

THE UNIVERSE

Serving the Brigham Young University Community

Beloved choir director retiring



Rebekah Baker

Members of Men's Chorus toss director Rosalind Hall into the air as part of the 2019 BYU Homecoming Spectacular.

By WHITNEY BIGELOW

“Esse quam videri” — to be, rather than to seem.
This is the lesson taught to the thousands of BYU choir members who sang under the direction of Rosalind Hall during the past 21 years. Hall will retire at the end of this school year, concluding her time as the director of both BYU Men's Chorus and Concert Choir.

'A better ward choir director'

Hall grew up in a small town in Wales. She said that music was always present in her home, “but it wasn't sophisticated music by any means.”
At the age of 6, she begged her parents for piano lessons. They found a teacher who lived down the street. Thus began her music education, which she continued through grade school.
When she was 17, it was time for her to choose what she would study at the university. She had it narrowed down to two choices: music or law. But after a summer internship at her uncle's law

office, she said she quickly realized that she was better suited for music.

Hall attended the University of London, the University of Edinburgh and London's Royal Academy of Music, where she studied voice and piano and received a bachelor of music degree in 1977.

After 12 years of marriage, it was Tim Hall, Rosalind's husband, who first suggested moving overseas to continue his education at Brigham Young University.

“He applied to BYU and I started thinking about what I was going to do here for two years,” Hall said. “I thought, ‘Well if I'm going to be there at BYU, I may as well do something — I may as well do a degree.’”

Hall remembers looking down the list of music degrees offered at BYU, and when she saw choral conducting and thought, “I'll do that! That looks like fun!”

“I had never had a conducting lesson,” she said. “I conducted my ward and stake choir, which I loved doing, so I thought, ‘When I go home, I will be a much better ward choir director.’”

Upon finishing her master of music

in 1993, she spent seven years teaching music to middle- and high-schoolers at the Waterford School in Sandy, Utah. In 1999 she received a call that Mack Wilberg had been called as the assistant conductor for the Tabernacle Choir, and she was asked to take his position at BYU for one year while they looked for a permanent replacement.

When the Daily Universe first interviewed Hall about what it was like to fill Wilberg's shoes, she said, “I cannot fill Dr. Wilberg's shoes; I will not attempt to wear his shoes. I will wear my own, and mine will have high heels.”

At the end of the year, Hall was asked to apply for the job. She did not have a doctorate, which was supposedly an important qualification for the position. When asked if she was willing to go get a Ph.D. in order to meet the requirements, she refused.

“The great news for me was they decided to give me the job anyway,” she said, chuckling. “That led to 20 more absolutely glorious years here at BYU.”

'The greatest faculty member BYU has ever had'

From her Welsh accent to her

energetic “cross-brain” activities, Hall has been well-beloved by her students. So much so that RateMyProfessors.com has included Hall on its annual list of top university professors five times in the last seven years, including the national fourth-place ranking in 2013.

CJ Madsen, a graduate student in the choral conducting program, has worked closely with Hall since joining Men's Chorus as a freshman.

“I think Sister Hall is the greatest faculty member BYU has ever had,” Madsen said. Hall was also named one of the 300 best professors in the country by the Princeton Review in 2014.

Hall has led both of her choirs through the production of full-length studio albums. Concert Choir's solo album “Beautiful River” was released in 2005, followed that same year by Men's Chorus's release of “Praise Him.” Men's Chorus released an album of missionary-themed hymns in 2017 titled “Set Apart” in response to the missionary age change announcement. This album was made available for free download.

See HALL on Page 3

Seek and ye shall find: Risking it all to discover the truth

IF ANY OF YOU LACK WISDOM

Third in series

By SYDNEE GONZALEZ

LIBERTY, Mo. — The threat of execution, never seeing his family again and being barred from his home country weighed heavily on Saeed Al-Awlaqi's mind as he pondered whether to join The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Saeed is originally from Yemen but has spent most of his life in Saudi Arabia, where Islamic law dictates that converting to another religion is punishable by death.

“It's scary, not having freedom to choose whatever you want or whatever you believe,” he said. “This is a very big decision. It's not an easy thing.”

For months Saeed pondered if he should renounce the Sunni Islam religion that he had known all his life for the Christian faith he had discovered less than a year earlier. Like Joseph Smith, Saeed's mind was “called up to serious reflection and great uneasiness” (JS - H 1:8).

“It made me think a lot. If I convert, what will happen to me in the future?” Saeed said. “I was praying and asking



Sydnee Gonzalez

Saeed Al-Awlaqi, originally from Yemen, reads the Book of Mormon. Scan the photo with the **Universe Plus** app to read a Spanish translation of this story.

Heavenly Father to guide me.”

Saeed's journey of discovering the Church was also very similar to Joseph's experience of asking which church he should join. Both men's journeys started with a mix of curiosity and turning to the Bible.

Shortly after moving to the U.S. to pursue an MBA in 2017, Saeed was invited to a Christmas party where he was shown the Bible.

“I think this was the beginning,” he said. “It was the first time I touched the Bible because the Bible is

prohibited in Saudi Arabia.”

He then attended various Muslim mosques and Christian churches in an attempt to quench his desire to know which one was true.

“We don't have churches back home,” Saeed said. “I wanted to discover what is happening in the churches. What do they have? What do they believe? The whole concept.”

When Saeed's brother, who lives in Ireland and had already joined the Church, heard that Saeed was attending different churches, he encouraged

him to go to a meeting of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

“I had never heard of this church before; it was something new to me,” Saeed said. “He (my brother) told me, ‘Just go and you will see how friendly they are, how nice they are.’”

Figuring he had nothing to lose from visiting another church, Saeed went to a Sunday meeting in July 2018. The first thing he noticed when he walked through the doors was that all the men were wearing suits.

“That was amazing to me because usually people wear suits when they are going to a place which is important to them,” he said.

Not entirely sure where to go or what to do in this strange new environment, Saeed stopped someone in the hallway, told him it was his first time there and asked him for help.

“What he (my brother) said was right,” Saeed said. The man he met in the hallway took him to Sunday School, where Saeed said everyone was warm and welcoming. When he told them about his Muslim background, “everyone was surprised and wanted to know more about me.”

Saeed eventually started taking lessons with the sister missionaries while also investigating the other churches he had been attending. Lost among a “tumult of opinions” (JS - H 1:10), Saeed used every resource available to him to try to find the truth.

See SEEK on Page 3

Facebook unites different religions for worldwide fast

By KENZIE HOLBROOK

Over 537,000 people of various religious backgrounds responded through a Facebook group to President Russell M. Nelson's call for a worldwide fast on Good Friday, April 10.

During the Church's April 2020 General Conference, President Nelson of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints invited people everywhere to fast for relief from the COVID-19 pandemic on April 10.

Following President Nelson's invitation, Jaden Taylor, a missionary serving in San Diego, created a Facebook group called “Worldwide Fast April 10,” which has been positively received by people from around the world.

Shannon Fitzgerald, a Baptist from Roanoke, Virginia, heard about the fast from her aunt who is a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

“I was unsure at first since she and I had different faith backgrounds, but it seemed like a group that wasn't trying to convert people, just trying to gather together to pray, which I liked,” Fitzgerald said.

Although she doesn't fast regularly, Fitzgerald participated in the worldwide fast. “I'm a Southern Baptist, but I believe in the power of prayer and that fasting is a spiritual discipline that Jesus taught and practiced!” she said in a post on the Facebook group. “What a special day to join together as we remember Good Friday.”

Ivy Villalba, from Madrid, Spain, considers herself an atheist but participated in the fast for her grandmother whose health restrictions won't allow her to fast.

Villalba's grandmother raised her in the Catholic faith, and her grandmother would always say that sometimes people have to offer something to God in order for Him to see they're willing to make sacrifices.

“She is the most important person in my life, so I'm doing this for her,” Villalba said.

Another member of the Facebook group, Muslim Ruby Gulle, said she was invited to the group by her nephew. She didn't join the group when she was first invited but decided to join the next day.

“I decided to join even (though) we have different religions. But I saw unity,” Gulle said.

Da Douangaphaivong of the group said he's been Catholic, LDS, Baptist and now Buddhist. “I am fasting for all of mankind,” he said in a Facebook post.

Debbie Swindle Escamilla, another group member, said, “I'm Methodist but we all worship God. I'll participate if you want an old Methodist.” Her post was received positively by other group members, with over 2,000 positive comments. One of the comments, made by Charles Deloy Stewart, said “The world needs all the help it can get, Debbie! ‘With God as our Father, children all are we!’ Our faith in God is what unites us in this crisis. Welcome!”

