



TRACY AREA HEADLIGHT HERALD

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OUR 141ST YEAR – NO. 21

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\$1.50

TRACY AREA HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 2020

COVID CAN'T STOP THIS CLASS

TAHS seniors were on parade through town last week as part of their final farewell to their high school days

BY PER PETERSON
EDITOR
High school kids make a lot of memories on Friday nights. This year's Tracy Area High School seniors made some good ones last Friday, doing their best to make the best of a bad situation.

As everyone knows, the pandemic known as COVID-19 ended the traditional school year a couple months early this year — the seniors' official last day was May 15 — and in the process, wiped out all spring extra-curricular activities. But this Friday, all that was forgotten about — at least for one fun night — as the TAHS Class of 2020 took part in what might very well be the school's first-ever Senior Parade.

"I'm extremely grateful for this, because this is not how any of us expected our senior year to end," said John Schmitt of Milroy. "Given all this support is really nice. Everyone just came out and showed their support for us."

Tristan Xiong called the parade fun and ex-



SPORTING GARB AND SWAG from their universities of choice, (from left) Mariah Mayer, Cerea Lasley and Reilly McConnell were part of a Class of 2020 contingent on this float in Friday's Tracy Area High School Senior Parade through Tracy. Photo / Per Peterson

citing.

"I enjoyed it," he said. "I was sad at first, but then I kind of figured out we wouldn't be able to go back to school. I am sad overall; I wish we could've went to school one more time before it ended."

"It was fun — it was really a new experience of cherishing everyone through this process," said Angelica Dominguez.

The seniors gathered in the high school parking lot to decorate their respective vehicles if they hadn't done so already. Some seniors also paid tribute to Emilie Hissam, a classmate they lost a little more than a year ago, with messages on their vehicles like "Emilie Strong." Hissam died from lung complications on March 21 of last year.

A number of seniors who will be off to college in the fall also wore a shirt with their school name and logo on it. After the parade, they all re-gathered in the parking lot for some more photos and memory-making moments. The scoreboard on the south end of the high school football field was lit up with 2020s to honor this year's class.

All three seniors expressed their disappointment regarding how their final year of high school came to an abrupt and unexpected ending.

PARADE

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*Seniors to graduate Sunday, in atypical fashion
School board struggles with decision to play it safe with commencement*

BY PER PETERSON
EDITOR
Plan A was, of course, in the high school gym. Plan B was on the football field. Now it's officially down to Plan C — the high school parking lot.

Sixty-seven seniors will graduate from Tracy Area High School on Sunday, in what will no doubt be the most non-traditional commencement ceremony in the history of the school. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the traditional indoor event will be moved to the high school parking lot for a 2 p.m. ceremony, followed by a parade through town.

After a lengthy discussion with strong opinions on both sides, the District No. 2904 School Board voted Monday to hold a graduation ceremony in the parking lot under the guidance of the State of Minnesota and Gov. Tim Walz's social distancing directives. On a roll call vote, the board voted 5-1 on a motion to proceed with commencement ceremonies that follow State guidelines, with Jay Fultz casting the dissenting vote.

"In this whole crazy world, we have to be careful of which wars we start," board member Ben Ludeman said. "If you disagree with the guidance, the person we have to defy is Governor (Tim) Walz — that's the point where this decision needs to be argued at, not here. We don't have the right, as a

GRADUATION
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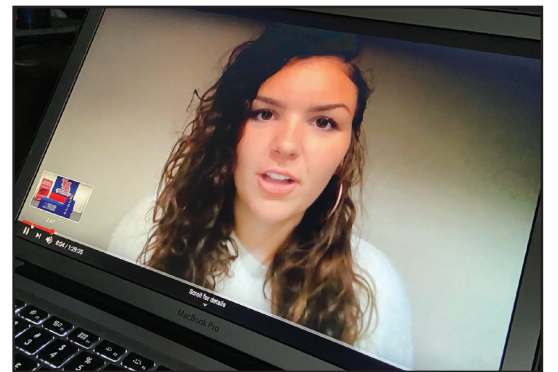


SPEAKERS AT THIS SUNDAY'S TRACY AREA HIGH SCHOOL 2020 commencement exercises will be (clockwise from top): Amy Vang (welcome), Cheemeng Yang (present), Brooke Christan (future), Tyler Timm (past) and Lucas Gervais (farewell). Submitted photos



Senior Awards Night: laptops replace in-person ceremony

TRACY AREA HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR AUDREY JOHNSON and the rest of this year's senior class addressed their fellow students and their parents virtually during last Wednesday's online Senior Awards Night ceremony.
Photo / Per Peterson



BY PER PETERSON
EDITOR

One by one last Wednesday night, members of the Tracy Area High School Class of 2020 introduced themselves and told of their future plans at the annual Senior Awards Night. Many of them were honored with awards and scholarships.

But there were no hugs or handshakes.

Because of social distancing mandates and large gathering guidelines set forth by the State in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, this year's awards night was held online. But that didn't stop this year's seniors from being recognized.

"My heart goes out to the kiddos that received the awards and were not able to be presented with them," said school registrar Sara Timmerman. "There are so many kids that I would have hugged and congratulated but was not able to."

AWARDS NIGHT
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INSIDE
Please see Pages 2 & 3 for all of this year's award/scholarship winners.

Culvert can't hold this canine for long

BY PER PETERSON
EDITOR
For Winnie the Pooh, it was that darned rabbit hole. For Lucy the chocolate lab last week, it was a culvert.

The Tracy Fire Department brought the "Jaws of Life" to a call this past Friday morning, about a mile west of town. Thankfully, this particular call didn't include any crushed vehicles with victims trapped inside.

Not even close.

This call was a rescue effort for Lucy, a 2-year-old, slightly overweight lab owned by the Paul and Hillary Sanders family.

Even though none of the firefighters were

LUCY
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HILLARY SANDERS carefully tries to pull her scared chocolate lab Lucy out from the small culvert she was stuck in last Friday morning. Photo / Per Peterson

Council reaffirms decision to keep MPC, aquatic center closed

BY PER PETERSON
EDITOR

In a special meeting Tuesday evening to continue the discussion on openings and closures of city-operated facilities caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Tracy City Council reaffirmed its decisions to keep the Multi Purpose Center closed for the time being and keep the aquatic center closed for the summer.

The City posted online last Friday that the aquatic center will remain closed for

the summer after Gov. Tim Walz's announcement that he is extending his original executive order concerning social distancing and large gatherings until June 1 (he is expected to make further announcements sometime this week). The Tracy City Council last Monday decided to tie its decision on the fate of the aquatic center to what the governor said during his May 13 news conference. Although it's unclear what the

COUNCIL
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