



TORRANCE T NEWS TORCH

Lighting the Way to Torrance High School Since 1922

HALLOWEEN UNDER QUARANTINE

CANS FOR A CAUSE

BY: VERONICA GARZA

Editor-in-Chief

Torrance High School will be hosting its annual canned food drive from Wednesday, November 4, to Friday, November 20. All donated cans will be given to Project Hope, a local charity affiliated with the South Bay Volunteer Center, and the El Camino College Food Bank in efforts to help feed local Torrance students and families.

During the previous school year, THS students donated 13,516 cans, setting this year's goal at 15,000 cans. Drop-off dates include: Wednesday, November 4, from 8 to 9:30 a.m.; Friday, November 6, from 3 to 5 p.m.; Monday, November 9, from 3 to 5 p.m.; Friday, November 13, from 3 to 5 p.m.; Monday, November 16, from 3 to 5 p.m.; Wednesday, 11/18 from 8 to 9:30 p.m.; and Friday, November 20, from 3 to 5 p.m.

All drop offs will be held at the student parking lot, and all grades will be rewarded spirit points. ASB asks

that students stay in their cars with their masks on as an ASB member retrieves their cans. Donated cans must have the student's graduation year written on them in order to correctly distribute spirit points.

For classes and clubs offering extra credit or merits, students must attach a note with their name, grade, and the name of the class or club. Additionally, they will be asked to specify how many cans will be donated for each class or club. Donations are not limited to standard cans; two small, five ounce cans equal one standard can, and five individual packets of instant ramen are the equivalent of one can.

THS looks forward to continuing this charitable tradition and encouraging students to take part in helping their community. Even in uncertain times, THS is able to unite in efforts to provide for the less fortunate.



A SPOOKY SPIRIT WEEK

BY: VERONICA GARZA

Editor-in-Chief

Tartars will be given the opportunity to show their school spirit from home this semester as the THS ASB organizes the first spirit week of the 2020-2021 school year. This event is scheduled for Monday, October 26, through Friday, October 30. In addition to dress-up days, Tartars will be given the opportunity to compete for spirit points through games and activities.

To start the week, Tartars will be sporting their favorite teams on Jersey Monday. Tuesday will be Throwback Tuesday, a time in which students are encouraged to post their favorite Halloween memory on their Instagram stories. Pink Out will be held on Wednesday to show support for Breast Cancer Awareness. Thursday is class color day, a time for students to dress in their class color from head to toe. The final dress-up day is Freaky Friday, a chance for students to post their favorite Halloween costumes.

ASB organized a Kahoot game for students and teachers to test their knowledge of Halloween. The game was hosted over Zoom on Wednesday, October 21, and the recording is set to be posted on THS's YouTube account on Thursday, October 22. The freshmen led the scoring, correctly answering the most questions. In order, the sophomores, juniors, and seniors trailed behind them.

Following the Kahoot are two pumpkin carving contests, one for individual competitors and one for each grade inspired by Red

Ribbon Week. For the Red Ribbon Week pumpkin, each class council's publicity will be carving or painting a pumpkin with the following criteria: Red

Ribbon Week, two facts regarding the event, and graduating class year and color must be included in the design. Pictures of the pumpkins will be posted on the @thstartars Instagram account, and the pumpkin receiving the most likes will be crowned the winner on October 29 at 9 a.m.

For the individual contest, competitors will be judged on their level of creativity and usage of Halloween themes, originality, details, and design. The pumpkin can be either painted or carved, but it must be medium sized and school appropriate. Pictures are to be sent to THS's Instagram account, @thstartars, or emailed to 1023657@etusd.org sometime between October 26 and October 28. Graduating class year, name, and description of design must be included. Polls will be posted on the @thstartars Instagram story. Whichever pumpkin has the most votes by October 29 will be the winner.

THS ASB hopes this spirit week will return some normalcy to the lives of the Tartars, as events such as these are a school staple. Although all-school and snack rallies have been put on hold, Tartars can still virtually join hands in the celebration of Halloween, and engage in competitions for class spirit.

DEL AMO MALL – SOCIAL DISTANCING

BY: ANDREW GERGES

Club Writer

Torrance's Del Amo Mall stands as the 7th largest fashion center in the United States. With an array of activities from shopping in Nordstrom to playing arcade games in Dave & Busters, it is no surprise that going to the Del Amo Mall is one of the most popular activities in the South Bay.

