

## SMOKE IMPACT

Read about the damaging effects of smoke to your lungs.

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## JFK

President John F. Kennedy was assassinated fifty-seven years ago. What happened before he was pronounced dead?

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## #BLM

The Black Lives Matter Movement had a large impact on America over the summer. But what exactly does the movement stand for?

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## INTROVERSION VS EXTROVERSION

How do you react in social situations? Read about being an introvert or an extrovert.

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# The Pony Express Volume 3 Issue 1

## TUSD Board Meeting: Did the Mental Health of Students Influence the Decision to not Return to School?

by: Amara Hackney

As you may know, the Tracy Unified School Board previously made the decision to send students back to school in a hybrid model starting November 2, 2020. It was a long process getting there, and along the way several topics were brought up on the pros and cons of the hybrid model option. While most topics revolved around the state of the county in the case of COVID-19 numbers and their falling projectory, the topic that caught a lot of attention was the fate of students' mental health if we considered staying in the distance learning model. The topic of mental health was first brought up by the member, Lori Souza, who spent

over ten minutes stressing the importance of bringing students back to campus, even if it is only for two days out of the week. The teachers and staff members are worried because there are students that have not been turning on their cameras. The reason Lori Souza says this is a cause for concern is that with teachers unable to see students through the camera, they are also unable to get an idea as to if the student is even okay or if there is a cause for mandated reporting. With that being said, CPS cases have dropped by 28% compared to October of 2019 and that isn't the normal. Usually these cases would be higher, and Lori Souza feels the reason the cases have dropped is



because teachers are unable to notice the signs they would need to see in order to report to CPS.

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What goes on in the mind of a cat when tuna gets involved?

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### 2020 RECAP

Is 2020 the worst year yet? Read about everything that happened this year, good and bad.

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### STUDENT VIEW

The bell schedule was changed for the 2nd semester. What do the Monte Vista students think of it?

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### MIRACULOUS MOVIE

The Miraculous movie came out in September. See what it's all about.

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## Coronavirus Impact

by: Zahra Amini and Manreen Gill

The coronavirus is getting worse and worse every day. Coronavirus is a disease that started in 2019 (COVID-19). It was first identified in Wuhan, China. Scientists say it originated in bats. Coronavirus disease, abbreviated as COVID-19, "CO" stands for corona, "VI" for virus, and "D" for disease. According to the World Health Organization, this is a new virus that has not previously been seen in humans. Back in March 2020, a nationwide quarantine period started. Health providers and other workers,

"essential workers" had to do their jobs while the rest of the country was instructed to stay in their homes. Students in the Tracy Unified School District began the 2020-2021 school



year doing classes online and continue to do so while schools in many U.S. states have gone back in-person with the newly

developed hybrid model.

This virus is spread generally from infected people coughing, sneezing, and having close contact with others. People who have an underlying condition are more likely to contract the virus. A few of these conditions include Cystic Fibrosis, Diabetes (both types one and two), and kidney, lung, or heart diseases.

When going out, the CDC encourages you to stay at least six feet from people outside of your household. Masks are required in most facilities, and you should wear one whenever you're going out in public. The virus is very dangerous, and you should do your part to protect yourself and others.

# Features

## TUSD Board Meeting (continued)

Continuing the conversation of students' mental well-being was board member Jill Costa. She confronted the issue of the higher stress levels that are involved for both students and parents. In addition to this, many students have been forced into the situation of raising their younger siblings, while also trying to make it through their own classes, since they are the oldest person in the household for most of the day. She also brought up the lunch system according to the

proposed hybrid model at the time of the board meeting. School lunches provide the only meals some students get in an entire day. Under the proposed model, students would have lost their access to the school's lunch program.

Dealing with stresses of mental health, childcare responsibilities, and loss of lunch, without the support of a trusted adult, who understands the struggles they are going through and can help, will cause students to get lost in the gaps of the system.

While it is true the effects of the virus are a major concern, Lori Souza summed it up best when she explained that she understands her opinion on the matter may be an unpopular one. However, everyone must remember that psychology is a science and so when people tell her to follow the science, she replies with, "I am."

