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What is Happening Between Russia and Ukraine?



**By Ava Schmidberger
Tusker Tribune Staff**

What's happening with Russia and Ukraine right now? Is it something for us to worry about?

Well, the conflict between Russia and Ukraine has been going on since 2014. In fact Russia actually "controls" parts of Ukraine.

What effect did this bombing have on Ukraine? Maybe this will give you a further understanding. Both a kindergarten and orphanage were hit as well as many other places. Eleven people have been reported dead and many more injured.



Is this something to worry about? This is a situation we can only hope gets better, especially for the people of Ukraine. You never know with our world. It doesn't look like there is any threat to us here in Somers right now. I encourage you to send your thoughts and hope for the people of Ukraine.

Well why is this happening? Russian president Putin claims to do this because modern Ukraine sends a constant threat. However many of Putin's claims are false or irrational. He claims to want to protect his people from the "bullying" of Ukraine. However it is now clear that Russia wants to overthrow Ukraine's government. Ukraine used to be part of Russia but became independent quite a bit ago. Ukraine was the land Russia used for oil. Russia also disagrees with Ukraine because they want to join NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) which is an organization for world peace.

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Normalcy is Tempting!



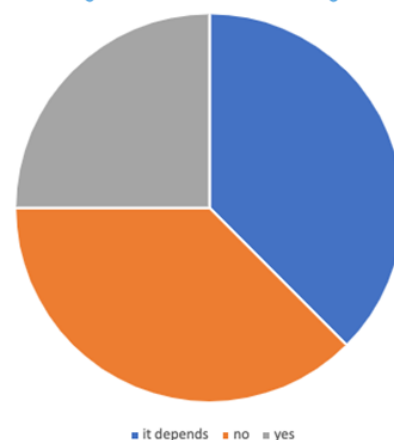
**By Ruby McDowell
Tusker Tribune Staff**

You all know. Mask wearing is now a personal choice. Whether you are wearing a mask, or not, you can feel the normalcy. We have yearned for it for 2 ½ years. It has come trickling, though, like putting your legs in a pool. We now take a giant leap off the diving board.

The debated topic: Masks. Some of you have no choice in your mask wearing and now, some of you do. I decided to wear the mask. However, at the end of the day it was off. Why? Normalcy is tempting. The mask has become a regular part of our life for 2 ½ years. It might have started off as a bandanna, and now a KN95. It might still be. All I know is that the thing that probably runs out most often in our home (Expect for toilet paper) is masks. I polled 26 people if they were going to wear a mask. Around 37% answered "It depends". Another 37% answered "No". 25% answered "Yes".

Overall, it was even, and I think most of those it depends on are a No now, at least from what I have seen. Overall, we are pretty normal now. I am excited we took that leap off the diving board.

Who's wearing a mask?



Great to See Your Pretty Faces!



**By Akosua Adobea-Wiredu
Tusker Tribune Staff**

Hey guys, it's Akosua again. I'm just gonna rant about how the mask mandate being lifted has really changed the school. I mean, come on, I haven't seen any of these people without their mask on since ... ever. Especially since I'm new to the school, I haven't seen much of these faces before.

Everyone this school is extremely pretty and beautiful and I just want to say that nobody should feel pressured about having to not wear a mask or to wear a mask. It's your personal choice and you should do what you feel as if it's right for you and your family.

Hopefully, by the end of summer we should all have all our masks taken off because COVID isn't a thing. HOPEFULLY! Anyways, bye!!

Cats Vs Dogs: Which is a Better Pet for a Middle School Kid?



**By Ava Schmidberger
Tusker Tribune Staff**

What's better for a middle school student? A cat or dog?

Everyone has opinions, but when it comes down to the facts, which pet is better for a middle school student?

Let's talk time and care of the animal. A dog must be bathed every few months, and must be taken out for the bathroom and to get exercise. They have lots of energy and get very messy.

Cats also have lots of energy, however, they mostly like to stay indoors. They use the litter box indoors that doesn't take much time to change once a week. Cats must be bathed only once a year. I feel cats win the caretaking time area.



Cost is a very important factor. Dogs, depending on the breed and size, can cost up to \$9,000 a year! That's a lot! On the other hand, cats cost up to \$1,900 a year. Not as much as dogs, huh? Cats definitely win that round.

Destructiveness. Most cats do not bite things or tear them apart, however, some may. It's about the same with dogs.

I personally have had both a cat and dog and feel cats are much easier to take care of. However, dogs are much more energetic and playful. So it comes down to the choice: do you want a more playful and whole family-friendly pet or do you want a cheaper and less caretaking pet? What would you choose?

