Tartars kicked off the winter season with a festive Spirit Week filled with holiday inspired activities and dress-up days. Monday, December 14 was Snooze Day; Tuesday, December 15 was Ugly Sweater Day; Wednesday, December 16 was Holiday Hat Day; Thursday, December 17 was Maroon and Grey Day; and Friday, December 18 was Class Color Day.

Prior to Spirit Week, the spirit point standings were as follows: seniors in first place with 1975 points, juniors in second with 1905, sophomores in third with 1650 points, and freshmen last with 1645 points.

During such unprecedented times, one thing remains constant: Tartars’ sense of compassion. ASB thanks teachers and staff for their willingness to forgo their usual gift cards and seasonal treats in efforts to help the less fortunate, and students for their generous donations.

ASB wishes students, teachers, and staff a healthy and happy holiday season. Though unable to celebrate in person, the holiday spirit was apparent in this Spirit Week’s participation. Have a restful break, Tartars!

Mr. Kush’s third period Calculus AB class participating in Spirit Week on Holiday Hat Day, December 16. Photo courtesy of @thstartars

Spirit point standings as of December 13, 2020. Photo courtesy of @thstartars

This year’s Operation Gift project looked a bit different from previous years, as events such as Teacher Talentless Shows, “Are You Smarter Than A High Schooler?”, and “Family Feud” were replaced with holiday/thank you cards for students to send to their teachers. ASB sold cards in the student parking lot from December 11 to December 14 from 3PM to 5PM.

Activities Director Mr. Nathan Jones called upon teachers to “possibly sacrifice the gifts [they] receive from the students” and ask them to “use those funds to donate to Operation Gift.” Cards were sold for $5 each, and students were given the option to park their vehicle and write their cards for immediate return, or drop them off in the business office the following day.

All proceeds contributed to aiding some of the 125 foster or homeless families within the Torrance Unified School District. Last year, Torrance High School was successful in assisting 19 of those families. ASB President Arman Baglioni commented, “Thank you so much to everyone who came out and bought cards for their teachers/staff. We were able to raise a total of $1,890 for our families in need.”

During such unprecedented times, one thing remains constant: Tartars’ sense of compassion. ASB thanks teachers and staff for their willingness to forgo their usual gift cards and seasonal treats in efforts to help the less fortunate, and students for their generous donations.

A Tartar’s sense of charity proved to have no bounds as 14,969 cans were donated during the Canned Food Drive. Though 31 cans short of their goal of 15,000, ASB thanks Torrance High School staff and students for their participation despite the unprecedented limitations presented by this school year.

The Canned Food Drive was held in the student parking lot from November 4 to November 20. On November 9 and November 16, Tartars were given the opportunity to donate cans to help their grade advance in the class competition. Spirit points were awarded as follows: juniors with 1000 points for their 5,223 can donation, seniors with 900 points for their 4,242 can donation, sophomores with 800 points for their 5,113 can donation, and freshmen with 750 points for their 2,391 can donation. Jenna Irasusta, Senior Class President and head of this year’s Canned Food Drive Committee, commented, “I thought it went really well even though this year was different from any other year.” Additionally, she felt the drop-off process to be “really fast and easy which made the boxing process easy, too.” She thanks teachers, clubs, ASB, class councils, Tartar Ladies, and Tartar Knights for their volunteer service and donations.

This takes great pride in providing for less fortunate families within the community and is grateful for the efforts put forth by Tartars to continue the tradition of the Canned Food Drive, regardless of 2020’s restrictions.

ASB thanks Tartars for their can-do attitude
OUT OF THIS WORLD

BY MIKI IGNAO
Staff Writer

On November 23 at 20.30 UTC, China launched the probe Chang’s 5 to collect and return lunar samples for the first time since 1976. Its ascend success fully landed on the moon on December 1, and left the moon with samples two days later. According to the China Lunar Exploration Program, Chang5’s managed to accomplish the first robotic rendezvous and docking (or, the joining of two separate space vehicles) ever in history, making this mission historical for more than one reason.

Space reports the Chang’s 5 mission launched from the Wenchang Space Launch Center in Hainan province. Eight days after its launch, the Chang’s 5’slander and ascent vehicle detached from its orbits and landed near the volcanic peak, Mons Rümker (Space). This marks the third moon landing from Chinese spacecrafts, as well as the third moon landing of the 21st century.

According to Space, Chang’s 5’s ascent vehicle collected approximately two kilograms (4.4 pounds) of lunar samples, including samples “dug up from up to 6.5 feet (2 meters) underground using a drill.”

