

Global Voices

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Spring Break in Washington D.C.

by Megumi Shimada



Miya & Megumi

Since I am an exchange student, this year's Spring Break was the first and last time for me at Washington College. Miya, who is my one of the Chinese friends, and I spent

part of Spring Break in Washington, D.C. Miya was very familiar with the city, so she guided me around. We went to Washington D.C. on a four-day trip. We took an ELL

class together last semester and we live in the same dormitory, so we talk a lot and I have a great connection with her. She is a very caring and friendly person and often asks me to hang out with her. I was very happy when she asked me to go to Washington D.C. together for Spring Break.

We took a shuttle bus in the morning of March 8, 2020, to Washington D.C. After we arrived at the New Carrollton metro station, took the train into the city.

In Washington D.C. we went to a Korean restaurant and ate

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My Trip to the Cherry Blossom Festival

by Xiangyu Yuan & Bin Nguyen

Over the past few weeks, the world has bowed to the global COVID-19 pandemic. Many parts of the world are forced to shut down all activities, in a bid to curb the prevalence of the disease. Sadly, thousands of people have lost their lives, creating fear around the world. Many activities have been affected and this year's National Cherry Blossom

Festival was no exception. Every year, the festival attracts millions of visitors who come to Washington DC to experience the beauty of the budding cherry blossom trees (Varnam 2020). This year's festival was slated for March 20 to April 12, 2020. Initially, the organizers canceled some events from the festi-

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val to prevent overcrowding amid the Coronavirus scare. The rapid increase of new infections has led to the closure of many public activities and gatherings.

I almost canceled my weekend trip to the National Cherry Blossom festival due to the ongoing tension. The virus has hit hard in my neighborhood with several people already in the hospital. The rest

of us are in partial lockdown, too afraid to go out and expose ourselves to it. Washington District reported the first infection on March 7, 2020, with more cases in the past three weeks. Therefore, allowing many people to attend the Festival would have exposed them to a higher risk, as such events are always crowded. However, the organizers of the event announced that the



(Continued on page 3) *Cherry Blossoms at the Tidal Basin in Washington, D.C.*

Spring Break (Cont'd)

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delicious foods.

After lunch, we went to the National Gallery of Art and saw many famous paintings and sculptures. I took a lot of pictures and had a great time. After that, we walked toward the Pentagon mall and went shopping together. She was well informed



Hope Diamond, Smithsonian Museum

about fashion and cosmetics and she had good taste. So, when we went to a Sephora, she recommended me some nice cosmetics.

On the second day, we went to the Chinatown section of the city and ate delicious ramen noodles for lunch at a restaurant named Daikaya, which is a famous ramen restaurant.

Then we went to the Smithsonian museum. I was very excited to see the famous Hope Diamond, which is one of the most famous jewels in the world.

After we saw it, we

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Cherry Blossom (Cont'd)

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Tidal Basic Welcome Area (TBD) would remain open over the weekends, which was a huge joy for me and perhaps for some other nature lovers.

When I visited the Tidal Basin Welcome Area on the weekend of March 21, it was not business as usual. Only a few people were in attendance. There was a lot of tension, owing to the rapid spread of the virus in the US since the first case was announced in early March. People were asked to maintain social distance and to put their masks on all the time. Despite the tension around, I strived to enjoy every moment at the Park, as I now

spend most of my time in the house. The few people at the park walked alone or in small groups to avoid creating large crowds. There were rangers around to offer guidance to the people. Luckily, the peak bloom commenced around the weekend I visited, which was quite earlier than predicted. The bloom was expected to come in the first week of April, given the warmth experienced in Winter. The events of that day were streamed live at the Cherry Blossom Watch coverage so that those who were denied attendance would not miss the event. I was excited to get the opportunity to take photos of nature in full bloom.

This year's Cherry Blossom visits were very brief. Unlike

in the past where I was accompanied by friends, this time I went alone. I captured every moment on camera, which I shared with my friends on my social media platforms. Most of the cultural activities that accompany the National Cherry Blossom festival were canceled. Thus, there was no need for spending a lot of time as not many activities were going on. For instance, the cultural performances by Japanese and American artists were canceled this year (Coleman, 2020). Also, the opening ceremony held at the Warner Theatre was not possible, as it would go against the social distance rules. Although I would have loved to enjoy massive entertainment, everyone has to ensure that the Coronavirus does not spread

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Spring Break (Cont'd)



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moved to a China town in Maryland and had a delicious

dinner at Miya's recommended Hot Pot restaurant. After we finished eating, we bought bubble teas and watched *On-*

ward which is Disney and Pixar's family film at a movie theater close to Chinatown.

On the third day, I and Miya went to a Chinatown again and ate delicious Vietnamese food. After that, we enjoyed shopping at the City Center D.C. and visited the National Postal Museum. At night, we ate Korean BBQ.