Russia and Ukraine

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What can you do to help? Raise money and donate to non profits for Ukraine. Especially donating to funds for places and people that were close to or hit by a bomb. Even word of mouth and spreading awareness can help.

*Student perspective: Julia Schmidberger,
Grade 9*

What do you think about the whole situation?

"It is crazy what's happening and I believe Russia is out of line."

Who would you side with if you were a country?

"Ukraine because Russia should not be shooting bombs at a peaceful country."

How To Get More ZZZZZ's At Night



**By Eli Clavines
Tusker Tribune Staff**

Have you ever spent your nights tossing and turning trying to get some rest but end up staying up? Well, most of us have.

This could be a result of insomnia; Insomnia is a sleeping disorder where you have trouble falling asleep or staying asleep. Insomnia is different for everyone, and we've all had a tough time getting a good night's sleep.

Some causes could be depression, anxiety, stress, etc. We all have our reasons for not being able to sleep. But how can we deal with this?

Some methods you could use are avoiding naps or trying to sleep less throughout the day.

At times we may doze off, but this can make it harder for you to sleep later since you've already gotten some shut-eye. Another way to get better rest is to keep a consistent sleep schedule. Studies have shown that being consistent with your sleep routine can train your body to fall asleep at a certain time, which is quite interesting!



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Reducing blue light exposure can

also help you sleep better. Blue light can cause a few problems. It not only will affect your sleep, but it can also affect your eyesight, and even cause headaches. When we go onto our phones or devices, we are exposed to blue light. So, it's better if before you go to bed, you take a moment where you're not staring at a screen.

Finally, make sure your resting environment is calm and peaceful. Where you sleep can affect how you sleep. If you slept in a loud, uncomfortable place, this will obviously keep you up. However, some people enjoy the company of noise when they sleep and prefer listening to music or white noise. Which leads me to the fact that everyone deals with their insomnia differently.

I interviewed two students about what they do when they cannot sleep.

Alexa Stupplebeen says, "I read sometimes because it makes my eyes move back and forth fast, so it makes me tired, and I have glow in the dark stickers on my ceiling and count them, which tires me out."

Emely Cordero says, "I drink chamomile lavender tea with milk when I can't sleep because it helps my body calm down and relax."

If you have trouble sleeping hopefully this can help you out.

Russia Vs Ukraine—The Ongoing War



By Anya Khurana
Tusker Tribune Staff

If you're like me, you are used to hearing the news constantly talk about Covid-19, mask mandates, and vaccines. But recently, a new story has been dominating the news, and the minds of many people around the world.

On the 24th of February, 2022, at 4:50 A.M, Russian president Vladimir Putin made an announcement saying that he had decided "to conduct a special military operation....to protect people who have been subjected to abuse and genocide by the Kyiv regime for eight years."

However, Vladimir Putin denied that he was going to be invading Ukraine by saying that, "We are not going to impose anything on anyone by force." This however, was not the case. At 5:07 A.M, Russian forces launched a series of missile attacks on locations near Kyiv, the capital of Ukraine, and they also used artillery in the city of Kharkiv, near the Russian border.

At 7 A.M, air raid sirens went off all around Kyiv and 45 minutes later, the same happened in the western city of Lviv. By 1 P.M, more than 40 soldiers, and about 10 civilians were killed.

You might be wondering, how did all of this start? Well, in order to tell you that, I have to take you all the way back to the break up of the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union existed from 1922 to 1991 and it was made up of Russia, and 14 surrounding countries including Ukraine. When the Soviet Union collapsed, Ukraine had one of the biggest collections of nuclear warheads in the world. The United States, along with Russia, worked with Ukraine to reduce the number of warheads and, in doing so, Ukraine, specifically Kyiv, gave hundreds of nuclear warheads to Russia in exchange for assurances that Ukraine would not be attacked by Russia.

However, in 2014, this assurance wavered when Russia annexed Crimea, a peninsula that



was part of Ukraine. Since then, tensions between Ukraine and Russia have been increasing, until that morning on February 24th, when Russia advanced even further into Ukraine.

Now, Russia is firing missiles left, right, and center, and Ukrainians are desperately trying to flee the country, scared for their lives, and the lives of their families. So now you might be asking, why isn't anyone helping Ukraine? The answer to that is complicated but in short, the answer is that everyone is doing as much as they can.