Two weeks later on December 15, the Chang 5 team made its way back to the Earth. The Chang 5 space capsule safely landed in the Siziwang Banner in Inner Mongolia. China will be the third country to retrieve lunar samples.

The Chang 5 mission is an impressive feat in space exploration. The Associated Press News reports the young lunar samples will be examined in order to uncover some of the mysteries of the solar system. This historical mission will be the stepping-stone for future explorations.

GRANTS FOR A GREENER MARSH

BY M  MOMO NAKANISHI
Club Writer

Five state grants, totaling over to be $850,000, were awarded to Torrance’s Madrona Marsh Preserve and Nature Center last month and will be used to fund various educational and restoration programs.

Home to over 100 native species of plants and animals, Madrona Marsh is one of the few remaining vernal freshwater marshes in the county. According to the Daily Breeze, the money gained from the grants will allow for the completion of the $470,000 restoration project of their vernal pools by March 2021. Maintaining this wetland habitat is crucial for the survival and flourishing of its various native species.

In addition, the funds will also be used to increase educational opportunities at the Marsh through the expansion of the field trip program as well as the installation of an amphitheatre by 2020, which would act as an outdoors classroom to educate the youth about the importance of wildlife preservation. Thrilled about these new educational projects, Park Services Manager Tracy Doyle says, “It’s really important that people have a chance to interact with the cultural heritage of the area and realize, too, that what they say and do affects habitats.”

She believes that the new projects will contribute greatly to this learning experience.

Having lived by Madrona Marsh his whole life, Torrance High Senior Andrew Gerges believes that it is “a treasure for the Torrance community” and is “very happy for the grants they have received.” The Marsh has played a huge role in the lives of Torrance High students, many of whom can be found volunteering on Saturday mornings through their Habitat Restoration program. The newly awarded grants will undoubtedly cast a positive influence on the Torrance community and enhance its experiences with nature.

NOT FAST BUT FURIOUS

BY JOSHUA FLORES
Staff Writer

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health enacted new Coronavirus restrictions on Monday, November 30. The restrictions come amid a rise in Coronavirus cases in Los Angeles County. The New stay-at-home order forbids most gatherings and discourages most crowds.

The restrictions include prohibiting gatherings among people from different households with the exception of outdoor religious gatherings and outdoor political protests. It replaces the previous rule, which “allowed only small, outdoor gatherings of 15 or fewer people from up to three different households,” according to Ron-Gong Lin II and Alex Wigglesworth, writers for the Los Angeles Times.

Additional restrictions include the closing of playgrounds not part of a school or child-care center, 35% capacity for essential retail stores such as grocery stores down from 50%, 20% capacity for nonessential stores such as barbershops down from 25%, and a 50% capacity for gyms, zoos, and museums.

Restrictions on restaurants which went into effect on November 25 barred restaurants from having indoor and outdoor dining are also still in place. The restrictions on restaurants have been devastating for small businesses.

Jason Roth and Shane McColgan, who are owners of The Crest Sports Bar & Grill in Old Torrance, said that they had to lay off “more than 20 employees and have spent hundreds of thousands of dollars since the shutdown to build an outdoor patio and make other renovations,” according to an article from the Daily Breeze.

Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti on December 2 ordered residents to stay at home, with few exceptions, or face fines and jail time. According to an article from The Epoch Times, all travel, including travel on foot, bicycle, and scooter was prohibited. Garcetti also rotated five state grants, total ing to be over $850,000, were awarded to Torrance’s Madrona Marsh Preserve and Nature Center last month and will be used to fund various educational and restoration programs.

The Los Angeles Police Department in an email to The Epoch Times said that “The orders of social distancing and stay at home, in and of itself, will not be a basis for detention,” but they will be enforcing the guidelines issued by the Mayor’s office on an individual basis.

Senator Ron Johnson (R-Wis.) speaking during a hearing on Capitol Hill on December 16, 2020. Photo courtesy of The Washington Post

Another testimony of voter fraud came from Susan Voyles, who has worked as a poll manager for over 20 years. Voyles told the Georgia Senate committee during a hearing on December 3 about an “odd batch of absentee ballots.” Voyles said the batch of ballots she was referring to were copies because they were “pristine,” which according to her was unusual since most ballots have folds and are worn.

On December 14, Republican electors in Pennsylvania, Georgia, Michigan, Wisconsin, Arizona, Nevada, and New Mexico cast alternative slates of votes for President Trump while the Democrat electors in the same states cast their votes for Biden.

The concept of dueling sets of electors casting votes in a presidential election has been done before, as in the state of Hawaii during the 1960 election.