Most of the mall has been shut-down since March due to state restrictions pertaining to the Covid-19 pandemic. It first began opening some of its outdoor stores on May 30 while many of its indoor shops and restaurants remained closed. In July, some interior stores began reopening but were shut down by the state once again due to a surge in infections.

The closure of most of the mall's activities has had an immense impact on its businesses and its regular customers. The Simon Property Group, which owns and operates the Del Amo Mall, estimates millions of dollars of lost revenue from its months of closure. Many storeowners are calling for the reopening of the mall, citing the fact that they had to fire many employees just to stay in business.

According to the *Daily Breeze*, proponents of opening the mall believe the mall should reopen with social distancing guidelines in order to ensure business prosperity but limit the spread of Covid-19. Opponents believe that the mall should remain closed since the United States already faces the highest infection rate in the world and reopening the mall would only exacerbate the problem.

Torrance High senior Mahima Manoj stated, "I just really want the mall to open again so I can enjoy my senior year with my friends." Mahima also said she understood "why they want to keep the mall closed," but she prefers the enforcement of social distancing.

According to the *LA Times*, several malls, including Del Amo Mall, have sued the State of California to insure the reopening of their interior stores. This ruling, which has not yet been announced, will have immense ramifications on Torrance businesses and citizens looking for leisure time.

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2 News

DEBATE DESERVES DECISION

BY: JOSHUA FLORES

Staff Writer

The first presidential debate of the 2020 presidential election occurred September 29 between President Donald Trump and former Vice President Joe Biden at Sheila and Eric Samson Pavilion in Cleveland, OH.

According to Josef Adalian, a contributor for the Vulture, an estimated 73 million people watched the debate, which was triple the amount of views the Oscars had this year but didn't get the same amount of viewers the 2016 presidential debate between Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton with 84 million viewers.

The debate chronicled the discussion of many current events, such as climate change, the rioting and looting, and the economy. Chris Wallace, a journalist and news anchor for Fox News, moderated the debate. Wallace started the debate with the topic of the Supreme Court.

President Trump has already chosen his nominee for the Supreme Court, Amy Coney Barrett, an attorney, academic, and a judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit. Joe Biden talked about how the seat for the Supreme Court should wait to be filled until after the election is over. Debates do not win elections. Biden considered it to be a partisan move by the president.

The coronavirus was another topic brought up by Wallace who wanted to know how each

candidate felt about responding to the pandemic. Joe Biden opened the discussion with a criticism of Trump's response, while Donald Trump said a vaccine will be available before the end of the year. The question went unanswered.

When the topic of taxes arose, "neither candidate provided a concrete plan for the average American's taxes," according Angela Caico, a staff writer for The Record, the SUNY Buffalo State's student-run outlet. Caico also reported how both men argued over the fact that Biden, "wants to raise taxes for corporations from 21% to 28%," which Trump feels will cause corporations to send jobs overseas to save money.

Both men had different opinions when it came to mail-in voting. Biden argues that it would be a safer alternative due to the Coronavirus and that both the military and Trump himself use mail-in ballots for voting.

While Trump believes that mail-in voting is susceptible to fraud since in some parts of the country it is unsolicited, meaning that voters automatically receive a ballot as opposed to requesting one personally. Trump instead encourages his voters to go vote at the polls in person. This year's presidential election is unlike any other because the pandemic solidifies the need for personal safety in a time of public interest.



President Donald Trump and former Vice President Joe Biden at the First Presidential Debate of the 2020 Election

Photo courtesy of: *The Boston Globe*



Moments before a gender reveal party ignited a 47,000-acre wildfire in Arizona

Photo courtesy of: *cnn.com*

BY: MIKI IGNACIO

Staff Writer

Wildfires have been scorching the California landscape, damaging the air quality with ash and painting the sky as if in a dystopian era. According to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire), over four million acres of land have been razed over the past year, from August to present day.

Along with the low humidity and high temperatures, mankind is to blame for the start of these deadly fires. On September 5, the El Dorado fire in San Bernardino County was stated to be caused by a "smoke-generating pyrotechnic device" used at a gender-reveal party (reported Cal Fire). The San Bernardino Sun claims the El Dorado fire has burned over 22,000 acres as of September 20.

As of October 5, Cal Fire has recorded that six structures were damaged, ten structures were destroyed, with thirteen injuries, and one fatality. The brave firefighter who gave up his life to battle the blazes was identified as Charlie Morton, the crew leader of the Big Bear Interagency Hotshot Crew of the San Bernardino National Forest.

