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THE

# SATOMA

NEWSMAGAZINE

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS HS  
ONE TINGLEY LANE  
EDISON, NEW JERSEY 08820

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CARISSA MATRALE.



Welcome  
AQUINAS STARS





**A) Ms. Rachel Rivera**

1. English III + IV
2. Aquinas College in Santa Paula, CA
3. Singing, reading, writing short stories and playing old video games.
4. My Western Civ and AP Art History teacher Mrs. Holtzman
5. BBC's Sherlock and Doctor Who
6. In N' Out + The Kendall Park Market and Deli
7. I keep my house keys on a Little Mermaid keychain I've had since I was seven.

**B) Mr. Thomas Weiler-**

1. Algebra II
2. Centenary University
3. Basketball, spending time with family and friends
4. My mom!
5. The Office
6. Camillo's in Sayreville
7. I'm the fourth of five boys (3 older brothers and 1 younger.)

**C) Mr. Philip Yip**

1. Chemistry
2. University of North Carolina + Roswell Park Cancer Institute
3. Reading scientific journals
4. High school teachers
5. Nova
6. Bertucci's
7. I enjoy classical music.

**D) Mr. Vincenzo Dama**

1. Religion I + Religion II
2. American University, B.A. in Film and Media Arts
3. Cooking, video games + reading comic books.
4. I was inspired by all of my past teachers here at BGA/STA, specifically Mrs. Gossett, Mr. Cullinan, Ms. Byrne, and Mr. Reilly.
5. It's constantly rotating for me. Right now, I'm watching the Amazon show The Boys.
6. Five Guys and Chipotle.
7. When I was 4 I got 3rd degree burns on my hand when I touched a hot curling iron.

## New Staff on the Block

Some fun facts to help you get to know our new staff:

1. What subject(s) do you teach?
2. What college did you attend?
3. What are your hobbies and interests?
4. What/Who inspired you to become a teacher?
5. What's your favorite TV show? Why?
6. What's your favorite restaurant?
7. What's something that most people don't know about you?

**E) Mr. Scott Barnes**

1. Biology I + U.S. History II
2. Montclair State University. Whoopi Goldberg was at my graduation ceremony!
3. Pop culture, ranging from pretty much everything awesome from the 1980s to modern-day.
4. My high school teachers.
5. Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.
6. Taco Bell for fast food. Bites and Bowls in Milltown is perhaps my current favorite non-chain restaurant.
7. I once helped the East Brunswick Police arrest a pigeon.

**F) Ms. Kasia Ebert**

1. World History + US II
2. Rutgers
3. Formula 1
4. Mr. McCarthy
5. Below Deck
6. Any diner!
7. Mr. Dama was my senior prom date!

**G) Mrs. Lauren Arevalo**

1. Religion III + Religion IV: Christian Life Choices
2. Saint Joseph's University + New York Law School
3. Crafting and anything DIY related!
4. My favorite law school professor
5. Friends!
6. Mama's Cafe Baci in Hackettstown, NJ
7. I've never traveled outside of the United States.

**H) Ms. Amy Kate Byrne**

1. English I, World Literature Honors  
Writing for Publications + Theater Intensive
2. Marist College.
3. Reading, writing, any outdoor activity, and spending time with friends and family.
4. My parents and former Religion teacher Mrs. Cole.
5. Good Omens
6. Applebees because I like eating good in the neighborhood.
7. I have been learning to trapeze for the past 4 years.

**I) Mr. Chris Garr**

1. AP/Honors Physics
2. TCNJ
3. Playing Guitar, snowboarding, gaming.
4. Ms. Savner
5. Mr. Robot
6. Roche Cookie Bake Sales
7. I'm a huge bubble tea fan!

**J) Ms. Sarah Lee**

1. Precalculus Accelerated + Honors
2. Rutgers
3. Attending concerts, traveling, and finding good restaurants.
4. My mom! She was a teacher and I grew up helping her with her lessons.
5. Elf.
6. Poke Nagomi and Jue Lan Kitchen in New York.
7. Little known fact about me- I was a dancer growing up.



**K) Ms. Angela Perino-Ignar**

1. Counseling Secretary
3. Shopping, walking, organizing anything
5. Three's Company! It makes me forget what I was worrying about AND laugh!
6. Stonehouse
7. I can speak "some" Cantonese.

**L) Mrs. Charlotte Caporrino**

1. English I + English II
2. St. Peter's University
3. Yoga, weight training and traveling.
4. I want to be a bright light to students and show them it's 100% ok to be yourself!
6. I love Italian and Mexican food!
7. I have a dachshund named Nelson. I love him so much!

**M) Ms. Rosa Strahl**

1. Algebra 1 + Algebra 1 Accelerated
2. Rowan University
3. When I was in Kindergarten, I had an amazing teacher and wanted to be just like her.
4. Spending time with friends and family, traveling, playing sports, and watching movies. I am also obsessed with Disney!
5. One Tree Hill and Gilmore Girls
6. Any hibachi restaurant
7. I worked at Disney World for 8 months.

**N) Mr. Michael Batkiw**

1. Regular + AP Biology
2. Seton Hall University
3. Traveling, hiking, and shooting sports
4. My college professor
5. Danger Man (UK) Secret Agent (US), The Prisoner and many more.
6. My kitchen, because there is no opening or closing time, I personally know the chef, and it's all you can eat (but eat all you take!)
7. I have visited the highest and lowest point in the contiguous United States.



