

# 'Teach anyway'

"I hate it, too."

That was my message to one of my juniors back in April. Distance learning had been suddenly foisted upon us, and he was struggling with staying interested in it. I had come up with a combination of reading assignments, clips from YouTube, my own video lessons and Zoom meetings that seemed to work for some kids, sort of. But I wasn't happy either.



by  
Matt Sutter

An educator for 14 years, the author teaches history, government and economics, and coaches the varsity girls' soccer team, at Paradise High School.

I got into teaching because I care about kids. I enjoy interacting with them and building relationships with them. How could I do that on Zoom?

I'm sure my own frustration and anxiety came out in a few of my conversations, even as I assured kids that I'd find a way to make this all work for them. It couldn't possibly be forever, right?

After a surge in COVID-19 cases, the narrative that we will all go back to "normal" soon

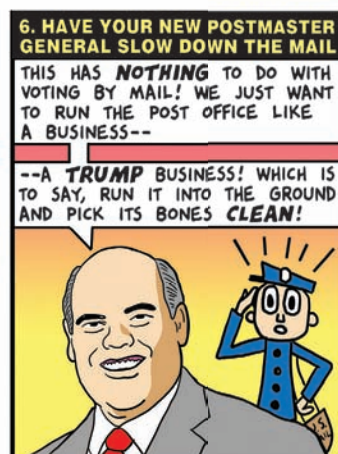
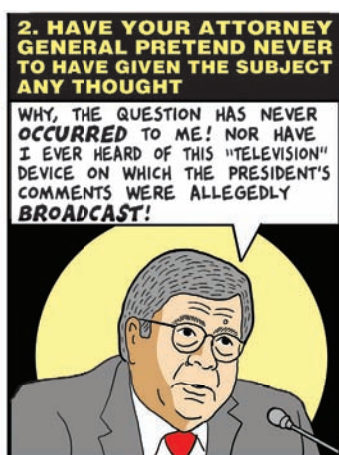
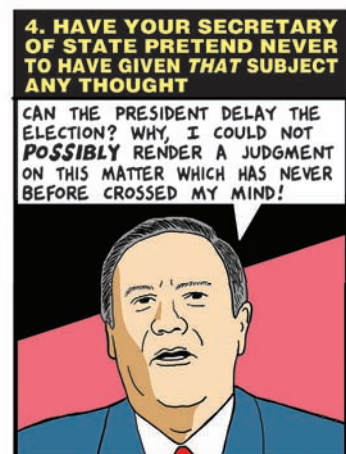
seems incredibly naïve.

Schools right now are having meetings with committees of educators asking teachers to, once again, reinvent what we do for a living to match a new situation. For those of us teaching in Paradise, you'd think we'd be used to it by now. In December 2018, we were teaching in a mall. The following January, we were teaching in an office building. By August of last year, we were back on campus but with PG&E shutting down the power intermittently. Then in March, we were all thrown into distance learning. School starts in one week, and here we are, planning what we hope will be a better, more rigorous, more helpful form of distance learning.

I have students back in houses on the Ridge. But I also have students still sleeping on the couches of friends and family. Some are in RVs, with the town telling them they can't stay. Students for whom sports programs are a core part of their identity have their seasons up in the air. My kids have an added layer of unanswered questions and unfamiliar settings on top of the unknowns students everywhere are facing.

GUEST COMMENT CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

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## BY TOM TOMORROW

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