The August Complex fire will go down as the biggest wildfire in state history. Earning itself the label of a "gigafire," the blaze has reached one million acres and spanned over several counties in the north, as CNN states. The August

Complex fire will go down as the biggest wildfire in state history. Earning itself the label of a "gigafire," the blaze has reached one million acres and spanned over several counties in the north, as CNN states. The August Complex fire started as a "series of separate fires sparked by lightning strikes in August," which was presently combined into the gigantic force.

According to Cal Fire, six structures have been damaged, fifty-two structures destroyed, and one fatality has been recorded. So far, firefighters have contained 60% of the August Complex fire, and are still continuing to put their lives at risk to extinguish it before it grows into a greater disaster.

"Temperatures will remain warm today across the state and humidity recovery remains slow, continuing the increased fire danger," Cal Fire states. The wildfires are not going to be stopped any time soon, but we can only put faith in our courageous firefighters to do their very best.

The El Dorado fire and the August Complex fire are not the only wildfires running rampant, as a plethora of deadly fires all throughout the Golden State are eating up more land at this moment. Although civilians cannot directly end the fires, we can prevent them: avoid actions which provoke ignition. Be cautious of your surroundings, and stay safe.



A woman carries her belongings as she observes a house in ruins due to the shelling of Ganja, Azerbaijan.

Photo courtesy of: *thenation.com*

collapse of the Soviet Union, when Armenian and Azerbaijani forces fought for control of the region.

The conflict, which began in 1991, "saw 30,000 people killed before sputtering to an uneasy cease-fire in 1994," according to Nabih Bulos, the Middle East chief bureau for the Los Angeles Times.

Despite agreeing to a ceasefire on October 17 that was supposed to go into effect at midnight October 18, fighting still continues. Both sides accuse the other of violating the ceasefire. Azerbaijan accused Armenian forces of shelling its territory, while authorities in Nagorno-Karabakh, backed by Armenia, said artillery continued to be fired upon them by Azerbaijani forces and had responded accordingly.

Hundreds of people have died according to an article by DW News and more will perish if the fighting does not stop. Countries like France, Russia, and the United States have said they are willing to mediate peace talks in order to stop the fighting. During these troubling times, humanity should strive for diplomacy rather than war.

CONFLICT IN CAUCASUS

BY: JOSHUA FLORES

Staff Writer

Armenia and Azerbaijan are countries that have both a long and complicated history due to their geographic location. Located between the Black Sea in Europe and the Caspian Sea in Central Asia, the Caucasus contains a diverse group of people, which often leads to conflict then ultimately to war.

On the morning of September 27, Azerbaijan, a country located in the eastern Caucasus bordering the Caspian Sea to the east, launched an offensive across the line of contact being held by the Armenian military and local forces belonging to the breakaway state of Nagorno-Karabakh. The line of contact separates the Armenian and Azerbaijani forces in the Nagorno-Karabakh region, which was formed after the Nagorno-Karabakh War. Nagorno-Karabakh, or the Republic of Artsakh, is located between Armenia and Azerbaijan and is internationally recognized as a part of Azerbaijan. The region is home to about 150,000 people, most of which are ethnic Armenians.

According to Michael Kofman and Leonid Nersisyan, writers for warontherocks.com, "the fighting is the worst it has been since the Karabakh War of 1922 to 1994." The region of Nagorno-Karabakh has been disputed since the

Student Life

VIRTUAL VEXATIONS

BY: MIKI IGNACIO

Staff Writer

With the Coronavirus actively spreading across the world, schools throughout the United States have shut down. Torrance High School is no exception. The year 2020-2021 commenced a new start for many individuals. Students and faculty of THS currently attend school through online applications, such as Zoom, Big Blue Button, and Google Meets. Without a doubt, students bear mixed feelings about this new approach to learning while not in a school facility.

“As a senior, I feel a bit disappointed,” Brooke Kehler states. Like the majority of the seniors, Brooke was anticipating graduation night and prom. However, because of the rising Coronavirus cases, both may not take place this year, as Governor Gavin Newsom ordered school districts not to welcome students on to campus until the [Los Angeles] county gets off the list for at least two weeks,” according to *The Daily Breeze*.

Brooke is pleased with being able to relax in the comforts of her home, but she definitely feels a “disconnect between student to student and student to teacher.” The virtual wall which divides Tartars from each other is a troublesome obstacle, but that will not stop us from interacting with one another.

