

# TORRANCE NEWS TORCH

*Lighting the Way to Torrance High School Since 1922*

## THIS IGNORES DARK WINTER, EMBRACES GRATITUDE IN TRYING TIMES

### CLASS SPIRIT STANDINGS

**BY: VERONICA GARZA**  
*Editor-in-Chief*



**CURRENT SPIRIT POINTS**

seniors: 550  
freshmen: 525  
sophomore: 450  
junior: 400

The race for the Champion of Class Spirit has begun as ASB tallies Spirit Week’s total points. The results of the Halloween trivia Kahoot, Red Ribbon Week Pumpkin Contest, and October 28th’s Pink-Out are all accounted for. Freshmen took the crown for Kahoot, winning 150 points. Sophomores, juniors, and seniors follow with 100, 75, and 50, respectively.

Seniors flipped the script with their pumpkin-carving triumph, as they earned first place and 300 points in the Red Ribbon Week Pumpkin Contest. Sophomores, freshmen, and juniors trailed behind, earning 250, 200, and 175, respectively. Following the inclusion of participation on Pink-Out Day, the current spirit point standings are: seniors with 550 points, freshmen with 525 points, sophomores with 450 points, and juniors with 400 points.

Tartars were given another opportunity to catch

up or increase their lead on November 16, as ASB is hosting a can competition as they collect cans for the Canned Food Drive. Cans may be donated from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. ASB asks that participants include a single note with their name, grade, and total number of cans.

Additionally, students must specify whether they will be donating the cans as extra credit for a class or as service hours for a club. Donations for extra credit must include: the names of the class and teacher, the period, and the number of cans being donated. Donations for service hours must include: the name of the club and the number of cans being donated.

ASB sends a great thank you to those who donated and volunteered to make this year’s Canned Food Drive possible, as well as those who have participated in Spirit Week and prioritized class pride.

### THANK YOU, COVID

**BY: ASHLEY MERCURIO**  
*Club Writer*

Thank you COVID for all you’ve done for me. I can’t imagine how you managed to make nine months seem like yesterday. Time is not a constant for you.

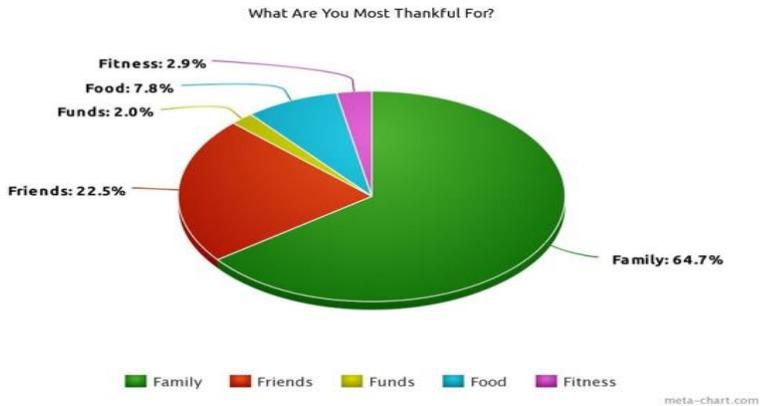
Do you remember how I got to miss out on Summer? Or how you came and dunked us into no contact with our friends? How about those goodbyes we never got to do? Or the graduation we never got to attend? Do you remember?

Being online is so fun, though! Classes seem optional and homework does, too! Meeting my new teachers and peers feels awkward and detached! How did

You manage to do that?

And you made me feel that way for three months straight! Thanks so much! And asking for help is harder than ever with the whole class being silent!

Honestly, thank you, COVID, for all you’ve done. You’ve made me realize that maybe all I am is a little square in the corner hiding among my classmates, ignoring my homework, and getting senioritis, just a few months or maybe years early! Thanks again! How can we ever repay you, COVID?