Oakley Spain said she hasn't been active in the Church for several years. “But through social media and seeing everyone's posts about inviting all to join, I too want to join this fast,” she said.

Daniel Dale is a gay former member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints from Colorado. He said he still has great respect for the Church and that he considers himself a Christian.

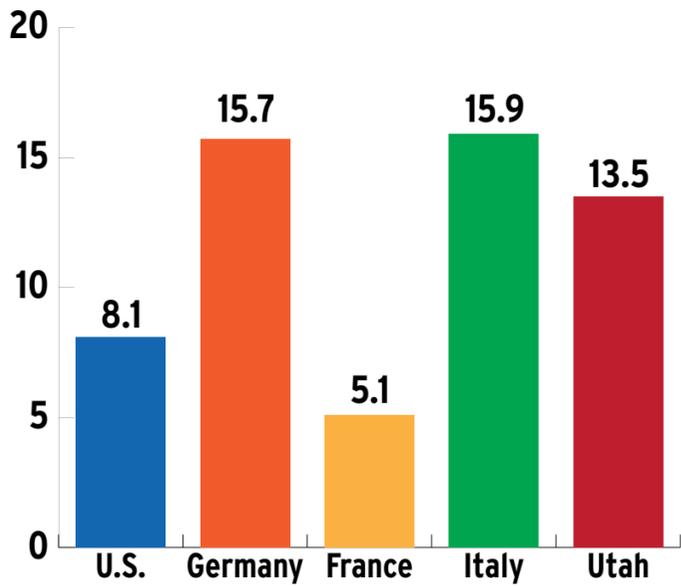
Dale said fasting isn't something he normally does, but he believes that standing together right now is the duty of humanity as a whole.

“It is times like these when we turn to what we believe in and believe in those things more strongly than ever,” Dale said. “That is why I'm fasting.”

COVID-19 OUTBREAK

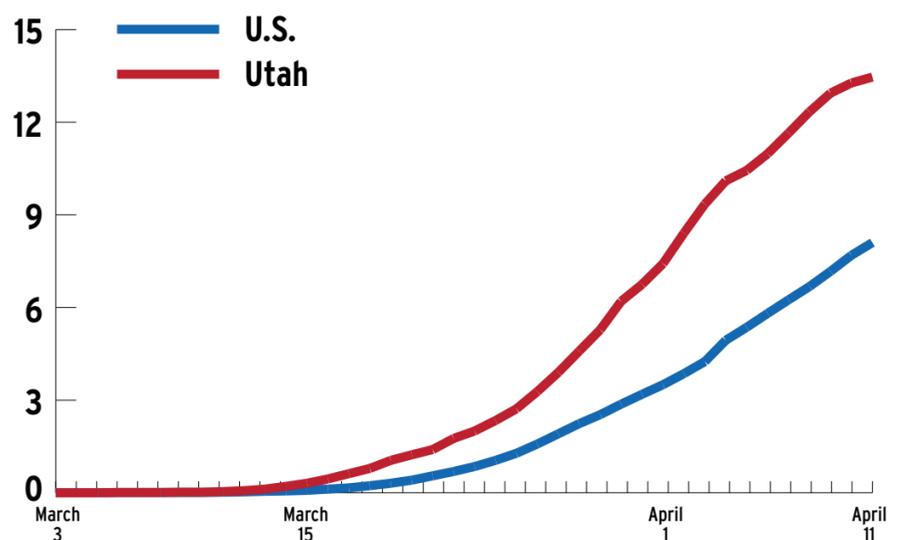
Outbreak updates

Number of COVID-19 tests per thousand people by country or state



The number of COVID-19 tests performed as of 10 a.m. March 13. Because countries use different metrics to count the number of tests performed, the totals may not be perfectly comparable.

COVID-19 tests per thousand people



The number of COVID-19 tests performed in the U.S. and Utah. Information is accurate as of 10 a.m. March 13.

World virus deaths pass 100,000

ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK — The world-wide death toll from the coronavirus surged past 100,000 on Friday, April 10, as the epidemic in the U.S. cut a widening swath through not just New York City but the entire three-state metropolitan area of 20 million people connected by a tangle of subways, trains and buses.

In the bedroom communities

across the Hudson River in New Jersey, to the east on Long Island, and north to Connecticut, officials were recording some of the worst outbreaks in the country, even as public health authorities expressed optimism that the pace of infections appeared to be slowing.

As of Friday, April 10, the New York metropolitan area accounted for more than half the nation's 18,000 or so deaths, with other hot spots in places such as Detroit, Louisiana and Washington, D.C.

BYU Women's Conference to be streamed online

By EMMA BENSON

BYU Women's Conference organizers announced April 8 via a live video on Facebook that this year's conference will be a "virtual gathering."

They also stated on Facebook that the conference will be streamed free of charge.

The conference, which is based on the theme "Gather All Safely in Christ," was

previously scheduled to be held on the BYU campus on April 30 and May 1, but it was canceled last month due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The digital conference will take place on May 1 from 10 a.m. to noon MDT via a live stream on the conference's Facebook page, womensconference.byu.edu and churchofjesuschrist.org.

Four video-on-demand sessions will also be available following the live stream.

Utah governor requires travel declaration

By LAUREN LETHBRIDGE

Gov. Gary Herbert issued an order requiring all individuals older than 18 to complete a travel declaration form when entering Utah.

These declarations, which are required at the Salt Lake City International Airport and on roadways, were passed out beginning Friday, April 10. Herbert said the declaration asks individuals whether

they have been tested for COVID-19, if they are experiencing symptoms of the virus and where they have traveled recently.

Herbert has been active on Twitter sharing announcements, updates and information regarding COVID-19 in Utah.

Previously on March 26, Herbert issued a "stay home, stay safe" directive that encouraged residents and those visiting Utah to avoid recreational travel.

Outside the outbreak



New, larger wave of locusts threaten millions

Weeks before the coronavirus spread through much of the world, parts of Africa were already threatened by another kind of plague, the biggest locust outbreak some countries had seen in 70 years.

Now the second wave of the voracious insects, some 20 times the size of the first, is arriving.



Feds deny claims of misconduct

Federal prosecutors denied allegations that investigators deliberately withheld and fabricated evidence to entrap actress Lori Loughlin and other prominent parents charged with cheating the college admissions process.

Prosecutors told a judge in a legal document filed late Wednesday, April 8, that he should reject the parents' attempt to dismiss the charges.



General presidential election is now set

Barring unforeseen disaster, Joe Biden will represent the Democratic Party against President Donald Trump this fall, the former vice president's place on the general election ballot cemented by Bernie Sanders' decision to end his campaign.

Biden likely won't secure the number of delegates needed to clinch the nomination until June.

THE UNIVERSE

Serving the Brigham Young University Community

April 14-20, 2020 • Volume 73, Issue 30 • universe.byu.edu
152 BRMB, BYU, Provo, Utah 84602

EDITOR

Sydnee Gonzalez

ONLINE EDITOR

Nathan Wanlass

SPORTS EDITOR

Aaron Fitzner

SECTION EDITORS

Karina Andrew

Lisi Merkley

OPINION EDITOR

Spencer McWilliams

COPY EDITORS

Lauren Lethbridge

Kenzie Holbrook

SENIOR REPORTERS

Emma Benson

Alicia Matsuura

Jenny Goldsberry

PHOTOGRAPHERS

Hannah Miner

Addie Blacker

Preston Crawley

Emma Willes

EDITORIAL ASSISTANTS

Spencer McWilliams

Alessandra Harris

WEB DEVELOPER

John Martin

EDITORIAL DESIGNERS

Allie Peterson

Benjamin Daniel

GRAPHIC DESIGNERS

Sophie Parmley

Kate Slobodian

SPECIAL SECTIONS

Lauren Layne

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

Amanda Ius

CIRCULATION

Brandon Wiscombe

Jake Hiltcher

MARKETING

Alena Black

Aubrey Tanner

Lance Revoir

ADVERTISING SALES

Eric Forbush

Michael Wade

Connor Poulsen

Lexi Carley

ACCOUNTING

Taylor Bennett

Adam Dalton

PROFESSIONAL STAFF

DIRECTOR

Steve Fidel

BUSINESS MANAGER

Ellen Hernandez

DESIGN MANAGER

Warren Bingham

NEWSROOM MANAGER

Carrie Moore

FACULTY ADVISER

Kris Boyle

The Universe is a product of The Daily Universe and is an official publication of Brigham Young University and is produced as a cooperative enterprise of students and faculty. It is published as a laboratory newspaper by the College of Fine Arts and Communications and the School of Communications under the direction of a professional management staff. The Universe is published weekly except during vacation periods.

The opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect the views of the student body, faculty, university administration, Board of Trustees or The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Copyright 2020 Brigham Young University.



For more news, including audio and video, visit universe.byu.edu

@UniverseBYU
letters@byu.edu
News 801-422-2957

Advertising & Circulation 801-422-7102



US expels thousands to Mexico after largely halting asylum

President Donald Trump's administration is relying on a seldom-used public health law to set aside decades-old national and international immigration laws. People seeking refuge in the U.S. are whisked to the nearest border crossing and returned to Mexico without a chance to apply for asylum.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection said April 9 that nearly 10,000 Mexicans and Central Americans have been "expelled" to Mexico since the rules took effect March 21.

"What's happening right now is a public health crisis driven by a global pandemic, which has resulted in a national emergency declared by this president to protect the health and safety of every American in this country," CBP acting commissioner Mark Morgan said.

Mexico is providing critical support, agreeing to take migrants from Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras.



Trump rails against mail voting

President Donald Trump is claiming without evidence that expanding mail-in voting will increase voter fraud. But several GOP state officials, including Utah, are refuting his claim. Trump's complaints baffled Justin Lee, Utah's elections director. The only fraud the state finds are scattered examples of one spouse signing for another. The mail system hasn't hurt Republicans at all.

"People are turning out, 90% are using it in a very red state," Lee said.

HALL*Leaving a legacy of love**Continued from Page 1*

Hall oversaw the creation of the first BYU choirs music videos, including a collaboration with BYU Vocal Point with over 26 million views on YouTube.

'The perfect exemplar of a disciple of Jesus Christ'

Andrew Crane, fellow choral professor and director of BYU Singers, said beyond her tradition of musical excellence, Hall is leaving behind a legacy of using choral music as a vehicle to teach students to be better people.

"It's never just making music for music's sake, but you learn things about life by being in choir with Sister Hall," Crane said. "She inspired people to live better."

During her 21 years of daily choir rehearsals, Hall has influenced thousands of students with her life lessons and gospel-focused insights.

"She has helped me increase my faith and find God in the music I sing," said Rosie Morreale, an elementary education major and current member of Concert Choir. "She has treated every one of her students as if they were her own child, and that is something I will never forget."

Madsen said that in addition to giving him opportunities to advance his career, Hall has touched his heart.

"She made it known from the beginning that she had high expectations for our group collectively, and individually," said Justin Smith, a member of Men's Chorus from 1999-2000. "She didn't waste time talking about how important this was to her or what a wonderful opportunity it was — instead, she pulled out music and we got to work."

COVID-19 and an early farewell

Hall's final concerts with the choirs at the end of March were canceled due to the COVID-19



Chris Bunker

Men's Chorus performs during 2011 BYU Homecoming Spectacular.

pandemic.

In her email announcing the cancellations to the choirs, Hall said, "I am saddened beyond words, but know that this is the right decision."

Mallory Millett, a graduate student in Human Development and member of Concert Choir, expressed via Instagram her disappointment in not giving Hall that one last concert.

"This woman is incredible," Millett said on her Instagram story. "But in true Sister Hall fashion, she reminded us not to dwell on what we've lost, but to be grateful for what we've had."

The Men's Chorus final concert was going to include a performance with over 700 Men's Chorus alumni.

Though the performance has been canceled, Men's Chorus alumni continue to raise funds for the Men's Chorus Endowment Fund, which will allow Men's Chorus to travel to some of the many prestigious concerts and festivals to which it received invitations each year — something the choir have previously been unable to do because of the immense cost of transporting more than 200 men across the country.

The endowment fund must reach one million dollars before it can be used, so alumni and Hall herself are encouraging those who have been involved with Men's Chorus in any way, as singers or listeners, to give generously.

Hall had included one of her all-time favorite songs in each of the programs for both the Concert Choir and Men's Chorus performances. Concert Choir prepared to sing "Prayer of the Middle Ages" by Howard Hanson, and Men's Chorus prepared "Choose Something Like a Star" by Randall Thompson.

Moving forward

Come August 2020, Brent Wells will fill the opening in the choral department as director of Men's Chorus and Concert Choir. Wells will also teach courses in the choral conducting curriculum.

"There is no one that can ever 'replace' Sister Hall," Crane said in an email to students. "Our only aim is to carry on the tradition of excellence that she has embodied for so many years."

As for Hall, she says she is optimistic about what the future holds. She looks forward to spending time with her husband before they get "too old to enjoy it."

"As I move on to the next chapter of my life, I am not sad," she said. "I am grateful."

"A young woman who came from Wales who had not very sophisticated music education to begin with, was given incredible opportunities and has had this marvelous experience with all of you," she said through tears. "I am so grateful for it."

"Honestly, that's what this has all been — 'an impossible dream.'"

SEEK*Finding answers to questions**Continued from Page 1*

One thing that he particularly struggled with was accepting the idea of Christianity. He met with sister missionaries once or twice a week for months in an attempt to understand it better.

"Because of what I had been taught, it was so, so difficult for me," he said. "I just wanted to get the idea."

It was also difficult for him to adjust to reading the Book of Mormon. Instead of sticking with a single physical book, he prefers reading from a large variety of sources online.

"But I read the Book of Mormon a lot, which is something unusual for me," he said.

Despite these initial difficulties, there was also a lot about the gospel that was easy for Saeed to accept, such as the Word of Wisdom. He found many similarities between the Church and Islam, too.

The first time he heard about Joseph Smith from the missionaries, Saeed immediately saw connections between Joseph's story and that of the Islamic prophet Muhammad. Saeed says both men came during a time of apostasy to restore God's word and both received guidance directly from God.

Saeed also saw similarities between Joseph and himself. "Joseph Smith was asking Heavenly Father if he was on the right track. I was in a similar situation because I was asking Heavenly Father if I was in the right place or not."

The answer to Saeed's prayer didn't come as a grandiose vision like Joseph's but instead as a feeling of calm and peace, and in April 2019, he told the missionaries he wanted to get baptized.

"I decided to accept Christianity and accept Jesus Christ as my Savior," he remembers. "It is one of the best decisions I have



Sydnee Gonzalez

Saeed continues searching for more answers.

ever taken in my life and I'm so happy that I took this big step."

His conversion hit a huge roadblock, however, when he was told that he would not be able to get baptized because of his Muslim background and the persecution he would inevitably face when his visa expired and he would be forced to return to his country.

The Church's general policy is to prohibit missionaries from teaching Muslims who may return to a Muslim country without first talking with the mission president.

Rodney Ames, Saeed's bishop in the young single adult ward he attends, pulled him aside after Saeed came to church a few times to explain this to him.

"If someone is Muslim and from a practicing Muslim country, it's very dangerous for them to convert to Christianity and it can also be very dangerous for that person's family at home," Ames said.

The only way around the Church's policy would be a letter from the First Presidency, the top governing body of the Church.

Saeed worked with Bishop Ames to prepare a letter to the First Presidency asking for an exception.

"I was touched by Saeed's genuine search and his integrity of soul about the decision he was making to accept Christ and to be baptized," Ames said. "It was extremely touching and

inspiring to me. It strengthened my faith watching him make that decision. I'm very proud of Saeed."

They waited two weeks for a response. During this time Saeed prayed daily, asking Heavenly Father for help.

"I was praying to Heavenly Father every day that if I convert, things will be OK," he said. "I believe that my prayers were answered because I got the approval letter to be baptized."

He added that the way everything fell into place for him to find and eventually join the Church is evidence of God's hand in his life. "All the things in the past led me to be here in the Church," he said. "If this was the wrong place, I wouldn't be here. I'd be in a different place, in a different church in a different area."

Since joining the Church, Saeed said he has seen changes in his own life, specifically an increase in self-confidence and happiness. The change is so strong, he said others around him have seen it, too.

"Before I became a member, I was having a hard time, especially with happiness, but I found that here in the gospel," he said. "One of my friends told me, 'Saeed, I see that you are happy. ... I can see there are some differences in your life and your personality.'"