Article continues on page 8



board member  
Lori Souza



board member  
Jill Costa

## What is the Importance of the Black Lives Matter Movement?

by Amara Hackney



photo via Tracy Press

The tragedy that took place in Sanford, Florida on February 26, 2012 was a horrifying event where a 17-year-old African American boy by the name Trayvon Martin was shot and killed by a 28-year-old man named George Zimmerman. This death caused an outcry across the nation but sadly, it is an outcry that has been felt by the black community for hundreds of years. All the way back to the beginning, when Black men, women, and children, were being taken from their homes, put on ships

and sailed to a land where they were made to be slaves.

The outcry was felt during the civil war when Black men fought proudly for a country they knew deep down did not want them. The pain continued to last during the times of fighting for their equality, fighting for the opportunity to not be beaten when they walked into a restaurant that, "did not serve their kind." At the time of his death, in 2012, Trayvon Martin was just another example of the long, painful, road Black Americans have been walking on. However, this story did not just end in the tragedy, it began a movement that

has been going strong to this day. The Black Lives Movement has been working hard to make our world a better place. The Black Lives Matter Movement was founded by Alicia Garza, Patrisse Khan-Cullors, and Opal Tometi. These women have been fighting against police brutality and racial violence against the Black community since 2013.

The people who are members of the BLM Movement see and understand unfairness within the Black community.

#BLM isn't a trend; it has an importance and meaning. Black lives have been fighting for years now with

*"...sadly, it is an outcry that has been felt by the Black community for hundreds of years,"*

A year ago, Patrisse Khan-Cullors made a video talking about how the movement really started. "...I was so distraught, so I go to social media and go to Alicia Garza's Facebook page and she's writing this love note to Black folks and she closes it with 'black lives matter.' And then right underneath it I hashtag, "black lives matter," and that's the moment in which the phrase and the hashtag began..." As of now it is a global network of more than 40 chapters with their views being ideological and political.

the official BLM campaign on its seven-year anniversary. This is a cause worth fighting for because racial inequality has been going on for way too long. Donations and peaceful protests play a large part in supporting the Black Lives Matter Movement.

photo via Tracy Press



# Features

John F. Kennedy was born on May 29, 1917 in Brookline, Massachusetts and assassinated on November 22, 1963, at the age of forty-six. It all started when crowds of excited people lined the streets and waved to the Kennedys driving by. The car turned off Main Street at Dealey Plaza. As it was passing the Texas School Book Depository, gunfire suddenly reverberated in the plaza. Then bullets struck the President's neck and head.

## John F. Kennedy by: Hunter Schrader-Biringer



He slumped over toward Mrs. Kennedy after the impact. The governor was shot in his back. The car sped off to Parkland Memorial Hospital just a few minutes away. A Catholic priest was summoned to administer the last rites, and at 1:00 p.m.. John F. Kennedy was pronounced dead. Though seriously wounded, Governor Connally would recover.



Not even less than an hour later police showed up and arrested Lee Harvey Oswald. Lee was a recently hired employee at Texas School Book Depository. He was held for Kennedy's assassination. There is still so much to know about JFK, and you should do your own research to find out more.

Quarantine has affected us all, but there are two types of people, who may be impacted in different ways. These groups are commonly known as introverts and extroverts. You can figure out if someone an introvert or extrovert by how they act in social situations. An extrovert typically enjoys being out and about, says what's on their mind, and can be friends with almost anyone. You may know some people who are like this. Extroverts generally have louder personalities but can also be pretty friendly. It is difficult for

## Introversion VS Extroversion by: Ellie Chiles

them to be alone, which in current times is not necessarily a good thing. On the other hand, introverts cherish being in the comfort of self-isolation. This type of person is quieter and puts more thought into their words before they speak. They are known to undergo more brain activity, meaning they think more. Social gatherings involving large amounts of people usually make an introvert uncomfortable. Being an introvert also has its benefits. Self-isolation is much easier when you didn't enjoy being around people in the first place.

