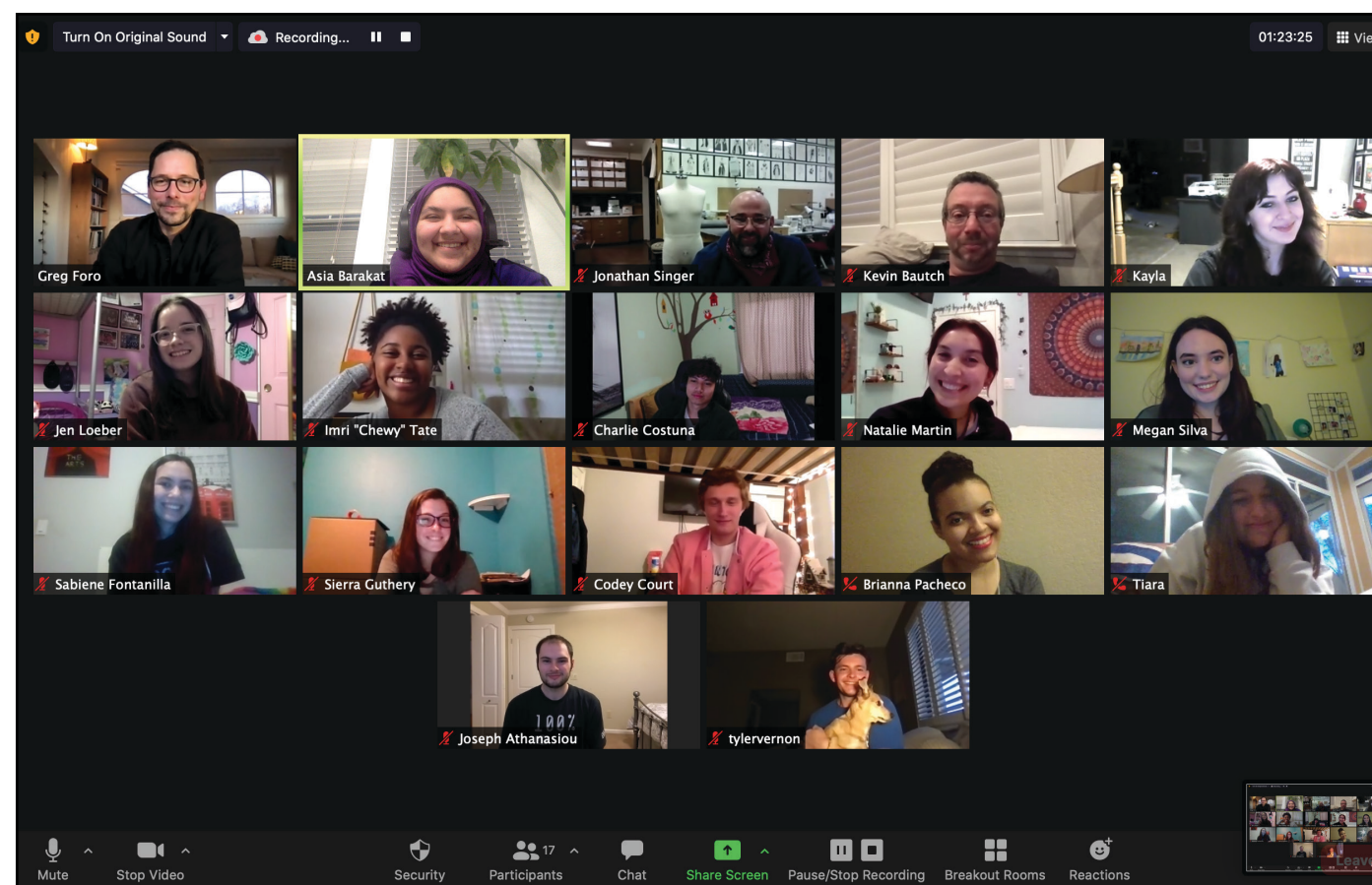
Traditional elements including the turning of the tassels would be included.

FINDING OUR WAY THROUGH

The challenges of the pandemic have changed the way we live, from online classes to limited travel to new opportunities. The Delta College community has worked through the hardships and new realities. These are snapshots and stories from their lives.