NEW FACULTY AND STAFF PICTURED FROM LEFT TO RIGHT IN THE ORDER AS LISTED ABOVE: A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N. (IMAGE COURTESY OF STA PRODUCTIONS)

## The Satoma NEWSMAGAZINE

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# Pros of Online Learning



The year 2020 has been chaotic from the start. Due to coronavirus, many aspects of daily life have changed one way or another. For students, a vast majority of them had to transfer to online classes. Online graduate degree programs grew, with more than 6.4 million graduate students taking at least one course online.

While it may have been

difficult for everyone at first, it has shown to have its benefits for teachers and students. The course work given out by teachers was easily accessible from any device (LearningHouse.com reported that 67% of students used a mobile device to complete online course work), and information about any topic was readily available at one's fingertips. Time management was another benefit of online learning. Hours of commute time was saved, since people did not have to travel back and forth to school or classes.

Being online gave students a sense of flexibility, as they did not need to stick to the traditional school schedule and could balance their time more efficiently between other activities, such as work, sports, and other hobbies. Distanced learning, to a certain degree,

also lets students learn more independently. There are more chances to take things at their own pace rather than following everything that the teacher does. Lastly, digital learning also aids and teaches the older generations about technology, as it forces everyone to learn how to confidently use technology and other online tools in a work environment while keeping them in the comfort of their own home. An increasing number of faculty supported the usage of technology regarding education, 39% in 2019 compared to 29% in 2017 (educationdata.org). As the world goes through these rough times, experimenting with different learning methods is very important. It is a learning process for everyone, but as time progresses the best method will be found.

# Cons of Online Learning



Within recent years, education in the twenty-first century has changed drastically. Physical textbooks have been replaced by tablets and online resources. Students can learn from the comfort of their homes, and some teachers even have the opportunity to teach online from other countries. However, this method of learning may not be conducive to all students.

Online learning has been designed for students with self-discipline and motivation. This can be difficult for those who have men-

tal disorders or disruptive family situations at home.

Social interaction is a vital part of the educational system. Although many kids have phones and ways of contacting each other via the Internet, their mental health is more positively affected by in-person contact. Creating relationships with other peers and faculty members gives students a wide network of people to reach out to for help. Not having this as an option can stunt their ability to persevere in school.

Another big factor that negatively impacts online learners is the sole dependence on WiFi and Internet connection. Families with multiple children can have bad Internet connection if all of their kids are in class at the same time, causing strain on their WiFi which can make it hard for them to join class or submit assignments on time. This problem can escalate if the child is younger and needs constant help navigating their online classes. Even communication between instructors and their students can be de-

layed for a few days or more when the instructor has multiple students constantly emailing them asking for help.

Lastly, it is very challenging to gauge how well a class is understanding a particular lesson from the other side of a screen. Most students are not as comfortable asking questions in an online course as they are in an in-person classroom. Most instructors are used to a specific style of teaching so changing their teaching style to fit an online curriculum can pose some challenges; for one thing, they may have to constantly stop to ask if everyone can hear them or if their connection has been cut out. The world is constantly evolving and technology is becoming such a prevalent part of our lives. The question is not about whether online learning should still be an option; it is here to stay. The real question is how does online learning compare to in-person learning and how long will it take before online learning becomes just as effective as its counterpart?

## Pepping up Homecoming

BY: KRISTEL RAMBOUD

Some traditions cannot be stopped, even during a global pandemic. Homecoming is one of them. Despite all the restrictions and changes, Homecoming was still able to be a memorable event for all involved.

This year, the student body got

to celebrate Homecoming festivities with three consecutive days of themed dress down: Hawaiian, Disney, and STA. On October 2nd, the actual day of Homecoming, students showed off their Trojan pride at a pep rally held in the afternoon that celebrated the fall sports teams as

they began their seasons and highlighted this year's senior athletes.

The Homecoming Court was announced at the pep rally. The freshman winners were Michael Corradino and Olivia Alicante. Neal Chonski and Kylie Ferber were the sophomore winners. Kiran Bhattacharya and Morgan Lavelle were the junior winners. Finally, the senior court was announced. The pairs for the senior court were as follows: Joshua Rivera and Anna Caruso, Antonio Ortega and Amaris Hemmingway, Sean O'Leary and Isabella Hamm, and Rylan Krikorian and Eleni Alvarez. Lastly, Jaren Buliyat and Caroline DiMaggio were crowned as this year's king and queen.

Later that day, spectators arrived at the field, ready for an exciting evening. The Marching Trojans took the field to entertain spectators with their rendition of

Queen's "Bohemian Rhapsody."

Immediately after, the football team kicked off its season. They competed against South River Rams in a Friday Night Lights classic. The score went back and forth throughout the night, each team giving it their all every day. The back-and-forth momentum of the game resulted in the 4th quarter ending with the scores tied at 32-32. With the score tied, the teams headed into overtime. The Trojans had the ball first in overtime and took it straight to the endzone for a touchdown to make the score 38-32. On the next drive, the Trojans prevented the Rams from scoring a touchdown, solidifying their victory. Even though traditional Homecoming festivities were different this year, the school spirit and pride from years past were not. STA's pride was still as unshakeable and intact ever, even with an obstacle like COVID-19.



**(LEFT):** STUDENTS CHEER ON THE FALL SPORTS TEAMS AT THE PEP RALLY  
**(RIGHT):** HOMECOMING KING AND QUEEN, JAREN BULIYAT AND CAROLINE DIMAGGIO, RECEIVE THEIR SASHES AND CROWNS.  
 (IMAGES COURTESY OF STA PRODUCTIONS)

## Delivering spaghetti and smiles

BY: KATHERINE IKO

Buon appetito! The Aquinas Star program kicked off their 33rd annual spaghetti dinner welcoming the Spiderman loving three-year-old, Rocco Dimaggio. COVID-19 has affected everyone in all sorts of ways, but the Aquinas Star committee found the perfect way to transition the spaghetti dinner to a curbside event. Aquinas Star co-chair Joseph Simmons said they took inspiration from the Class of 2020's socially distanced graduation ceremony, "The transition was extremely smooth because we took the route they did for graduation, but instead of getting their diplomas, they got spaghetti." Because of its great success, this temporary fix may become a permanent change in the program, finding enlightenment from this pandemic Simmons added, "... we are thinking about doing the take out right after school for years to come."