What if you are both? Two more labels aren't as well-known. You may have heard of the word ambivert. An ambivert is both an introvert and an extrovert, or there is a balance between the two. There is also an omnivert. An omnivert is someone who will go back and forth between introversion and extroversion. Certain social circumstances can affect this. After knowing these things, you may still be wondering, "What does this have to do with quarantine?" Introverts are more likely to develop mental illnesses such

as depression or anxiety. On the other hand during quarantine, extroverts can find themselves in long periods of isolation for the first time, also resulting in depression or anxiety. Artistic hobbies such as writing or drawing are known to calm your nervous system, which may help with worries related to isolation. And for those who need people, while social media and technology apps are not the same, they can assist in fulfilling the need for human contact. The pandemic may have affected

you differently depending on which category you fall under. There's nothing wrong with being an introvert or extrovert. It's just a word to describe how socially comfortable you are with other people. If you are used to being around people (which most of us are), you'll get through it. And if you still can't stand them, that's okay too.



comic strip by: Rebecca Dubie

# Features

## How Does Smoke from Wildfires Affect Our Lungs?

by Nayeli Zamora Robles

California suffered from many wildfires this Summer. The fires have burnt grass, trees, houses, and people. Smoke is bad for our lungs because when material burns, it creates ash. Ash can travel for miles and miles. When you inhale smoke there are tiny bits of ash that enter our lungs and bloodstream making it polluted. It makes our respiratory system weaker and makes us cough,

sneeze, gives us shortness of breath, and more. People with lung damage or illness will possibly have some issues breathing. It goes into the bloodstream and causes people to get sick. Luckily, we have safe cells that destroy any unfamiliar material in our bodies. After inhaling smoke, your respiratory system may be exposed to several other illnesses. Smoke makes people

vulnerable to the coronavirus. This year, hospitals are busier than usual because of COVID-19, and the recent fires that California experienced contributed to placing a heavy burden on hospital staff. What can we do to protect ourselves? Avoid going outside when there is poor air quality. If you want to exercise, it is better to do it inside. Exercise increases heart rate and

breathing, which is good for you. However, outdoor exercise in poor air quality could complicate breathing. Overall, take care of your body so you can stay healthy.



## 2020, One of The Worst Years Ever?

by Baktash Azizi

Many people are calling 2020 the worst year ever. Maybe it was maybe it wasn't. Let's take a look. This year was an emotional roller-coaster from bombs to video games. Why does everyone hate 2020?

**January:** A fire caused massive flames in Australia. The massive heat made it hard to stop the fires, but several people came to help others, firefighters, and animals. Kobe and Gianna Bryant died in a helicopter crash with other passengers. Many mourned Kobe's death and came together to celebrate his accomplishments in late February.

**March:** Due to Covid 19, sports and other events have been postponed. Many schools converted to online learning to better protect students. Virtual sports became popular, along with Minecraft Edu.

**May:** A swarm of murder hornets was discovered in Washington State. Along with that, a new animal called the flying spider was discovered. George Floyd died due to a choke hold from a police officer. The lack of priority from law enforcement regarding the death sparked much anger within the Black Lives Matter movement. This tragic event

had aided in making the Black Lives Matters cause a national movement.

**August:** In Beirut, an abandoned ship, with massive bomb material, exploded. Hundreds died, thousands were injured, and hundreds of millions of people were devastated. Hundreds of people came together to help support the victims and rebuild the city.

**September:** Multiple states suffered from fires in the mountains and it was very hot. Thank you to our firefighters who placed their lives on the line, fighting

tirelessly to save lives and property.

**October:** Halloween became harder to celebrate. General Halloween celebration activities were highly discouraged. With no one in the spirit, the only scary thing is the virus. People still tried to make the holiday as normal as possible.

**November:** The PlayStation 5 was released, but it had issues running for many customers. Thanksgiving was different for everyone. Some attempted to celebrate with their families and some chose to quarantine and find other ways to connect. The 2020 Presidential Election caused many controversial arguments about voter fraud and campaigns.