### THANKSGIVING SURVEY

**BY: VERONICA GARZA**  
*Editor-in-Chief*

In spirit of the upcoming Thanksgiving break, the News Torch staff conducted a survey to determine what students felt most thankful for. The pie chart below displays their preferences. The options were family, friends, food, fitness, and funds. 64.7% of participants chose family, 22.5% chose friends, 7.8% chose food, 2.9% chose fitness, and 2% chose funds.

### THE HISTORY OF THANKSGIVING

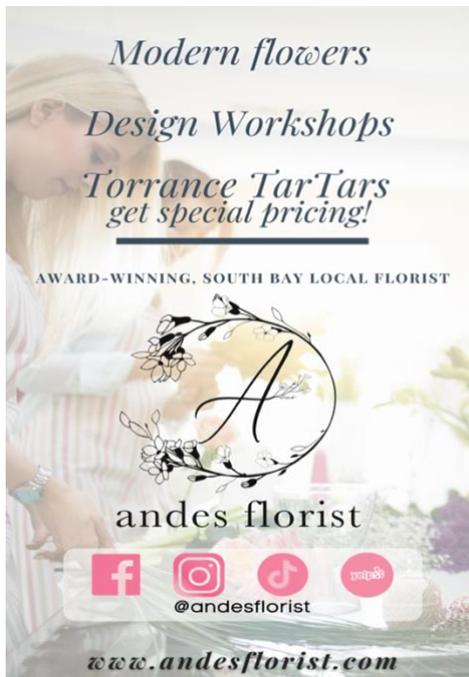
**BY: PHOEBE LIN**  
*Club Writer*

As November comes to a close, the annual turkey dinner awaits on the last Thursday of the month. Since President Lincoln declared Thanksgiving a national holiday in 1863, Thanksgiving has been celebrated by many Americans for nearly two centuries. While the meaning of Thanksgiving and dishes served at the feast have slowly changed throughout the years, the holiday remains an iconic one for many generations. To trace, the first Thanksgiving feast was held in 1621 by the Pilgrims and Native Americans.

In search for a new life, the Pilgrims emigrated from England to Plymouth, Massachusetts on the *Mayflower* ship in 1620. Upon their arrival, they were faced with disease and starvation from their journey, with only half of the passengers surviving to see the following year. The survivors were visited by the local Wampanoag tribe, who taught the Pilgrims to

survive on the land, to grow and catch their own food. In November of 1621, there was finally a successful harvest, and a feast was held to celebrate to give gratitude to both the abundance of food and kind Native American allies.

The exact menu of the first Thanksgiving is unknown, but historians believe that it was most likely composed of wild turkey, venison, seasonal fruits and vegetables from their harvest, and seafood from the bay. Pumpkin is also a likely possibility, but the potatoes and pies commonly seen in today’s feasts were absent from the first Thanksgiving meal. Today, a classic Thanksgiving dinner consists of turkey, ham, potatoes, stuffing, green beans, corn, and pumpkin pie. However, while the original menu of Thanksgiving has long changed, there is one thing that has remained the same throughout—gathering with loved ones to give thanks for the year.



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## JUSTICE BARRETT CONFIRMED

BY: JOSHUA FLORES

*Staff Writer*

Amy Coney Barrett was confirmed into the Supreme Court by the Senate on Thursday, October 22. Barrett, who was a Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals judge, was nominated last month by President Trump to replace Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

According to [whitehouse.gov](http://whitehouse.gov), Justice Barrett “is the first mother of school-aged children to become a Supreme Court Justice.” She is also the fifth woman to serve on the highest court in the land. Interestingly, Justice Barrett is also the only current justice to have a law degree from a school other than Harvard or Yale. Barrett graduated top of her class at Notre Dame Law School in Indiana.

Democrats boycotted the vote for Justice Barrett, asserting frivolous claims of the damage she would do to “health care, reproductive freedoms, the ability to vote, and other core rights Americans cherish,” according to an article by Alana Wise and Brain Naylor for [npr.com](http://npr.com).