As the year draws to a close, we can only hope that the results of the 2020 election are fair and just towards the American people and that whoever wins the election did so in an honest manner.
Student Life

UC APPLICATION, CALAPPLY EXTENSION

BY ANDREW GERGES
Club Writer

On Sunday, November 29, a host of students across California, including many Tartars, attempted to submit their applications to the UC system. Unfortunately, the server crashed for several hours.

It is common knowledge the server usually crashes near the deadline, which was 11:59 PM on November 30, but this is the earliest it has ever failed to operate, causing many students to fear that they would be unable to submit their applications on time.

A few hours after the problem began, the UC system announced the deadline to apply was extended to December 4. Many students were grateful to have more time, but some felt the deadline change was unfair. Students who were ready to submit applications by the due date and had toiled during Thanksgiving break were displeased to discover the website was down and that students who procrastinated had four extra days.

Hours after the UC announcement, CalApply—the application for all California State Universities—announced that they will be extending their deadline from the traditional first Friday of December to December 15. They cited difficulties at home and school due to COVID-19 as the reason for their extension. Later, UC also announced a deadline extension to December 15 for three of its campuses: Merced, Riverside, and Santa Cruz.

Since the UC and CSU systems are the among the biggest in the world and the most applied to schools for Torrance High seniors, almost every college-bound Tartar was affected. Senior Mahima Manoj reflected, “Although I was frustrated that the applications went down, it was actually a good thing in the end because it gave me more time to refine my applications and really present myself in the best light.”

At the time of the publication of this article, both deadlines for the UCs and CSUs will have passed, marking the end of many Tartars’ college application process. Decisions from all UC and CSU schools are expected to come out on time throughout March despite deadline extensions. Regardless of what has happened, make sure to wish our senior Tartars good luck in this stressful time!

TUSD STATEMENT

BY JOSHUA FLORES
Staff Writer

Dr. Tim Stowe, the Interim Superintendent of TUSD, announced that first graders in the Blending Learning model will be returning to in-person learning on January 4, 2021 in a statement to TUSD families on December 3.

The statement also talks about how in accordance with the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, the district has already returned 1500 students to TUSD campuses daily since September.

It also details how YMCA childcare activities were available at some schools since August. Stowe also expressed his gratitude to “staff, students, and parents for their collaboration,” when it came to reopening schools and stay-at-home orders. Stowe also said that the district is working on a dashboard that will show information on confirmed positive cases by school site.

In an email from the Torrance Teacher Association to TTA Site Reps, it detailed what teachers should know before going back to campus for in-person teaching. The email consisted of two pages of information teachers should know.

The first page from the email begins with saying what follows is important information on how to ensure the safety of both teachers and students. The first part of the information titled “Know The Plan” provides some of the safety plans and protocols teachers must adhere to while on campus. Things such as maintaining good hygiene and using face masks.

The second part of the information titled “Hold Them Accountable” details what to do when coming back to campus. Such as to demand that the safety plan be implemented before teachers and students return to campus. Additionally, it also says to record “all violations and report them to your principal,” implying that the plan must be taken seriously.

The third part of the information titled “Know Your Rights” reminds teachers of the rights they have and some of the things they can or cannot do. For example if a teacher is assigned to a distance teaching position they will not be required to return to campus.

The information from the TTA ends with a reminder that the health and safety of teachers and students is the most important consideration as we return to in person teaching. Hopefully the plan works out and we will be able to return to the classroom instead of being stuck behind a screen for half the day.
SANTA AT THE MALL

BY PHOEBE LIN
Club Writer

The holiday season has arrived in full swing, but the spirit of Christmas is a little different this year. The pandemic has restricted us from the usual jolly gatherings of friends and family, and the usual crowds of Christmas shoppers have diminished considerably. However, we hope we can return to regular life soon, we’ve learned that we can adapt if needed. Challenges are what led to growth. If the pandemic had never seized the earth, we would not have had the opportunity to become stronger people and gain essential skills.

That said, we also faced tremendous loss this year. However, this loss can have a silver lining. Before, we took little things, like going to the grocery store without a mask or hugging friends, for granted. 2020 has shown us that we seem miniscule. We have learned that our world is a little more fragile than we thought. However, this pandemic has allowed us to uncover so much, giving us 2020 vision, just not the kind we expected. Though this year may go down as the worst one in history, the least we can do is take what we have much to be grateful for and should always try to appreciate what we have, even things that seem miniscule. We have learned that our world can be flipped upside down in an instant, so we should acknowledge what we do have.