**December:** Closing out the year was December. Many families still found a way to connect for the holidays. 2020 might have been a rough year, but we need to remember all things are temporary and that there is a light at the end of the tunnel.

## Letter from the Editor

This year, distance learning has had its pros and cons when it comes to our newspaper. Microsoft Teams meetings and less class time was a struggle for the Journalism class. Our product being technology-based and working with Microsoft's many features benefitted us in multiple ways. Of course, I could not have made this possible on my own. TUSD's ISET department, Dr. Silver, Mrs. Wyant, and the rest of the Staff Reporters deserve as much credit for bringing this newspaper to reality.

Ellie Chiles, Editor-in-Chief

# Arts & Entertainment

## The Miraculous Movie Review

by: Baktash Azizi

In September 2020, the newest Miraculous movie was released on Disney Channel. The main characters are Marinette (also known as Mari) and Adrien. In the TV show, they both gain a jewel called a “Miraculous,” which grants them special abilities. Both Adrien and Marinette use their powers for good to try and defeat Hawkmoth, the villain of the story. There were also new characters added in the movie. Those include: Majestia, Owl Night, Sparrow, and Aeon.



Marinette and Adrien go to New York because of a school trip. A villain, Techno Pirate, attempts to crash their plane. The heroes stopped Techno Pirate before he was able to do anything extreme. The story continues with both the class of New York and the class of Paris going to a history museum. Aeon and

Sparrow orchestrate a plan to make Adrien and Mari fall in love. Meanwhile, Hawkmoth is in Paris with his own plans to control Techno Pirate.

Will Marinette and Adrien save the world? Or will it all go down crashing?

I give this movie a 9.5. The animation, cameos, and storyline are great. I suggest you watch, “Miraculous: Tales of Ladybug and Cat Noir,” before seeing, “Miraculous.”

## Cinder review by: Kathryn

Cinder by Marissa Meyer is a dystopian sci fi loosely based on the Brothers Grimm Cinderella. The story follows a girl named Cinder, a cyborg mechanic living in a futuristic New Beijing with her stepmother Linh Adri and her stepsisters Linh Pearl and Linh Peony. Letumosis, a deadly disease started by the Lunars, the people who have colonized on the moon, is sweeping throughout the world with no known cure. While in the marketplace, Cinder meets Prince Kai, son of the emperor and next in line for the throne, when he asks her to fix his personal android. Soon after meeting him, Cinder's sister Peony contracts letumosis after going with Cinder to the junkyard while looking for spare parts for the prince's android. After she finds out, Cinder's stepmother volunteers Cinder for plague research that no one survives. When they inject Cinder with the disease, they discover that Cinder has an immunity and decide to investigate why. This book was captivating in so many ways with fantastic surprises and no shortage of action. A very good read.

## Crepe Recipe by: Kyrrahlyn Dowell

Here is a tasty recipe that barely involves a mess and it is really easy to make. Make sure to have fun with it.

### Ingredients:

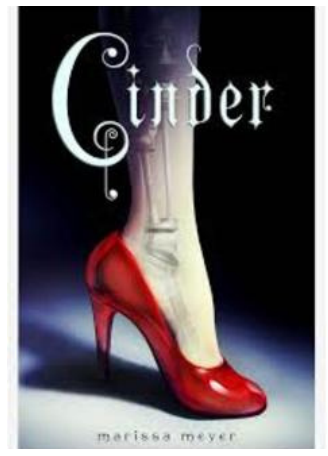
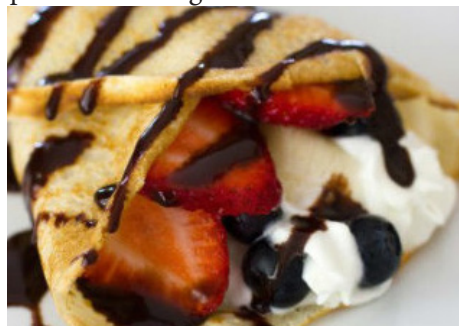
- 4 eggs lightly beaten
- 1 and 1/3 cup milk
- 1 cup plain flour
- 2 tablespoons caster sugar
- ½ teaspoon salt
- \* 2 Tablespoons melted butter.

