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THE SATOMA

NEWSMAGAZINE

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS HS
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Golden celebration for faith-filled education

BY: AN NGUYEN

The St. Thomas Aquinas/Bishop Ahr High School community came together on Friday, September 27th, and Saturday, September 28th, to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the founding of

or be associated with, but also to see the changes that have occurred and the positive direction that the school is headed in! “Our 50th anniversary celebration was a wonderful opportunity for our school community—alum-

and staff to celebrate the years we have been given and to pray for strength and guidance in the years to come. From there, the community was able to celebrate with an outdoor pep rally to present the fall sports teams and the always spectacular Marching Trojans. Students had a wonderful time celebrating and then were given the opportunity to eat pizza on the campus and to enjoy the company of their classmates.

The weekend’s festivities kicked off with an Open House for former students to walk through the halls they once called home and to say hi to the teachers that they once had in class. Many former students, faculty, and staff visited the school and got to see many of the old, familiar faces they once were so close to.

After the Open House, the school was able to come together and give thanks to God for the wonderful years they’ve been given. Bishop James Checchio presided over the Mass and many current and former students assisted as altar servers, readers, singers, and musicians. The night concluded with a gala hosted in the school’s main gym, which was transformed into a beautiful reception hall. The Dama Family, whose son Vincenzo graduated from the school, was gracious enough to cater the entire event and

provide many of the decorations for the evening. As the evening went on, the community took the opportunity to celebrate members of the community by awarding individuals the St. Thomas Aquinas Award and inducting new members to the school’s Athletic Hall of Fame. It was a wonderful evening for all who were in attendance. Bishop Checchio summed it up aptly when he said, “An anniversary such as this is a time for thanksgiving, when we can express our gratitude for the gift of St. Thomas Aquinas High School and the blessings it has had for its students because of the immeasurable contributions of its faculty and benefactors.” Here’s to another fifty years of faith-filled education.



SISTER DONNA MARIE WELCOMES A FORMER STUDENT AND THEIR FAMILY TO THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OPEN HOUSE (ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF LORS PHOTOS).

the school. The “Golden Anniversary” was an opportunity for former and current students, teachers, and parents within the community to come back to their school and partake in the celebration of “50 years of faith, service, and educational excellence.”

This event, which was planned by Mr. John Roche, Class of 2006, and Mrs. Deborah Chippendale, Director of Alumni Relations, was designed to give everyone a chance to not only see the school they used to attend

ni, faculty, staff, students, and families—to come together and celebrate all that makes St. Thomas Aquinas High School what it is. It is events like this one that help us to recommit to the ideals and mission of our school,” Roche commented on why he chose to help coordinate the events for the anniversary.

The anniversary began with in-school events for the current students of St. Thomas Aquinas High School. The day started with a Mass for all of the students, faculty,



JOHN ROCHE, 06’, WELCOMES THE COMMUNITY TO MASS

New Faces Joining



Jerry Smith
Athletic Director



Matthew VanDoren
English/History



Brynn Albanese
English/History



Alison Rashid
French

The **Satoma**
NEWSMAGAZINE

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New name for cherished tradition

BY: Wafa Qureshi

Founded in 1988, the Ahr Star program has been going on for 32 years. Our beloved tradition kicked off with its first event of the year, the Ahr Star Spaghetti Dinner on October 3rd. Members of the school along with friends and families were able to welcome the two newly named Aquinas Stars, Andrew and Elijah, who are both 8 years old, to the school community!

Elijah is diagnosed with an autoimmune disease and Andrew has a rare chromosome deletion. One of the great blessings of the night was that both Ahr Stars were able to attend the dinner with their families! Aquinas Star as a program is designed to help families both financially and spiritually and the Spaghetti Dinner was the first opportunity for people to show their support. There were over two hundred volunteers who helped throughout the night, including students, faculty, parents, and friends of the community. People who were not able to volunteer and help that night instead were able to come and enjoy pasta, meatballs, salad, cookies, and cake! By the end of the night, more than five hundred people had attended, and through donations and ticket purchases, the Aquinas Star program managed to raise over \$10,000, all of which will go to Andrew,

Elijah, and their families. Many of the school's sports teams came to support the Aquinas Stars and their families. The football, basketball, and volleyball teams were able to make presentations to Andrew and Elijah, which included giving an encouraging speech and presenting them both with autographed sports balls from the respective sports. In addition to sharing a great meal, Aquinas Star chairs Bethany Ciccarelli and Joey Dunn were able to present Elijah and Andrew with a number of gifts. Elijah was gifted a skateboard and Andrew received a pair of toy spy goggles and a Build-a-Bear. All of the gifts given were paid for by donations from the Aquinas Star community. One of the most fun ex-

periences for many of the volunteers, including Aquinas Star Moderator, Sister Cynthia Babyak, is that former Ahr Stars came to the dinner as well. Former Ahr Stars Mikey, Arianna, El-lona, and their families came to show support for the new Aquinas Stars and to share their experiences in the program. Many alumni of the school, people from around the Diocese of Metuchen, and members of the Felician Sisters community also came to the Spaghetti Dinner to show their love for the two Aquinas Stars and this honored tradition. Up next for the Aquinas Star program is the Christmas Mass and celebration in December where we honor the families with prayer, Christmas gifts, and carols.



AQUINAS STAR CHAIRPERSONS JOEY DUNN AND BETHANY CICCARELLI PAUSE TO SMILE WITH AQUINAS STARS ELIJAH AND ANDREW DURING THE SPAGHETTI DINNER.

the STA Community



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Athletic Trainer

WASTA day is why we cheer!

BY: SAMANTHA CHRISTINE

We Are Saint Thomas Aquinas Day, or WASTA Day (formerly known as WABA Day), is perhaps one of the school's most iconic events. Led by upperclassmen and school faculty, it is an upbeat and joyful day that welcomes the incoming freshman to the school with games, songs, and fun. It may sound corny on paper, but everyone who has experienced the event enjoys it and leaves feeling good!

The day began with the freshmen reporting to homeroom to do

icebreakers in order to get to know the people in their homeroom better. From there, they were led to the gym and were greeted with loud cheers from the upperclassmen to make them feel welcome. After an opening prayer, some upperclassmen racked up enough bravery to tell embarrassing stories that had happened to them when they were freshmen, assuring the new members of the community that they should not feel worried about making silly mistakes during their first year because everyone has been in their shoes and knows what

it's like to make a mistake. The "Rain Game" was next followed by playing Dragon Tag, a unique and fun take on the traditional game of Tag. After all these activities were completed, the freshmen were paired with an assigned upperclassman who would serve as their "Guide" for the day. Each pair got to participate in three fun activities to help learn about the school and their classmates: the Scavenger Hunt, Classroom Icebreakers, and finally, watching a video and singing songs in the Little Theatre. In the Scavenger Hunt, the pairs found themselves trying to find the "items" (QR Codes) via a clue sheet they were given. Each QR code would give out a letter that would be used to spell out a message for the participants. Once finished with the hunt, the pairs would make their way down to the cafeteria, where they were able to have a quick snack and converse with other freshman/upperclassmen. The Classroom Icebreakers started out with a quiz of the school on the infamous Kahoot, a round of "Get off The Bus", and Charades. In the

Little Theatre, the freshmen saw a video about where places such as the library or Tech Office were located and were promptly "quizzed" on the locations of these rooms. Right after that, the choir led the students in singing many songs, such as school favorites "Trading My Sorrows" and "Big House", everyone unleashing their inner rock star to Bon Jovi's "Livin' on a Prayer", line dancing to Earth, Wind and Fire's "September" and crooning to the Backstreet Boys "I Want It That Way."