2020 has allowed us to uncover so much, giving us 2020 vision, just not the kind we expected. Though this year may go down as the worst one in history, the least we can do is take lessons from it to better ourselves. Here’s to a better 2021!

TOMMY TARTAR’S CHRISTMAS HOAX

BY MIKI IGNACIO
Staff Illustrator

We began this year with the phrase “2020 vision”, and though the year is drastically different than we originally expected, we got what we wished for. From a raging pandemic and online school to racial injustice unrest and a controversial election, this year has definitively been a historic one. Americans have uncovered a surplus of time to pause and reflect. It’s beneficial to take a breather every once in a while from the whirlwind of life to evaluate if you are making the most out of your time, which the pandemic has allowed us to do.

This year has been devastating to people all over the world, but there are some positives to the hardships. The pandemic has forced everyone to adjust to new circumstances, fostering skills of adaptability and resilience. Musicians are collaborating remotely, education is achieved through computers, and award shows occur on Zoom. We’ve had to adjust to our “new normal” in a short period of time, and though we hope we can return to regular life soon, we’ve learned that we can adapt if needed. Challenges are what lead to growth. If the pandemic had never seized the earth, we would not have had the opportunity to become stronger people and gain essential skills.

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2020 WRAP-UP

BY KARA SERAFIN
Staff Writer

The holiday season has arrived in full swing, but the spirit of Christmas is a little different this year. The pandemic has restricted us from the usual jolly gatherings of friends and family, and the usual crowds of Christmas shoppers have diminished considerably. However, there is one Christmas tradition still alive this year: seeing Santa.

At the Del Amo Mall, you can still schedule an appointment to meet Santa in-person this year due to social distancing practices, you still have the opportunity to meet him outdoors to tell him your Christmas wishlist for 2020, as well as a holiday photo with Santa with masks on, a memorable experience sure to bring smiles to children’s faces.

Pets of the Week November 30-December 4

Davie
21-01017
1 Year Old
Pit Bull Mix
Male
Available at the spcaLA P.D. Pitchford Companion Animal Village & Education Center 7700 East Spring Street Long Beach, CA 90815
spcaLA is offering adoptions by appointment. Go to spcaLA.com for info.

Hello, I am a very sweet boy, who knows sit, and enjoys hot dogs. I’ve been working with the trainers here on practicing find it, the name game, and basic obedience. I would love an active family who will spoil me and continue my training. Adopt me!

https://spcala.com/adoptable/pet/?ss=21-01017

Inky
21-00752
1 Year Old
DSH
Male
Available at the spcaLA South Bay Pet Adoption Center 12910 Yukon Ave. Hawthorne, CA 90250
spcaLA is offering adoptions by appointment. Go to spcaLA.com for info.

Hello, Inky here! I am a young cat with a luxurious black coat on the lookout for my forever home! I am also on the lookout for my friend for Life who will join me in writing my life story!

https://spcala.com/adoptable/pet/?ss=21-00752
What I Want for Christmas

Tech: 22 - 19.5%
Clothes: 24 - 19.4%
Gift Cards: 12 - 13.3%
Entertainment: 8 - 9.9%
COVID Vaccine: 4 - 0.9%

Tortona News Torch conducted a survey among students, asking what they wish for this Christmas. This year, most students wished for a COVID-19 vaccine, while clothes, technology, gift cards, and entertainment, respectively, trailed behind. A COVID-19 vaccine is the most understandable wish, so family and friends can interact without the risk of contagion. It is on the hearts and minds of all of us. We must endure and stay resilient. Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays, Tatras!

BY KARA SERAFIN
Staff Writer

With traditional holiday plans cancelled this year, we are all in need of some holiday cheer. Luckily, Six Flags has come to the rescue with its Holiday in the Park Drive-thru Experience. The amusement park is currently closed due to COVID-19, but it sought an alternative method to provide entertainment to Californians and infuse its annual holiday spirit.

On evenings from November 20 to December 31 and additional dates in January, visitors can enjoy a three-minute drive through the park and “experience millions of twinkling lights through eight distinct festival areas” along with festive decorations, music, characters, and more. There are also “holiday snack packs” and merchandise packages available for purchase to sweeten the experience. Surely people have missed the classic theme park funnel cake, which can now be pre-ordered on the Six Flags Magic Mountain website. Purchased items will be delivered to the vehicles during the occurrence.

Along with the fun, there are regulations. Passengers must adhere to the social distancing requirements, such as wearing a face covering when speaking to personnel if the vehicle window is open. All vehicles must be enclosed, meaning no motorcycles, convertibles with the top open, or bicycles. A detailed list of safety guidelines is listed on the website.