Even with the happiness the gospel has brought him, Saeed still struggles at times with the weight of the possible repercussions of his decision to be baptized.

"It's very difficult when I think about it," he said. "It means there is a possibility that I will not see my family anymore. It's a very big decision, a very big step."

Though he doesn't know what the future may hold, Saeed is continuing to progress in the gospel. He is currently serving as a ward mission leader and recently received his patriarchal blessing and the Melchizedek priesthood and he plans to receive his endowment in May.

Next: Remembering that answers come by small and simple things.

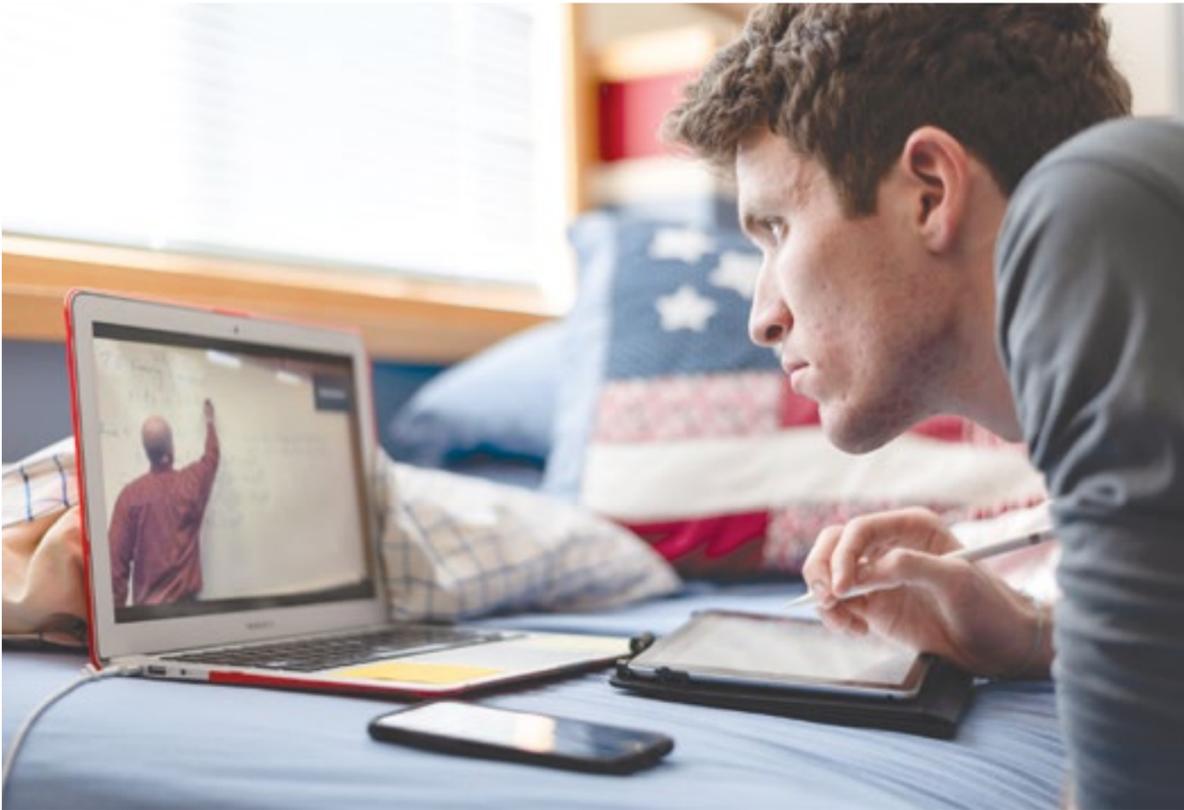
Want daily news updates from campus?

1

Subscribe to Daily Universe emails.
universe.byu.edu/subscribe

THE DAILY UNIVERSE
Serving the Brigham Young University Community





BYU Photo

Math education major Christian Dahneke participates in his differential equations class online from his home in Chaska, Minnesota.

BYU students adjust to moving home, online classes

By EMMA BENSON

BYU announced a few weeks ago that classes would transition online due to the spread of COVID-19. All students were encouraged to return home to finish the semester — but for many, the transition to online classes and a new environment hasn't been completely easy.

Following the announcement, BYU junior Lane Gibbons moved back home to San Antonio, Texas. “The transition of moving back home has been rough,” she said. “Although I love my family and I'm glad to be home, this is not an environment conducive to productivity.”

Gibbons, a sociology major, expressed her disappointment that classes are now online rather than in person.

“I specifically chose these classes because I was interested in the material, and I have loved the lectures and learning from my professors,” she said. “It's difficult to lose that.”

Gibbons also said the pandemic has heavily impacted her mental health.

“The transition of moving home, the stress and impending doom of COVID-19 and the anxiety of trying to keep up with school work have been overwhelming,” Gibbons said. “My mental health has essentially collapsed and I'm in the process of recovery. But school

is just not one of my top priorities right now.”

Gibbons said she can't see things going back exactly to the way they were once the pandemic is over. “Life after COVID-19 is going to be a new normal. We may be back in school, but we won't be the same.”

BYU public relations sophomore Austin Rustand moved home to Tucson, Arizona. “I was very disappointed to stop having classes on campus, because the professors that I had this semester were fantastic and I'm definitely an in-class learner,” he said. “I'm definitely going to miss those in-class experiences versus online.”

Rustand worked in the Marriott Center equipment room for the men's and women's basketball teams. But when the NCAA canceled all athletic competitions, BYU's basketball operations were shut down, and Rustand was let go.

“Looking for another job is definitely a plan that I didn't see coming,” he said.

Rustand said he's looking forward to getting back to “normal,” which he'll then more fully appreciate.

“I think it'll definitely make me more cautious going forward when something like this does come up and they say, ‘Oh, make sure to wash your hands more, make sure this flu season to stay clear if you are feeling sick.’ I feel like I'll take more precautions when I see notes

like that because of the fact that I can see now that if we don't, it can lead to this,” he said.

Toby Driggs, a psychology sophomore from Denver, Colorado, moved in with Rustand for the time being because Driggs' parents are living in Washington, D.C. for work until June.

“I think everyone's lives have been disrupted,” Driggs said. “People went from everything that they had scheduled and all of a sudden, it's just day by day.”

Driggs said the transition to online courses has made it difficult for him to know what his professors expect of him.

“I personally struggle with online learning,” he said. “The most difficult part has been (going) from attending class and getting explanations there and also receiving assignments in class, whereas now I feel like no one really tells you what to do.”

Though he personally doesn't prefer it, Driggs said he thinks the current education system is building a dependence on internet-based learning.

“Unfortunately, I think it's going to push everything to more online learning. People have realized, obviously, that doing school over the internet provides certain conveniences. You can teach as much in the classroom as you can do from anywhere.”

Emma Campbell, a junior studying physics and astronomy, agrees.

“I could see a lot of teachers and employers realizing that doing stuff online can actually be easier, and so then they don't switch back in some regards,” she said. “I had several classes where all of my assignments were turned in physically, so they might find it easier that we all turn them in online.”

However, some of her classes have suffered setbacks due to the online structure, like the beginning astronomy class for which she is a TA.

“We would use the planetarium and the telescopes, and so now we can't do any of that. That's kind of sad, because I feel like it's beneficial for the students and I enjoy it,” she said.

Campbell said it's been difficult to not do homework with her classmates and study on campus, which helps her stay motivated.

“I have stuff around the house I want to do, but I still have to do my homework,” she said. “It's just really hard to get motivated especially since it kind of just doesn't feel real. It helps me on campus to kind of get it in my mind.”

But aside from the struggles of doing online coursework, Campbell added that she's had more time to do things she enjoys without the travel time of going to and from classes.

“Now I have that time to go hang out with my dogs,” she said. “We've been doing a lot of puzzles. And I've been baking a lot, which is nice.”

Petition to cancel off-campus housing contracts continues

By JENNY GOLDSBERRY

A petition to let BYU students out of their housing contracts has garnered over 16,000 signatures despite efforts to quiet the petitioners.

Following The Daily Universe's report on a petition to allow students to terminate their contracts, Julie Brooks, a first-year law student and the creator of the petition, emailed Provo City Mayor Michelle Kaufusi for help. Kaufusi responded to the email, writing: “Thank you for sharing this with me. I have a meeting with BYU and other stakeholders in the city to discuss this situation. . . . We are meeting next week.”

The Universe received a phone call from Nicole Martin, Provo City's Public Information Officer two days after the email was sent. Martin said the meeting is not happening.