On the final day, we ate delicious Hotpot and Taiwanese shaved ice for lunch. After we went shopping, we returned to Washington College by Uber. It was a very fulfilling Spring Break.

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Student Interview: Yisi Liu

by Wang Qi & Huang Ketong

Q: Hello, thank you for doing this interview with us to talk about how this pandemic impacted your life. Can you introduce yourself to the readers?

A: My name is Yisi Liu. I am currently a senior and double majoring in Computer Science and Economics, and minoring in Math.

Q: Thank you! How are you?

A: Well, I have to cancel my graduation trip and my plans for the summer. My parents could not visit me and attend the graduation commencement.

Q: I am sorry to hear that. Most people started social distancing around mid-March after the Spring Break. When did you start to be aware of this virus?

A: Thanks! I was aware of this virus since January when the break out started in Wuhan, China.

Q: Are your parents worried about you?

A: My parents were worried about my safety in the States since many people were treating Asians irrationally back then. That is when I realized it was serious.

Q: At that time, did you think it was going to be that bad here in the U.S.?

A: I never thought it would be bad since as the U.S. president stated the government blocked the borders pretty fast and they had strict rules and were “prepared” for this. I never thought this pandemic



Washington College senior Yisi Liu

would go this far.

Q: There has been instances of racial discrimination toward Asian people around the world because of the virus, did you experience any personally?

A: Not really, people around me are super caring and friends are willing to protect me when I feel uncomfortable doing grocery by myself. I am blessed to be in the college, WAC, and surrounded by warm-hearted friends, professors and classmates during this special time. I definitely received their support and understanding.

Q: That's great. So how was your Spring Break? What did you do?

A: I stayed on campus when I heard the school may move courses to online and just in case I have trouble traveling

between states.

Q: After we had one-week extension of the Spring Break, we started online class. How do like having class online?

A: The schedule becomes more flexible and it was hard and new to not interact with professors and classmates as usual. But we all worked our way through.

Q: How are your classes? Do you have any final exams this week?

A: Yes, I have two finals this week and a virtual presentation due on Zoom which I found pretty interesting.

Q: Good luck! You mentioned you have to cancel your graduation trip and plans for the summer.

What was your original plan for the summer after gradua-

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tion?

A: I had planned to travel in the U.S. with my family, then we'd go back to China and I'd catch up on my shopping.

Q: Now how this pandemic changed this plan?

A: What do you think?! Stay inside and meeting no one. I cannot even go anywhere.

Q: Yes, that is frustrating. Do you plan to go home any time soon?

A: I keep trying to find flights that will take me home.

Q: I know since countries have shut borders and international flights were being canceled. Do you have a flight ticket now?

A: Yes, from a website.

Q: Was it difficult to book the ticket?

A: Yes, I booked tickets from 8 different airlines and they all got canceled or suspended.

Q: That is crazy! It sounds like you are being careful dealing with this outbreak. How has your mentality on this outbreak changed in the

past two months?

A: I was worried about my grades when classes moved to Zoom, so I did not go home ASAP. But the school decided to ease our burden and changed the grading policy to Pass/Fail. Then I was less worried and I was able to focus on getting a ticket to fly home since I started to feel nervous of not being able to fly back.

Q: There are more and more voices out there want to reopen the county. What do you think of that?

A: I understand the country's policy of social distancing. We need it to prevent the spread of the virus since this policy works. But as a graduating student seeking a job, I wish the country would reopen soon.

Q: Are you worried that easing the restrictions will increase the spread of the virus?

A: Well, I'm a little worried — but people need to work eventually!

Q: In closing this interview, I have one final question. Do you have any positive takeaways from pandemic so far?

A: I have two takeaways from this experience. Firstly, we need to think of the things and people that we need to appreciate. And the other is to let things go and wait to see where the destiny takes me.

Q: Well said! Thank you for your time and stay safe.

A. Thank you! It has been a pleasure. Stay safe, too!



MY LOVING FAMILY

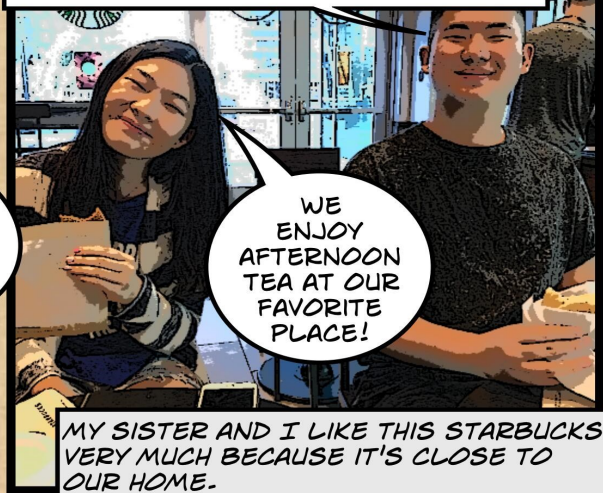
BY DIAN LIU AND BRANDON MA

THIS IS ME, BRANDON. I AM IN TAIWAN OVER SPRING BREAK. TODAY I WENT TO A VIETNAMESE RESTAURANT FOR A LUNCH.