On Thursday, October 8th, STA gave a warm-hearted welcome to little Rocco and his family, making his first appearance in the STA community. The event kicked off with many volunteers and hard-workers ensuring that the "Spaghetti Your

Way" was a success. As the night went on, the focus shifted from spaghetti to meeting some new faces. Many students, parents, faculty, volunteers, and Bishop James Checchio of the Diocese of Metuchen met the star of the night and his family. Rocco received Spiderman themed presents. Simmons stated, "... it was the highlight of the night..." seeing Rocco overwhelmed with presents. When the night concluded, the biggest fundraiser at STA was over. The fundraiser sold over 600 plates of spaghetti and raised over \$12,000 that will be given to the family. All the hard work put in to welcome Rocco was a success thanks to everyone who participated!

The Aquinas Star program, originally known as Ahr Star, began in 1987 with the sole purpose of providing unconditional love and support to the families who have children that have been diagnosed with a chronic or terminal illness. Rocco was unfortunately diagnosed with Advanced Stage 4 High-Risk Neuroblastoma but has been fighting strong ever since. Rocco resides in Staten Island, New York with his younger brother, Carmine, and his two parents, Rocco and Gabrielle.



**(TOP):** ROCCO SHOWS OFF HIS MUSCLES AS HE AND HIS FAMILY CELEBRATE THE DINNER WITH BISHOP CHECCHIO.  
**(ABOVE LEFT):** JOEY VALENZUELA STYLES HIS SOMBRERO WHILE DELIVERING THE TAKE-OUT BAG TO ALUMNUS JOEY DUNN '20.  
**(ABOVE RIGHT):** STUDENT VOLUNTEERS WAIT WITH TAKE-OUT BAGS TO GREET THE DRIVERS AS THEY ARRIVE.  
 (IMAGES COURTESY OF STA PRODUCTIONS)

# Clubs encourage new thoughts

BY: ALEX SARDIS

School clubs are fun filled organizations whose moderators encourage the student body to become a member of their club's community. School clubs serve to enhance a student's skills, develop new ones, open their minds to current events, teach valuable lessons, and have them actively engage in conversations, projects, or

activities. School clubs provide relief after a long day of studying in school and can often cause new friendships to form. So, with all of that said, what clubs can STA students join?

African-American Heritage Club, run by Ms. Smith, raises awareness about the African-American culture and history, both on a local and national level. Art Club, whose moderator is Ms. Walker, enhances a student's

creativity. The club allows them to explore various art styles, letting their talents shine! Book Club, which is run by Ms. Penny, encourages its members to enjoy reading and enhances their knowledge of literature.

CSAC, run by Sister Cynthia, provides numerous service opportunities to the student body. From coat and blanket drives to making cards for the Sisters, CSAC covers it all! Creative Writing Club, run by Mr. Mrozek, allows members to share their works, give feedback, and learn how to better their writing skills. Members learn about aspects of creative writing like plot development and worldbuilding. D20 club, run by Mr. Mascaro, mixes tabletop gaming with creative writing. Club members create their characters to interact in a sharded-world and face new challenges each week.

Environmental Service Club, run by Mr. Barnes, is all about campus-wide cleanup and reducing the carbon footprint. Members actively participate in recycling programs. Another club run by Mr. Barnes is Gaming Club. Gaming Club regularly takes place in video game-related challenges and tournaments. Currently they are working on an Among Us challenge. Mr.

Barnes is also the moderator for Robotics Club. Students learn all about the science behind coding! Students can reach out to Mr. Barnes to get involved in Comic Book Club and Hope For Animals. Comic Book Club members read and analyze comic books. They partake in lively discussions over their shared interests. Hope for Animals advocates for the wellbeing of all animals through school wide projects and events.

Fishing Club, run by Mr. O'Keefe, is all about fishing trips and learning tips and tricks. Students learn how to fish and the best bait to use. Future Lawyers Club, run by Mr. Mascaro, features live debates and mock trials to prepare students for court. Medical Explorers Club, run by Mr. Yip, educates students on what it takes to pursue a medical career. Model UN, run by Mr. Mrozek, is for students interested in learning about international affairs, as well as discussing and resolving global issues.

Finally, P. in.K, which stands for Power in Knowledge, is run by Mrs. Veni and Mrs. Markert. P.in.K is an all female group which educates young girls about self defense, and raises awareness for important women issues.



SENIORS CARISSA MATRALE, ABBY CHADWICK, AND KIARA CRO-  
NIN TYE DYE CLOTHES DURING STEM CLUB.  
(IMAGE COURTESY OF STA PRODUCTIONS)

## Student service focused on school and community improvement

BY: RAJASVI PATEL

Service is an integral part of being a student today. In addition to academic growth, STA strongly promotes spiritual growth in the form of service. All students attending STA are highly motivated to perform acts of service for others, both for the school and for the local communities.

Service is not only a big part of high school but is also very beneficial for college. Service is something that most colleges look for in their applicants. It can increase the chances of earning scholarships or being accepted into specialized programs. Service also provides sparks of inspiration in connection to a unique experience.