“The mayor is not going to delve into anything that isn't strictly about city operations,” Martin said, adding that she did not know who sent the email or what it said. Immediately following the phone call with the Universe, Martin called Brooks to tell her the same thing.

Brooks has since created an Instagram account, @letusgocovid19, to bring more attention to the situation. She posted a screenshot of the email from the mayor, with a caption reading: “Do you think this meeting needs to happen? Call her office.”

The day after her post on Instagram, Brooks received an official statement from the mayor's office.

“I meet regularly with members of BYU's administration, and in response to these recent student inquiries, I reached out to them,” Kaufusi wrote. “The city can't modify these contracts, but we can encourage things from the sidelines. In that spirit, I hope that landlords who are in a financial position to do so will factor compassion into their decision making.”

I hope that landlords who are in a financial position to do so will factor compassion into their decision making.”

Michelle Kafusi
Provo Mayor

Tim Metler, property manager for Legend Real Estate, believes that there are few landlords who are in that financial position. He manages the finances for some local properties, including in some cases paying the mortgage. “Between 5-10% of these are making a profit,” he said.

He said he manages the finances for only a minority of the total properties under Legend Real Estate. Metler isn't privy to any financial information, even whether a mortgage has been paid off or not, unless the owner voluntarily gives him that information.

Brooks was kicked out of three different BYU Housing Facebook groups after posting the link to her petition to the group. Her posts were also subsequently deleted.

“I respect it if they want to maintain neutrality,” she said, “but if they're kicking me out because they're siding against me, that's not OK.”

One of the groups that removed Brooks from its page, BYU HOUSING Provo/Orem Rentals, Apartments, Roommates, Sublets, is hosted by Roomr, a real estate consulting company. “We connect over 30 people to potential buyers a day usually,” cofounder Lee Chang said. “Although

recently may be different,” he added, in reference to the COVID-19 outbreak.

Of the post, Chang said, “It was likely deleted by the community moderators for not being a strictly for sale or ISO (In search of) post. Roomr team members aren't responsible for moderation, we invite local group members to moderate according to best interest standards.”

Chang verified that Brooks had been removed from the group, but she has since been added back in again. Her post has also been reinstated. Moderators decided to disable comments for her post, and previous comments are no longer visible.

“I'm allowing it in a special case because we are in special times,” Chang said. “However the group is not going to sponsor any side of the debate more than the other.”

Brooks has also started her own Facebook group to promote the petition and its success stories. It has been met with some opposition.

“There's been comments that people who signed the petition belong in hell, stuff like that,” Brooks said. “I deleted the comments.”

According to Ben Schneider, a junior studying economics at BYU, the petition helped him get out of his contract at Branbridge Square. Previously, he'd had success selling his contract for this same apartment but ever since the outbreak, it was a hard sell.

“(Before), it was super easy,” he said. “I had people asking left and right.”

Since he wasn't receiving offers on his listing, he emailed his landlord to have his contract terminated. “I also sent her a link to the petition. I also quoted the (Section 23b) part in the contract.”

The landlord kept Schneider's security deposit but let him terminate the contract, which saved Schneider over \$1,000 in rent. He's since returned home to Idaho Falls but plans to return to Provo in the fall.

“I'm planning on living there (Branbridge Square) again,” he said. I already pre-signed a contract for fall. The owners were merciful to let me out of it, so I'm thankful for that.”

Branbridge Square has also given Schneider until May 25 to cancel his 2020-2021 contract.

BYU-Idaho students are seeing mixed results. Maria Shishmareva is a senior studying communications. Her management is asking for half of the rent.

“I don't think that the situation here is any better than in Provo,” she said. Shishmareva is from Russia and only had one semester left of school.

“I never lived (at this complex) before, decided to try,” she said, adding that she feels trapped in her contract. “Worked really well as you can see.”

“If (I) sign a contract with almost any other housing, my situation probably would not be much better,” she added.

Some students have been asked to sign non-disclosure agreements after negotiating their rental agreements. Metler, the property manager for Legend Real Estate, has delivered non-disclosure agreements to both students and landlords. He said this is a standard procedure.

“We tried to standardize the process for the tenants,” Metler said. He says he's done this in an effort to align with the rules set by the BYU Center for Peace and Conflict Resolution.

One of the mediation rules guarantees confidentiality for both parties. The rule is that “any oral or written communications prepared specifically for or expressed in the course of the mediation proceeding are privileged and confidential and shall not be disclosed through discovery or any other compulsory process and are not admissible as evidence in any judicial or arbitration proceeding.”

COVID-19 sparks nationwide Christmas lights trend to ‘lighten up the lockdown’

By EMMA BENSON

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas.

People around the nation are getting festive to spread cheer during the COVID-19 pandemic — including putting back up their Christmas lights.

The trend started when Lane Grindle, a broadcaster for the Milwaukee Brewers, posed the idea on Twitter a few weeks ago.

“What if we all put our Christmas lights back up? Then we could get in the car and drive around and look at them. That seems like a fair social distancing activity,” he wrote.

Since then, several Twitter users have embraced the idea, posting pictures of their houses or yards adorned with bright Christmas lights, often using the hashtag #LightsForLife.

Twitter user Brian Samoules posted a picture of a heart-shaped light display and wrote, “Trying to spread some

cheer. We'll get through this together.”

Many people are hanging lights as a way to say “thank you” to those working tirelessly to combat the pandemic.

Twitter user Pamela Cloutier wrote, “Putting up my Christmas lights to spread love and hope to all. And to say thanks to all the care givers!”

One community in Mississippi decided to all put up lights “to honor and show gratitude to the doctors, nurses, medical pros, first responders and everyone else working to aid others,” reads a post from @RankinChamber.

They encouraged residents to place a light outside their home — whether it was Christmas lights, a flashlight, candle or even a porch light.

Others are continuing to “lighten up the lockdown” by giving those driving by something cheery to look at, such as the word “love” in Christmas lights. Twitter user Christina Watkins responded to the trend by saying “This is exactly what we need!”

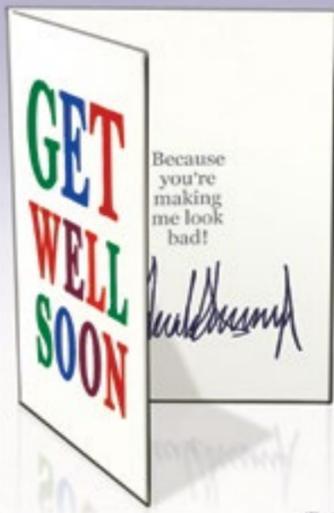


Andy Meiman

A heart made out of Christmas lights outside of Andy Meiman's Connecticut home.

She posted a photo of a sign in Metairie, Louisiana, that reads “No darkness and fear

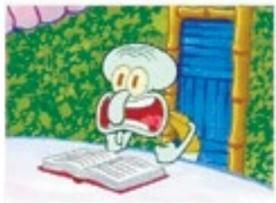
during these scary times, only hope, cheer and cheesy light displays!”



Me: "decides to study"

Me: "reads first page"

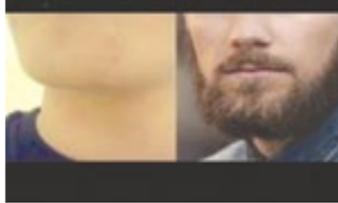
Me:



me panicking over exams and then panicking over lack of time and then panicking bc i'm panicking



BYU Students before quarantine BYU Students during quarantine



Teacher: "This isn't a paper you can write the night before"

Me: "You underestimate my power"



Corona got Provo dating like:



Tweet Beat

#BYU #BYUprobs

Want to see your tweet in print? Tweet something about life around you with #BYUprobs or #BYU and hopefully it makes the cut.

Leave comments at universe.byu.edu or @UniverseBYU

@mynameisTiff

@HeardAtBYU

A guy in my class literally just started doing pull-ups during a zoomed class, camera set above him, looking straight into the camera at all times. REALLY?!

@BrendenWRensink

The @BYU @byu_hbl Library is creepily quiet, even for a library. Most of the humans I have encountered are student workers walking around disinfecting surfaces.

@isabellaolsonn

glad this is the perfect time for everyone to start taking their tiktok career seriously

@hankrsmith

Our guest room is now called BYU-Upstairs. It's a new part of campus where I work. My wife said my presence was throwing off her groove & my 7 year old twins didn't understand why they couldn't come chat while I talk to the computer so here we are.

