



The Pretentious Press

March 2020

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A Social Distancer's Guide To Zoom

By: Sophia Tan

You know, we get it — you didn't sign up for this. You never intended on having an education that relies on pixelated webcams, screechy microphones, and a conference host's Internet connection that times out every ten minutes. In light of this uncharted territory, we offer a guide to all the ins and outs of your new best friend, Zoom.

First and foremost, polish up that environment. Perhaps take your towering chair of dirty laundry out of frame, throw out your empty water bottles stash, and remove the 8th-grade era emo band posters. But mess up your bookshelf a little; drape a coat over your chair — “oops, sorry I'm just so messy!”; light a candle on your nightstand — “can't believe I forgot to put that out!” Of course you did, you quirky little gal.

I'm sure we're all aware of how noise sensitive we've found Zoom to be — as in, the way it maximizes your screen every time you talk so that everyone can make deep, passionate eye contact with you. Use this to your advantage. Make sure you turn your mic and camera on, even if no one else does. Then, proceed to shift around in your seat as much as you can. You're only there for a short amount of time, so keep making noise and popping up in everyone's face as much as possible. Rustle your papers like a madman. Maybe trap your dog in your room and let him run around a little. Crunch on a few chips (perhaps kettle-cooked). Just keep reminding everyone you're there at every given opportunity within that brief hour and thirty minutes.

On a similar note, you don't want to miss a second of lecture in these meetings. Your professors put in the time and effort to figure out how to use a desktop mouse and install a whole app! Listen as they recite their detailed notes to the class like some kind of parallel-universe Oovoo session.

If you need to move from your spot, you should take your laptop with you everywhere you go. This includes the kitchen to fix yourself a snack, the bathroom if you just can't hold it any longer, and even when it's Mr. Whisker's dinner time. Remember to keep your mic and camera on so that everyone knows what you're doing, and doesn't think that you've just abandoned the meeting. And if you do choose to leave, just skrrt out and email your professor, “I'm sorry but my Internet completely cut out during our session. These gosh darn glitches! Who even designed this thing!?”

We know it's gonna be a sh*t show for everyone, so just try your best to play along. Maybe throw a “LOL! :)” in the chat when your professor makes a joke. And if you do something embarrassing, don't sweat it -- you probably took the weight off of somebody else's shoulders. Good luck, social distancers; we'll get through this together, one Zoom session at a time.