Recently, the required number of service hours per year to be eligible for the National Honors Society has been changed to twenty-five. During freshman year, students are required to complete twenty-five hours of community service as a part of

their religion grades. Although not required, upperclassmen are highly encouraged to continue to search for and join opportunities to serve others. Service is often done through the end of senior year as it is required that all students have a minimum of 200 hours in order to graduate.

Throughout the year, there are many chances for students to participate in school service activities. One of the major portals for service is the Christian Social Action Club (CSAC). By joining this program, students continue to "build the foundation for infinite possibilities." Chances to serve are mentioned on a daily basis and often posted on external sources, such as the school website. CSAC sponsors numerous service opportunities for students to partake in throughout the school year. One of the CSAC events includes the Blanket and Coat Drive, which took place from October 20 through October 22, 2020. During this collection, families came together to collect

blankets and coats to support others by providing warmth for people who may not be able to do so alone. Another important collection is the Thanksgiving Turkey collection from November 11th to the 12th. With a whopping five hours per turkey, this was a great way to earn some hours and help a family enjoy the holidays.

For Christmas, CSAC hosts Operation Christmas Child, a chance for students to donate presents in shoe boxes to ensure that needy children, globally, can still enjoy the holiday season. This year, the boxes' collection dates were from October 27 to October 29, 2020. STA also adopts two families from Catholic charities that the religion classes will buy gifts for. Towards the end of the winter sports season, CSAC sponsors the Hoops for Heart charity basketball game to raise awareness and funds for the American Heart Association. This is a great opportunity to have some fun while also contributing to an important cause. STA consistently

donates to the American Heart Association and was even awarded a grant for a new AED system.

During the school day, students can participate in service by: arranging lunches for local soup kitchens, decorating lunch paper bags, assisting a staff or faculty member, or writing notes to senior citizens and Felician Sisters. Some ongoing service opportunities include sending virtual cards to Felician Sisters and donating any of the following items: non-perishable food items, used cell phones, used prescription eyeglasses, soda tabs, and/or Box Tops for education. As more possibilities arise, announcements will be made and posted around the school.

The community welcomes every student to participate in any service activity to give back to the community. Some organizations even offer life skills. These include the Student Ambassadors and the Student CMTs. It is a great idea to get involved in service as early as possible.

## All caught up with the Kardashian family

BY: SARA ASDHIR

After 14 years, 20 seasons, over 200 episodes, and 10 babies later, reality TV show “Keeping Up With The Kardashians” is saying goodbye to the screens. Since 2007, the family has been giving fans the inside scoop on their personal life and sharing their biggest milestones with the entire world. After the death of their father Robert George Kardashian, attorney of OJ Simpson during his murder trial in 2003, the Kardashians took advantage of their public profile. They launched one of the most successful billion dollar brands, the Kardashians. After watching crazy, unforgettable holiday episodes, Christmas card photoshoots, wedding specials, and tons of spin offs, fans almost feel like part of the family. From Kendall and Kylie’s sibling drama, to Kim losing her \$75K diamond earring while being thrown in the ocean in Bora Bora, a major part of their rise to stardom is the highly relatable yet unrealistic glamorous content the Kardashians post. This content appeals to a variety of audi-

ences for many reasons. The range of personalities throughout the family are also part of their huge appeal. Whether it be Kendall’s carefreeness or Khloe’s undying energy and OCD, the Kardashians know how to keep fans always wanting more. Throughout the past 14 years, watchers have witnessed the Kardashians transform from kids to full on business people, dominating some of the biggest industries in fashion and beauty. Kendall and Kylie especially grew up in the limelight and viewers watched them build their own personalities and careers. With their every move traced in the spotlight and an enormous amount of publicity on the entire family, unlike other reality shows, fans feel connected to them and their not so personal lives. KUWTK brought the family their biggest opportunities like Kendall’s huge career in modeling, Kourtney’s wellness blog, and turned Kim and Kylie into billionaires. After growing up with the show and starting their own families, the Kardashians mutually decided that Keeping Up

With The Kardashians was too big of a job to keep up with. Filming and coordinating meetings with each of their busy schedules was becoming a lot. The family wanted to end KUWTK on a “high note”, and focus on their family’s individual brands. The Kardashians have already expanded their names beyond the reality show, creating multi million

dollar brands like Kylie Cosmetics, Skims, DASH, Poosh, Kendall and Kylie for Pacsun, Good American, and more. The girls, Robert, and momager Kris, together are worth at least 2 billion dollars, basically set for the rest of their lives. The show made them who they are, and although it may be ending, fans will keep “keeping up” no matter what.



THE KARDASHIANS HAVE CERTAINLY CHANGED A LOT FROM SEASON 1 TO SEASON 20 OF THEIR SHOW. (IMAGE COURTESY OF GOOGLE IMAGES)

## Which console will conquer?

BY: LISA MOHABER

This November we will witness a battle between two of the biggest names in gaming: Microsoft and Sony. The Xbox Series X is set to release on November 10 at a price of \$499 (*Xbox.com*). Microsoft is also launching a cheaper version: The Xbox series S, with no disk drive, for \$299 (*Xbox.com*). On the other hand, Sony has announced the Playstation 5 will release on November 12, two days later than the Xbox series X. The PS5 will also be priced at \$499 (*Playstation.com*) along with a digital edition that excludes the disk drive which will cost \$399 (*Playstation.com*).