Empty shelves were commonplace the first part of the pandemic. Read a poem written by Deanna de Azevedo at deltacollegian.net/yearofuncertainty. **PHOTOS COURTESY OF DEANNA DE AZEVEDO**



This is the first read thru for our upcoming Spring 2021 production of "She Kills Monsters: Virtual Realms." This is the cast, crew and designers of the production. **PHOTO COURTESY OF GREG FORO**

Living through the pandemic while trying to create the theatre has been, well, trying. As you can imagine, an art form that by its very essence is about a group of people gathering in a room to experience a common event has been greatly hindered by a pandemic that prevents that very thing. How have we adjusted? Well, at first, of course, there was the general idea that there was absolutely NO way we could carry on. But, as theatres across the country began to find some kind of footing, Delta Drama followed suit. We began to explore a completely new medium of the art form which has become known over the past few months as "digital" or "virtual" theatre. Is it the same type of work that we had been doing? Certainly not. There are different "rules" and different techniques that can only be discovered in the doing. We started with a radio play reimagined for a streaming platform and continued on to explore two productions that were written specifically during the pandemic and for a this new medium. It remains to be seen how digital theatre will evolve after the pandemic or if it will even exist. It remains to be seen how traditional theatre will be affected by the introduction of the new form. All we can cling to right now is the fact that we came together and built a "virtual" creative space. Was it easy? Nope. But at least we were able to come together, to collaborate and, at the very least, keep each other company from behind our computers. But now we look forward to the next chapter, hoping we learned something about the importance of the work we are all doing and, at the very least, learned not to take it all for granted. **STORY SUBMITTED BY GREG FORO**

I help coach high school Cross Country and Track over at Lincoln High School. Here we are taking a picture before our San Francisco run in which we ran on the Golden Gate Bridge. This was taken by the parents. **PHOTO COURTESY OF JUSTIN SHERMAN**

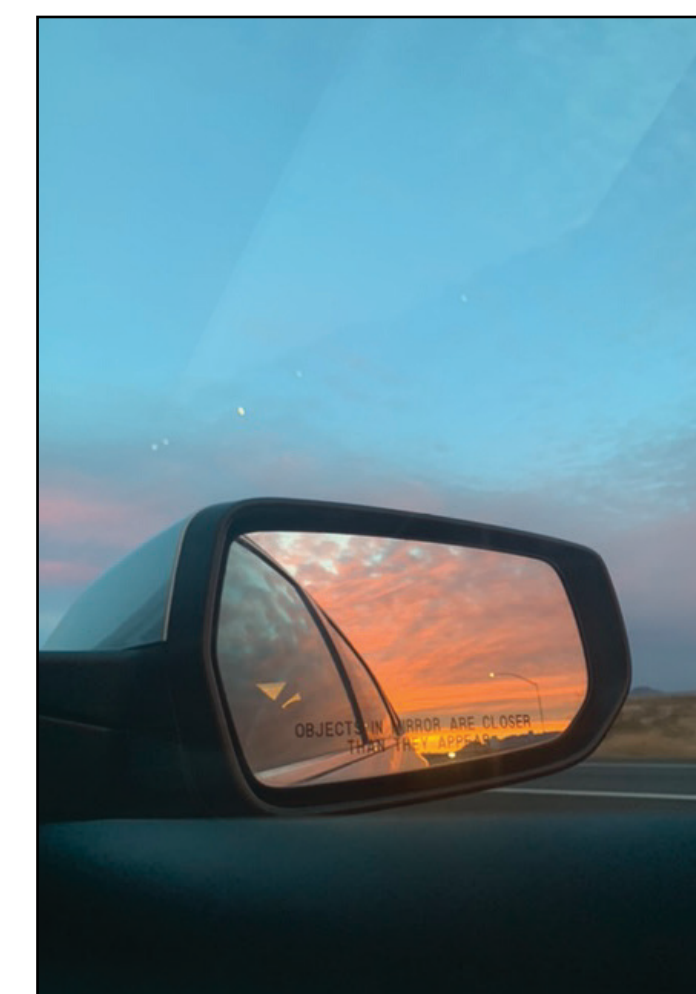


Before the pandemic, my partner and I had a long-awaited backpacking trip to Patagonia lined up. We had bought all the gear for braving the southern Chilean wilderness — until everything came to a screeching halt. I teach physical geography and had never fully explored all the fascinating local geological features I teach my students about each semester. I have traveled all over the world but had never really ventured so far as beyond the Sierras here in the valley. So, we got in our car and drove. Drove far away from all the cities and people and did our social distancing deep in the Redwoods and up in the forests. Among our discoveries was a cinder cone volcano one can climb into only four hours north of Stockton (pictured here) where we found ourselves completely alone. These quarantine retreats have taught me to appreciate just how beautiful California is — with waterfalls, volcanoes, and alpine forests right at our doorstep. If there ever was a silver lining, it's the perspective I gained in feeling so lucky to be "stuck" in this beautiful state and all its natural wonders. **PHOTO COURTESY OF DUSTIN TSAI**