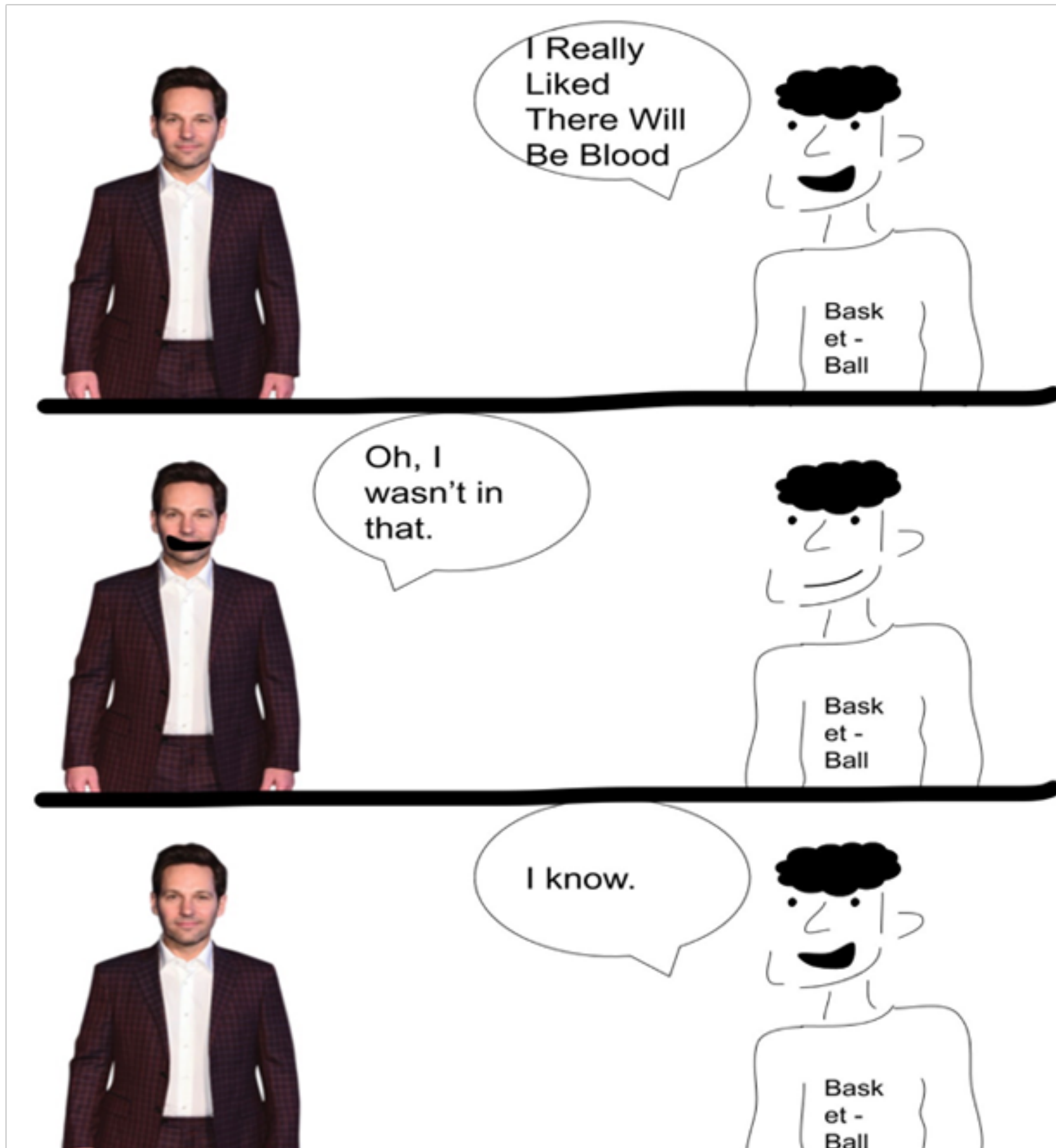


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This Month's Art

By: Jack Brady





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How To Spend Your Free Time In Quarantine

By: Sasha Sackichand

After Supreme Overlord Cuomo mandated the self-quarantine of New York, it's difficult to not succumb to boredom at home. Sure there's online classes and homework to be completed, but if I didn't want to do those before the lockdown what makes you think I'd want to do that now? There's always the option to stare out the window longingly to pass time, but why waste your time hoping instead of being productive? Here are some amazing tips to occupy yourself within your house.

Want to exercise but can't because outside is illegal? Well, do I have the solution for you! Turn on all the running water in your house and slowly wait for the water to accumulate until you've transformed your home into an indoor pool. Feel free to blow up some floaties, swim laps through the living room, and, if you want the authentic public pool experience, pee a little. Not only is this activity great for exercise, but it also allows deep cleaning of your home. Once you drain out that water, your floors and walls will be sparkling!

Craving a delicious meal but can't acquire it because restaurants are closed and you have no cooking skills to try and replicate it yourself? No worries! I've got a recipe that will satisfy any hunger and requires no cooking. Just open up the Food Network and watch those chefs get to work on their culinary masterpieces. Then, visualize yourself eating those meals and try not to let the sadness of not actually eating it get to you. You'll eat it someday, but for now, you can dream!

Social media not making up for the physical aspect of socializing with your friends? Why not make mannequins of them to keep you company! Cardboard, paper mache, clay, or any other material you desire is fine. Dress them up and have fun with being creative! Once you're done, you'll have some new company to help you cope with your crippling isolation. Together you can watch movies, eat a meal, work on homework, and anything else you'd normally do with friends, if you actually had any.

I hope these tips and tricks will keep you occupied and sane during these rough times. I know they've definitely enhanced my lockdown and kept me from falling into a pit of depression! Happy quarantine everyone!





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A Bench's Farewell

By: Selini Drakos

Due to building codes, all benches on the 3rd 4th, 5th, and 6th floors were removed last month. We asked our friend, Bench, to write a letter reflecting on his time at Pace University:

Dear Pace community,

For the past 20 years, I've had the privilege to serve as your bench in front of E311. It was a time I'll never forget. Many a person has sat on me. I knew all the hot gossip, the names of the toughest professors, and I developed my talent of identifying anyone by their fart scent.

Living in an academic institution gave me meaningful insight into student life. I don't think many people understand exactly how difficult it is to be a student. With their heavy course loads, financial woes, and burnouts, it becomes easy to sympathize with them. That's why I could forgive students for any messes they made on me. I've had all types of snacks stuck in my nooks and crannies over the years - hot Cheetos, both with and without limón. Don't get me started on spills. Back in 2002, one student spilled an entire bottle of Pepsi on me and I was sticky for the following month. But I never got angry; they're just kids doing the best they can.