The day ended with the faculty and all the students going back to the gym where they first started, to close the day on a happy note. A blessing was given to the freshmen, followed by the "STAHS" Chant, as well as Mr. Kevin McCarthy doing his ever-so-popular split, inciting an uproar amongst the student body. WASTA Day was a fun and rapture-inducing day that helped the freshmen learn more about the school and each other while also meeting some upperclassmen! The day was enjoyed by all and will continue to get better and better!



MEMBERS OF THE CLASS OF 2023 PLAY THE NEWLY ADDED "DRAGON TAG" DURING WASTA DAY ((PHOTO COURTESY OF LORS PHOTOGRAPHY)).

Was 'Hamlet' really a 'Bad Guy?'

BY: ALEX GOFERMAN

On September 20, 21, and 22, the drama department performed William Shakespeare's "Hamlet", a tragedy about a Danish prince on a mission to avenge his father's death at the hands of his uncle. The cast did a spectacular job of capturing the grim tone of the play. The drama department hadn't produced a tragedy in a long time, so this was an interesting change of pace from the usual comedies put on. The play was full of suspense and action, keeping the audience at the edge of their seats.

Another thing that was special about this particular production was that it was directed by Mr. Kevin McCarthy, Service Coordinator and moderator for the Class of 2021. This was his first time individually directing a show, and he exceeded all expectations. Mr. McCarthy had been a star at STA in his own time as a high school student, so his experience allowed him to

make the show the best it could be.

The lead was played by senior Cristian Vozza whose performance was impressive to say the least. Cristian pulled off an enormous feat in playing Hamlet, not only because of the complexity of his character's personality, but also because Hamlet has the most lines of any character in any play ever written (specifically 1569 lines). Other major roles include Hamlet's unknowing mother, Queen Gertrude, played by senior Faith Dodge, Hamlet's duplicitous uncle, King Claudius, played by junior Joseph Valenzuela, Hamlet's innocent love interest, Ophelia, played by sophomore Gianna Vaynberg, Ophelia's mother, Polonia, played by senior Carolyn Foley, and Ophelia's brother, Laertes, played by junior Jaren Buliyat.

As is the case with the Shakespeare shows at STA, there was a musical theme. This year the theme was songs from pop singer Billie Eilish. Her music is very dark, express-

ing themes of loss, confusion, and depression, so it worked perfectly with the somber and serious matters of "Hamlet." Since there was no time period to base costumes off of, the director decided to go with a simpler theme for clothing – neutral colors. The set was very simple, too, for it was completely black.

"Hamlet" was very well received

by its audience. Many students showed up to support the cast, as well as teachers and alumni. The Saturday performance had the largest crowd, but the other nights were well attended! The cast is hard at work creating even more great productions for the community to enjoy. The department's rendition of "Into the Woods" is set to debut at the end of November!



SENIOR CRISTIAN VOZZA (LEFT) REHEARSES A SCENE WITH JUNIOR JAREN BULIYAT FOR THE PRODUCTION OF 'HAMLET' (PHOTO COURTESY OF LORS PHOTOGRAPHY).



Name: Jillian Balsamo



Nickname: Jill, Jilly B

Grade: 12

Sport: Soccer

Lucky Number: 2

Favorite Athletics Memory:
Watching film and eating cookies and bagels in Mr. Roche's classroom.

Name: Aryan Chadwani



Nickname: Ary

Grade: 12

Sport: Soccer

Lucky Number: 14

Favorite Athletics Memory:
Scoring a goal during sophomore year and playing in goal during the same game.

Name: Joseph Dunn



Nickname: Mr. Consistent, Joey

Grade: 12

Sport: Cross Country

Lucky Number: 22

Favorite Athletics Memory:
Watching David Essel medal at GMCs.

Name: Gabriella Toryk



Nickname: Gib

Grade: 12

Sport: Cross Country

Lucky Number: 1

Favorite Athletics Memory:
Winning the division at my first meet of my senior season.

Name: John Campagna



Nickname: Johnny Boy

Grade: 12

Sport: Football

Lucky Number: 67

Favorite Athletics Memory:
Blowing out Metuchen in the biggest game of our season.

Name: Nicholas Verendia



Nickname: Nicky

Grade: 12

Sport: Soccer

Lucky Number: 19

Favorite Athletics Memory:
Being named to the All Gold Division junior year and All Conference senior year.

Name: Christian Kadi



Nickname: CK, Sunshine

Grade: 12

Sport: Cross Country

Lucky Number: 15, 35, 61

Favorite Athletics Memory:
Ultimate football games before practice

Name: Brianna Fontanilla



Nickname: Bri

Grade: 12

Sport: Volleyball

Lucky Number: 13

Favorite Athletics Memory:
My first and only senior night this season against Colonia.

Name: Samantha Miel



Nickname: Sam

Grade: 12

Sport: Volleyball

Lucky Number: 8

Favorite Athletics Memory:
Waking up with the other seniors at 4am to see the sunrise at the beach on the last day of summer and then going to practice.

Volleyball Gymnastics Girls tennis



SENIOR SAMANTAH MIEL SETS THE BALL DURING HER WARM UPS.

BY: GRACE LANCIA

The girls volleyball team “set” up for a strong season this year. With a strong core of seniors and returning players combined with a new coach running things, the team entered the year with high hopes and a lot of potential. Although there were some obstacles throughout the year, the team was able to post some strong victories against the likes of New Brunswick, Wardlaw-Hartridge, and South Plainfield.

The team celebrated their senior night on October 14th versus Highland Park honoring seniors Jessie Bodnar, Madison Bruno, Brianna Fontanillo, Samantha Howlett, Amanda Markert, Samantha Miel, Carly Petela, and Annaliese Smith who will be truly missed. Although the match did not go the way the team would have hoped, the team still found time to celebrate the dedication of the leaving seniors. Two major highlights of the season were shutouts versus Rahway and South Plainfield. In the Rahway match, Brianna Fontanilla had 8 digs, Amaris Hemingway had 5 kills, Samantha Meil had 18 assists, and Danielle Suter had 6 service points. In the South Plainfield match, Carly Petela had 6 kills, Sam Miel had 10 service points and Amanda Markert had 9 service points.

With the loss of eight seniors, next year the team will be faced with a season focusing on rebuilding and recruiting new talent. The seniors will be missed not only for their athletic ability but their dedication to the team and leadership skills.

BY: CARISSA MATRALE

This year’s varsity gymnastics team is continuing to amaze us all while making a name for St. Thomas Aquinas. From the start of their season to now, the team has worked tirelessly to perfect their routines and their stunts. Now with the end of their season soon approaching, the six members of the team are continuing to finalize and tweak their routines and prepare for a strong final push towards success in states.

This year, the team consists of freshman Annika Zavalla, sophomores Armanii Agarwala and Bella Garcia, and juniors Kaitlyn Adlassinig, Naomi Southerland, and Ty Upton. The girls practice for about two hours a few times a week starting in mid August. Their schedule is tentative to allow the girls time to practice for the club teams that many of them are on. The team competes in all four events: vault, bars, beam, and floor, and each girl has qualified for states on multiple events. This talented group has made it almost all the way through the season only losing two meets, and taking third overall at the GMC competition.

Kaitlyn, Naomi, and Ty, the team’s captains, are looking forward to seeing what the future holds for the team for the rest of this and their senior seasons. “Even though we have a small team this year, I am so proud of every girl’s ability to accomplish big things and how far we’ve come by working hard as not only a team, but a family,” says Kaitlyn. The team’s future looks bright as ever and that was evident with Ty Upton being named to the All-Conference team. The youth that this team has gives it a lot of promise moving into the future.