“Considering how high the cases are in California [an increase of nineteen deaths and 707 positive cases as of September 12, *The Mercury News* reports], I was not surprised that school started virtually,” Junior Mayeauri Cartas admits. Balancing the pros and cons of online learning, she acknowledges that students cannot experience “real-life teaching” and create bonds with fellow classmates as easily as before.

MAPPING THE WAY TO LEARNING

BY: VERONICA GARZA

Editor-in-Chief

Due to concern of learning loss as a result of online distanced learning, the Northwest Evaluation Association [NWEA] MAP Assessments have been introduced to Torrance High this school year. The NWEA is a research based, non-profit organization whose mission is to aid students and educators through assessments that pave ideal learning paths. Teachers will be able to utilize test data to “help identify student needs, areas of weaknesses, and monitor student growth which correlate to the state standards,” Assistant Principal Mr. Paul Nitake comments.

Students are tested on mathematics, science, and English. According to assistant principal Mr. Mark Roulette, the tests are computer adaptive, meaning the “questions given depend upon whether the test taker answered the previous question correctly or not.” If a question is answered correctly, then the next will be more in-depth and challenging. The purpose of this method is “to provide information” that will help teachers determine what “students’ knowledge gaps are,” Mr. Roulette explains.

The assessments are made to be formative in order for educators to more efficiently and effectively tailor instruction to benefit any student, regardless of their learning curve. The NWEA supplies teachers with “easy-to-use, standards-aligned reports” to help them “develop interventions for struggling students” and “see what students are ready to learn next.” However, there appears to be a flaw within the NWEA’s system: students and teachers are not provided immediate feedback concerning the accuracy of answers.



“Dance rally is something I always looked forward to, and it’s sad that we might not be able to have it for two consecutive years.” Not only did the Coronavirus force Tartars to stay indoors apart from their friends and peers, but it also canceled the joy of attending Torrance High School.

Once school opens back up permanently, Sophomore Carter Serafin states he would “like to physically go to school when it’s safe,” because he finds “learning is a lot easier at school and you can interact with people in person.”

Additionally, Carter voices his dislike for distant learning because of how easy it is to get distracted. However, he does express his liking toward not waking up early and driving to school. Though many students enjoy staying at home, being separated from precious schoolmates tramples on that delight.

It is not guaranteed Torrance High School will be opening up its campus for all students very soon, but signs of returning back in small groups are evident. According to the *LAist*, on September 14, LA County allowed students “at greatest risk of falling behind during distance learning” to come back on campus. For the next six to eight weeks, the Department of Public Health will monitor the schools to determine the next ideal course of action.

As much as students wish to go back, no action can be taken until the average percentage of positive cases are under eight percent, according to *The Daily Breeze*. The vexations students undergo are completely understandable, but we must stay strong. No matter the challenging obstacles Tartars may face, THS will continue to persevere as it has for over 100 years.

Mr. Parker Bostwick, AP Language and Composition teacher, comments, “There are no results. You either pass or fail.” Students are not given the correct answers to incorrectly answered questions. Instead, the accuracy of their answers is hinted at by the level of difficulty of the question that proceeds it. “This is not a summative assessment,” Mr. Bostwick remarks. Summative assessments include student evaluation through comparison against a standard or benchmark.

Though it is uncertain whether MAP assessments will become a classroom staple, AP Literature teacher Mrs. Lauren Siadek states, “Torrance Unified School District may have us give it to [students] again during the school year.” Mrs. Siadek found the lack of instant results to be due to the test “being administered in the beginning of the school year,” making it “more of a formative assessment at this time.” While students and teachers continue to navigate through nontraditional learning settings, the future of online education will be improved upon.

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4 Special Interest

October 23, 2020

TRICK OR NO TREAT

BY: MIKI IGNACIO
Staff Writer

Spooky times call for spooky measures, but will there be any spookiness at all this Halloween? The pandemic threatens the spread of the contagious virus, and social distancing is still highly suggested. However, the Torrance News Torch staff came up with ways to prevent the spread of COVID-19 while preserving the festivities of Halloween.

"Having a night in with loved ones, popcorn, and some scary movies is a more casual trick-or-treating alternative," Veronica Garza remarks. "To continue the tradition of giving out treats, [you] can sanitize individually wrapped candies and place them in an equally sanitized bowl on [your] front porch or doorstep, free for the children's taking. Halloween does not have to lose spirit, it just has to gain more safety."