Republican members of the judiciary committee, who oversee the Department of Justice, cited her three years experience on the 7<sup>th</sup> Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals and her record as a well-respected law professor at the University of Notre Dame to justify her nomination.

Justice Barrett officially began an active role on the U.S. Supreme Court on Monday,

November 2. The court held a teleconference session in which Justice Barrett was welcomed to the court, albeit without being able to see her colleagues in person or shake their hands before arguments in accordance with longstanding court tradition, according to [abcnews.go.com](http://abcnews.go.com).

The justices continue to hear cases by phone while the pandemic is still going on. On Monday, November 2, the court held arguments in a dispute over the Freedom of Information Act, which requires the disclosure of previously unreleased information and documents controlled by the U.S. government upon request, and internal records from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. On Wednesday, November 5, the court discussed a case involving religious freedom and LGBT rights in a Philadelphia foster care institution.

Since Justice Barrett is new to the court, she has not participated much in decision making and discussions, taking into account all of the Court’s hearings are virtual. American citizens can only hope that Justice Barrett does her job in upholding the checks and balances our republic.



President Donald Trump watches as Supreme Court Associate Justice Clarence Thomas swears in Judge Amy Coney Barrett.

Photo courtesy of: [New York Post](http://New York Post)



## RESULTS OF THE 2020 ELECTION

BY: JOSHUA FLORES

*Staff Writer*

The race for the presidency this year has been very long and is still not officially over yet. The official results of the election will not be announced until all 50 states certify the election over the coming weeks before giving the results to the Electoral College.

Additionally, the Trump campaign has filed lawsuits against the states of Pennsylvania, Georgia, Arizona, and Michigan.

In Arizona, Governor Doug Ducey announced on November 19 that he will not accept election results until all court cases by the Arizona GOP and the Trump campaign are settled. According to the [gatewaypundit.com](http://gatewaypundit.com), the Arizona GOP and the Trump campaign are suing

Maricopa county from certifying its results.

Sidney Powell, a lawyer on Trump’s legal team, called on Voting System employees to step forward and speak out about voter fraud. Dominion Voting System is a corporation that sells voting machines in both the United States and Canada. It is the second largest seller of voting machines in the United States and served 70 million voters in the 2016 election.

At the time of writing this article, not enough conclusive evidence has been collected to declare the winner of this election. The American people can only wait and see what happens, in hopes that the outcome will be a fair and just victory.



Demonstrators outside the Pennsylvania Convention center calling for all votes to be counted.

Photo courtesy of: [The New York Times](http://The New York Times)

## FIRING LINE

BY: MIKI IGNACIO

*Staff Writer*

On the morning of October 26, the Blue Ridge Fire and the Silverado Fire ignited in Yorba Linda and Irvine City, respectively. According to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire), 13,694 acres were burned from the Blue Ridge Fire, and 12,466 acres were burned from the Silverado Fire. Thousands of residents were ordered to evacuate Orange County and masses of firefighters risked their lives.

The causes of both fires are currently unknown, but the Silverado Fire may have been caused by an electrical equipment defect from Southern California Edison. The Los Angeles Times reports that Edison stated a “lashing wire attached to a third-party telecommunications line may have struck a primary conductor.” The causes of the fires are still being investigated.

According to the Orange County Register, more than 90,000 Irvine residents were ordered to evacuate at one point as the Silverado Fire crept close to residential areas.

However, all evacuation orders have been lifted, and residents are able to move back into their homes. Cal Fire reports ten damage structures and one destroyed structure from the Blue Ridge Fire; the Silverado Fire damaged nine and destroyed five structures.

Fortunately, no casualties have been reported from either fires, but KTLA-5 announced five injured firefighters, with two being in critical condition. The two firefighters from the Orange County Fire Authority handcrew “suffered second and third-degree burns and remain hospitalized.”

Despite how unfortunate the 2020 fire season has been for California, the Blue Ridge and Silverado Fires show a slight glimmer of hope. As of November 2, both fires have been contained to 93% over the past six days thanks to hardworking and courageous firefighters. Although the year is coming to a close, we must protect ourselves from future mishaps.