ABOVE LEFT: JUNIOR TY UPTON DURING HER BEAM ROUTINE. ABOVE RIGHT: SENIOR ALEJANDRO SANTIAGO BREAKING TACKLES (ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF LORS PHOTOGRAPHY).

BY: MORGAN BRENNAN

As the season draws to a close, we can say that the girl’s tennis team had a great season! They had both a varsity and a JV team and both teams were led by the long-time coach, Mr. Al Mohrmann. This season’s varsity lineup consisted of first singles Sarah Girod, second singles Avni Bhavsar, third singles Julia Kebutladze, first doubles Amanda Cariaga and Nicole Kubiak, and second doubles Aashka Ray and Jessica Kubiak. The team captains are seniors Avni Bhavsar, Nicole Kubiak, and Julia Kebutladze. With only a few matches left the team has had a pretty successful season with wins against Dunellen, South Amboy, Colonia, and Mother Seton. Sophomore Amanda Cariaga says “The team has improved throughout the season and I think we have the potential for next year’s season for a new varsity lineup of

girls. I am sad that this season is ending because my team and I have become sisters and it is sad to see the seniors go.” Although the team experienced some adversity throughout the season, their determination to get better never faltered. The team looks ahead to a bright future.



SENIOR AVNI BHAVSAR RETURNS A SERVE TO HER OPPONENT.

FOOTBALL

BY: MICAH KELLY

The 2019 Trojans had a strong start to new Head Coach Brian Meeney’s tenure. Meeney, who has experience in developing smaller programs and guiding them to success, has focused a large portion of this redevelopment project on bringing youth into the program while also relying upon the veterans of the team to help lead the way. This mixture of youth and experience has given the Trojans a lot of hope for laying the groundwork for future successes.

There are many positives to take away from the season for the Trojans. The team has put a strong emphasis

this season on maintaining a strong ground attack based around senior Captain Alejandro Santiago and freshman Jared Tynes. Statistically the Trojans have carried the ball 308 times over the course of the season (9 games in at the time of writing). The Trojans have amassed over 2400 yards this season on the ground, but have not abandoned passing. The team has passed for over 1,000 yards while amassing seven touchdowns in the process. This combination of run and pass has given the Trojans success as the season has progressed and has helped to build the confidence of freshman starting quarterback, Jayden Young. His growth throughout the season gives the team hope for what the future can hold.

On defense, the Trojans successes have come from their ability to stymie the opponent’s offense. This was on display in wins against Dunellen, Highland Park, and Metuchen. Highland Park in particular was a great game for the Trojans defense which was led by senior Parker McCall who had eight tackles and Santiago who registered eleven. The defense of the Trojans has steadily improved as the season has gone on and many of the hiccups that were present early on have been smoothed over.



Boys soccer

BY: CAROLINE DiMAGGIO

This year the St. Thomas Aquinas boys soccer team continues to work harder than ever. As a team, the boys continuously make progress to improve. Even through difficult competition, the team works together to win with determination and unity. The boys work hard at each practice by doing drills that replicate situations on the field, and they do a lot of conditioning to perform their best on the field. The varsity soccer coach, Dimitrios Vassiliadis, has led the team through all of their victories during his first year as a coach at St. Thomas Aquinas. Rylan Krikorian, the team leader in assists, attributes the team's motivation to Coach Dimitrios. Rylan says, "I personally believe that Coach Dimitrios is exactly what the boys soccer team needed. He's a young, talented soccer player and can relate to his players a lot from his past experiences. I like how our coach is very open to taking feedback from the players since they are the primary source of what happens on and off the field. And not only is he a good coach, but he's a good mentor as well." The constant support of the coaches, captains, and other teammates is what keeps the boys soccer team motivated to keep striving for stronger performances and better results.

Captain Nick Verendia has enthusiastically led the team and brought them together all season. When asked about his experience on the soccer team, Nick shared his positive and touching experience: "Soccer at St. Thomas Aquinas has been unforgettable. The coaches and players have been fun to work with and helped me grow as a person and as a player. Through my four years, the positive atmosphere has felt the same with everyone on the team." The four graduating seniors will be greatly missed on next year's team. Nick Verendia, Julian Napoli, Andrew Roarty, and Aryan Chandwani are the seniors who have been strong influences on the team this year and have contributed so much. The St. Thomas Aquinas boys hope to end their season on a positive note and look forward to continuing to build on the foundations set this year.

Boys and girls XC

BY: JAREN BULIYAT

On a cold fall Saturday morning, the average person would most likely stay in the comfort of his or her nice, warm bed. On the other hand, our Cross Country teams run a grueling 3.1 miles on rough terrain and sometimes, even harsh weather conditions. The girls and boys cross country teams have had a marvelous year. The girls, led by Coach Tim Miller, and the boys, led by Coach Runkel, have worked hard all summer in preparation for this past season.

In cross country, your biggest opponent in a race is yourself. You have to have a strong mindset and have to be able to ignore the pain. You gain this mindset by constant practice. In practice, runners work their hardest, rain or shine. They push themselves in order to be the best that they can be. In workouts, teammates work

off of each other in order to improve in order to reach, and sometimes even exceed their limits. "Yes, we run some crazy mileage each week and do really painful workouts, but when you get a PR, it is always worth it" said girls Captain Gabby Toryk. In cross country, the only way to improve is by staying consistent and working hard everyday.

The seniors of the Cross Country teams are Captain Joey Dunn, Captain Kishan Patel, Captain Gabby Toryk, Christian Kadi, and Frank Wilhelm. These seniors are a constant example to their teammates and always lead their team in the right direction.

Behind every great team, is an even better coaching staff. Coach Scott Runkel, along with Assistant Coach Nicholas Tonzola, always motivates his boys to run with everything they got and always coaches with a smile. Coach Tim always gets the absolute

best out of his girls and coaches them to be fine runners. "Encouraged by Coach Runkel and Coach Tonz, this team is a force to be reckoned with" said Captain Joey Dunn.

Even though running is seen as more of an individual sport, our XC teams have a great bond. "We aren't just a team. We aren't just friends. We're a family 'til the end" said Captain Eleni Alvares. The boys XC team loves to bond by playing ultimate football before every practice and making "tik toks" together. "We've had many obstacles this year, from injuries to grueling workouts, but we have made the best out of what the season has given us" said Captain Kishan Patel. Cross Country is a tiresome sport. Running in hot weather in the summer, and cold rain in the fall is not easy, but when the runners reach that finish line, every second of pain is worth it.



Girls soccer

BY: ISABELLA DANNER

This year's soccer season was a success! Both Junior Varsity and Varsity gave it their all and their hard work has paid off. The varsity team, led by coaches Matthew Roche and Alanna Doran, helped the team finish off their regular season games with a record of ten wins and six losses. This season, the senior captains were Jillian Balsamo, Julianna

LEFT TOP: JUNIOR JAREN BULIYAT LOOKING TO KEEP PACE.
LEFT BOTTOM: SENIOR NICHOLAS VERENDIA ATTACKS AGAINST HIGHLAND PARK.
BELOW: SENIOR TRINITY UPTON CROSSES THE BALL TO A FELLOW TEAMMATE.



Shea, and Trinity Upton. Jillian and Trinity were also the team's leading goal scorers. There was a total of 65 goals and 47 assists throughout the team. St. Thomas' strong defense consists of juniors Angelina Iocca, Kiara Cronin, Melanie Mallari, Victoria Nasto, and Megan Driscoll. The team's goalie, Eryn Oldroyd (junior), saved over 200 shots this season. Varsity's first game in the GMC tournament led them to a tough game against Old Bridge. Although they were knocked out, both coaches and players agree that the game was well fought, especially considering that Old Bridge was ranked much higher than St. Thomas in the tournament.