NATO, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, is made up of many countries in the world, however, Ukraine is not one of them. If Ukraine was a part of NATO, then all of those countries would be sending military forces to Ukraine to help fight Russia. But since Ukraine is not a part of NATO, NATO is unable to send the military force, due to fear that it will start an even bigger war because then Russia will start to attack the NATO countries as well.

Instead, NATO is helping by sending supplies, weapons, and money to Ukraine and the U.S. is applying restrictions and sanctions to Russia. Now, there isn't much we can do except wait, and watch how this crisis unfolds.

I know personally, that I want to do anything I can to help Ukraine get through this and it makes me angry to think about what Russia is doing, but how about some other middle school students?

Eighth grader Eli Clavines says, "Well, on social media I've seen the perspective of what's going on in Ukraine and I feel bad and scared for them because a lot of innocent people and kids are being harmed and bombed."

This is a common thought of people all around the world and we must show our support to Ukraine during this horrific time. Don't forget to keep watching or reading the news to get more information about this crisis and how it is unfolding. History is being made right before our eyes and it is important to know what is happening, and how to help.

Just O' Bit About St. Patty's Day!



By Ava Schmidberger
Tusker Tribune Staff

What is St. Patrick's Day all about? How do we celebrate it? Let's dive deeper into the March holiday St. Patrick's Day.

St. Patrick's day is celebrated on March 17th. On this day we observe the death of Saint

Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland. The holiday also involves celebrating Irish culture, with a little bit of leprechaun tradition in the mix.

On St. Patrick's day, people celebrate with parades, food, music, dancing, and (adult) drinking. The decorations normally consist of gold, Irish flags, and a ton of green! How do you celebrate?



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No More Masks?



**By Eli Clavines
Tusker Tribune Staff**

On Wednesday March 2nd, 2022, NY State Governor Kathy Hochul lifted the mask mandate in NY schools.

Many people have mixed feelings about not wearing masks anymore in schools. Some people are happy that we are finally taking steps towards going back to normal. Others feel more nervous about COVID because people are now more exposed to it without their masks.



But how do the students feel about not wearing masks anymore? Do they think that this change is for the better or worse? I interviewed a few students, and these are their opinions.

Leora Hadzovic says, "I chose to continue wearing my mask but for me and my family, it's not a huge deal. A lot of people are happier they don't have to wear masks but I'm a bit concerned about whether the COVID cases will spike up again because I'm not sure about the mask policies outside of school."

Isabella Butrico states, "I feel relieved because we had to wear masks for so long but I'm kinda scared because I feel like there is going to be another COVID outbreak. I think this change is for the better because eventually we will have to get over COVID because it has been almost three years and we have vaccines and boosters so the chances of us dying from COVID is a lot more slim than before."



Lastly Akosua Adobea-Wiredu says, "I feel like it's a bit weird because we have always worn masks, so it's hard to get used to. I personally feel like I should keep my mask on, but I respect everybody's personal choices. It's a lot to take in, seeing everyone's faces for the first time but I do respect everyone. I feel like it's for the worse because I feel like some people are pressured to take off their masks since everyone else is doing it and they would want to fit in."

After hearing how students view this change, I was curious about what this would look like from a teacher's perspective, so I asked Mrs. Levesque and she said, "I'm comfortable with it and we are doing the right thing, and everyone should have a choice. My hope is that this is for the better. People should do what they feel is comfortable."

As you can see, we all have different opinions on what is going on, but we should always respect each other and understand that we are all going through similar experiences during these times.



SMS 7th Grader Benn Baran and 8th grader Caleb Carpenter were recently recognized for their help with the St. Luke's Episcopal Church Food Drive. They filled in when other volunteers couldn't make it, and also organized the storage shed for storing donations. Nice job, guys!

What's Up With the NY Islanders?



**By Thomas Mauro
Tusker Tribune Staff**

The NY Islanders have lost 10 of their last 15 games. This is a team that had gone to two semifinals in a row and suddenly just fell off.

This season, the Islanders are at a bad 19-21-8 and are far out of fourth place, so they have pretty much no shot at a playoff run. The player with the most points on the team is Mat Barzal with 37. That is tied for 85th. That is not good compared to the rest of the NHL.

The Islanders are 22nd in power-play percentage and 28th in goals per game. That is awful. We are ninth in goals against per game, 5th in save percentage and tied for 6th in shutouts. That is the point to the Islanders' letdown season. They don't give up many goals, but they don't score so it stays at a stalemate.

If the islanders figure out the scoring situation next year, I believe they can win the Stanley Cup. Until then, they will just keep losing.