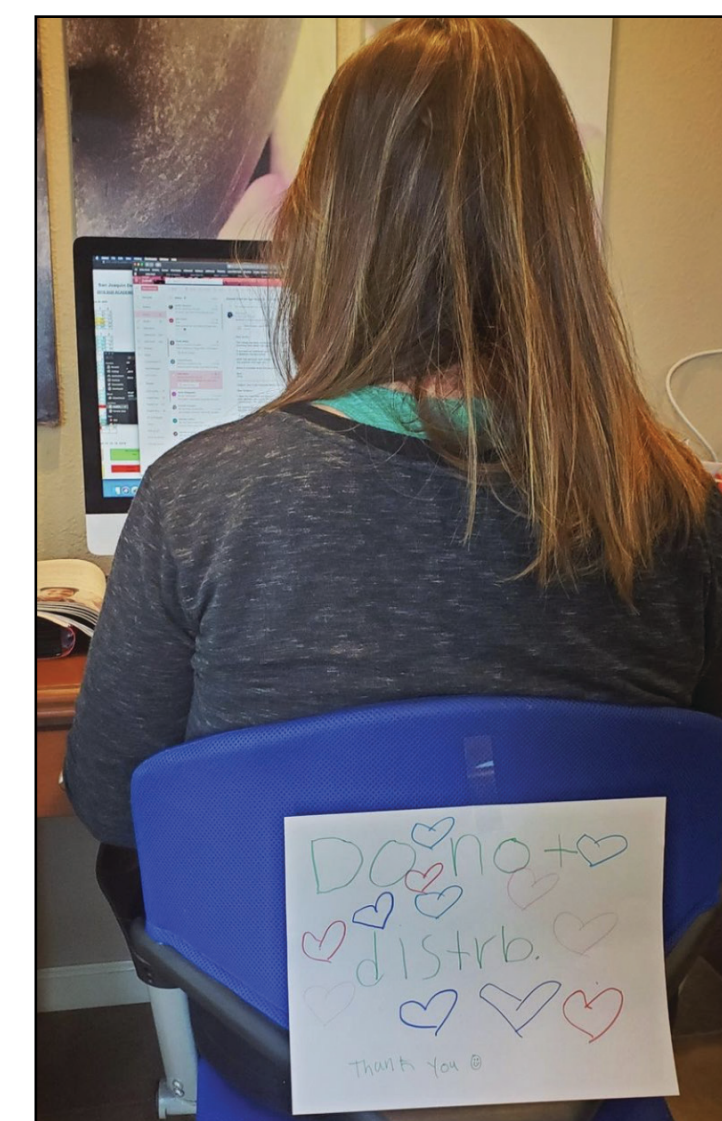


This photo was shot by my wife, Amy Marquez, it's of myself Leo Marquez and my daughter Kairi working on a paper mache volcano that we put together as a family. We didn't build this for a school project but simply just for fun because during this pandemic that has been what we have strived to continue to do, is have fun. Parks are not open and if they are we don't feel safe taking out child there because no one is sanitizing the slides or the swings and we don't want to risk any of us getting COVID. This pandemic has truly forced us to get extra creative in all parts of our life and I feel like this picture is a great representation of that. I, Leo, spend 24 hours of my day everyday with my daughter because she is remote learning and I work from home most days unless I have to be on campus at Delta to do an equipment checkout as I work in the Radio-Television department. Everything we do is at home, so it's little things as simple as building this paper mache volcano and watching it erupt to bring that excitement and that fun and keep the positive energy going because without this everyday is just that much harder. If anything I have only gotten closer with my family over the period of this pandemic. So despite it being frustrating that things aren't normal, we truly have made the best of it. **PHOTO COURTESY OF LEO MARQUEZ**

3-15-20: I record my first video to students. "Hi everybody. So, it looks like we're having to transition over to Canvas and online learning. I am working on getting everything set up. So, bear with me. I know the college is giving everybody a couple of days to get switched over, get caught up, learn new tools. I will keep you posted as soon as I have it sorted out; I will let you know and we will move forward. I will update you soon."
3-15-21: We have moved forward... I am still sorting it out...
STORY SUBMITTED BY GWEN MACIEL



My friend and I hadn't been talking for a few months. This picture was taken on our trip from Texas to California. We had time to reflect on who we are, who we wanted to be, and how we would fit into each others lives now that we are making our own paths. This photo is special to me because we were both making some serious heartfelt changes that hurt and healed deeply. It's something I never want to forget. **PHOTO COURTESY OF ALEXIS PAGALA**



My then-7-year-old daughter snapped this photo of me, trying to keep up with all of my online classes, while also managing distance learning for her and her 4-year-old brother. She was also the person who made the sign and put it on my desk chair in our dining room. The sentiment was nice, but it was rare for the "do not disturb" direction to actually be followed... I often worked from early in the morning until way too late at night trying to keep up with everything. I cannot wait to be back in the classroom where I belong. **PHOTO COURTESY OF AMBER WOLAK**

MAY 1, 2020

Delta announces all Fall 2021 classes will be held online with some exceptions for lab-based career education courses. Faculty and students who have never taught or taken online courses have a short time-span to learning the Canvas learning management system.