In general, both consoles are about the same. The Playstation 5 and Xbox Series X both contain 16 GB of memory and support 4k and 8k resolution gaming. While most people do not own 8k television or produce games with 8k resolution, Sony and Microsoft are preparing for the future. Jason Ronald, the director of program management for the Xbox Series X, stated, “When we designed the Xbox Series X... we designed it with the next seven to ten years in mind. So we’ve ab-

solutely designed the system to be able to do 8k.” Another prominent feature both consoles have is the incorporation of ray-tracing, a technology that makes light and shadow look better in-game. The Playstation 5 and Xbox Series X also offer 3D audio for an immersive sound.

Starting off with the processor, also known as the CPU, the Xbox Series X is slightly more powerful than the Playstation 5 so it is unlikely there will be a big difference in gameplay. The Xbox’s processor can go up to clock speeds at 3.8 Gigahertz compared to the PS5 which has 3.5 Gigahertz. This is not a major difference so it should not affect much. Microsoft appears to have a slight advantage when it comes to graphics. The Xbox Series X has 1.7 more teraflops (a unit measuring computing speed) on its GPU than the PS5 does. Generally the more processing power a console has on its GPU, the better a game will look. It is not over for Sony, however. The Playstation has differences in the architecture of its GPU which may perform better than it appears.

Running out of storage on a console can be very irritating. This is where Microsoft wins; the Xbox

series X has one terabyte of internal storage, whereas the Playstation 5 has 825 GB. However, this should not be a problem because both Microsoft and Sony have developed cloud gaming solutions- Playstation Now and Project xCloud. Here is where Sony has an advantage. The PS5 can interpret data at 5.5 GB per second, compared to the Xbox which works at 2.4 GB per second. This means PS5 users will spend less time waiting on a loading screen.

Sony has revealed the DualSense controller will use haptic feedback, replacing the DualShock 4’s rumble technology. The haptic feedback of the controller means it will use a simulating touch to output vibrations and movements to replicate a real-life touch experience. The controller will include a built in microphone

which will make it easier to talk to friends. Regarding controllers, the PS4 controller will not work for PS5 exclusive games. On the other hand, Microsoft has promised the old Xbox controllers will work with the Xbox Series X across all of its games.

At the end of the day it all comes down to what games you prefer to play. Three of the PS5’s most prominent games are Ratchet & Clank: Rift Apart and Horizon Forbidden West, Spider-Man: Miles Morales, and God of War: Ragnarok. The Xbox Series X did not announce any exclusives yet, however, some Xbox games not available on Playstation include Gears 5, Forza Horizon 4, and Sea of Thieves. This should be one of the most important factors in your decision between the Playstation 5 and the Xbox Series X.



MICROSOFT AND SONY BATTLE IT OUT FOR THE BEST NEW GAMING CONSOLE. (IMAGE COURTESY OF GOOGLE IMAGES)

# Warming up the ice again

BY: MILES FARRELL

The NHL's Stanley Cup has been awarded! After almost four months without hockey, the NHL returned to the ice with the intention of finishing out the rest of their season. And now the season is over, with the Stanley Cup being awarded to the Tampa Bay Lightning. But how did we get to this point, what did the NHL do to allow players to return to the ice during the COVID-19 pandemic?

The NHL returned on July 28 after being suspended on March 11. To be able to return to play, the league instituted a plan to allow the game to resume while keeping the players and other staff safe. The plan had two hub cities in which every game would be played, Toronto and Edmonton. All games, exhibition or playoff, were played in the Scotiabank Arena in Toronto and Rogers Place in Edmonton. Players had to stay within a specified area inside and outside the arenas, and anyone caught breaching these rules would be exempt from play

until a negative COVID-19 test was produced. League wide testing of players and staff would occur regularly, again, as keeping the health of all personnel was top priority in returning to play.

In the new playoff format, the normal amount of sixteen qualifying teams was expanded to twenty-four teams. The lower seeded teams played in an initial qualifying round to determine who made it into the regular four round playoff tournament, while the higher seeded teams played in a round-robin style tournament to determine seedings. The favorites from each conference were the Boston Bruins from the Eastern Conference, and the previous Stanley Cup winner, St. Louis Blues from the Western Conference. The Bruins won the Presidents' Trophy for having the most points during the (shortened) regular season with a total of 100 in 70 games, while the Blues had 94 points in 71 games. Some dark horse teams who made it further than many predicted were the New York Islanders and the

Vancouver Canucks, both making it to the second round before being eliminated by the Lightning and Golden Knights respectively. Teams who failed to meet lofty expectations were the Blues who were eliminated in the first round by the Canucks, and the Flyers who were eliminated in the second round by the Islanders. After much toil and difficulty, the teams who battled it out for the Cup were the Dallas Stars and the Tampa Bay Lightning.



THE TAMPA BAY LIGHTNING CELEBRATE THEIR STANLEY CUP WIN. (IMAGE COURTESY OF GOOGLE IMAGES)

The Lightning had 92 points in 70 games, and the Stars had 82 points in 69 games. The Lightning were led by star players Brayden Point and Nikita Kucherov, while the Stars were led by veteran players Joe Pavelski and Jamie Benn. The Lightning had built an extremely strong team with both skill and speed, centered around captain Steven Stamkos (currently injured) and shutdown defenseman Victor Hedman. The Stars' play was the antithesis of the Lightning's style of play, physical and opportunistic. The Stars boasted a deep defensive core, centered around alternate captain John Klingberg and Miro Heiskanen. Backstopping the Lightning in net was Andrei Vasilevsky, and for the Stars Anton Khudobin. After a brutal six game series and for the second time in their team's history, the Lightning came out victorious. The Star's physical style was no match for the Lightning's speed and persistence. Congratulations to all teams who participated in the Stanley Cup playoffs.

# Blowing bubbles and shooting hoops

BY: KAITLYN DAVIS

When COVID-19 struck, the world changed forever. People were confined to their houses, there was a shortage of toilet paper, and all entertainment, including sports, were canceled.