Junior Varsity also had a spectacular season. Their coach, Michelle Penny, helped them achieve

a record of ten wins, three losses, and one tie. Captains Silvana Guido (sophomore), Emily Scott (junior), and Victoria Tricoles (junior) helped the team reach its potential. Freshman Sophia Guido and Isabella Danner were the primary goal scorers for St. Thomas. In total, the team scored 45 goals. Their goalie, Mackenzie Cruz (freshman), had 65 saves this season. The girls were placed in the third seed of their division and played against JP Stevens for their JV Tournament. Despite the loss, they ended the season confident about their personal and overall improvement over the past few months.

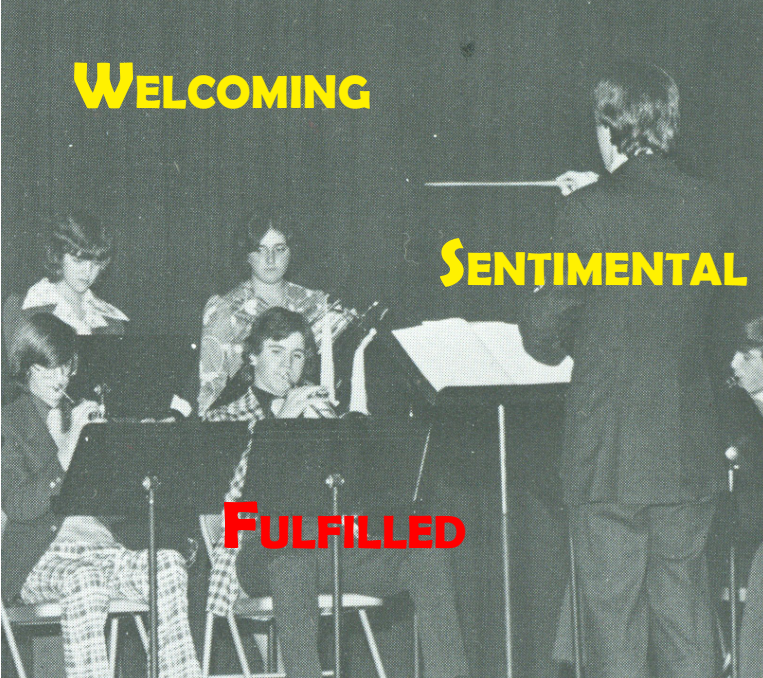
All around, it is fitting to say that the girls from both teams played exceptionally well this season and look forward for all there is to come.



CARING

BRAVE

CLASSY



WELCOMING

SENTIMENTAL

FULFILLED



FUN

MEMORABLE

PROUD



Fifty Years Faith-Filled

To honor the school's "golden anniversary" we are... which the school has grown and flourished into w... we have asked faculty, staff, and students to sur... the page you will see the various responses. We a... for all he has done for us and for all he will cont...



COMMEMORATIVE

AL

INSPIRING

MAGN



MONUMENTAL

SPECIAL

BREATHTAKING

Years of Education



taking the opportunity to remember the roots from
that we know it as today. To add to the celebration,
n up this milestone using only one word. Around
re an extremely blessed community and thank God
inue to do in the years to come. God bless us all.



MILESTONE

MAGNIFICENT



L-INCLUSIVE

COMMUNITY

IFICENT

DEDICATION



BLESSED

FAITHFUL



EXCITING

ICONIC

PHENOMENAL



NICE

INFLUENTIAL

Christmas music wherever and whenever you want



In a society where trends are constantly changing and something that is popular now could be irrelevant in a few weeks, the holiday season is always under fire. When department stores begin lugging out all of the Christmas decorations, clothing, food, candies, etc. many people become angered by the fact that we are skipping so far ahead. One of the aspects of Christmas that is always under attack this time of year is Christmas music. There has been scores written about when the “appropriate” time to begin playing Christmas music is, but let me make this clear to everyone, Christmas

music can be played whenever and wherever you want regardless of how far away Christmas actually is! Allow me to take this opportunity to address some of the common arguments against why you should play Christmas music before the actual holiday season begins.

First and foremost, many people like to argue that when you choose to play Christmas music before December begins you are devaluing the other holidays before it, Halloween and Thanksgiving. This sounds on the surface like a pretty straightforward argument, but I think it can be seen as too simplified. First, Halloween and Thanksgiving are fun holidays, but they certainly don’t live up to Christmas. Second, neither Halloween or Thanksgiving has music specifically dedicated to that holiday. There are some songs that people think are related to Halloween, but it certainly is not to the same extent that Christmas songs are written. Though Halloween and Thanksgiving take place before Christmas, it doesn’t take anything away from those holidays by simply listening to that music. In addition, Advent begins one day before Thanksgiving, and you can’t

argue with the Church’s calendar! And besides, if Mary knew about Jesus’s birth nine months in advance, what’s wrong with me listening to Christmas music a few weeks early?

Another argument that people like to make is that if it doesn’t feel or look like Christmas then why are we listening to Christmas music? This argument holds little value when you think about it. I can concede that certain songs do lose their value when played outside of the Christmas season, but that certainly is not every song. Even if you eliminate every song that mentions snow, cold weather, or warm fires, you still have plenty of other songs that can be played and enjoyed year round! There is no other genre of music that is deemed to be acceptable only during certain parts of the year and yet because we have labeled it “Christmas” music, you have suddenly eliminated it from the rest of the year. From my perspective that simply eliminates good songs from the rest of the year for no reason.

Now let’s talk about the math portion of this argument. If you were to listen to Christmas songs for 24 hours a day from Black Fri-

day to Christmas Day, you would only have listened to one fiftieth of the near million Christmas songs that exist. Now, if you were to listen to Christmas songs 365 days a year non-stop, you would only be able to listen to one fifth of all the Christmas songs in existence. Now, I’m not saying that I want to listen to every Christmas song in existence, but I can sure try, and to do so, I’d have to start way more than 26 days in advance. And, if you mean to tell me that Mariah Carey doesn’t reach her peak in “All I Want for Christmas is You”, or that Kelly Clarkson’s “Wrapped in Red” album isn’t the perfect pairing of festiveness and pop radio, you would be mistaken.

Overall, music should be enjoyed. If chestnuts roasting on an open fire just happens to be a fire pit in the middle of someone’s mosquito infested backyard that’s great! It does not matter where it is being listened to or when; instead all that matters is if you enjoy the music and if it brings you joy. Merry Christmas to all and to all a good Christmas playlist! Unless you are cotton-headed ninny muggins, in which case keep listening to regular music.

Christmas music for when it’s actually Christmas

Recently as I was running errands with my mom, I came across a massive Christmas display for all to see outside of the Home Depot. Not only were there Christmas shrubs of all different shapes and sizes, but all of the summer and fall items were outside on clearance. When you walked inside the store, it became even more apparent that Christmas was coming with an enormous Christmas village display right at the front of the store, a life-size Santa Claus, and Christmas music blaring. I could walk by everything and ignore the rampant consumerism. What I could not ignore though was the music. The ear-piercing sound of Mariah Carey’s “All I Want for Christmas is You” was too much for me considering the fact that Halloween had just ended and Thanksgiving is still so far away. Christmas music before Thanksgiving is a step too far. Not only is it unacceptable, but it also puts a damper on the days and weeks leading up to Christmas. It must stop.