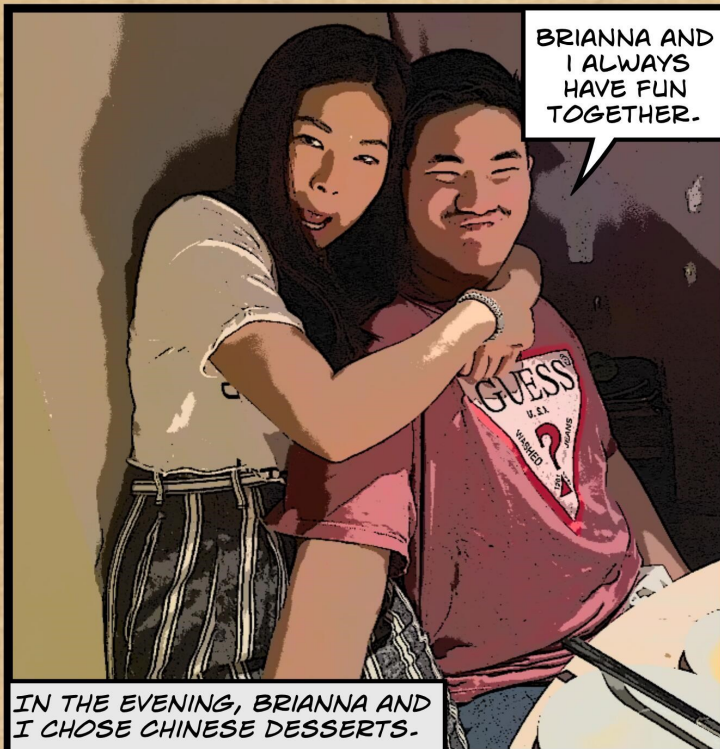
I MADE THE SAME FACE AS DAWSON. DID YOU SEE THAT?

THIS IS MY LOVELY SISTER, BRIANNA.



WE ENJOY AFTERNOON TEA AT OUR FAVORITE PLACE!

MY SISTER AND I LIKE THIS STARBUCKS VERY MUCH BECAUSE IT'S CLOSE TO OUR HOME.



BRIANNA AND I ALWAYS HAVE FUN TOGETHER.

IN THE EVENING, BRIANNA AND I CHOSE CHINESE DESSERTS.

AFTER DINNER, I PREPARED A LITTLE SURPRISE FOR BRIANNA -- I WAS CAPTURED BY ...



I'LL GET YOU!!!

ALIEN FRIEND

ON SUNDAY, I MET MY MOM AND SISTER TO MAKE PLANS.



LET'S PLAN GRANDMOTHER'S PARTY.



HEY BRIANNA, LET'S BUY A COOKIE JAR AS A GIFT! SHE LIKES SWEET FOODS.

I HELP MY MOM AND MY SISTER PLAN A PARTY FOR MY GRANDMOTHER.

I DREW THIS PICTURE AS A GIFT FOR MY GRANDMOTHER.



COOOOOOL GIFT!

A COOL GUY IN MY FAMILY.

WE LIKE TO DRESS UP AND DINE TOGETHER FOR GRANDMOTHER'S BIRTHDAY.



WE LET GRANDMOTHER CHOOSE THE PLACE FOR CELEBRATE HER BIRTHDAY



HAPPY BIRTHDAY FOR GRANDMOTHER!!

THE END

An Unforgettable Experience in Spring Break

By Wang Gengchen

Due to the COVID-19, this is a very different spring break for me. I took the shuttle bus to Philadelphia airport and flew to Boston to stay with my mom and brother for a few days. However, things changed during the spring break. WAC announced that we will have an extended week and waiting for further updates. In this case, I canceled my flight and stayed in Boston for another week. However, the future update said that WAC would move to online classes, so I stayed in Boston and started online courses for the first in my life.

My brother is now in grade six, so my mother rented an apartment in a small town called Lexington near Boston and take care of him. The apartment is not a big one, but it's possible to have three people live at the same time.

At this time, the Massachusetts government declared an emergency condition, and



Gengchen practicing his driving skills during the Covid-19 pandemic

everyone should follow the social distancing policy and have to wear a mask when going out. Moreover, people should not be out at nighttime since the state started the curfew. All stores had been close due to the COVID-19. Even

the CVS drugstore is now following the social distancing police and having a plastic plate to avoid any contact with others, and Starbucks is closed and will

not reopen at this time. As a result, I only went out two times this month, and that's killing me.