The National Basketball Association is a staple of the sports world between the months of October and June. Because of Covid-19, that was taken away from fans. The commissioner of the NBA, Adam Silver, created a plan that would safely allow players to continue their season and allow fans to feel like fans again. The NBA restart began on July 30 in Orlando, Florida. The ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex and Gran Destino, which became known to the world as "The Bubble," was the site of all the games, as well as the living quarters of the players, coaches, their family members, and employees. To keep everyone as safe as possible, masks had to be worn when not in a game setting, COVID-19 tests were regularly administered to everyone in the "The Bubble," all the food was cooked on the premise, and no "non-essential" people were allowed inside of "The Bubble."



LEBRON JAMES ATTEMPTS A LAYUP IN GAME TWO OF THE FINALS. (IMAGE COURTESY OF GOOGLE IMAGES)

Once all safety measures were put in place, the season began. Nine teams from the Eastern Conference and thirteen teams in the Western Conference battled it out to see who would gain the playoff spots in their respective conferences. To no one's surprise, the Los Angeles Lakers and the Los Angeles Clippers clinched the #1 and #2 seed in the west while the Milwaukee Bucks and the Toronto Raptors did the same respectively in the east.

The Clippers were expected by most to win the championship, but they suffered a crushing defeat after losing 3 straight games to the very surprising adversary in the Denver Nuggets. The Nuggets also had an exciting playoff run, coming back from a 3-1 series deficit against the

Utah Jazz in the first round and then again against the Clippers in the second round. Their miracle run would be ended when they met the Lakers in the Conference Finals. The Lakers got to the Finals with ease. With their stars Anthony Davis and Lebron James at the helm, they beat every team they faced within five games. The eastern conference was a different story. The Milwaukee Bucks were expected to make their first NBA finals appearance since 1974, with the reigning MVP, Giannis Antetokounmpo, leading the team. The expectations differed from reality. The fifth-seed, Miami Heat, led by Jimmy Butler, defied all expectations when they beat the Bucks in the second round of the playoffs in 5 games. The Toronto Raptors also had their dreams crushed early. They suffered a crushing defeat in Game 7 of the second round against the third-seed Boston Celtics, robbing them of the chance to win the Finals back-to-back. To the surprise of most fans, the Miami Heat triumphed over the heavily favored Celtics, beating them in the Conference Finals in 6 games, and made their way to the NBA Finals.

Once the finals arrived, emotions

were high. Heat fans were experiencing a feeling of joy and excitement they had not felt since 2013 and Lakers fans were experiencing the same feeling for the first time in a decade. According to most basketball experts, the Heat did not stand a chance against the Lakers. The Heat may have not won, but they put up a fight that very few thought they would. They won two games in a series that most people thought would be a sweep. Doing that makes them a serious threat for championship contention during the next season.

When the Lakers won Game 6, they dedicated their championship trophy to the late, great Lakers legend Kobe Bryant, who had died in a tragic helicopter accident earlier this year, along with his daughter Gianna and several others. This win not only memorializes a legend taken too soon, but it cements the Laker dynasty. They are now tied with the Boston Celtics for most championship wins in history by any NBA team. Now, the NBA is back to uncertainty. It is unknown when the next season will begin and how it will be handled. But basketball fans can rest easy knowing they had an exciting 2020 playoffs.



# The Republican Campaign

BY: CHRISTOPHER O'CONNELL

It has been almost 16 years since the Republican party has focused on the re-election of one of its members. George W. Bush, the 43rd president of the United States, was the last Republican to take office by being re-elected in the election of 2004. Since then, the strategies of re-election have been completely altered as the culture, thoughts, needs, and voice of the American people have changed over the years. Many situations that have arisen surrounding this election have not been seen in several election cycles or even at all in the history of our country.

This year's debates and campaigning were very different. Trump took a more traditional approach by holding rallies, which went over well with his supporters. The fight for the elec-

tion was close. There were a number of states that were polling very erratically over the last few months that ultimately had to choose a candidate. Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Michigan, Minnesota, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and Nevada were the states that decided this election. For the last few elections these states have switched parties a number of times. Together they have 133 electoral votes, just under half needed to reach 270. These states are the reason that many candidates have won or lost in the past cycles.

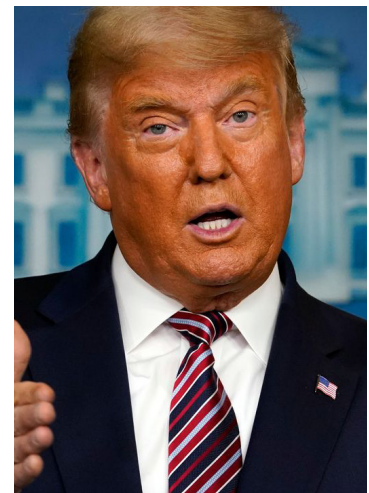
Trump's campaign largely focused on his selling points as a president. He spoke at length about economic and international issues at his rallies and speeches. On the topic of economics, Trump made himself the opposite of the opposing candidate. Focusing more on businesses, many

promises of increased funding and donations were made over the course of his campaign trails. Ending the U.S. reliance on China transcends both these topics. While it does cut us out of many deals, it allows American manufacturers to pick up the slack. Contracts would be sourced in the country, making jobs and giving the economy a boost. By brokering a number of peace deals in the Middle East, Trump also got himself nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. He used this to his advantage when speaking on foreign relations and his plans for the future. Many had seen what he was working on in the Middle East and thought it was a very good change from the Obama administration's handling of similar issues.