The commute is great though!

@bpilk10

Well my dad just told me that I won't be getting married until they're in a nursing home... he's 56 years old

@laurenvolley11

update: i miss sports and byu... might just mess around and watch the entire 2019-20 season again

@StaceyHarkey

How is Joe Exotic bood up yet I'm out here SINGLE?

@AubrieCardon

it's looking like i'm going to have about 512

hours worth of online lectures to watch before finals

@dannyniemann

when it's 6pm and you're like "where'd the day go?" but then you remember it started 45 minutes ago

@mirneeeee

My heart goes out to all you Provo peeps trying to date during this pandemic. It's hard enough to date, let alone virtually date.

@PostJimmer

If the BYU fan base focused all the time and energy we spend voting in random online mascot polls on literally anything productive, we might just get somewhere in this world.

@colindross

What I did during quarantine: made lots of tik toks

What I put on my resumé: proficient in video editing, collaborated with others for idea creation, and managed all content production for accounts with 1,000+ followers

@camillewish

Stalking myself on Instagram to see what the RMs are seeing

@hilary_ann

Everyone who says we're no longer counting quarantine days can speak for themselves. I didn't come this far to only come this far.

@j_hancock34

this whole quarantine thing is REALLY messing with my sleep schedule

@ChadT_26

Scares me sometimes to be such a responsible adult. Made sure to eat some veggies with my dinner. And then I ate an entire container of ice cream

@DallinJohnson

We're all gonna be awkward RMs at the end of social distancing.

Tweets are unedited.

READERS' FORUM

The benefits of waking up early

"Early to bed, early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise." This well-known saying, made famous by Benjamin Franklin, may have much more truth than you realize. Everyone knows what it's like to wake up to a blaring alarm, only to be freed by the liberating mercy of the snooze button. Although doing so is gratifying in the moment, it feels way better in the long run to get up early.

Waking up just 30 minutes earlier than usual can help you be more productive. Whether that time is spent exercising, reading a good book, tackling homework, praying or searching the scriptures, it will leave you feeling more accomplished. That feeling of accomplishment can transform into confidence in your schoolwork and can positively influence your whole day.

Now, waking up earlier (or waking up in general for that matter) may not be easy for most people. Make sure that when tackling this beast in your life that you don't bite off more than you can chew. Try and get up a little earlier each day. This will be easier by going to sleep sooner. Also, consider putting your alarm out of reach from your bed so that turning it off requires you to get up.

So, if you want to be more productive, get better grades or have more motivation, consider waking up 30 minutes earlier than you do now. I have done so, and though waking up still can be a challenge, the benefits are well worth it. It will change your college experience and your life.

—Samuel Pratt
Cameron, Missouri

Anxiety during a pandemic

As a teenager, I struggled with anxiety. When it took over, I couldn't look beyond the problem at hand; my thoughts were cumbered with doubt, hopelessness and many other negative emotions. By the grace of God, I overcame that difficulty, yet it feels like today the entire world is experiencing one of my teenage anxiety attacks.

A global pandemic, earthquakes, imminent war, inequality, severe political partisan

animosity, the cacophonous bickering of moral controversies — it seems there is no end to this chaotic typhoon tormenting our existence. Being continually caught up in the whirlwind of relentless news updates, fashion trends and social media notifications causes us to drown in our own lives.

And yet the sun still rises and sets. The world has not ended, nor do I think it's going to end soon.

Like my teenage anxiety, we'll get over it. I'm 20 now. Life still goes on. I'm still learning, growing and making mistakes, but I look to the future with optimism. So stop stocking up on toilet paper and relax. Yes, our world will never be the same, but if we're being honest, it's never been the same.

As the Persian adage goes, "This too shall pass." The world is simply experiencing a trough in the ups and downs of life.

—Andrew Gabbitas
Taylorsville, Utah

A wedding during COVID-19

On January 19, 2020, I became engaged to the love of my life. Eleven days later, on January 30, the World Health Organization declared a global health emergency. For me COVID-19 was both literally and figuratively a foreign issue. I recognized that people were getting sick and that was scary, but I also had a wedding to plan and a psychology degree to finish.

Planning for the future consumed most, if not all, of my free time. Things got weirder as the virus spread throughout the world. Over the course of a week, BYU classes were cancelled and moved online, my graduation was cancelled, businesses shut down (including that of my paid internship) and the restriction on large gatherings went from groups of 100 to groups of 50.

My fiancé and I continuously made alternative reception plans, trying to accommodate for the new announcements and restrictions. At this point we've postponed our reception and plan on getting married regardless in May. I am devastated that I won't get to celebrate with all our friends and family at this time, but can I just say when people said that planning a wedding is crazy, I don't think anyone meant this crazy!

—Franklin Palmer
London, Utah

OPINION OUTPOST

The Opinion Outpost features opinions and commentary on the latest hot topics from state and national news sources.

the scientists and other experts who are doing their best to figure things out as the pandemic proceeds.

statewide stay-at-home order in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic.

—Editorial Board
The Salt Lake Tribune

Listening to the experts

Humans tend to be impatient, by nature. Many have begun to criticize the experts and to note their contradictions as the virus spread.

At first, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said Americans shouldn't wear masks. Now, the thinking is the opposite.

The critics, however, do not understand the nature of what the world is experiencing. The virus is new. Scientists have had to learn about it as the pandemic raged.

Utah, and the rest of the nation, needs to stay the course until the danger has passed, and people should continue to heed

Public health decisions

Talk from some leaders of the Utah Legislature about denying local governments the power to issue mandatory stay-at-home orders in their jurisdictions proves that the principle of government closest to home is, for some lawmakers, a cruel facade.

They just want all the power for themselves.

A distaste for top-down management, opposition to one-size-fits-all policy-making, is behind the decision by Utah Gov. Gary Herbert to go against the decisions made by 42 other governors — and most First World nations — in not issuing a mandatory,

Black and Hispanic lives

As the pandemic continues, it is crucial that local and state health departments across the country report data on how the coronavirus is affecting people by race and also by gender and age.

In many black and Hispanic communities, trust in government is low and the information given to the residents has often been confusing and come too late.

To serve these Americans now, state and local governments will have to meet those in need where they are.

—Editorial Board
The New York Times

Planning for the future

President Trump's self-aggrandizing claims notwithstanding, the federal government's response to the early warnings of the COVID-19 pandemic was slow and inadequate.

Part of the fault certainly lies with Trump himself, whose initial dismissive attitude cost crucial weeks that should have been spent girding for the outbreak.

Some of this country's broad failure to properly prepare can be blamed on human nature. Much like humankind's approach to addressing climate change, people tend to not deal with threats that are not immediate.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a real-world stress test that a number of our institutions and approaches have failed. Now is the time to figure out how to gird for the next challenge.

—Editorial Board
The Los Angeles Times

Liberty University

Liberty University sought and obtained arrest warrants on charges of criminal trespassing against two journalists — a freelance photographer for the New York Times and a reporter for ProPublica — involved in stories that chronicled concerns about the decision to keep the Lynchburg, Virginia, college partially open amid the novel coronavirus pandemic.

—Editorial Board
The Washington Post

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

The Universe encourages students, faculty and BYU staff to add their voice to ours by writing letters to the editor and guest editorials, or by submitting editorial cartoons.

- All letters should be submitted by email to universe.ideas@gmail.com. The topic of the letter should be included in the subject line.
- Letters should also include the author's name, hometown (for students), campus position (for faculty and staff) and phone number. Anonymous letters will

- not be published.
 - Letters should be no more than 250 words and may be edited for length, clarity or style.
 - Guest editorials should be 500 to 700 words and are encouraged from individuals with professional or academic expertise on the topic.
 - Original cartoons are also welcome.
- Opinion editor Spencer McWilliams can be reached at universe.ideas@gmail.com.

TJ Haws: Establishing a legacy of excellence

By SYDNEY FLEMING

TJ Haws dribbles down the court, desperately looking to create a play as the clock ticks to 17 seconds. He dishes it off to teammate Connor Harding. Harding then passes the ball to Jake Toolson, who takes no time in passing the ball back to point guard Haws.

Fourteen seconds. Haws faces his defender, then breaks left. He rounds the top of the arc. Twelve seconds. He throws the ball to the rim off one foot as time seems to freeze. Out of nowhere, Yoeli Childs reaches the top of the rim for the alley-oop dunk. Eleven seconds. San Diego pushes down the court and misses a potential game-winning three-pointer. BYU wins.