THROUGHOUT MAY 2020

Stay-at-home orders began being lifted after weeks of "flattening the curve" at home. Gov. Gavin Newsom allows businesses such as retail stores, florists, and bookstores to slowly reopen to the public. Restaurants can operate with outdoor dining, which becomes a standard for the rest of the year.

MAY 15, 2021

Donald J. Trump announces Operation Warp Speed May 15, 2020 in order to facilitate and accelerate the development and manufacturing of COVID-19 vaccines. The vaccine race begins.



MAY 20, 2021

Students are invited to apply for CARES Act funding. The bill, passed in March 2020, allotted \$2.2 million providing fast and direct aid to all American civilians. Students benefited from grants and equipment.

MAY 28, 2020

The death toll for United States COVID-19 related deaths hits 100,000. The grim milestone would only be the first of many in the pandemic year.

JUNE 10, 2020

COVID-19 cases in the United States pass two million in total. States across the map began seeing major spikes of COVID-19 in hospitals.

JULY 2020

California Gov. Gavin Newsom announces new closure orders to limit the spread around the Independence Day holiday. The mid-year push also includes a more concentrated effort on mask wearing.



JULY 6, 2021

The United States announces intent to withdraws from the World Health Organization. The plan was not followed through and the U.S. remains a member of WHO.

WOMEN BONDED BY 'SECRET SISTERHOOD' REUNITED

Split by social distancing, friends tied by cancer diagnoses finally reconnect after a year apart

Editor's Note: Delta College photography student Juanita Contreras documented her time with her friend Maria Vargas, whom she hadn't seen in a year out of precaution due to the pandemic. Vargas, a stage IV ovarian cancer patient, safely welcomed Contreras into her home for a long-awaited visit. This is their story.

BY JUANITA CONTRERAS
Special to The Collegian

My time with Maria was limited as she is filled with appointments during the week that I currently cannot attend with her.

I am glad I visited, however, and spent much needed time with her.

I have not seen her since COVID-19 hit. I took the necessary precautions before visiting to ensure that she was safe.

Maria is a stage IV ovarian cancer patient.

She was diagnosed in 2017 and continues to battle as of today to shrink the tumors that now are attacking her lymph nodes.

She has been off chemo for five weeks now since she has become platinum resistant and is awaiting a new treatment plan.

She offered me some tea and we had a long chat about things we do not often tell anyone who has not faced this.⁵

It is like a secret sisterhood in which we only understand each other, when you are tired of hearing how strong you have to be from others, we understand not being strong is exactly what we need when we are together.

Maria talked about how this cancer has affected her life and her family.

She reserves Sundays for dinner with her family as her children work during the week.

Her daughter, Cristina, is a pediatrician at Valley Children's in Madera and her son, David, is a police officer for NASA in Mountain View.

As you walk through her house you can sense the culture and the things she loves in there.

A wall dedicated to her family and her faith, a small space where she collects Calaveritas (decorative skulls) as a celebration of Dia de Los Muertos.⁸

She loves that holiday, even dresses up as a Catrina every year, but the most prominent collection Maria has is her beautiful plants.



Ovarian cancer patient Maria Vargas displays the group of medications she takes to battle the disease. Although no longer going through chemotherapy due to platinum resistance (when a tumor doesn't respond to the drugs containing platinum), Vargas still takes a number of prescriptions in wait of a new treatment plan. Vargas spent a day visiting with Delta photography student and friend Juanita Contreras talking openly about their fears and their faith, and also giving Contreras a tour of her home and garden. **PHOTOS BY JUANITA CONTRERAS**

She has a really good green thumb, and she even sent me home with some cilantro that she grew in her vegetable garden.³

In our time together we cried, we spoke about the feelings during our diagnosis, the fears of the present, the future at this stage and about our faith.

Life is different before cancer and after cancer. It really changes us, but she continues to be such a strong warrior.

She fights daily, not just with her physical ailments such as arthritis⁷, neuropathy that resulted from the chemo, kidney failure and the fluid that constantly fills her abdomen.

She also fights the emotional aspect of this tiring disease, the anxiety and fears that come along with it.