The election this year is one that will be remembered for ages. Having a presidential election in the middle of a worldwide pandemic is not something the founding fathers would have taken into consideration when writing America's Constitution. Many people were confused and scared on how the voting might work. This led to a major increase in the use of mail-in and absentee ballots. If a person did not want to vote in person, this provided a more comfortable option. Traditional campaigning was also very different. While both candidates contin-

ued to hold rallies, they were often very limited. The town hall portion was also changed due to how they would usually operate. Often, candidates would walk around the stage and audience to interact with guests. Due to Covid, this was not possible.

Throughout the last year, America faced many challenges. An election year only magnified these difficulties and caused more division than unity. The American people were in quarantine, and therefore, had nothing to do. Both candidates found themselves subjected to repeated interpretations and rough moments. Through it all, America prevailed and made it through.



**LEFT:** THOUSANDS GATHER IN NORTH CAROLINA FOR PRESIDENT TRUMP'S RALLY IN GASTONIA. THE CROWD CHEERED THE PRESIDENT AS HE PRESENTED HIS GOALS OF HIS RE-ELECTION CAMPAIGN. NORTH CAROLINA WAS A KEY SWING STATE IN THIS ELECTION.  
**ABOVE:** PRESIDENT TRUMP SPEAKS AT A PRESS CONFERENCE FOLLOWING THE ELECTIONS  
(COURTESY OF GOOGLE IMAGES)



# tions 20



## The Democratic Campaign

BY: SAMANTHA CHRISTINE



On November 3rd, the U. S. presidential election took place. Americans everywhere voted for the next president. The current president, Donald J. Trump, was the Republican candidate. On the opposite end of the political spectrum was, now President-elect, Joe Biden. Born in Scranton, Pennsylvania, Biden served as a U.S. Senator for Delaware from 1973 to 2009. He then served as the nation's 47th vice president from 2009 to 2017. He announced his presidency on April 29th, 2019, with his campaign slogan "Build Back Better Unite for a Better America."

The "Build Back Better" slogan is built around the four main national efforts Biden hopes to mobilize: manufacturing and innovation to ensure that the future is made in America, and in all of America; ingenuity to build a modern infrastructure and an equitable, clean

energy future; talent and heart to build a 21st century caregiving and education workforce which will help ease the burden of care for working parents, especially women; across the board to advance racial equity in America. (*joebiden.com*)

Some of his campaign goals included strengthening gun control laws, giving all Americans the ability to access affordable health care, and making four-year college tuition-free for students with family incomes lower than \$125,000. He vowed to make many major and extensive investments in things like the auto industry by supporting American auto-workers to guarantee their jobs are good, as well as housing, infrastructure, environmental justice, agriculture, and more. He wants to make sure all of these investments will create decent jobs to extend the middle class as well as ensure that these jobs are filled with well-trained people of all colors, orientations, and genders, making workplace environments more diverse.

A generally centrist Democratic politician with 47 years of experience in Washington and with a reputation as a proponent of bipartisanship and consensus-building, Biden did very well in the polls early on in the election, appearing to have the upper hand against Trump in a number of states. With such a tight election race, key battleground states were essential in determining the winner once all of the ballots were counted.

Biden's success in the polls may have been partially due to the presidential debate that took place on September 29th, 2020. Although

there were heated discussions and a copious amount of interruptions from both candidates, Biden managed to talk vehemently about his views on the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change and law enforcement. He also strongly urged people to vote and get their voices heard. Biden also stressed the importance of wearing a mask during the pandemic, saying: "Anybody who contracts the virus by essentially saying masks don't matter, social distancing doesn't matter, I think, is responsible for what happens to them."

Biden has raised \$383 million for his campaign since the first presidential debate, topping the amount he had in

August, which was \$364.5 million. "To every person who chipped in a few dollars last month—thank you. Because of your support, we raised an astounding \$383 million. I'm incredibly humbled," Biden tweeted. He also had a drive-in rally in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania with his wife Jill and pop star Lady Gaga, as well as a quick stop in Cleveland, Ohio.

This election was one of the most controversial in the country's history and still has the American public talking about how the political system in our country works. It is clear that the 2020 election and its results will be documented and analyzed for years to come.



ABOVE LEFT: NOW PRESIDENT-ELECT, JOE BIDEN SPEAKS TO A DEDICATED CROWD AT A CAMPAIGN RALLY.

RIGHT: NOW PRESIDENT-ELECT, JOE BIDEN TRAVELS TO MICHIGAN FOR A LAST MINUTE CAMPAIGN RALLY.

(COURTESY OF GOOGLE IMAGES)

# Combating the Covid-19 crisis

BY: GIANNA STRAZZULLA

A patient in the United States was diagnosed with Covid-19 by the state of Washington and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This was the breaking news on January 20, 2020. On March 6, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared Covid-19 a pandemic because of the speed at which it was spreading. As of October 25, 2020, there have been more than 42.9 million cases worldwide, with the United States accounting for 8.69 million of them (New York Times). There were 1.15 million coronavirus related deaths worldwide, with the United States accounting for 225 thousand of them (New York Times). Today, the world should be relieved to know that there is some good news on the way in the form of a vaccine. Dr. Anthony Fauci, the director of the US National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, said "We will know whether a vaccine is safe and effective by the end of November, beginning of December" (CNN).

Social distancing, hand washing, and mask-wearing are all effective ways that everyone can assist in preventing the spread of Covid-19. Quarantining, contact tracing, and rigorous testing also help control the spread of the coronavirus. However, a vaccine would change the game. Widespread community immunity (also known as 'herd immunity') can significantly reduce the spread of the virus. This can either be achieved through many people becoming infected or many people becoming vaccinated.