The major reason why Christmas music should only be played

during a set time period is because it rushes everything else that comes before it. When you look at the basic calendar of events starting with Halloween, everything is perfectly spaced out so that you have plenty of time to enjoy all that the seasons have to offer. Leading up to Halloween is the perfect time to start breaking out all the pumpkin flavored drinks and snacks and to get yourself ready for trick or treating and costumes. November should be focused solely on preparing for Thanksgiving. November should be a time for family and friends and the month should culminate with the biggest dinner of the year and a mad rush to kick off the holiday shopping season. Please don’t get me wrong, the moment Thanksgiving is over we should usher in the Christmas season and play as much Christmas music as our hearts desire, but up to that point it should be off limits. When we begin playing Christmas carols on the radio and on television ads, it takes away from the other holidays that people are celebrating and it

makes everything else feel rushed.

Another reason why there should be a ban on Christmas music before Thanksgiving comes is because regardless of how many different Christmas songs there are, the media chooses to focus heavily on the same six or seven songs to the point of insanity. I stated earlier that I have a personal beef with Mariah Carey’s “All I Want for Christmas is You,” but that is for obvious reasons. It is clearly the most overplayed song of the Christmas season and it is a song that everyone knows the words to. Knowing the words is fine, but trying to recreate the high notes that Mariah Carey can hit over and over again is where I must draw the line. In addition to Mariah, there are a number of other songs from various artists and movies that are always played regardless of whether or not they’re appropriate for the time. Listening to songs talk about snow falling and the need for gloves, hats, and winter jackets while I’m enjoying temperatures in the mid to low 40s just doesn’t make sense. And yet ra-

dio stations will play them over and over because during this time of the year they will not play anything else.

It becomes mind-numbing to be subjected to the same songs, about the same holiday for more than just one month. Listening to Christmas music should be a fun time to celebrate because Christmas is coming closer. It shouldn’t be something that is taken for granted, that is rushed, or that is cheapened because we don’t have the patience to cherish the time we have before us.



TO BETTER UNDERSTAND HOW THE SCHOOL HAS CHANGED OVER THE PAST FIFTY YEARS, WE SAT DOWN WITH SCHOOL COUNSELOR, MRS. DENISE MARKERT, AND HER DAUGHTER SENIOR AMANDA MARKERT AND ASKED THEM ABOUT THEIR EXPERIENCES AT THEIR SHARED HIGH SCHOOL.

Satoma:

What was your first day of school like?

Mrs. Markert:

My first day of high school was pretty much exactly the same as it is today. We had a Mass and orientation, walking through our schedule and getting lost in the hallways just as much as new students do today. It was a little easier to navigate, however, since the “new wing” wasn’t even a thing back then! I remember I wasn’t nervous at all. I was very excited to meet new people.

Amanda:

I don’t remember it being too stressful. We had a lot of different things to do to help acclimate us into the school. It also helped that I had been playing volleyball before we actually started school.

Satoma:

What was your favorite athletic memory from school?

Mrs. Markert:

Since I wasn’t even close to being considered an athlete, I guess my favorite athletic memory was attending all the football games. The sound of the band playing the various themes and songs throughout the game still stays with me today; even now I get some flashbacks when I attend football games.

Amanda:

Literally everything with volleyball! I’m very competitive and I really love my team. From struggling through the season during our freshmen year to having an amazing year and a fun senior night, I’ve made some wonderful memories and have made some really lasting friendships.

Satoma:

What were things that you were involved in at school?

Mrs. Markert:

Regrettably, I wasn’t able to get as involved as I would have liked. I did, however, become a member of the Color Guard and CSAC (yes, we had CSAC even way back then!). Another club that I was a member of that is no longer here was SADD (Students Against Drunk Driving).

Amanda:

I am on the PINK Executive Board, Co-President of the Photography Club, Varsity Volleyball Team, and have been a leader of my class in service hours for the past three years.



THREE DIFFERENT MARKERTS HAVE ATTENDED ST. THOMAS AQUINAS/BISHOP AHR HIGH SCHOOL. STARTING FROM THE LEFT: AMANDA, MRS. DENISE MARKERT, AND JESSICA

Satoma:

What was your favorite spiritual memory from school?

Mrs. Markert:

My favorite spiritual memory was probably the year we had our first Ahr Star. I remember being in the gym around Christmas time watching our students bring out various Christmas gifts for him. I also remember a very scary-looking Mickey Mouse costume that one of our students wore! I don’t think our Ahr Star recipient was scared, but it kind of freaked ME out!

Amanda:

It is by far my first BGA/STA Mass. It was so different from any Mass I had ever gone to in middle school and it made me really excited to grow in my faith. The music and the cheering and dancing really helped!

Satoma:

What was your favorite social memory from school?

Mrs. Markert:

My favorite social memory is probably just hanging out on nice days before practice started with friends. As I said before, this was all before the new wing was built, so the area outside was much bigger. We would just sit out on the grass in the sun and socialize before the work started.

Amanda:

Being able to go to junior and senior prom last year was really amazing and was so much fun. I also loved being able to be a fan at the boys basketball game against Spotswood. When we beat them the stands went crazy and everyone was laughing and having a great time!

Dangers of sleep and electronics

BY: ASHLEY PEREZ

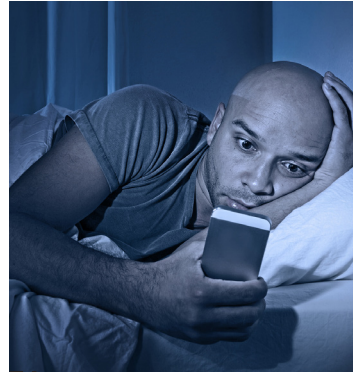
How many hours of the day are you on your phone? Is it longer than the amount of hours you should be sleeping? Studies now show that most students today are lacking the sufficient amount of sleep. Average high-schoolers get approximately 6.8 hours of sleep a night, but the necessary amount of sleep that students should be getting at a minimum is 8.5 hours. If students started to sleep the necessary minimum every night, research shows they would be able to properly function through a normal school day. According to newly published research, not having enough sleep is more harmful today than the negative effects of social media. Professor Russell Viner, a co-author

of a study from the UCL Great Ormond Street institute of child health, said: "While we obsess a lot about social media, how much do we obsess about how much our young people sleep? Not very much – but it is a more important factor, actually, in determining their mental health."

Although there are some studies that indicate social media causes an increased amount of mental health issues, there are still questions as to whether or not there is a direct correlation or if sleep is also a contributing factor to many of the issues. Regardless of individual beliefs, all of the research suggests that a lack of sleep makes you more prone to serious medical issues such as: high blood pressure, heart disease, and mental illness.

One question that arises from all of

the research available is whether social media is leading to young adults and children having poor sleeping habits. Scientists are careful when looking at this because issues such



THE LIGHTS FROM PHONES CAN CAUSE ISSUES WITH SLEEP REM CYCLES

as internet addiction and stress can cause sleep problems on their own without social media specifically being included. Social media is correlated to stress and depression, two main factors of insomnia, a common sleeping problem. Additionally to this, the blue light illuminating from electronic devices disrupt the body's natural circadian rhythm cycle. Overall time and frequency spent on social media, have been linked to developing sleep problems. Even though there are still many questions that need to be answered, all researchers can agree that limiting time on social media, turning off all electronics at least an hour before bed, and performing a relaxing bedtime routine can help to straighten out sleeping schedules and leads to deeper and more meaningful sleep.