We walked around her house and through her backyard where she showed me all her plants; gardening is her favorite hobby.^{4,6}

There is a plant in particular she has inside her home that hangs from the ceiling and it carries itself all the way to the floor.²

Maria approached this plant saying how sometimes she forgets about the plant, but the plant keeps fighting and continues growing, so strong and beautiful.

Metaphorically, like her in some special way.

The sadness in her eyes, the medication she takes¹ and the downfalls of chemo do not bring her spirit down. She continues to be faithful that God will grant her a miracle and I sure hope He does.

She is the rock of her family.

As we sat at her dining table in the newly remodeled and beautiful blue kitchen, Maria said, "I love the sun. I can go out there and stare at it with my face up letting it just shine on me, it is my favorite thing to do; it makes me feel alive."



AUG. 24, 2020

Delta College begins fall semester in similar fashion to end of Spring 2020 term, with a majority of classes being delivered through virtual methods. As with the Fall 2020 semester, some classes will be offered as hybrids.

Spring into Delta College
Sign up for late starting classes

15 Weeks	Begins 1/25/21
12 Weeks	Begins 2/15/21
10 Weeks	Begins 2/22/21

SEPT. 25 2020

Delta announces that the Spring 2021 semester would be mostly remote learning.

On the same day, the United States passes more than seven million COVID-19 cases.

OCT. 2, 2020

President Donald J. Trump and First Lady Melania Trump tests positive for COVID-19.

Shortly after they were flown to a medical center in Bethesda, Md., where they were kept under watch for three days.

FINDING THE SILVER LININGS IN QUARANTINE

BY MATTHEW JANG
Staff Writer

The COVID-19 virus shutdown the world over the last year, and many of us will look back with only hate towards 2020 as the worst year ever.

The pandemic year definitely was an especially rough one for many people and their families. But it also led to many people trying new things, discovering hobbies, and partaking in acts of human kindness.

While being stuck inside many people suddenly had a lot more time than they had before. Extra time led to more and more people trying to learn to do more things in their homes. One of those things is cooking. For many people they took to it as a way of coping with how much more time on their hands that they had. A poll from HUNTER, one of the country's leading food and beverage public relations and marketing communications agencies, polled 2,064 Americans ages 18-73, and found that more than 54 percent reported cooking more than the before quarantine and 46 percent reported baking more.

Something else that has made a massive surge with people is the video game industry. From console and video game sales to streamers making money just to play for an audience, the video game community has

never been bigger. While other forms of entertainment such as movies have taken a hit video games are coming out stronger than ever. The streaming platform Twitch even exceeded a record three billion hours watched, according to a report from the software service Streamlabs.

"I liked the idea of having a community of my own and being able to experience gaming with other people," said a local streamer named Ciarra Michaelis, known by her streamer name fayetamin, who had gotten into streaming over quarantine. "I largely have to focus on school and that takes a lot out of me and my energy. So when I have the time to even think about streaming, I'm excited and happy."

She isn't alone in this ever-growing group who have used video games as a way to stay in touch with one another and to even make new connections. According to Twitch tracker data the number of streamers had a 125 percent increase from 2019 to 2020.

As the quarantine dragged on people started to become tired of being locked inside and looked for more things to do outside.

"When quarantine hit I started taking pictures a lot more" said Josh Fernandes, 22. "That and I started to get back into skateboarding for the first time since High School." He, like many others, turned to new,

and in some cases old, hobbies in the outside world just to get some air.

Camping also surged during quarantine while people were otherwise stuck inside. "The California State Parks camping reservation system also saw a surge — 97,417 reservations made from Feb. 1-March 11, up from 54,825 during the same period last year," spokesman Jorge Moreno said in a release according to the Los Angeles Times.

Close to half of those people who went camping were going for the first time during quarantine or hadn't camped in recent years, according to a survey from Campgrounds of America.

Beyond all the personal skills people may have learned this year or hobbies they got into there has also been some seriously amazing acts by some amazing people. The most obvious are the frontline essential workers for being out there and helping in the biggest epidemic we have seen in our lifetimes.

The Gospel Center Rescue Mission in Stockton is one of those doing it's part. According to Melanie Townsend of the FOX 40 News the center "acquired a separate facility to become a part of the Project Roomkey initiative and suppress overcrowding in nearby homeless shelters by taking in at-risk and potentially COVID-19-positive patients."

Stockton Civic Theater planning for the future

BY DANTE CAMACHO
Staff Writer

The Stockton Civic Theater (SCT) is gearing up for its 70th season, albeit with the same delays and modifications that are now a feature of the pandemic.