### Directions:

1. In a large bowl, whisk together eggs, milk, melted butter, flour, sugar, and salt until smooth.
2. Heat a medium-sized frying pan or crepe pan over medium heat. Grease pan with a small amount of butter or oil applied with a brush or kitchen paper so it does not stick. Using a serving spoon or small ladle, spoon about 3 tablespoons of crepe batter into the hot pan, tilting the pan so that the bottom surface is evenly coated. Do this very carefully. Cook over medium

heat, and be delicate with it. Cook 1-2 minutes on each side. When you flip it, be very careful because it can easily break and ruin the crepe. You can also make a savory crepe by adding eggs, onions, cheese, meat, vegetables tomatoes, avocado, spinach or whatever you like. When you're done putting what you want on it, you gently roll it up like a burrito but be more careful. Once you're done rolling it up and adding your toppings, you're done.

photos via Google

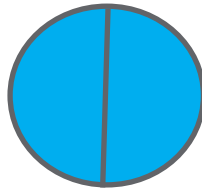


# Student View

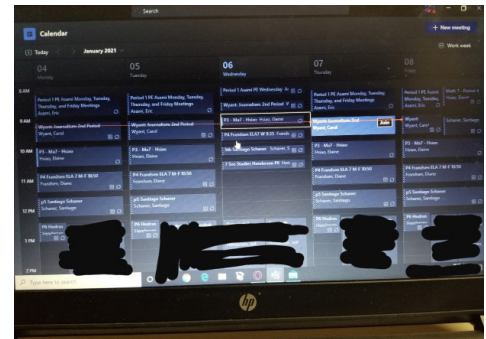
We asked students for their opinions on the new 2021 bell schedule. Here is what Monte Vista Middle Schoolers had to say:

**Do you think it is a good idea to extend the amount of class time for the second semester?**

47% of people said, "yes"



53% of people said, "no"



Above: A student's calendar is much more full than it was during the first semester of the year

## What do you think of the new schedule for the second semester?

"I think it gives us a bit more of a chance to communicate with our teachers and ask them questions."

"The new schedule is fair I guess, gives [us more] time for classes and working and is closer to [a] normal school bell schedules."

"My first thought was 'Oh no this is bad', but now I think it's good because it gives people more time to learn and pay attention."

"I think it is a good idea because with this schedule I think we are not learning as much as we will learn when we go to school."

"I think the new schedule is something I can work with [,] but might take awhile to get used to."

"I think that we should have kept the same schedule for the second semester, because students have been struggling to adapt to the new way to learn and now that a schedule change is coming they are going to have to adapt again."

"I think that the new schedule for the second semester is pretty good considering our circumstances with distance learning and COVID-19."

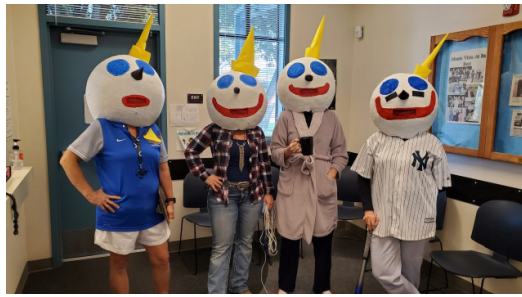
"I don't think it's a good idea, doing more than 3-4 hours of online school. As you know, schools and doctors don't advise looking at a screen for more than 1-3 hours."

"I think it is good because we get to learn more things even though we don't have as much free time."

"It's okay, but I feel I will have less time to do what I like. I will have to work until 1 PM, then homework, and it's very little time that I have."

"I think that the new schedule will be more stressful because we are spending more time in class."

