

# A YEAR FOR THE HISTORY BOOK



CAROLINE KOPAS



## Introduction

It is now the last month of 2020, and isn't that crazy? The period between March and November seems to exist in some sort of twilight zone. The passage of time seems muddled; have we been at this for days or weeks? Months, or years? One day blurs into the next, which blurs into the next. But yes, one year (12 months, 52 weeks, 365 days, 8,760 hours, 525,600 minutes, 31,536,000 seconds) has in fact passed since we celebrated the start of a new decade in January last year. In less than a month it will be 2021.

Just thinking back to March where a burning Australia and the not-so-serious threat of World War Three were the worst of our worries almost makes me want to laugh. It is not that those problems are laugh-worthy, but rather that when not involved in them directly, there is a sort of distance, a disconnect that makes it seem like far-off fiction rather than reality. But when the coronavirus stopped the world, what once seemed like a science fiction novel became everyday life. 2020 has been such an unprecedented (and has not that just become our favorite word) and crazy year, but, personally, one thing I certainly did not lack this past year was down time. And that leads to reflection. So here it is: my 2020 wrapped up.



Courtesy of: CNN

## *January*

New Year Day brought with it the same in which it brought every other year: hope. Resolutions were made, habits were changing, and people were making Gatsby-themed jokes about the roaring twenties. The high hopes did not last too long, though, and the year quite literally began in a blaze of Australian fire.

Then Iranian General Qasem Soleimani was assassinated, and WWIII began to trend on Twitter. It then became quite evident that 2020 was not exactly going to be a great year.

Just think of all those people who pledged to work on their hobbies more and spend more time with family for New Year's. They jinxed it, really.

## *February*

Did February ever really happen? Seriously, I have no recollection of this month whatsoever. I suppose it just went by normally when I was blissfully unaware of what was to come.

## *March*

It was Friday the thirteenth when my school shut down because of the COVID-19. How fitting.

I was part of the stage crew for my high school's spring musical, and Friday was our second show date. As the curtain closed at the end of the night, there was a small pregnant silence as all the performers and crew drank in the moment. And then, rising up from the stage, came a cry: "We beat corona!"

Then at once, celebration. Everyone threw their hands up and cheered, dancing and hugging each other. As I moved to stand against the wall, ready for the inevitable stampede of actors and actresses, they came jumping and screaming into the wings. My stage manager stopped someone, a senior, and asked if the director was planning for our final performance tomorrow. She replied that there was hope, but for all intents and purposes, tonight was the closing night. Even after everyone had funneled into the dressing room, their jubilee was still heard as a faint echo.

As I woke up the next morning to an email notifying every one of the school closures, I was actually a little happy. I got a break in the stress, I got to sleep in. No worries, after all, we were going back to school in two weeks. Yeah, right.

The concert and marching bands were scheduled to go on a trip to Los Angeles, California on March 19th, which was promptly cancelled. It was a pain trying to get all that money back.

March 24th marked my sixteenth birthday, and excluding a small ice-cream cake, the day went by just like any other day.

When March ended, I had begun to realize in-person school was not going to return anytime soon.

## *April*

I began to get used to online schooling. I would wake up around 9am, do work for my first two blocks (one of which being gym, which would take all of five minutes to complete), eat breakfast, then finish my day. Maybe with a few breaks thrown in there. I would always be done before noon. It was not particularly taxing.

## *May*

George Floyd was murdered, and the world was rocketed into the Black Lives Matter movement. In lieu of posting a normal assignment, my writing teacher posted a diary-like assignment on our thoughts and feelings. Many students expressed outrage and despair. So did the rest of America. Even though 2020 had begun a year of nothing, it grew into a year of change.



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## *June*



Courtesy of: brgeneral.com

My father, brother, and I took a road trip down to South Carolina to escape the confines of our house. We stayed at our grandparents' condo and played lots of minigolfer. But the difference between what we experienced in New Jersey and in the south was drastic.

People walked around without masks and ate indoors. We even witnessed in shock as a Subway employee made a sandwich for a customer without a mask nor gloves.

June was the month when I truly realized the prime reason cases were rising was simply because of the lack of care.

## *July-August*

Summer normally goes by in a hot haze, and that of 2020 was no different. The summer months were a whole bunch of nothing for me. There was no school to keep me occupied, so I simply was not occupied.

## *September*

School started promptly on the first, and my world was shaken. I had spent most of the year at home, and wearing a mask for hours on end and sanitizing everywhere was a bit of a shock for me. School was impersonal and distant. I did not get to see my friends, and the mix between in-person and at-home schooling was often confusing. I became occupied once more, and I was thrown face first into the intense learning I had gone without for the previous months.

## *October-November*

As it got colder, gatherings became even harder, because if you wanted to be outside, you had to sacrifice your warmth.

On Halloween I stayed inside instead of going out. My mom put out a table with candy separated into little boxes so children would not need to grab candy directly from our hands. She bought two giant bags of candy, but we did not even finish one. There were less trick-or-treaters than normal this year.

Joe Biden became the President-elect of the United States.

Thanksgiving also came and went, and it was the first year of my life where my family did not get together with the entirety of our extended family. The food was good, though. On Thanksgiving, both the maternal and paternal sides of my family usually figure out a complex system of figuring out who buys for who in our gift exchange. After a quick discussion with my mom's side of the family, an exchange between nearly twenty people was cut to only six, even if contactless, due to lack of interest.

Life in the age of COVID-19 had become normal. Grabbing a mask when I walk out the door is as natural as grabbing my cell phone.

## *December*

The last month of 2020. When I am writing this article. Let us hope the holiday season is nice and jolly.

## *Postface*

This year and all its nuances will appear in the history books. We will have to tell future generations what it was like to live through a year such as this. And through the solitude, good things did emerge.

People had time for their hobbies, for their passions, and for their work. People became healthier, people gained more appreciation for those in healthcare. People learned just how fragile life is, and how you have to milk every second of it to make it count.

I have learned to treasure my friendships more. Ever since COVID-19, a friend of mine who lives twenty-two hours by car away and I have been video chatting every Friday night, seeing each other exponentially more than we did before all of this.

2020 has been an insane year, but at least you can say you have lived during a major world event. That has you have been quite literally making history. That is kind of cool. But as this year comes to a close, I want to reaffirm this: your problems do not stop at midnight on January first.

People are acting like 2021 will rid the world from its 2020 problems, but that is simply not the case. A change in date will do nothing to curb coronavirus cases and deaths, unfortunately, but the year could in fact herald some good changes if we keep our spirits and ambitions up. 2020 has been an interesting year, and 2021 very much has the potential to be the same.

Because through all the hardships, you have to recognize that you will come out on the other side changed. You cannot just pretend this year never happened and go into 2021 mask and hand sanitizer free.

When people ask you in the future what living through 2020 was like, be generous with the time frame. A time period is less of calendar measures and more of common ideologies and events occurring near each other and grouped together, so view 2020 and everything that came with it from your unique perspective. How has 2020 changed you?