

Grad Nite at Disneyland canceled due to coronavirus

BY ANDREW TURNER

It was mid-March when students got word that they would be sent home and begin distance learning due to concerns over the coronavirus.

High school seniors were unaware then they would not return to the classroom. Spring student-athletes did not know that they had played their last game of the season.

The class of 2020 has had to endure unimaginable disappointment as the coronavirus pandemic called into question the future of, and at the very least, altered the end-of-year events.

Among the most celebrated of these are prom, graduation and Grad Nite.

The latest domino to fall for many high school seniors last week was the cancellation of Grad Nite at Disney's California Adventure.

"While there is still much uncertainty with respect to

the impacts of the unprecedented COVID-19 situation, the safety and well-being of our guests and cast members remain the top priority of the Disneyland Resort," a statement posted on the *Disneyyouth.com* website said. "In light of recommendations by school and government officials to limit gatherings for the remainder of the academic year, we are making the difficult decision to cancel Disneyland Resort Grad Nite 2020."

Locally, Costa Mesa, Edison, Huntington Beach, Ocean View and Pacifica Christian Orange County have been confirmed as high schools that intended to have their Grad Night celebration at the popular theme park.

"Because Grad Nite events require a substantial amount of planning, coordination and travel, we felt that this was the right decision to make at this time," the statement continued. "We know how disappoint-

ing this news will be to the many students who were planning to join us this year."

Ocean View senior Miguel Flores, who is committed to Hope International University for soccer, said he never cared much about attending school dances, but there were two senior events he was very much looking forward to.

Those were graduation and Grad Night, which he had been eager to attend to since hearing of his sister, Adriana's, experience last year.

"You have that excitement, that emotional climax of graduation," said Flores, who also competed in cross-country and track and field for the Seahawks.

"There's tears, there's cheers, there's a lot of emotion that goes into graduation, and then right after, you get to spend basically the next day, and then that following night, all the way into the morning, with

friends and just having fun. It's kind of this last goodbye to them."

Word of mouth travels fast. Pacifica Christian senior Brooklyn Motske, who plans to play soccer and golf for Vanguard University next year, said that she had also heard plenty of positive feedback from previous graduates that had attended Grad Nite at Disneyland.

"I remember talking to some seniors that graduated last year, ... and they always talked about how fun Disneyland was," Motske said. "It's hard because those memories, we can't get back."

As the commissioner of pep and spirit for Edison's ASB, if Cole Koffler was not holding court on the football field or on the track, he would be doing so in the student section.

Though the letdowns have been numerous, seniors have not yet become numb to the disappointing nature of the coronavirus

impact on their lives. Koffler also used the word "bummer" to describe the cancellation of Grad Night.

"It's the right choice that has to be made during these times to keep us safe," Koffler said. "We understand, but it's a bummer that we [have] to miss out on all of these senior activities that everyone usually gets from years past and all the years to come. We're going to be the class that either didn't have that or had a modified version of it."

Koffler realizes that he is living in an extraordinary time, and the seniors of today will have a unique story to tell.

"My mom and dad were telling me this, 'No one's going to forget this,'" Koffler said. "No one's going to forget that the class of 2020 didn't get this, this, and this because there was a worldwide pandemic."

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BEACHES

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friends at 32nd Street and played Spikeball, though they made sure to use disinfectant wipes for the ball.

"It's a hot day, so you want to go down to the beach," Polley said. "We're kind of tired of being in our houses and jerking around. We've been keeping up with the news lately ... and we really believe that this heat wave will drop people out, weaken the virus at least."

Beach parking lots in the city also remain closed, as well as the piers, the Oceanfront Boardwalk and the Balboa Island Bayfront Walkway, Newport Beach police spokeswoman Heather Rangel said in an email.

Outdoor recreation facilities, including tennis, basketball and pickleball courts and athletic fields, also remain closed. Rangel said there would be a "visible presence" from police officers, lifeguards and park patrol staff on the beach this weekend.

The city has taken an educational approach which has resulted in compliance, and citations have not been issued.

Laguna Beach city beaches have been closed since March 23. Earlier this week, Mayor Bob Whalen asked the Orange County Board of Supervisors to also close county beaches and trailheads, but Aliso Beach in south Laguna Beach remains open.

Laguna Beach marine safety captain Kai Bond said that signage notes the closures at the top of each beach access point, and violators are subject to citation.