# MVMS At Its Best



credit: Tracy Press

credit: Tracy Press

credit: Tracy Press

## The Pony Express Policies

The Pony Express is created by the students in Mrs. Wyant's Journalism class at Monte Vista Middle School. The Pony Express does not reflect the opinions of our school's student body or faculty. Opinion pieces reflect the views of the writer. Letters to the editor are encouraged and can be sent to Carol Wyant at cwyant@tusd.net

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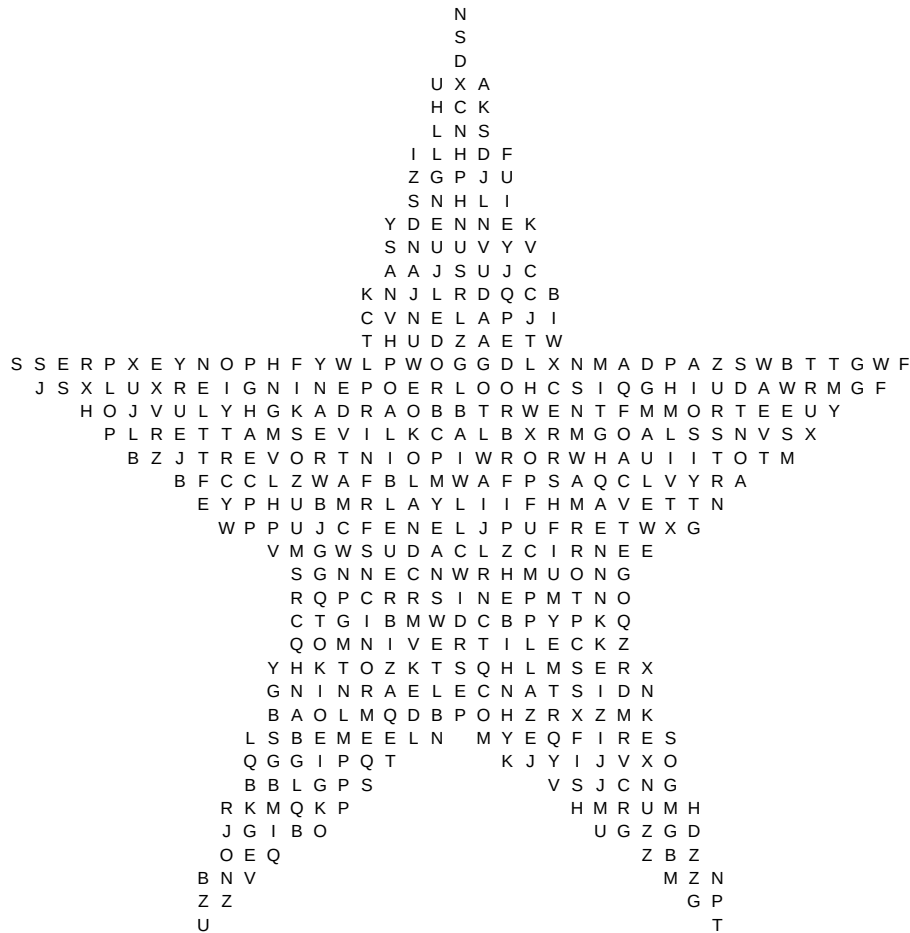
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# Word Search



## WORD LIST:

- |                  |                  |            |                  |
|------------------|------------------|------------|------------------|
| BLACKLIVESMATTER | CREPES           | FIRES      | OMNIVERT         |
| BLM              | DALLAS           | INTROVERT  | PONY EXPRESS     |
| BOARD            | DISTANCELEARNING | KENNEDY    | SCHOOL REOPENING |
| CALIFORNIA       | DR SILVER        | MIRACULOUS | TWENTYTWENTY     |
| CINDER           | EXTROVERT        |            | MONTE VISTA      |

## School Return Update

by: Amara Hackney

With the Covid-19 cases slowly decreasing in the San Joaquin County, the Tracy Unified School District Board of Education has decided that grades Pre-K-6 will resume classes in person

starting March 22nd. The students in the pre-determined grades will be going back to class in an A/B hybrid model, while 7-12 graders will be going back once the county has moved

into the red tier. The school board projects that the county could be safe for students to go back soon, as the school board has voted for grades 7-12 to return to school two weeks and five days after the county is placed in the red tier.

That would mean the earliest grades 7-12 could return is March 23rd.