Indoor shows have been postponed since the March 2020 lockdown. SCT is finding ways of creating content, generating revenue, and is expecting to begin outdoor shows this spring.

Artist Director Dennis Beasley said the theater has been coping with the pandemic and planning for the future.

SCT moved to working online, but the theater isn't something that is made for a screen, Beasley said.

"The thing that hasn't gone so well is ticket sales," said Beasley. "Most people are not interested in watching theater online, it turns out, they want to come to

the theater."

According to SCT's website the next event is a lineup of singers performing comedy songs from "Broadway and beyond." The event will stream online March 19 through April 4 and tickets are being sold per device.

"Our fundraising efforts have worked very well for us," said Beasley when asked what has gone well during the pandemic. "Our members have been very generous." Beasley said that a combination of individual donations and grants from the federal and county governments have kept the theater going.

The play August Osage County now set to run in May was in rehearsal when it was postponed during the first lockdown, and it will be the first show to be performed in person and outdoors since the pandemic.



Stockton Civic Theater staff is constructing shields for future performances. PHOTO BY ESPERANZA HERNANDEZ-MUNOZ

Beasley said SCT is using the patio behind the theater for outdoor shows.

"We won't be able to build a three-story set outside, but we're going to do as much staging as we can and we have enough room to socially distance the audience," he said.

The transition back to in person shows will be a relief to the SCT staff.

"When you put content online you're competing with things like movies and television, which are meant to be seen on a screen," said Beasley. "Part of what theater is about is

the exchange of energy between the performers and the audience ... as an online content person, we're one in a million."

As to when indoor shows can resume?

"We're thinking the fall, we're getting to announce our first show will be Something Rotten, which was supposed to be the opening show of last year," said Beasley. "We're hoping that in September we'll have audiences in the building."

Despite a tough year there was a silver lining in the pandemic for SCT: "The outdoors performances have been pretty wonderful," said Beasley. "When we finish building the stage on our patio outside...it's a contained area, we're right on the lake...what we're hoping to do is a couple projects out there this summer, and when weather allows, do different events... from now on."

Board game sales get a boost from the pandemic

BY CHLOE GAMBLE
Staff Writer

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused business to slow and in worst-cases has resulted in permanent closures.

As more people remained indoors, particularly at the beginning of the pandemic when shutdowns were more prevalent, consumers have fallen back onto board games and family game nights to stay entertained.

Sarah Giglia is one such person playing board games locally and she says her family has been playing a lot of board games including "Survive" and "some murder mystery board games."

Giglia finds it to be a fun activity as the family can "bond and have fun as a family while they try to solve or win the games."

Shows like "The Queen's Gambit," which showcases chess, and Stranger Things, where characters play Dungeons and Dragons, have increased the popular-



Collegian editor Dominique Williams has a chess board set up for game nights. PHOTO BY DOMINIQUE WILLIAMS

ity of sales and board games.

This rise has helped save many businesses and provide a constant stead of sales like the Launchpad, located at 712 W. Lodi Ave. in Lodi.

Owner Michael Todd said "business has been booming with sales. There has been three times the amount of sales than last year. Dungeons and Dragons as well

as board games are popular items that are being sold consistently."

Other factors for the increase in sales are perhaps the "increase due to people staying inside, Dungeons and Dragons campaigns like Critical Role, Marvel, and people playing on apps like Discord," said Todd.

Another store that has agreed that sales have been booming is Blackrowan Games in Tracy.

"I would say we definitely benefited from the first stimulus package, as June and July 2020 were record months for us," said Blackrowan Owner Christine Mabry. "We stayed pretty steady through the end of the year. And then Pokemon exploded in popularity, and we've seen more record-breaking sales months in 2021. At the same time, we are seeing increased sales in other segments, such as wargaming (Warhammer, Star Wars Legion) including the paint and hobby supplies used for those games, as well as an uptick

in D&D as people feel comfortable gathering in small bubbles again."

Mabry said she has seen an influx of people as they "believe board games are a welcome respite from the hours of screen time we are forced into for school and work because of COVID."

Blackrowan Games and The Launchpad have noticed people come into their stores to browse to escape the confines of their homes.

Todd said "many people come inside just to get out and they walk around and sometimes find a cool game that they had never heard of."

Mabry said people say there's nothing to do in town, and then they find her shop.

"Not only do they find us, they find other people in the community with similar interests ... We use social media to keep our community connected until we can safely meet and game together in person again," said Mabry.

OCT. 5, 2020

Trump leaves the hospital and returns to the White House via Marine 1. He waves and gives a thumbs up to the media as he makes his way to his office and residence. Trump said he would be recovering at home.

NOV. 3, 2020

Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, Joe Biden wins the electoral vote and presidency by a landslide.