"I think people can still go out for trick-or-treating so long as they're safe," Joshua Flores states, "and as long as people don't make hand-to-hand contact, everything should be fine." As the virus is contagious, physical touch will increase the chances of spreading COVID-19. The Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports "[p]eople who are physically near (within 6 feet) a person with COVID-19 or have direct contact with that person are at greatest risk of infection." Joshua also notes: "I feel Halloween is a good thing to keep people's minds off of what's going on in the world."

"Video chatting platforms have gained popularity during the pandemic, and you can use these to your advantage to spend the holiday by playing a movie and watching it virtually with

friends or family," Kara Serafin opines. "You can also have a virtual costume party." Kara also suggests, "Other ways you can celebrate Halloween safely at home include baking spooky treats, decorating your home, and carving pumpkins."

Why go trick-or-treating door by door when you can buy your own bag of chocolates? Along with treating yourself without the hassle of traversing neighborhoods, the probabilities of being tricked are zero—at least, this is my perspective. However, if trick-or-treating is a tradition you must adhere to, I suggest going with a select group of friends or family. Covering your nose and mouth with a mask is necessary, no matter what the costume is.

"How about a family Halloween costume contest?" Mr. Bostwick suggests. "Parents can lead or participate with family and friends in competition (preferably outside) for the most gruesome, ghoulish, or garish costumes constructed at home. And the best part? Everybody wins, when all the treats are shared and the creativity is explained. Talk to each other, people!"

As the coronavirus is easily transmitted through physical closeness and contact, trick-or-treating is a frightening threat to everyone's safety. However, submitting to the local guidelines should keep positive cases from increasing as a result of Halloween night. As always, wear a mask if you are going to go trick-or-treating, keep six feet apart from other individuals, and stay safe, Tartars.



"PANDEMMYS" MAKE HISTORY

BY: KARA SERAFIN
Staff Writer

The 72nd Annual Emmy Awards, hosted by Jimmy Kimmel, took place on September 20. Due to social distancing guidelines, the awards were done virtually like many other awards shows this year. Nonetheless, the Emmy Awards still provided sufficient entertainment, much needed during these stressful circumstances.

In normal times nominated celebrities would walk the red carpet in elaborate outfits. This year, the Emmy Awards were done virtually, so there was no red carpet, but some stars still showed off their looks.

Sandra Oh, nominated for Outstanding Lead Actress in a Drama Series for the show Killing Eve, wore a meaningful ensemble that commemorated the Black Lives Matter movement. She wore a lavender jacket with a matching mask, black pants, white heels, and complementary accessories.

Sandra Oh paid homage to her Korean heritage, while also celebrating the Black community. Embroidered on her jacket are the words "Black Lives Are Precious", written in Korean characters.

Oh stated, "I wanted to express my support for the Black community in a way that felt personal to my community." The acclaimed actress collaborated with the clothing brand KORELIMITED to show her support for two communities that are close to her heart.

Other nominees also showed their support for the Black Lives Matter movement. Regina King and Uzo Aduba both wore shirts honoring Breonna Taylor, and Yvonne Orji had the Black Lives Matter symbol shaved into her hair.

2020 Emmys broke numerous records. Zendaya, twenty-four years old, became the youngest ever winner for the category Outstanding Lead Actress in a Drama series, while the popular television show Schitt's Creek dominated the awards. The show had the most wins for a single season of comedy and won a total of nine Emmys. Eugene Levy, who stars in the show, won his first Emmy in thirty-seven years.

This year's Emmy Awards looked drastically different from past years, but one thing is clear: they were historical.

Jimmy Kimmel virtually hosting the 72nd Annual Primetime Emmy Awards

Photo courtesy of: *The New York Times*



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TOMMY'S SPOOKY MYSTERY

BY: MIKI IGNACIO
Staff Illustrator



**EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
VERONICA GARZA** **CONTENT EDITOR
KARA SERAFIN** **TORRANCE HIGH SCHOOL**

**STAFF WRITERS
JOSHUA FLORES
VERONICA GARZA
MIKI IGNACIO
KARA SERAFIN** **PAGE ILLUSTRATOR
MIKI IGNACIO** **2200 W. CARSON ST.
TORRANCE, CA. 90501**

**BUSINESS MANAGER
JOSHUA FLORES** **PAGE EDITORS
JOSHUA FLORES
VERONICA GARZA
KARA SERAFIN** **ADVISOR
MR. J. PARKER BOSTWICK** **FOR AD INQUIRY:
NEWSTORCH@GMAIL.COM**