Prior to attending the enchanting event, participants must make a reservation online. Each vehicle must have a reservation and each guest must have a valid ticket. Membership, or Season Pass, excluding children under the age of three who will be admitted for free. Members and Season Pasholders can use their pass for free admission.

Admission tickets start at $25 per person and vary by day. Tickets will not be on sale at the park, so they must be purchased in advance. There is also a limited number of cars allowed each night, so make your reservations early.

Amid all the disappointment in the world right now, it’s nice to have something exciting to look forward to. The holidays definitely look different this year, but we can still enjoy them!

MAGICAL MAGIC MOUNTAIN

BY KARA SERAFIN
Staff Writer

Many workplaces host virtual holiday parties this year. Photo courtesy of The Charlotte Observes

The “most wonderful time of the year” coincides with the most unprecedented time of the century as families find themselves celebrating Christmas under COVID restrictions. This holiday season is especially crucial, with many struggling with isolation and yearning to reconnect with family and friends. However, in an effort to reduce the spread of COVID, these festive plans must be modified.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, celebrating virtually or with members currently residing in your household pose the lowest risk for spread. In-person gatherings with people outside of one’s household hold varying degrees of risk. For example, it is recommended that traveling family members, such as those returning home from college, not be present for a celebration because “airports, bus stations, train stations…are all places travelers can be exposed to the virus” both in the air and on surfaces.

Additionally, the CDC advises hosts to avoid potluck-style meals, as it is possible that a person can contract COVID by “touching a surface or object, including food, food packaging, or utensils that have the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes.” Using single-use items such as disposable plates and utensils is highly recommended, as is designating a single person to serve shareable items.

If traveling is part of one’s Christmas itinerary, the CDC recommends avoiding close contact by “staying at least six feet apart from anyone that is not from your household.” Frequently washing one’s hands with soap and water for a minimum of 20 seconds is a must, as well as carrying a travel-sized container of hand sanitizer (with at least 60% alcohol). However, it is strongly advised that traveling be cancelled or postponed.

Under normal circumstances, Christmas would be a highly anticipated holiday for many, but with COVID-19, unshackling traditional festivities is a challenge. No matter how strong the urge is to physically meet up with loved ones, maintaining the safety precautions is a priority. Stay six feet apart, avoid travelling, avoid potluck gatherings, and keep one’s hands clean as much as possible. Christmas can still work this year, as long as the safety rules are executed.

CHRISTMAS COVID CONDITIONS

BY VERONICA GARZA
Editor-in-Chief

The holidays feel less joyful this year, but we can still decorate to raise our spirits. Everyone has their own method of incorporating the holiday atmosphere, but some tips may help establish the ultimate decorating experience.

We’re going to be spending much more time indoors this holiday season, but you can bring some of the outdoors inside. Katie Holdfere of Real Simple magazine recommends “natural touches—think fresh greenery, dried foliage, and raw wood” for dressing your home. The earthly decor will add liveliness along with the holiday spirit.

When it comes to decorating, perhaps “more is merrier,” but try not to go overboard, especially with decorations involving text. Kasia of the blog Personalization Mall explains: “A wall full of things to read can seem a bit overwhelming. Think: one per room.” Nonetheless, don’t shy away from expressing your delight.

Festive lights are classic and used annually. Though they are common, you can be creative. There are infinite types of lights—multi-colored, flashing, mini bulb, and others. They are also versatile, so you can use them in many places. You could wrap them around a tree in your front yard or string them along a fence. The possibilities are endless.

HELPFUL HOLIDAY HOME HINTS

BY KARA SERAFIN
Staff Writer

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Don’t forget, you can use holiday lights indoors, too. Some may limit their use of indoor lights to decorating a Christmas tree, but lights can be placed in other areas of the home, such as on the windowsill, to add extra holiday cheer.

Another option is to make decorations yourself. Homemade decorations are usually pretty simple to make and add a sense of coziness. You can find tutorials online to test your crafting skills, and even try more complex DIYs if you’re up for a challenge!

This year, we’ll have less opportunities to see all of the amazing decorations because we will be quarantined, but try to take walks around your neighborhood every so often, day or night, to appreciate the displays. Seeing thousands of twinkling lights at night is a wonderful experience. Just make sure to dress warmly.

Since we will have so much time at home this year, feel free to go above and beyond with decorating because holiday cheer is much needed. If you’re not up for it, do what you like because this year has been physically and emotionally exhausting. However you choose to spend the season, try to make the most of it!