Haws often goes unnoticed when compared to senior forward Childs or senior guard Toolson. But without Haws, BYU would have a big hole in its lineup since Haws is the team's third best scorer and primary assist leader.

While Childs and Toolson lead the team in points, BYU can attribute some of its biggest wins to Haws. He may not be large in stature, but he can shoot. In the 2019-20 season, Haws averaged 14.0 points and 5.8 assists per game, shooting 45.9% from the field.

Toolson only had compliments for Haws, who he's known his entire college career.

"He's very intelligent and very smart, especially the way he thinks (about) the game," Toolson said. "That goes for off the court, as well. He's really smart. He works really hard. He's always trying to find a way to get a step ahead of everyone else. He might not have the physical advantage, but he's always one step ahead of his opponent."

Earlier in the season, BYU played quad-one opponent University of Houston. The game was a battle all night, with Houston claiming the biggest lead of the game of 13 points in the first half. But with one minute and 25 seconds to go in regulation, BYU fouled Caleb Mills, who made two free throws to give Houston a one-point lead. The next minute was full of unsuccessful scoring attempts, until a Houston player turned the ball over with five seconds left on the clock.

There was only one chance for a shot, and Haws was going to take it. Harding threw the ball in-bounds to Haws, who drove down the court, dodging Houston defenders left and right. He pulled up and took the shot, the ball bounced in the hoop as the buzzer sounded. The bench cleared as the team paraded around Haws, who was the reason BYU topped No. 22 Houston 72-71 earlier this season.

But Houston wasn't the last time Haws would save the Cougars from a loss. On Feb. 1, BYU welcomed West Coast Conference rival Saint Mary's to



Preston Crawley

TJ Haws leaves the floor after big 81-79 win over Saint Mary's on Feb. 1.

the Marriott Center. This would be the second time BYU faced the Gaels this season. The first matchup resulted in an 87-84 overtime loss in California, with Haws scoring a career-high 29 points. This time, the Cougars sought revenge and attempted to dethrone the Gaels from second place in conference standings.

The game was similar to the Houston game, except the Cougars played the Gaels even closer than they played Houston. BYU shot above season average the entire game, but the Gaels answered each shot with one of their own. Gaels forward Malik Fitts shot a season-high 29 points versus BYU, making four for six from behind the arc and 11 for 15 from the field.

But, BYU held its own against Saint Mary's, bringing the game within one point after senior Zac Seljaas made two free throws with 49 seconds left, the score 79-78 in Saint Mary's favor. Both teams went scoreless until BYU head coach Mark Pope called a timeout with 16 seconds on the clock.

The Cougars had their chance for one last possession out of the timeout. Haws had the ball behind the arc,

Toolson screened then popped out and Childs screened then rolled down to the paint. The ball was supposed to go to one of the two, but Haws saw a clear shot and took it. With nine seconds left, Haws sunk his third three-pointer of the night, the deciding shot in the 81-79 win over Saint Mary's.

Pope was happy that the ball ended up in the hands of a veteran player like Haws.

"When he pulled up for three, I was a little surprised, but I'm sure grateful he did it," Pope said. "Players are way smarter than coaches."

Haws is well-known for his three-point shooting, and his efficiency can't be overstated. If not for the two game-winning shots over top-tier teams, BYU would likely not have been in the NCAA tournament conversation. The Cougars needed to prove that they could beat top-teams, and thanks to Haws, BYU was a "lock" for March Madness. ESPN's Joe Lunardi had BYU as a No. 6 seed playing No. 11 Indiana in Albany, New York, in the first round of the NCAA tournament.

But Haws is more than just a basketball player: he's now a father. The night

that Haws hit his game-winning three versus Saint Mary's, he left for the hospital immediately after interviews to be there for the birth of his first child, a baby boy named Tyson. Haws said that day was full of emotions, beginning with his wife going to the hospital and ending with sinking the game-winning shot. But he also said it was one of the best days of his life.

In his postgame interview, Haws reminisced about what went through his head after he sunk the game-winning three.

"To be honest, my son went through my mind," Haws said. "I've been thinking about this whole experience all day and right after I hit that shot, I was like, 'That's for you, man.'"

Being a student athlete may seem like a lot to handle, and it is, according to Haws. As a basketball player, he has to figure out how to meet the demands of school, sports and family life.

He said his secret to success on and off the court is to compartmentalize.

"You just have to be present wherever you're at. When you're here on the court, your whole mind, focus and everything are here on the court.

When you're home, it's being with the family and enjoying and spending time with them. When it's school, you gotta buckle down and study," Haws said.

Many of Haws' teammates, including Childs and Toolson, have complimented his ability to not let outside problems affect his play in the gym.

Haws' ability to focus and compete showed on Feb. 15 when BYU scraped by conference opponent San Diego in California. The Cougars began the game with an 88.7% chance to win, according to ESPN's matchup predictor. But during the game itself, the lead of either team didn't extend beyond seven points.

In the final seconds of regulation, Haws assisted Childs to an alley-oop dunk that gave BYU the one-point advantage. San Diego couldn't respond, losing to BYU 72-71. Haws finished with team-high points on the night, recording 17 points and 10 assists, the second double-double of his career. Combined with Houston and Saint Mary's, Haws also had a big hand in BYU's win over San Diego, a win that was essential for the Cougars' NCAA tournament dreams.

But when asked about his big role on the team, Haws only gave the credit to his teammates for making his performance possible. Haws said his only goal is to help his team win games, and if he can do that, everything else falls into place.

Haws ended his BYU career with a nod toward his father Marty Haws, a former BYU basketball player, who has been his biggest inspiration on and off the court.

"He's been there with me through all of this ever since I was a kid," Haws said. "He knows my game so well and he's been my mentor. We talk every single day, we talk through things dealing both on and off the court. He's such a good guy and I really owe it all to him — where I'm at and everything I have and especially the person I've become."

Haws finished his career ranked as BYU's No. 2 career record for assists leader with 603, also breaking his career-high assists in a game with 14 on Jan. 11 against Portland. Haws is also No. 3 all-time at BYU for three-point field goals made with 242 over his BYU career. And to top it off, Haws has started and played in 133-straight games over his career, ranking No. 1 at BYU for consecutive games started. If anyone was reliable from year to year, it has been Haws.

The Cougars finished ranked No. 18 in the country after their historic season was abruptly cut short due to the COVID-19 pandemic. March Madness was scheduled to begin on Mar. 19 with the first round of games, with BYU making its first debut since 2015, while also claiming its highest seed since 2011. Despite the early end to the season, BYU made every game count, and Haws' impact on the program will

Jessie Hyde's racquetball journey brings national title, marriage

By CHELSEA KERN

Of the 14 student athletes BYU took to the 2019 racquetball nationals, only one of them had never been there before.

Jessica "Jessie" Hyland Hyde was the lone Cougar freshman competing in the 2019 National Intercollegiate Racquetball Championships, held at Arizona State — where 200 players from 32 universities had come together to crown their champions.

It was her last doubles match of the tournament and victory was within reach. All that was left for Jessie and her teammate, Chloe Durrans, was a best-of-three tilt for the title.

After splitting the first two games, Jessie and Chloe played a first-to-11-points tiebreaker and held the opposition at match point for what seemed an eternity, but an eventual missed ball gave their opponents the championship.

"We fought so hard and it felt like our hard work went to waste," Jessie said. "I remember just feeling so sad because that was the first — and only time — either of us had lost a game in the entire tournament."

Learning to love the sport

As the youngest of three sisters, Jessie had no intention of following in the footsteps of her older sisters Rachel and Maddie, both of whom played racquetball. Jessie had fallen in love with

tennis and, while racquetball was similar, she didn't want the extra burden of doing two sports at the same time.

In the end it was her parents who pushed her to begin playing on her high school racquetball team as an incoming freshman.

"I made her do it," Jessie's father and high school racquetball coach Scott Hyland said.

He said the sport seemed to be a good idea for Jessie, who would not only get to spend additional time with her sisters but would also be able to fill her time during the tennis offseason winter months competing in another discipline.

In addition to meeting new people, developing skills and increasing confidence, Hyland said racquetball was just what Jessie needed to be pushed outside of her comfort zone and into an area of growth.