I suppose my one regret is I never experienced requited love. I tried a long-distance fling with a 6th floor bench but she left me for a trash can. She said he had more prospects than me. But I can say the greatest love came into my life in 2009. She was an adjunct professor in the English department. Every Monday and Wednesday from 9:00 am to 10:25 am, she would recite to her students the most beautiful poetry. Her sweet cadence made my metaphorical heart flutter. And after every class, she chose to sit on me. Over the years, I got to know her very well. She couldn't hear me but when she laughed, I laughed. When she was frustrated, I was frustrated. When she cried, I wished I could feel tears stream down my legs. One time, she rested her hand on me and the energy changed. We must have made a connection; there's no other way to explain that moment. But on May 15th, 2013, my world fell apart. She announced to her class that it was her last day at Pace; her fiancé had to relocate for his job so she was moving to Baltimore. My mind raced with thousands of thoughts. She had a fiancé? She was leaving? What is a Baltimore? As she sat on me after class, I wanted to scream. Why didn't you tell me you were engaged? How could you let me spin so far into my delusional fantasy? And for the last time, she stood up and left. I haven't fallen in love since. Oh my darling, how I miss you sitting on my face.

I don't know what the future holds in store for me. The other benches and I didn't get much notice of our eviction. Rumors have been circulating amongst us, the main one being that we'll be sent to a scrapyard. While I wish my stay at Pace University was longer, it will always be the greatest time of my life.

With much love,

Bench



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Pace's Fail Safe Plan

By: Eren Sari

As we all find ourselves lost, distressed, and confused in this major event of history, at least we can have faith in our university. This afternoon our own Vice Dean of Students, Horatio Polinez announced, from his penthouse, Pace's academic plan moving forward in this online semester.

"I understand that you all have a number of concerns on your mind- How is this going to affect our grades? Will we ever have graduation? Where is my refund? Who is T-Bone?- Well after countless hours of number crunching, my mom- I mean- my accounting team and I put together a foolproof plan that will solve some of those things."

We asked The Vice Dean to relay this information on Zoom, but he insisted that our reporter Jeremy Johnson come to his Penthouse.

Jeremy is now at lower Presbyterian Hospital with the Coronavirus, but Polinez claims that it wasn't from him. While at his penthouse, Polinez got way too close to Jeremy's face and explained his plan,

"I'm calling it Pace's Fail Safe Plan. No one will receive grades for this semester."

"Oh, like pass / fail instead of letter grades?" Jeremy asked.

"Mhm, Sure. *cough* You're all going to fail this semester *cough* so nobody will be graduating *cough*"

"What?"

"Let's just pretend none of this ever happened and start back up in the fall, ok! I won't tell if you won't tell!"

"Sir, thousands of students are-"

"If you fail you have to try again, no? Ok see you in the fall, bye!"

"If that's the case, what about the new class of incoming students in the fall? How will we house two freshman classes?"

"Aw Jeez kid, ok... Bunk beds. All of them. No more normal beds. No more Single and Double rooms. Only Quads and Sextuples."

Vice Dean then coughed in Jeremy's face and he was escorted out the penthouse by one of his robot butlers.

No matter how unpredictable life can be in our city, at least we know that our school is one of problem solvers. We Setters know how to adapt well to any situation life throws our way. Stay healthy out there, my fellow failures!





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I Don't Want To

By: Isabel Fontanals

I don't want to listen to the songs or artists you recommend. I honestly don't like you, and anything you recommend to me, even if high quality, will forever be tainted.

I don't want to help my mom go grocery shopping. I love my mother but if I run into someone from high school I will no longer feel comfortable in my own body and if there's exchanged eye contact I'll never return to my home town.

I don't want to follow your finsta. You're my friend's friend and the singular time we met does not mean I would like a front row seat to your emotional lapses nor your drunken vlogs which are, unfortunately, not entertaining.

I don't want to write a paper about how Gatsby's death represents the failure of the American Dream - an observation that an incredible amount of people have made since the book was first written in 1924.

I don't want to comfort my friend whose dog just died. I fully am a shitty person and for some reason don't feel sympathy for her, nor Gigi, a maltese who will be missed mildly.

I don't want to ask you what major you are. I don't want to talk about school, and I don't know the difference between BA acting and BFA acting.