Daily Pilot staff writer Julia Sclafani contributed to this report.

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REOPEN

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asked the council to "revote these issues" at its next meeting.

Almost exactly a month ago, Costa Mesa announced it would close all city parks and the Costa Mesa Country Club, the city-owned public golf course.

The council later ratified the decision in a 4-3 vote, following a lengthy discussion. Mayor Pro Tem John Stephens, who voted against the motion along with Mansoor and Genis, advocated for closing parks except for passive walk-throughs.

At Tuesday's meeting, the City Council again broached the topic, after a litany of comments — many of them also strongly-worded — from people desperate for the city to reopen the parks and golf course.

"Open the damn parks," one commenter said. "Give people the opportunity to

go out and about before you have blood on your hands."

Mayor Katrina Foley said Tuesday that a few councilmembers would work with the Parks, Arts & Community Services Commission "to craft very quickly some plan so that we can open up some public space for our residents."

Foley said the city plans to reopen park paths for walking and biking through and the golf course on Tuesday. The mayor emphasized multiple city staffers and councilmembers have been working on crafting a program to reopen the economy locally.

The former mayors' letter also referenced the council's 5-2 vote a month ago — Mansoor and Genis dissented — prohibiting landlords from evicting commercial and residential tenants unable to pay rent because of the coronavirus.

Under the urgency ordinance, landlords may begin asking for unpaid rent once

Gov. Gavin Newsom's March 16 executive order expires, and renters would have 120 days after that to pay. But the former mayors said some commercial tenants are taking advantage of the ordinance and skirting the rent, even if they have the means to pay it.

"When the power goes out at night in a major city, we can see who our neighbors really are. When our officials are the cause of the blackout, and then use the darkness to expand their power over daily life, we can see who our officials really are," the letter read.

"This is a moment of truth for our local officials. We expect them to act on our best interests. We count on them to remember the Constitution they swore to protect. We expect them to remember that they govern only because the people have allowed it."

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Finding peace in the storm

There's no need to fear for I'm your God.
I'll give you strength. I'll help you.
I'll hold you steady, keep a firm grip on you.

Isaiah 41:10, The Message Bible

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NURSING

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It allows our dedicated team to continue their tireless, around-the-clock work to fight this pandemic and care for everyone in our facility. We're grateful for their continued efforts."

OC Health Care Agency reported 33 new cases throughout the county Friday for a total of 1,845 including 36 deaths. The agency recognized 162 cases in Huntington Beach.

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Kevin Chang | Staff Photographer

HUNTINGTON VALLEY Healthcare Center facility said it has identified 62 cases of coronavirus, among its approximately 100 residents and 34 cases among its healthcare staff.

NEWPORT

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Some part-time workers, especially in the events and programming-heavy parks and recreation departments, haven't been picking up their usual hours but have been given work opportunities elsewhere in the city, she said.

The city also identified \$2.6 million in savings in professional and contract services for the balance of the year.

In contrast, fiscal year 2020-21, which starts July 1, is "exceptionally challenging" to forecast without knowing the duration of stay-at-home orders and associated high unemployment, Matusiewicz said. Consumer reluctance to gather and travel is unknown and the sharpness of the economic drop-off is

hard to compare to previous crises.

But if using the Great Recession of 2008-10 as an analogue, revenues could drop by 8% to 10%, or \$24 million. More conservatively, the finance department outlined losses of up to \$39 million.

"We don't know how all this is going to unfold except that most of our forecast is assuming that most of fiscal year 2021 will be impaired to some level," Matusiewicz told the city finance committee at an April 16 meeting, where they reviewed his department's projections.

At Tuesday's City Council meeting, staff will broach the topic of canceling or delaying capital projects to cut expenses next year. But before next year, Mayor Will O'Neill, who chairs the finance committee, encouraged the city to cut now be-

cause every dollar that makes it to the new fiscal year won't need to be cut or take out of reserves then.

He noted that some of Newport's neighbors have it worse — Costa Mesa, for example, is projecting a \$10 million-\$18.5 million, or more, revenue loss for the remainder of the fiscal year but their budget is only \$174 million, while Newport's potential drop comes from a pre-pandemic general fund of \$231 million. And notably, Newport has diversified, property tax-heavy revenue streams. It is not majorly reliant on sales taxes.

"I am sure there are going to be cities, particularly the ones that rely heavily on sales tax, that the hole is almost Armageddon," he said.

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CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU ANSWERS

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