

# California Fires Bring Danger and Despair

October 8, at around 10:00 p.m., the first of many fires began to spread in the Santa Rosa area. There are active fires in Napa, Sonoma, and Solano counties which have burned roughly 190,000 acres. There are no known causes, but over 300 firefighters are putting their lives on the line to stop them.

One of the three most treacherous fires is in Santa Rosa, and is known as the Tubbs Fire. So far it has burned approximately 36,000 acres and is 91% contained. The Atlas Fire, near the city of Napa, has burned up to 51,000 acres and is 83% contained, that is, according to the California Statewide Fire Map. However, the largest of them all is the Nuns Fire which is 80% contained as of October 18 and has burned almost 55,000 acres. There have been 41 deaths and, as of October 20, there are around 52 missing people. In Sonoma County, 5,700 structures have been burned down including houses and businesses.

The fires have been traveling fast, with facilitation from the wind, sending smoke as far as San Francisco and preventing access to escape routes. According to *Fox News*, the fire has left across roads and winds of 60 miles per hour have knocked trees down, making roads inaccessible. As well as the fire being hazardous, there are immense amounts of smoke in the air. "When I started loading stuff into the car it was a hell-storm of smoke and ash," Napa Valley visitor Chris Thomas told the *San Francisco Chronicle*. As a result, schools have been closed and have encouraged people to stay in their homes for refuge.

Many students at Miramonte have been affected by the smoke in the air. Some believe that attending school poses a risk to their own health. "I feel that the poor air quality is majorly

affecting my asthma and my education, as it is all I am able to think about throughout the day," junior Tony Caselle said. On Wednesday, October 11, a freshman student fainted during lunch while sitting outdoors. As a result of the smoke, some students can't even attend school. "I had to stay home because the air quality was so bad and I was concerned for my health," junior Meaghan Hohman said.

All sports, both indoor and outdoor, were forced to cancel practices from Tuesday, October 10 to Friday, October 14 after the air quality reached a potentially dangerous level of 150 Air Quality Index. Many teams had to postpone and even cancel games. The Miramonte football team played Campolindo on Monday, October 16 instead of that previous Friday night. Also, the golf team was unable to compete in their last tournament of the season on Wednesday, October 11. Not only were sports affected by the smoke, but extracurricular activities such as powderpuff were also cancelled for the entire week.