Firefighter Raymond Vasquez battles the Silverado Fire in Irvine, California.

Photo courtesy of: [patch.com](http://patch.com)



Firefighters looking over a burning hillside will fighting the Blue Ridge Fire in Yorba Linda.

Photo courtesy of: [patch.com](http://patch.com)

## RENOVATING COLLEGE



**BY: KARA SERAFIN**  
*Staff Writer*

Like many other aspects of education, the process of applying for college has been altered by the COVID-19 pandemic. Angel Pérez, CEO of the National Association for College Admissions Counseling, states that colleges and universities are “reinventing a process that hasn’t changed in over 50 years in the span of a couple of months” Perez added there was no other choice but to renovate. Their goal is to make applying as easy as possible, even though there may be some hurdles along the way.

Standardized tests, such as the SAT and the ACT, are a major part of college applications, but this year there have been COVID complications. Since March of 2020, numerous SAT and ACT testing centers across the United States have had to postpone the tests to adhere to social distancing guidelines. Juniors and seniors in high school have not been able to take these important tests, raising the question of whether or not the test scores will be considered in college application decisions.

Because a large number of students are not able to obtain an SAT or ACT test score before college applications are due for the fall 2021 semester, many colleges are becoming test-optional or test-blind this year. The University of California schools are even considering ceasing to use the current standardized testing altogether, and instead creating their own standardized test. If this test is approved, it would not be implemented until 2025.

It is still recommended that high school juniors and below plan on taking standardized tests, as they may be required for college applications for the fall 2022 semester and beyond. Seniors applying this year should check what the specific requirements are for each individual college because every college is different. Also, even if a college does not use standardized testing scores for admission, they may still use it for course placement.

In normal times, students visit colleges to acquire a feel for the location and experience at that particular college, which helps them decide which college would be the best fit for them. This year, many colleges have been closed to visitors. In response to this challenge, colleges have started doing virtual tours of campuses.

At Torrance High School, you can go to the Naviance website and sign up for college visits for colleges that will be coming to THS, since these visits cannot be done in person as usual. At these visits you can get a better understanding of what college applications will look like for individual schools, tips for applying, and a general idea of what life at that school is like.

Other portions of the college application process that have been modified include the activities section and the personal essays. Countless activities have been canceled or adjusted this year due to the pandemic, so colleges will be more understanding if there are less activities on your application for the 2020 year. However, this does not mean that college applications are any easier.

According to ABC News, “both the CSU and UC said these changes won’t be making it easier to get into college” and that the changes “are meant to accommodate students impacted by the pandemic.” Though the circumstances are very different this year, colleges still have high expectations.

As for the essay portion, you may want to think twice about writing about how the pandemic has affected you. It may be tempting, but it is advised to write about something more specific to you unless you have a unique story relating to COVID-19. Most college applications readers do not want to read thousands of essays consisting of almost identical stories.

It is still unknown what spring and fall of 2021 will look like in terms of the COVID-19 pandemic. The majority of universities across the US are doing virtual school, so this is a factor to consider for graduating seniors. Nonetheless, you should still apply because things can change very rapidly.

## TRAVELS WITH KARA

**BY: KARA SERAFIN**  
*Staff Writer*

During challenging times, it can be difficult to look on the bright side, but there are always positives to every seemingly negative situation. Online school is accompanied with its own impediments, but it has advantages, too. In October, my family and I bought a recreational vehicle (RV) in Washington, as the pandemic has caused a shortage and they are harder to find. We were cautious when traveling by airplane. Luckily, after we picked up the RV, we were able to stay mostly distant from others, and instead chose to bask in the outdoors.

Usually we would save this kind of trip for the summer or another time when school is not in session, but we thought we would try out doing school while traveling since it is virtual. One of the perks of online school is that it allows more flexibility for location. You can do classes from your backyard, kitchen counter, or couch—as long as you are still able to complete your work.