Death of terrorist leader a shock

BY: KRISTEL RAMBAUD

On Sunday, October 27th, President Donald Trump announced from the White House that the United States had successfully completed a special operations mission to find and target Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the leader of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, or ISIS. President Trump spoke for roughly an hour, first announcing what he is deeming, "the top national security priority" of his administration and then taking

questions from reporters present. This announcement, which is being hailed by many in the media and the US government as a significant step against the terror group, came as a surprise to many Americans and others around the world. After certifying the news stories that had been leaking out about al-Baghdadi's death, President Trump spent a large portion of his announcement explaining in very vivid detail how the operation occurred and what

the end results were. According to Trump, the mission was a "complete success" and went exactly how the government had planned with little issue. To fully understand the significance of this announcement though, it is important to understand who al-Baghdadi was, what his goals in the Middle East were, and what the lasting impacts of his radical and hate-filled ideology will be.

Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi came to power as the new head of a small militia group that had not yet come to be known as the Islamic State. At the time, the group was struggling, but under Baghdadi the group flourished to eventually take control of land in northern Iraq and Syria, which eventually was declared a caliphate, a country ruled by Islam. In 2014, Baghdadi declared himself the caliph, or religious leader, of this new land and ushered in a new era of terror and radicalism throughout the Middle East and eventually the rest of the world. ISIS eventually became a worldwide terror organization that has influence throughout not only the Middle East where it is headed, but also has large followings in Africa and the South Pacific. It was under Baghdadi's rule that the group was able to reach its apex.

Things began to change for Baghdadi beginning in 2016 and 2017 when the United States, under newly

elected President Trump, began to increase their strategy of pressure on ISIS in the Middle East with the help of the Syrian Kurds, an ally of the US with a strong military presence in northern Syria. The Kurds along with US servicemen and servicewomen began to steadily decrease the last holdings of the Islamic State until finally in early 2019 the United States officially declared that the caliphate had fallen and all territory, which ISIS had previously claimed as their own was now free.

The beginning of the end for al-Baghdadi came in June of this past summer. The United States with assistance from the Syrian Kurds were able to detain two former ISIS members who had very close relations with al-Baghdadi. One of those detained was a former wife of al-Baghdadi, and was able to give information regarding the location of the compound he was hiding out in. The United States worked with other countries in the region to verify this information and went through military channels to get approval for a raid. When all was said and done, the United States completed a two-hour long operation with only two men injured and a US attack dog also harmed. There were no deaths on the American side and Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi was no longer a physical threat to the world.



ABU BAKR AL-BAGHDADI PICTURED IN THE LAST VIDEO MESSAGE THE FORMER LEADER OF ISIS POSTED TO MEMBERS OF THE TERROR GROUP IN APRIL OF 2019.

Loss of trees leaves hotter temps in cities

BY: ITALIA WILEY

Trees are very important to the United States. In the summer, they can make it almost 10 degrees cooler with the shade that they provide and lower hot temperatures throughout the day, especially during the peak of the day when it is the hottest. According to the US Forest Service, The U.S. is losing about 36 million trees a year, and found that the total amount of trees that are in the United States has dropped 1% in the past 5 years. David Nowak is a senior US Forest Service scientist and co-author of the study. He says, "If we continue on this path, cities will become warmer, more polluted and generally more unhealthy for inhabitants." Nowak's research and the subsequent study that was published can be summarized simply as humans need trees to live and the planet is losing its trees.

There are many reasons for why the amount trees in the United States

is declining, such as hurricanes, fires, disease, insects, and tornados, but the main factor is the negative impact that humanity is having on the environment. One major factor is the continuing development of cities and the ever-increasing population in those areas. Trees are being torn down on a consistent basis and communities are finding that urban forests are harder to keep up with because of the pavement, asphalt, and constant construction. The average temperature of cities is also increasing drastically because of the lack of shade provided by trees and the temperature of the concrete roads rising during the summer. Another issue that trees are facing is that humans struggle to give trees the appropriate time and care necessary for success. Just because a tree is planted, doesn't mean it's finished. Trees need a lot of maintenance and care to maintain healthy branches, a deep root system, and continual growth. One good

way to do this is to actually prune trees to remove dead or decaying branches so that new life can flourish. People can also help tree loss by protecting what is already planted on their property and helping to cultivate growth or by planting more.

Trees benefit people in many ways like reducing heat and air pollution, improving water quality, and improving human health overall. Nowak also states that there are downsides

to trees because of allergies or raking leaves, but there are ways to get around that by getting medicine and hiring someone to do your leaves for you. The positive benefits of trees surely outweigh the negative impacts that they can have on some people. Trees are necessary for healthy communities and for the healthy development of children. The more that children expose themselves to trees the healthier they become.



ABOVE, RESIDENTS OF NEW YORK ARE DEALING WITH HIGHER TEMPERATURES AS TREES ARE BEING REMOVED. BELOW, EL NINOS ARE MAKING STORMS MORE AGGRESSIVE AND WETTER CAUSING MORE DAMAGE TO AREAS HIT. (ALL PHOTOS ARE COURTESY OF GOOGLE IMAGES.)

Storms are worsening across the continent

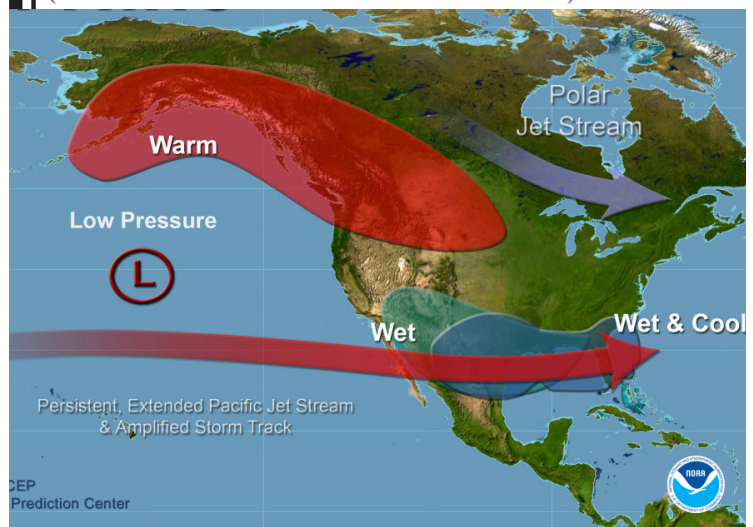
BY: MARIE MAURO

The Earth is getting warmer whether we want to admit it or not. One of the greatest indicators of this phenomenon is that El Niños are getting stronger. An El Niño is a naturally occurring irregular flow of warm ocean surface waters, which appears in the Pacific Ocean to the coast of western South America, mostly during December. El Niños prevent the cool, nutrient-rich deeper waters from rising to the surface. This causes irregular and extreme weather to occur such as floods, droughts, and other forms of weather phenomenons.

Climate change is making these El Niños more intense and causing more "super" El Niños, or ones that are more intense than normal. Researchers have studied thirty-three El Niño events that happened between 1901-2017. They concluded from their research that since the

late 1970s, El Niños are starting to transpire thousands of miles farther west than they had previously. This is a problem since ocean water is naturally much warmer where the storms are now beginning. As a result, these El Niños are more extreme and can lead to super El Niños.

Since 1978, there were eleven El Niños that took place and all of them happened in the Western Pacific or Central Pacific Ocean. Three super El Ninos arose since then, pushing world record temperatures to occur and causing many irregular weather patterns. El Niños are known for altering weather patterns worldwide; in California during the winter, the state is pounded with harsh storms as a result of El Niños. Three super El Niños occurred in the years 1982, 1998, and 2015-2016. Super El Niños like these can cause temperatures to fluctuate, can destroy coral reefs, and can flood certain areas of the



Earth, while others are in drought.