The Civil Aviation Administration of China announced a new policy this month call "five-one," which means each airline can only operate one route to each country, and can only have one flight each week due to the COVID-19. That shocked me, which means there is only a minimal flight from the United States to China, and ticket scalpers buy the tickets. For now, the price for an economy class back to China had been raise to more than fifteen thousand dollars for only a one-way trip, that's crazy, so I decided to stay until the price is reasonable.

However, there are some positive aspects of this situation. I



Supplies from family in China

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Unforgettable Experience (Cont'd)

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would say having class online allowed me to sleep during the morning class and watch the playback later, so I don't need to wake up in the early morning. Besides, I can even have levels and stay in bed, with a relaxed mood. Staying at home let me have more time on gaming, and that's an excellent way to stress out pressures, and I'm enjoying it.

My family in China sent me plenty of face masks so I can protect myself adequately, and I also donate some N-90 face masks to the local hospital to help the doctors.



Passing the time gaming online with friends

Staying at home can always make people feel bored, so this gives me an excellent opportunity to chat with my friends more constantly. Besides, I went to the Massa-

chusetts Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) and tried to get the driver's license. Luckily, I passed the written test, so I am allowed to drive and prepare for the road test.

The excellent news is Wuhan city, where the COVID-19 originated, is reopen a few days ago, and 77,746 out of 83,264 patients from the country had been recover now. China

started to donate face masks to other countries to help them combat the virus. I believe our life will back to normal this summer and all my friends will live healthily.

Spring Break (Cont'd)

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At first, the vacation period was from March 9th to the 13th, but it was extended one week because of Covid-19. I was very in lucky to travel with Miya before Covid-19 became serious. It was my first experience to travel with a friend who is not Japanese. At first, I was worried that I couldn't have a conversation in English well, but it was totally fine. I was really happy to talk a lot and share many wonderful memories.

People all over the world have suffered serious damage in Covid-19. I hope things settle down soon. After Covid-19 is over, I want to have a wonderful trip with Miya again.



Megumi Shumada at the Smithsonian Museum

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Cherry Blossom (Cont'd)

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on activities that put us at risk.

The weather conditions were quite favorable for a nature walk. However, health conditions prevented many people from experiencing the full beauty of nature. In this regard, everyone has had the responsibility to prevent the virus from spreading. Although the officials announced the closure of activities, many people were not willing to go to the parks. The flowers were already in full bloom, with their pink and white colors flooding the Tidal Basin area. The flowers are not only a symbol of beauty but also, represent the friendship between the Japanese and American cultures since 1912. The Japanese gifted the Americans with about 3000 cherry trees, which have remained significant for more than a century (Varnam, 2019). Today, the National Cherry Blossom Festival is one of the most significant celebrations in the U.S., with millions of people in attendance every year.

The officials were at the forefront of advocating for the stay-at-home recommendations and thus, the peak bloom weekend marked the last day of the festival. Every day, the officials would update the Cherry Blossom Watch so that nobody would feel left out. The pictures of the bloom are still available on their website. COVID-19 has greatly affected this year's festivals and thus, officials have had to put more effort into curbing further spread of the virus in such public areas. Despite the pandemic, nature has continued to spread its beauty to the world, which is a sign of healing. Outside the empty halls were written rules that encouraged people to stay safe. There were different areas where people could wash hands and sanitize at every corner, to ensure nothing was left to chance.

Before I visited the Tidal basin, I made inquiries with the park, as they limited the number of people attending the events. They are also advising many people to reconsider the decision of visiting the area, to curb the spread of the virus. They even closed down the Metro stations which would give people access to the Tidal Basin. Also, they advised people to go to other areas with Cherry blossoms, such as the East Potomac Park, which had fewer people. The National Arboretum was also open and has a very wide outdoor space, which could ensure people kept the recommended social distance. Children were not allowed in the park, as they are not likely to follow the social distance rules, without the guidance of an older person. Due to the empty spaces all around, I took a short nature walk around the Tidal Basin, where I experienced inner healing from nature's beauty.

In summary, I was grateful for the measures that officials at the Cherry blossom took to ensure people's safety. The Coronavirus pandemic has disrupted many activities around the world and thus, we can only adhere to all recommendations. Despite the gloom that has pervaded the world, I got to enjoy a bit of nature in the budding of the pink and white cherries. Millions of people who attend the festival each year were locked in their homes, as the festival's officials suspended any public gatherings to curb the spread of the disease. Hopefully next year, the world will have healed from the Coronavirus and millions of people will be able to enjoy the celebration of culture without fear.

Cherry Blossom Article

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