

# Late nights, ditch days and procrastination

By Raquel Montelindo

**S**enioritis is a condition that afflicts those who are in their senior year of high school. If you know someone who displays symptoms and is not a part of the aforementioned grade, don't fret. They have not developed senioritis. However, with an early onslaught of senioritis-like symptoms, they will be all the more susceptible to senioritis when they become seniors.

Reagan Thompson, one of the seniors diagnosed with senioritis, describes the epidemic as the "overwhelming feeling of not wanting to do anything related to school" and that "it is an official way to be lazy."

In addition, senior Reese Schoening believes that senioritis manifests because "the end is in sight." The end being: graduation.

You know, when you get to walk across the stage in a cap and gown and finally get to be done with what feels like the longest four years of your life.

But, hold up. You haven't gotten there yet. There are still multiple months of waiting for acceptance letters and surviving the last year of high school busy work to get through. The aforementioned waiting game is a major trigger for senioritis and the symptoms it brings.

## Symptoms

The symptoms of senioritis are fairly easy to detect. It begins with mild procrastination and decreased feelings of diligence and enthusiasm in regards to school. More severe cases are often correlated with late nights — because someone didn't start their homework until 11 p.m. (not that I'm speaking from personal experience at all) — and hatred projected towards classes and the assignments that accompany them.

Schoening explained that her senioritis appears in the form of extreme procrastination.

"First, I procrastinate with YouTube and Netflix because they are the loves of my life," Schoening said. "This is really special: I procrastinate by doing other homework. Instead of doing the complex math problems that are due tomorrow, I'll watch videos for the class I do understand even if they aren't due for another three weeks. It provides the illusion of being a productive human being, even though you are not."

Eventually, the symptoms — like Schoening's procrastination — spiral into senioritis. This generally occurs around or in the winter months of your senior year. This is directly correlated

to the post-college application slump that occurs after November 30, the date of most college application deadlines.

"It's strongest once you've gotten accepted into at least one college because you no longer have to stress about that," senior Thomas Kelly said.

Kelly's logic is shared by many seniors — myself included. Once I finished my early action deadlines and heard back from a few schools, my own senioritis came into full swing.

"It starts once you get accepted into any college," Schoening said. "It doesn't matter if you want to go there. You think 'Great, I'm into a college and nothing else matters.'"

More often than not, Kelly believes that when senioritis hits "assignments don't get done and the student takes the half-credit associated with the late assignments" or just accepts the zero.

Fellow senior, Andrew Nickerson, agrees with Kelly's point of view.

"Senioritis is when you bring your backpack home and don't open it up until you're at school the next day," Nickerson said.

## Treatment

There is no actual treatment for senioritis.

Most people wait it out and languish the last four months of senior year. Generally, the symptoms fade once the afflicted graduate high school.

Carrie Leadingham teaches Shakespeare, a senior English class. Her treatment plan for senioritis is seen in her teaching method for her Shakespeare class.

"I could come in and be annoyed and chew them out," Leadingham said. "But, I consciously decided that I'm going to go in and tell them that they have so much potential. 'It's the end of *Hamlet!* That's amazing. You're going to be the only kids that you meet next year in your freshman college class that have acted out the end of *Hamlet.*' And I could see them go 'Oh yeah, [this will be cool].'"

Leadingham also utilizes the oldest trick in the book when it comes to getting seniors to cooperate: candy.

"I also give them lollipops," she said.

## Cure?

No immediate cure has yet to be found by modern science. Scientists continue to work on an applicable cure and preventive measures. The only semblance of a cure that has been seen so far is when the afflicted class of seniors walks across the stage and receive diplomas.

Schoening believes that graduation is the only "cure" — kind of. According to her, "the cycle repeats in college."

**"Senioritis is when you bring your backpack home and don't open it up until you're at school the next day"**

**- Andrew Nickerson**



PHOTO BY RAQUEL MONTELINDO

A typical night for someone infected with senioritis includes watching Netflix and ignoring homework. All seniors diagnosed with senioritis have at least one night exhibiting the symptoms described above.