The ending result left Biden winning with 306 votes to Trump's 232. The pandemic plays a central role in the campaigning.



NOV. 4, 2020

United States reports 100,000 cases in a single day for the first time since the pandemic began.

DEC. 6, 2020

California implements regional stay-at-home order just in time for the Christmas, New Year's Eve, and New Year's Day holidays. The state regions was quarantined for three weeks according to Gov. Gavin Newsom.

MANDATING VACCINES ISN'T THE WAY TO GO

BY NOAH VANDYKE
Staff Writer

On May 15, 2020, President Donald J. Trump activated Operation Warp Speed (OWS) to develop “substantial quantities of a safe and effective vaccine available for Americans by January 2021” to combat the COVID-19 virus, according to the United States Department of Health and Human Services.

OWS was quicker than anyone could have hoped as the first doses of the vaccine were rolled out by Pfizer on Dec. 14, only three days after the U.S Food and Drug Administration granted the two-shot vaccine an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA). Moderna's vaccine, which is also a two-shot deal, was approved with a EUA on Dec. 18.

The overall speed of this vaccine production and rollout process is concerning to some, as before COVID-19, the fastest vaccine to ever be developed and approved was for mumps. This vaccine took four years to develop from 1964-1967 before it was approved and distributed to the public, according to the Immunization Action Collection.

Since the two vaccines were approved for use, more than 109 million doses of the vaccine have been administered in the country, along with 21 percent of the total population receiving at least one dose according to the San Joaquin COVID-19 Vaccine Tracker.

Now the question being raised by individuals across

the country and around the world is should this vaccine, which the Biden administration projects will be made available to nearly everyone by May 1, be made mandatory by governments?

My short answer is no — The COVID-19 vaccines shouldn't be made mandatory.

COMMENTARY

Once you start getting into the area of forcing an individual to inject a liquid vaccination into their bloodstream, you are violating a person's bodily autonomy.

This is the freedom of choosing what happens with your body which involves what you inject into your body.

Forcing a person to take a vaccine that they could potentially be uncomfortable with is crossing these bodily autonomy boundaries, and starts to set a potential authoritarian precedent from the government.

It's understandable that people want to slow the spread of this virus and return to a sense of normal as quickly as we can, which could potentially be aided if everyone got vaccinated when their turn arrives.

However, we should never infringe on others' freedoms and liberties to make decisions for themselves, as every human has their God given rights to refuse a vaccine by choice.

There is a great hesitancy from the majority of the American people with the vaccine, as 49 percent of

people have said no already or are still unsure according to a survey by CBS News Poll.

Of this 49 percent who are unsure so far, 90 percent are worried about the potential side effects with the vaccine according to the Pew Research Center Survey.

While some of the minor side effects have been named such as fever, headache and swelling, there have been other reported cases of severe allergic reactions to the vaccine that result in hives, swelling of the face, and even severe dizziness and fainting.

New side effects will continue to surface as more people continue to get vaccinated, which also worries some as new news could potentially be suppressed by mainstream media from the public to prevent growing vaccination hesitance.

I think the biggest thing that worries people is the unknown factor with this virus and its vaccine. As mentioned this vaccine was developed and approved in record speed, which creates an uneasy feeling from the public to line up right away for their shot. There is very limited research and data on the long term effects and efficiency from these vaccines, that some don't want to be in that first data test group of vaccinators.

If the government doesn't require citizens to get flu shots every year, which have been around since the 1940s, why would they require citizens to get a COVID shot when they haven't even been made public for a year?

Athletes cope through a year without play

BY DAVID VICTOR
Sports Editor

A year has passed since the start of the pandemic forced the Mustangs to cease all competition, and athletes have found themselves going down an unusual path toward their goals in athletics and education.

Delta College's student-athletes have encountered a range of obstacles during the COVID-19 pandemic and try to find ways to cope with its effects.

Mustangs women's basketball players Alicia Jones and Matesn McMiller admit managing themselves during the pandemic is not an easy task, but said they've been able to keep their mental health intact.

Jones finds it challenging to keep up with her school work online.

“There are times where it's stressful. They add a lot of homework online for me to do. Mentally I'm still doing good though,” said Jones.

McMiller tries not to think about COVID-19 altogether.

“Overall I've been pretty OK. I've just tried finding ways to adjust to the situation and not let it get to me,” said McMiller.

Delta's student-athletes have faced a variety of challenges, from adjusting to remote conditioning and online learning to dealing with the emotional impacts of the global health crisis.

Remote training has posed a challenge for the athletes to stay motivated, mostly due to the fact they can't practice alongside their teammates and interact with them up close.