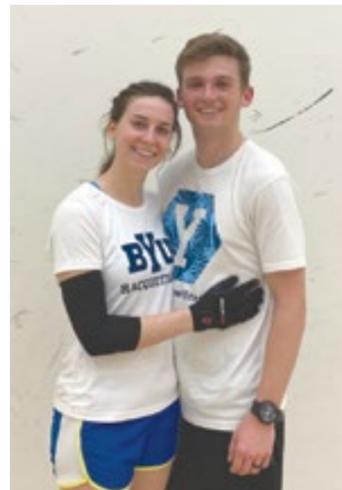
While Jessie said she was "a bit grumpy" about playing racquetball for the first couple of months, she began to enjoy the change of racquet and recognized her knack for the high-speed sport.

Little did Jessie know, racquetball would earn her a national title, an All-American award and even a husband during her first year attending BYU.

"Racquetball has honestly and literally changed my life," Jessie said.

Singles national title

After a discouraging doubles loss the day before, Jessie's nerves were



Jessie Hyland Hyde

Jessie and her husband, Cade Hyde.

catching up to her.

The very same opponent who had defeated her and her doubles partner would stand between her and the 2018-19 Sixth Division Singles National Championship.

Jessie said instead of succumbing to the fear of facing the same opponent, she felt motivated to bring her best game despite the odds.

While losing the doubles match hadn't been ideal, it reminded her to stay humble, work hard and maintain a positive mentality. Jessie credits one particular bit of advice that her

coaches gave her before the singles championship with completely changing her mental approach.

Instead of focusing on the winning point, they had told her, "Focus on hitting each shot well."

This time, Jessie was victorious. "I literally cried because I was so happy," Jessie said. "It was the best feeling ever."

Having once adopted the sport reluctantly, the Sandy native is now an All-American racquetball player, a singles national champion and doubles silver medalist.

"I never thought I would be a nationally ranked athlete," Jessie said. "I never thought I was good enough at any one sport."

Jessie said the hardest thing about becoming a nationally ranked athlete was the work and dedication needed before the tournament. With racquetball practices at 6 a.m. three days a week, she found it difficult to push through the early-morning routine.

Luckily, her motivation would increase as she fell in love with a racquetball teammate, Cade Hyde.

First came racquetball, then came marriage

Cade had enrolled in an elective racquetball class during his first semester at BYU. While he had dabbled in racquetball with youth summer leagues before his mission, Cade primarily wanted to take the class because it sounded fun.

It was in this class that Cade saw

Jessie for the first time.

"In the class you get to play with everyone," Cade said. "I made sure I got to play with Jessie a lot."

Cade and Jessie were married August 2019, in the Salt Lake Temple.

While the couple doesn't give full credit to racquetball for their love story, they believe their common interest in the sport has given them a certain competitive advantage over their opponents.

"We have more chemistry," Cade said.

The two have competed in mixed doubles tournaments and have been each other's motivation to put in more hours, push harder and increase their level of play.

This year, Cade managed to snag one of six roster spots on BYU's 2019-20 racquetball team and remains hopeful he will make it to nationals in the coming season.

Before COVID-19 canceled the event, Jessie was scheduled to compete in the second division at the 2020 National Intercollegiate Racquetball Championship in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

"I was devastated when I heard they were canceling nationals — not necessarily for myself, but for seniors like my sister, Maddie," Jessie said. "It's sad to think we will never go to nationals together."

Sophomore Jessie will continue preparing as a hopeful for the 2021 nationals, where she is determined to bring home another title for BYU.

Called to serve in a pandemic: 'No amount of preparing could have helped us emotionally'



By KENZIE HOLBROOK

Editor's note: Thousands of missionaries across the world are returning home before completing their missions at the direction of top Church leaders. Upon arrival, they must quarantine themselves for 14 days to prevent any spread of COVID-19. Church leaders have directed that those with a significant time left to serve be temporarily released as missionaries while they await reassignment. Each must choose by April 30, 2020, whether to opt for immediate reassignment once the Church announces it is ready to send them out again, or to wait between 12 and 18 months before returning to the field. The Daily Universe is looking at the impact of the pandemic on missionary service in a series of stories.

Austin Pratte, a 19-year-old from Castle Pines, Colorado, served in the Japan Tokyo South Mission for close to nine months before he found out his time there would be ending much earlier than expected.

On March 20, Pratte received a message from his mission president saying Japan was low on the Church's list of at-risk areas and that they should continue to stay focused. Only 30 minutes later, Pratte received news that he would most likely be getting sent home sometime within the next week.



Austin Pratte

Austin Pratte serving in the Japan Tokyo South Mission. Pratte is one of many missionaries who were suddenly sent home due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

Just four days later on March 24, Pratte received another message from his mission president. "(He) tells everyone to get to the mission home as soon as possible with our bags," Pratte said. "It was go time, and no amount of preparing could have helped us emotionally."

Pratte and his companion took the quickest train to the mission home but didn't make it in time. He had just missed his flight home.

When he finally got to the mission home later that day, he had to get taken in a van by office missionaries to the Narita International Airport and caught a flight to Atlanta around 5:50 p.m. From Atlanta he got on a flight to Denver and arrived home around 11 p.m.

"By the time the news came,

we were kind of expecting it," Pratte said. "We knew it was just a matter of time, especially after having been in self-isolation for four weeks already."

"This is really difficult," Pratte said. "I spend a lot of my time in the basement studying and exercising."

Pratte is choosing to be reinstated back to his original mission or a temporary assignment and to keep his original end date.

"I personally don't know if after 12 to 18 months of not being a missionary and probably returning to school, that I would return to the field," Pratte said. "Being in isolation and not in the mission field and not in a constant spiritual environment is already hard enough."

Pratte says that although all missionaries are required to be released for the time being, he doesn't think that those who are waiting to go back out will want to remove their missionary mentality.

"We will be surrounded by a lot of worldly things and situations we would never be exposed to as missionaries and it will require a lot of self-control to stay focused on when that day comes that we can be sent back to our mission areas," he said.

Even though it's been an adjustment for him, Pratte believes it all happened for a reason.

"I don't believe too much that this whole coronavirus is a coincidence," Pratte said. "I believe there is something God is preparing us for with this."

Pet care during COVID-19



Nuzzles and Co./Facebook

Nuzzles & Co. employees unload a van that was used as a mobile pet pantry.

By JENNY GOLDSBERRY

Utahns are under increasing pressure to provide for their family members, including the four-legged, furry ones.

Carlee Atkinson has three cats and admits she's under a lot of pressure to provide food for them. "I clean offices and seniors' apartments for work and now been without work for three weeks," she said. "Times are hard."

Utah County Sheriff's Sgt. Spencer Cannon said police have seen a growing number of reports of dogs on the loose since the pandemic began. The only way the Sheriff's Office keeps track of the number of loose dogs is by the number of calls to its office reporting dogs without owners.

"It does seem unusual that this increase would coincide with people being out of work and people being stuck at home and maybe not having income right now," Cannon said.

Neither of the two animal shelters in Utah County is accepting owner-surrendered animals at this time. Does that mean some families are having to let their pets fend for themselves?

That's a concern among

local animal advocates. This week, a pop-up pet pantry began touring Utah, handing out free pet food to animal owners in need.

Nuzzles & Co. of Summit County is an animal shelter that opened its mobile pet pantry after receiving the combined sponsorship of Petco and the Jason Heigl Foundation. The van, loaded with dog and cat food and even kitty litter, visited parking lots in Salt Lake County this past week, and has plans to travel to Davis, Weber, Utah and Summit counties in the future.

The company said the free food is intended for people who have been laid off or had their hours cut due to COVID-19.

But not even the company itself is exempt from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Ivy Gold has been an employee of Nuzzles & Co. for the last few months.

"I'm currently on furlough, because we are a non-profit shelter, and can't afford the full staff working right now," Gold said.

However, the animals are being taken care of, according to Gold. "I know that almost all the dogs and cats are being fostered during the pandemic, which is amazing," she said. "The community really stepped up."



NEWSPAPERS HAVE YOUR BACK

We are grateful for those who have our back in this important time. The list is long, but we want to thank our first responders and front-line workers.

Especially in critical times, newspapers have your back. COVID-19 is a national story that is impacting you at home and at work. Your local newspaper is keeping you informed with current events in your neighborhood and is bringing communities together in these challenging times.

From the actions your local government is taking, to lists of local stores that are delivering and tips on what to do while you're at home, your local newspaper is committed to bringing you the news you need, when you need it.

WE ARE IN THIS TOGETHER

Support your local newspaper. Subscribe in print or online.