El Niños can obviously cause a lot of damage, but the question is what will happen in future years if the Earth continues to get warmer? Many scientists are still uncertain as to what results in the future would look like. However as of now we already know that the increase of water temperatures are a result of

climate change, which is greatly affecting things. It is especially getting more dangerous since El Niño events starting in the Western Pacific Ocean cause more damage internationally. Climate change is definitely leaving its mark onto our world which is why it is so important to address it and find more ways to combat it and understand it.

'Joker' is no laughing matter

BY: RYAN SOLAMANTE AND
PAM MOHABEER

Todd Phillips' "Joker" hit theaters October 4th, 2019 and the hype for this highly anticipated movie is justified by its numbers. It raked in a whopping \$93.5 million on its opening weekend and is projected to earn \$834 million worldwide. The movie features Arthur Fleck (Joaquin Phoenix), a mentally ill nobody in society who eventually snaps and goes on a murderous rampage in the city of Gotham. One of the unique aspects of this film is that over the previous few decades in which movies and comics about the Joker have been written, none have ever depicted a "true" backstory of the character "The Joker." Each film has taken a unique look at the character and added their own unique twist. For instance, in Phillips' adaptation of the character he used inspiration from Alan Moore and Brian Bolland's 1988 graphic novel "The Killing Joke," which presents the character as a failed comedian gone bad. Given the freedom to creatively tell his own ver-

sion of the story, Phillips created a jaw-dropping film, which delivers a shockingly violent take on the Batman villain's past and is definitely a must see for fans of Batman stories.

The movie initially tries to move the audience to feel sympathetic for the protagonist by introducing his childhood filled with abuse and suffering. As the movie continues though, Fleck is shown to be a bro-

ken man shown to have grave mental issues of various sorts. In addition to battling depression, Fleck exhibits signs of psychosis in which the Joker experiences such traumatic episodes that he loses touch with reality. This psychosis is characterized by erotomanic delusions in which he believes that another character in the film is in love with him even though the evidence is contrary, he has disorga-

nized thoughts, and exhibits possible hallucinations throughout the film.

There are many things to enjoy about this adaptation of the Batman villain, but one aspect in which all fans seem to agree is that Joaquin Phoenix shines as the "Clown Prince of Crime." Phoenix's intensity throughout the performance combined with his physical movements and facial expressions on camera leave audiences feeling an array of emotions including anger and support. Phoenix's physical appearance was also a huge talking point throughout the film. The actor spent time prepping for the film purposely choosing to lose fifty-two pounds and allowing his body to shrink so that his bones appeared to pop out of his skin. In addition to the on-screen visual element of the film, the soundtrack is extraordinary and provides a new layer to the film and keeps audiences on the edge of their seats. Anyone who has seen movies connected to Batman and the Gotham universe will enjoy this new adaptation of the Joker and should try to see it before it leaves theaters.



JOAQUIN PHOENIX PLAYS THE "JOKER" AND EXPERIENCES MENTAL BREAKDOWNS THROUGHOUT THE FILM AS HE TRANSFORMS INTO THE GOTHAM VILLAIN (PHOTO COURTESY OF GOOGLE IMAGES).

Vampires for a modern audience in 'Legacies'

BY: SAMANTHA SOLDO

When you think of seeing vampires on your television, you probably imagine "Twilight", or maybe even "Buffy the Vampire Slayer." In recent times, however, a new series has made its way into mainstream TV, and the supernatural encounters don't just stop at vampires.

Whether you've heard of it or not, "Legacies", a fast-paced boarding school drama that includes a few more mythical elements than the average high school does, has become one of the leading shows on the CW network, up there with popular sagas such as "Riverdale" and "Charmed." What sets Legacies apart from those shows, however, is that it's a spin-off show born of two highly rated watches that came before it: The Vampire Diaries and the Originals. Set in modern times, "Legacies" follows the story of Hope Mikaelson, a witch-vampire-werewolf tribrid born of Klaus and Hayley, the two protagonists of the Originals. As a teenager, Hope battles against all the usual problems of a teenager, plus a

few extras, such as mummies, sirens, evil genies, and more. Side by side with Hope are characters such as Josie and Lizzie, two twin witches fathered by Alaric (a recurring character from "The Vampire Diaries") and her love interest Landon, who just so happens to be a Phoenix. Through it all, Hope perseveres and manages to maintain somewhat of a normal life, attending a boarding school for the (supernaturally) gifted with teenagers just like her.

I wasn't always a fan of supernatural shows, but I can confidently say that "Legacies" changed that opinion for me. What I like most about this show is that even though it's highly unrealistic, with teenage vampires and witches running around constantly, there's a certain atmosphere to it that preserves the type of relatable content that teenagers like to see in shows about their age group. Even though I personally do not attend a boarding school with a tribrid commanding the halls, I still find myself able to enjoy and make connections to "Legacies" because of

the show's skilled way of touching on problems teenagers deal with, such as relationships, friendships, sibling quarrels, and more. The show also catches my attention because of all the action it features, never giving me a break from hanging onto the edge of my seat. In every episode, there is a new monster to be encountered, all ultimately leading up to one final showdown. In most sci-fi shows, there's just one villain, but Legacies gives viewers a

taste of every creature under the sun, from haunted unicorns to demon ghosts. It is safe to say that watching "Legacies", you'll never be bored.

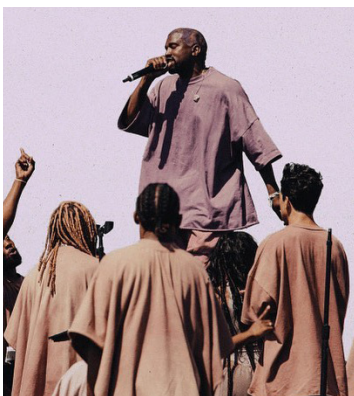
All in all, while the show had some pretty big shoes to fill, following the popularity of the Vampire Diaries and the Originals, Legacies revolutionizes supernatural characters in modern day TV, adding twists and turns that can appeal to any type of viewer, whether they themselves are vampires or not!



"LEGACIES" GIVES FANS A MODERN AND RELATABLE LOOK AT TEENAGE PROBLEMS WITH A HINT OF THE SUPERNATURAL (PHOTO COURTESY OF GOOGLE IMAGES).

Kanye misses the mark in 'Jesus is King'

BY: AN NGUYEN



KANYE WEST LEADS A CONGREGATION IN WORSHIP (PHOTO COURTESY OF GOOGLE IMAGES).

For Kanye West's ninth studio album, "Jesus is King", he chooses to explore gospel music with a rather unique take on the traditional genre. West spends under thirty minutes, twenty-seven to be exact, and eleven

songs to take a stab at creating music that is not only moving from a listening standpoint, but also from a spiritual standpoint, a tall task for any artist. As West navigates his way through the album, listeners experience a variety of different sounds and styles, but nothing that is all that unique or emotive. Although there are some songs that catch the listener's attention, the album is mostly filled with short riffs that don't have enough depth to really leave a mark.

Jesus is King begins with an upbeat, catchy track titled "Every Hour," which features the Sunday Service Choir. It is a fast-paced song, which to a non-gospel listener sounds like gospel, but is over before you know it and does not actually feature Kanye West at all. In another track, "Selah," which is a Biblical word from Psalms and Habakkuk at the end of the verse meaning an exclamation, West presents a more traditional version of the Kanye that fans have become familiar with, but this surely stands

as an outlier. Throughout the rest of the album, listeners are given a very disjointed and brief look into what West was trying to produce.