During my travels, I was able to participate in my classes while being surrounded by nature, and even used Oregon trees as my background instead of a fabricated backdrop. The adjusted schedule and the shorter school day also permitted for more time in the day for me to enjoy my travels.



We drove from Seattle to Torrance down the coast, so I was able to see magnificent scenery, including the ginormous Haystack Rock, the Oregon sand dunes, The Redwoods, and the Golden Gate Bridge. It was even enjoyable to be in a different type of climate, where the tree leaves are transforming to fall colors and the air has a cold briskness to it. Up north the weather was slightly colder than in Torrance, so we made sure to pack our puffer jackets, beanies, and gloves.

Doing school while “on the road” comes with its challenges, such as trying to maintain a stable internet connection for classes and homework. Nonetheless, the pros outweigh the cons and it definitely was an unforgettable and rewarding experience.

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## PLAYSTATION VS XBOX

BY: MIKI IGNACIO  
Staff Writer

The year 2020 is coming to a close, and what better way to end it than going out with a bang. The highly-anticipated Playstation 5 console launched on November 12, and its rival the Xbox Series X released two days prior on November 10. For years, Sony Interactive Entertainment (the owner of PlayStation) and Microsoft Game Studios (the owner of Xbox) have been competing contenders in the gaming industry. The tense rivalry between the two companies sparked biases and heated banter among the gaming community, but this year might be a close match.

Starting out with the PlayStation 5 (PS5), its retail price is \$499, and the Digital Edition at \$399. The Xbox Series X is listed at the same price, at \$499. Although the two consoles contrast on the exterior, its interiors and specs are not at all that different. In a chart generated by digitaltrends, the Xbox Series X slightly pulls ahead in terms of the CPU (Central Processing Unit) and the GPU (Graphics Processing Unit) compared to the PS5. In simple terms, the Xbox Series X is more

powerful and will perform better than the PS5.

Despite this, the PS5's popularity dominates that of its competitor. In a visual created by Rise at Seven, the PS5 is internationally more widespread than the Xbox Series X before its release. According to Screen Rant, the Xbox Series X sold one million units on the day it was released. Unfortunately, some were not happy; those who preordered on Amazon "might have to wait until the end of December." On the other hand, the PS5 has not revealed its sales yet, but the copious amount of preorders have reportedly crashed numerous retail websites.

Despite the "console wars" the gamers have set on themselves, both the Playstation 5 and the Xbox Series X are capable units. There are pros and cons that lie within each console and deciding which one to buy is purely up to you. If you did not preorder either of them, do not fret. Stay updated on stores such as Best Buy, Amazon, Walmart, GameStop, and Target and snatch yourself a unit when the time is right.

Photo Courtesy of Rise of Seven



## TOMMY TARTAR IS THANKFUL

BY: MIKI IGNACIO  
Staff Illustrator



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## Pets of the Week November 2-7



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**21-00409**  
1 Year Old  
Pit Bull mix  
Male

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12910 Yukon Avenue  
Hawthorne, CA 90250  
spcaLA is offering adoptions by appointment. Go to spcaLA.com for info.

You won't be Blue with me around! I am a young Pit Bull in need of guidance from an experienced owner and loving family. I am working on my leash walking and obedience skills while at the shelter, and am learning that humans are good and will pet me and give me hotdogs. Let's start a lifetime of happiness together!

<https://spcala.com/adoptable/pet/?ss=21-00409>



**Tumbleweed**  
**21-00693**  
2 Months Old  
DMH mix  
Female

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7700 East Spring Street  
Long Beach, CA 90815  
spcaLA is offering adoptions by appointment. Go to spcaLA.com for info.

Don't let me pass you by! Look at me, I'm as pretty as a picture with a lovely dilute Torti coat. I love to run, and jump, and play, and when I am all tuckered out, I will settle in for some petting, purrs, and Zzzz's.

<https://spcala.com/adoptable/pet/?ss=21-00693>

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