I don't want to constantly think about if Chandler would have been happier with Kathy, had she not "cheated" on him on episode 1 season 4 of Friends.

I don't want to carry my wallet around all the time. It's too heavy.

I don't want to live in society. I want to be transported into the Animal Crossing world and sell things I found on the ground all day.

I don't want to see ghosts everywhere I go. Sometimes its distracting, especially when I'm driving or having sex.

I don't want to carry my wallet around all the time. It's too heavy.

I don't want to miss a thing - Aerosmith

I don't want to jump like a frog every time I heard a doorbell because I volunteered during an elementary assembly where they brought in a hypnotist whose performance was cut short due to a fire drill so he could never unhypnotize me.

I don't want to eat my way out of my calzone sized bed every morning because honestly, it's really warm.

I don't want to keep in touch with my family.

I don't want to build an ark for Noah, even though he keeps asking me over and over.

I don't want to groom my dog because I want people to think she's a big rat on a leash.

I don't want to stop making my meatballs with human flesh because people keep telling me they're so good.

I don't want to own a power suit because I already have too much.

I don't want to stop flipping off my grandma even though sometimes the bitch is asking for it.

But I probably will anyway.



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A Memoir- The Only Student Left At Pace During The Corona Pandemic

By: Rachael Summers

"Is this a good idea?" I wondered, sitting on the Penn Station bound train, Sunday March 15th. My quaint hometown disappeared behind me as I crawled forward, to fulfill my destiny of catching The CoronaVirus with my brethren in New York City. In these trying times, I thought the best idea was to trade the comfort of my childhood home for my poorly lit Beekman dorm. Oh how I was wrong.

When I arrived back I was greeted by my equally stubborn pet Tardigrade. We hugged as to spread as many diseases as possible to each other. "This is going to be so fun!" I thought, "I'll have the city all to myself!"

The naivety.

The first thing I did was go to abandoned Times Square. Finally, no stupid tourists to get in my way of taking pictures with off-brand Elmo. After I paid 400 dollars for a picture with him, I decided to ride a Citi bike across the Brooklyn Bridge. The feeling was exhilarating, as I dinged my bell at those on the bridge who were too selfish to self-quarantine. "Selfish idiots! Stay home!" I thought to myself as the wind blew through my hair.

After the initial fun, things started to feel off. The stoners that usually sit outside of Beekman were gone, the 6th floor girl's bathroom smelled okay, there was only one caf worker left, and he barely had the energy to hit on me. My only purpose in life now was to pick up packages for my friends who had the wherewithal to leave.

New York City was no longer New York City. It was a sweet suburban town where everything closes at 8 PM. The sidewalks were nearly empty, and when people did walk down them, they looked you in the eyes and smiled like maniacs. The air was actually okay to breathe and the pigeons were a lot less horny.

After my 87th can of Chef Boyardee I was starting to lose it. The walls were caving in, and my Tardigrade wouldn't share any of her ethanol based fluids with me. I wanted to go outside, but I was too scared, and too lazy to put pants on. I sat in the elevator, riding it up and down until security asked me to stop, and to please put pants on. I was so bored and there was nothing to do except all the homework I was neglecting.

I couldn't go home because I might bring the virus back to my town and kill all the Karens. But staying wasn't an option either. I realized I had one choice. I drank the whole case of Red Bull that someone left in the lobby. I then grabbed my Tardigrade, and used the Bull Semen in the drink to blast myself to the moon where I reside today. My plan... to infect the entire Solar System with Corona. Talk soon Earthlings.





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A Pooh Um- Kickback In My Parents' Basement

By: Rachael Summers

It's my parents' house
You don't know the address
But you know how to get there

Stuck back in town
Trying to throw down
Come over at eight, leave at two
My mom likes it clean, at the door leave your shoe
Fun high, noise low
If you go upstairs to pee, make sure to tiptoe
Until we're 21, this is our replacement
It's a kickback in my parents' basement

Don't puke on our rug
My mom just redecorated, it's super snug
Sneak the stuff in using your guitar case
Make sure all the furniture is back in place
It's my parents' basement, super chill
We can play pong, just please don't spill

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Instagram and Twitter @PacePretentious

Staff: Sarah Baker, Jack Brady, Selini Drakos, Isabel Fontanals, Kaylie Leitner, Sasha Sackichand, Sophia Tan, Lesley Vaysman

Editors-In-Chief: Eren Sari and Rachael Summers

Faculty Advisor: Jonathan Danziger