One area in which West really struggles throughout the album is the lyrics. The first and most obvious example of this is in a song titled, "Closed on Sunday." The basic premise of the song is found in the title that Sundays should be used for worship and for family. The meaning is not where the issue lies, but rather the constant refrain of the song, which is sung so many times that it almost becomes mind-numbing. The exact quote from the song is "Closed on Sunday, you my Chick-fil-A." This example does not stand as an outlier on the album either. In a track titled, "On God," West continues to talk about the need for Jesus in his life and this time uses the Bible as his main source of inspiration. He mentions various Bible verses, but nothing really jumps out as anything overly complex. One line in particular helps to summarize the rap-

per's struggles with this new project. West is explaining in the song about the need for God and says that when he was little he thought the "Book of Job was just a job..." Again the lyrics appear to be a very simplistic take on religion and gospel.

One strength of the album comes from the composition of each song. West does have a unique approach to creating the music itself. There is a wonderful blend of Gospel-esque organs throughout the album paired well with some more modern style drums beats, which are catchy to listen to. In addition, West also chooses to use groovy, hip-hop style bass guitar riffs to give a certain funk to each song.

Overall, Kanye's newest album struggles to leave "Yeezy" fans feeling satisfied. There are moments of hope and bright spots throughout the album, but as a whole listeners are left feeling like there should be something more coming and that this is simply a one off and not a newly reinvented Kanye West.

iPhone 11 meets the hype, but at a cost

BY: THOMAS KOENIG

Technology is getting better and sometimes it feels like it is impossible to keep up. Televisions, automobiles, cell phones, and many more personal tech devices offer us the latest in technological breakthroughs in the fastest manner possible. With all of these technological advances, competition has become the norm. Every company is on a mission to create the newest, most advanced, and most futuristic device possible while at the same time producing it in such a fast manner that consumers feel it necessary to keep up lest their personal device become obsolete. In the midst of all of this competition, Apple has recently released its iPhone 11 Pro just in time for the holidays. Providing some of the newest features and most complex functions, it's important to take a closer examination and determine if the phone lives up to the hype.

The iPhone 11 Pro's biggest selling points were features that everyday users would appreciate and would notice almost immediately. The first change comes in the form of a triple-camera system built into

the phone without any needed additions. The standard triple camera on the Pro allows users to capture more of what they love and to do so in the most creative manner possible. Specifically, there are a few major improvements to the camera that allow users to really expand the phone's photo capabilities. First, it allows the person taking the photo to increase the width of the photo, a first for iPhones. Second, it provides users with an improved night mode for those late night memories you want captured. And finally, it has drastically improved upon its High Definition Resolution or HDR capabilities giving photographers better pictures with stronger tones, beautiful shadows and clarity, and natural-looking skin tones. In addition, the iPhone 11 Pro also offers its buyers what is deemed to be the fastest processing chip on any smartphone in production, all day battery life, which for many users is the most important reason to buy the phone, and is water resistant.

With the improvement of so many different features and some slight modifications, it may come as a relief to some that there are still many

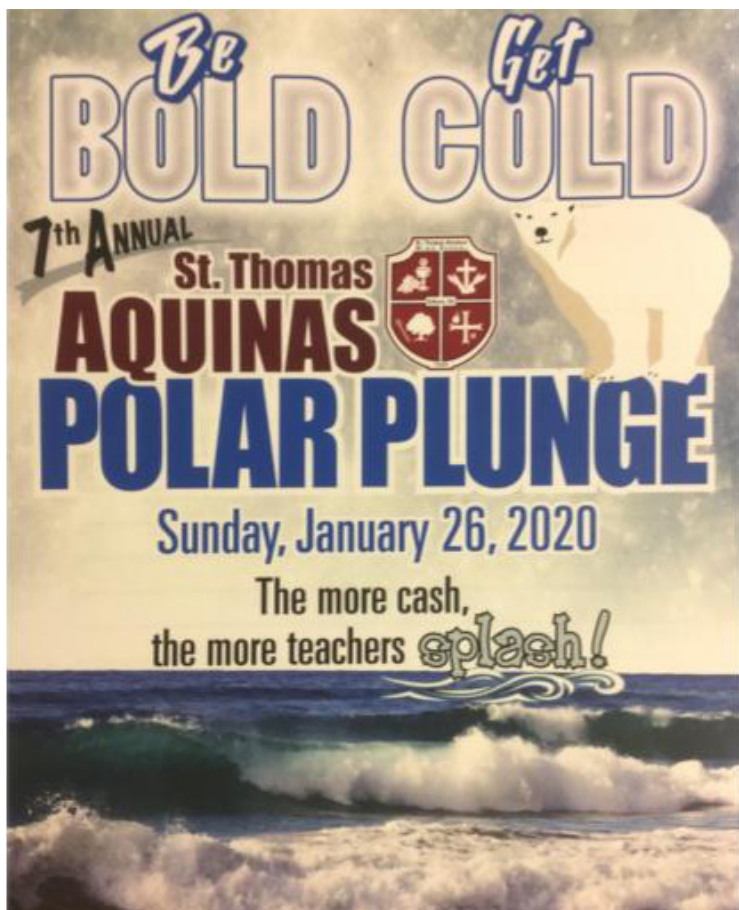
of the traditional iPhone capabilities featured on this phone. First, the basic setup of the iPhone and the functionality remains the same as the iPhone X. Returning Apple users will find Siri still embedded into the software and will notice improvements to her capabilities. In addition, the basic layout of the phone's

various screens remains identical to previous versions of the iPhone models with applications being dragged around the home screen to users liking and the ability to group apps by category. Finally, users will continue to love the simplicity of the facial recognition software to not only unlock the phone, but also to use the newly re-enhanced Apple Pay, which has expanded to include Apple's own credit card if buyers are interested.

With any major technological improvement, obviously one concern that consumers will have to take into account is the cost of the device. For the iPhone 11 Pro, buyers will have to be willing to pay between \$1,000 and \$1,400 depending upon the size of the storage they want. In addition, users will have to consider whether or not to spend money on AppleCare Protection for their device along with whether or not they feel it necessary to buy a case to protect the ever so dangerous glass screen. If cost were not a concern then the iPhone 11 Pro would be a must have for loyal Apple users. But given the projected total cost, it might be worth it to wait a year and see what comes within the next few months.



IPHONE 11 PRO WITH THREE SOLO CAMERAS (PHOTO COURTESY OF GOOGLE IMAGES).



Christmas Food Collection

November 18 - December 13

Collection Items:

Canned Soup, Canned Vegetables, Macaroni, Peanut Butter, Tuna Fish, Powdered Milk, Tomato Sauce, Dried Beans, Stuffing Mix, Cranberry Sauce, Boxed Mashed Potatoes, Bag/Box Rice

Bring Items to 103A!

Snowball 2019



Date: Saturday, December 7, 2019
Time: 7 – 11 p.m.

Where: STA Main Gym

Cost: TDB (payment by check is preferred)

Checks are to be made out to St. Thomas Aquinas High School – not STA)

Tickets go on sale on Friday, November 8th

Only 350 tickets will be sold!

Deadline for ticket sales is Monday, November 18th!

Ticket order forms will be found in your homeroom folder, the Main Office, in the newsletter, and on the STA website beginning Friday, November 8th. When handing in your ticket order form, all information on the ticket order form must be filled out.

When you fill out your ticket order form, you can leave it with the money for the ticket(s) in the envelope in your homeroom folder or in the Snowball Box on the counter in the Main Office.

The S.T.A. Drama Department
Proudly Presents

INTO THE WOODS

Ticket Prices:
\$10 for Students
\$15 for Adults

Tickets on Sale Now!!!

Friday, November 22nd @ 8:00pm
Saturday, November 23rd @ 8:00pm
Sunday, November 24th @ 3:00pm