Virtual communication is hard for Jones and she misses interacting with the rest of her teammates on the court.

“It's hard to connect with your teammates when you're not in person. Sometimes it's boring, our coaches have to find ways to keep us motivated and interact with each other,” said Jones.

McMiller finds online interaction insufficient when it comes to socializing with the rest of the team.

“Having to do workouts over Zoom has been a hard time. There's not enough social communication for me,” said McMiller.

Some athletes have needed to search for locations to even do their training.

Mustangs track and field distance runner Justin Sherman resorted to searching for spots where he can go running.

“My life has changed a lot recently, even with the

way I do my workouts,” said Sherman. “I've had to transition to mostly finding my own places to run.”

To cope with the impact of the pandemic, student-athletes are staying in contact with the people closest to them while also engaging in various activities at home during the lockdown.

Mustangs track and field thrower Alexis Pagala said she is following suggestions from her family and coaches to stay occupied as a means of dealing with the impact of the pandemic.

“I've done a lot of self-reflection and have been reaching out to anyone I know,” said Pagala. “Most of them gave me the same message, just stay busy. I have tried to keep a schedule that allows me to stay busy and active both mentally and emotionally.”

During the pandemic, Pagala changed her mentality to focus more on herself rather than what's going on around her.

“I have been focusing on how to improve on any and all aspects I can,” said Pagala. “I realized it's better to build myself up rather than validating what I cannot control.”

McMiller turns to family for coping with the pandemic.

“Being around family has helped. It's taught me to appreciate the people around me day-to-day,” said McMiller.

Even though training remotely on Zoom isn't something McMiller enjoys, doing workouts on her own still helps keep her mind off the health crisis.

“I tend to do workouts and listen to music. That has helped me cope with the pandemic,” said McMiller.

Some have found benefits from the pandemic and lockdowns.

Sherman has watched YouTube videos and Twitch streams to cope with the pandemic, and has even increased his interaction with other people.

“I have talked to a lot more people online that I would've never met before if it weren't for the pandemic,” said Sherman. “Watching Twitch streams helps a lot because you still get that real time interaction with other people even though you may not know them.”

During the pandemic, other athletes like Jones see the situation as a chance to try new things while stuck at home.

“I've tried finding hobbies outside of basketball to keep myself occupied. I've done sports all my life, and this is an opportunity to find myself and see what other things I like,” said Jones.

PIVOT: Uncertainty continues into 2021

continued from PAGE 1

aside until this summer, when I'm going to be taking classes again.”

UNCERTAINTY REMAINS

Colleges nationwide have seen a decrease in enrollment since the start of the pandemic.

The headcount for the Spring 2021 semester at Delta College is down 8.6 percent from 2020 and down 6.4 percent from 2019, according to a presentation to the Delta College Board of Trustees by Assistant Superintendent/Vice President of Instruction and Planning Dr. Lisa Aguilera Lawrenson on March 22. The Spring 2021 headcount of students is down 9.6 percent from last year at this time, with a decline of 1,728 students, Lawrenson's report indicated.

While students like McKinney and Rincon are hoping to return to campus in Fall 2021, plans haven't formally been announced by the institution.

In an Instagram Live Q&A session held on March 22, President/Superintendent Dr. Omid Pourzanjani said the institution is considering adding additional in-person classes in the fall.

“We don't plan on being fully reopened unless the pandemic conditions change significantly and we get different guidance from the state and from the federal government,” Pourzanjani said.

Pourzanjani's comments align with California Community College Chancellor Eloy Oakley's statement to the Board of Governors of the system on March 22. Oakley told the board that each campus is looking to local guidance from public health partners.

“We do expect to see a reopening, but given that no one thought we would be here a year ago, there is a lot of uncertainty,” Oakley is quoted as saying in an EdSource from the next day.

San Joaquin County, which was trending toward moving into the “substantial” red tier last week with 9.9 new COVID-19 cases “per day per 100K” within the Blueprint for a Safer Economy infrastructure, readjusted to 11.6 cases on March 23. The county remains in the “widespread” tier as 83.2 percent of the state resides in the substantial tier. San Joaquin County's status will be re-evaluated on Tuesday, March 30.

DEC. 11, 2020

The Pfizer vaccine is approved under Emergency Use Authorization by the Food and Drug Administration. Moderna follows a week later.

The single shot Johnson & Johnson vaccine was approved on Feb. 27. All three vaccines are now being distributed to the public.



FEB. 23, 2021

Delta College begins vaccinating staff members, first offering the Moderna vaccine to employees ages 50.

The college gives 139 shots on the first day of the event. Sessions run over a two week period after and are open to all campus employees.