# COVID-19 through the eyes of a high school senior

By Raquel Montelindo

January began normally enough for me and my fellow seniors, with senioritis running rampant. History was made when Donald Trump became the third president to undergo an impeachment trial. I helped two students write a piece for *The Stampede*, Monte Vista's student-run newspaper, on the coronavirus and the racial impact it had on Asian students on campus. COVID-19 seemed so far away. A disease halfway across the world that had seemingly little effect on us in California.

February began normally. I turned 18. The 49ers lost the Super Bowl *again*. The tide concerning COVID-19 shifted when concerns of what seemed to be "not our problem" became "our problem" as coronavirus crept across the world and into Seattle, slowly inching closer and closer to us in California.

Whispers of trips being canceled and news reports of cruise ships trapped near the picturesque Golden Gate Bridge led to increased anxiety among Californians.

March began with field trips being canceled and school sports having no spectators — but the schools made us students keep coming to class. It was recommended that no more than 50 people should be in the same room.

My choir class exceeded that every day with 109 students in very close proximity.

Then, Friday the 13th came — the unluckiest day of the year, even for those who aren't superstitious — when all schools in the San Ramon Valley Unified School District shut down. None of us seniors knew that March 13 would be our last day on campus, of our childhoods.

Suddenly, all the events that my fellow classmates and I have longed to experience since we were young were canceled or their fates hung in uncertainty.

Graduation. Decision Day. Prom. Ball. Class field trips. Signing yearbooks. Grad Night. Final seasons of sports games we've played since we were young. The last choir concert, band concert, or play. The last edition of the school paper. The last exit from your high school's figurative and literal doors.

We never imagined a worldwide pandemic

stripping our dreams from us. COVID-19 came and obliterated our last quarter of high school.

The second semester of senior year — at least according to every upperclassman I've ever met — is the epitome of high school. As an underclassman, I anticipated the days where grades held little consequence and weeknights were for goofing off with friends. I began to yearn for those future moments and pictured the festive memories I would make before I had to be an adult out in the *real world*.

For the three previous years of my high school career, I saw seniors commit to colleges and don black caps and gowns.

Even before graduation, I couldn't wait for May 1st. I would get to stand in front of a giant U.S. map in the senior quad. I'd be clutching the little sign with my chosen college's name on it and taking goofy photos with my friends. We

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would dream about visiting each other spread out all over the country and even the world. We would talk about how excited we are to attend our dream schools and our planned — or undecided — majors.

Instead, I'm sitting at home, stuck in a whirlwind of confusion, attempting to make a college decision. Envious of the seniors who got to visit their schools before the quarantine was implemented. Envious of those with a dream school and a plan for their lives.

I'm writing this during spring break. If COVID-19 hadn't occurred, I would be on the other side of the country visiting one of my top schools and getting to attend admitted student days.

Graduation: You know, when you get to walk across the stage in a cap and gown and finally get to be done with what feels like the longest four years of your life.

But, hold up. We haven't gotten there yet. In August, there were still multiple months of applying for colleges, waiting for acceptance letters, and surviving the last year of high school busywork to endure.

And now, it seems like we'll never get there. COVID-19 canceled nearly everything in one fell swoop. Now, what's going to happen?

Maybe we'll have graduation over Zoom. Who knows?

We all dreamed of walking across the stage to the next part of our lives.

Some may say seniors are acting like typical whiny teenagers who only care about themselves. In some cases that may be true, but the majority of seniors I know are spending the supposed best time of their lives locked up in their homes because their senior year was canceled. Adults talk and keep repeating "It's not that big

of a deal" or "You're lucky to be alive. You shouldn't be worrying about a stupid dance or photo-op."

Yes, I, *we* understand that the coronavirus is not a trivial matter, and we acknowledge the severity of the situation. However, to us, losing graduation and other significant events are a big deal. The rest of our senior year is canceled.

April began with a continuation of March's stay at home orders. Seniors used social media to show off what they would have worn to their senior proms and graduations. Easter was spent in isolation.

Discussion of virtual proms and drive-by graduations occurred as an attempt to placate the disappointment the class of 2020 feels.

School shutdowns extended through the end of the year and all hope of a normal last hurrah of high school went down the drain.

Seniors, it may feel like the world is ending, but we have to be positive. Maybe each of us can create a graduation ceremony in the backyard. We can create virtual graduation celebrations and do everything we can to make this unheard of time better.

The class of 2020 is coping and, surely, will never forget the last moments of their high school years.