A vaccine is an optimal solution to the pandemic. However, most vaccines typically take 10 to 15 years to develop (Stanford Health Communication Initiative). The fastest vaccine previously developed was for the mumps and it took 4 years. However, this has not discouraged the scientific community. Scientists worldwide have been working around the clock for months trying to develop this vaccine and they believe they are close. But, a clarification must be made. Dr. Seema Yasmin, director of the Stanford Health Communication Initiative, says "When experts optimistically say that they expect a Covid-19 vaccine by the end of 2020, they're talking about an emergency

use authorized vaccine, not a fully-approved one." Dr. Fauci agreed with Dr. Yasmin when he said, "Experts will know by early December whether a potential coronavirus vaccine is safe and effective, but widespread availability will probably not happen until next year." If the vaccine keeps progressing at this speed, Dr. Fauci believes we could see a considerable approach to some form of normalcy by the end of 2021 (CNN).

Operation Warp Speed (OWS) is a committee that was created by the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (HHS) tasked with rapidly producing a vaccine for Covid-19. By partnering with the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA), the Department of Defense (DoD), and the CDC, OWS has been able to accelerate development while maintaining standards for safety and efficiency (HHS). Rather than eliminating steps from traditional development timelines, steps will proceed simultaneously, such as aligning protocols for the demonstration of safety and efficacy (HHS). There are over 100 different vaccines being investigated, with 42 of them beginning human trials (Forbes).

Scientists are not the only ones working towards a potential cure. Anika Chebrolu, an 8th grader from Frisco, Texas was named the winner of the 2020 3M Young Scientist Challenge (a competition for middle school scientists) and received a \$25,000 cash prize for her discoveries (CBS). She was able to isolate a lead compound from a database of almost 698 million molecules which could potentially be turned into a tool to combat Covid-19 (CBS). Anika said, "I just wanted to help the world and

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*"I just wanted to help the world and let children know that they can do whatever they want to accomplish."*

*-Anika Chebrolu*

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let children know that they can do whatever they want to accomplish."

With the high possibility of a coronavirus vaccine becoming available by the end of the year, there are a few things that should be discussed. Americans should be assured that safety is the number one priority in creating this vaccine. "The U.S. vaccine safety system ensures that all vaccines are as safe as possible" (CDC). The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) can provide this through its clinical trial and safety monitoring systems. Right now, many vaccines are being developed and tested. The CDC is working with all levels of government to plan for many different possibilities. However, they assure Americans that they are aware how critical the vaccine is and are working with state, tribal, local, and territorial health departments to make it available to all communities. They are also devoted to eliminating the obstacle of cost. The CDC says: "The federal government is committed to providing free or low-cost COVID-19 vaccines. Vaccine doses purchased with U.S.

taxpayer dollars will be given to the American people at no cost. However, vaccine providers will be able to charge administration fees for giving or administering the shot to someone. Most public and private insurance companies will cover that fee so there is no cost for the person getting vaccinated. In addition, people without health insurance can get COVID-19 vaccines at no cost" (CDC).

Scientists are working very hard to produce this vaccine as fast as possible. It has the potential to set a new record if produced within 12-18 months. However, the FDA assures Americans that they have rigorous scientific and regulatory processes in place to facilitate development and ensure the safety, effectiveness, and quality of COVID-19 vaccines (FDA). Drs. Stephen M. Hahn and Peter Marks work for BARDA and had this to say, "We are committed to expediting the development of COVID-19 vaccines, but not at the expense of sound science and decision making. We will not jeopardize the public's trust in our science-based, independent review of these or any vaccines. There's too much at stake" (FDA).

While scientists do their part to stop this pandemic, people worldwide must continue to do theirs. The CDC offers a list of recommended guidelines to follow to help prevent the spread of the virus. Hand washing should be performed often, with soap, and for at least 20 seconds. If hand sanitizer is the only thing readily available make sure it contains at least 60% alcohol. Social distancing 6 feet from others is important to practice indoors and outdoors. This distance can be approximated as 2 arms' lengths from other people. It is important to remember that people without noticeable symptoms can still spread the virus. Masks and face coverings should be worn in every social setting. Wearing masks not only protects oneself, but protects others. Frequently touched surfaces should be cleaned and disinfected daily. These include tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks. And finally, people need to monitor their health. They need to be alert for symptoms and follow CDC guidelines if symptoms develop.



ANIKA CHEBROLU WINS \$25,000 FOR HER GROUNDBREAKING RESEARCH. (IMAGE COURTESY OF GOOGLE IMAGES)

# A new, better, and faster way of diagnosing cancer



THIS NEEDLE USES NEW TECHNOLOGY TO DETECT CANCER. (IMAGE COURTESY OF GOOGLE IMAGES)

BY: SHIVALI VORA

Medicine has made many advances over the years, but one illness remains a dreaded enigma. Cancer has always been one of the most elusive, hard-to-cure diseases that afflicts humans, partly because it is not just one disease but a widely varying group. However, one thing is generally true across the board: the sooner it is found, the better the outcome. Un-

fortunately, it often takes a long time to diagnose cancer because of the cohort of tests that can be required to arrive at an answer. Besides the treatment delays they cause, these time-consuming tests can worsen patient anxiety. Recently, however, a team of scientists in the UK from the University of Exeter, the University of Bristol, and the Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust developed a promising technology that uses light to detect cancer. As of December 2019, the researchers have begun a three-year long clinical trial of their product.

At the core of this new cancer-detecting smart needle is Raman spectroscopy, which relies on the interactions between light and the molecules that comprise cells. It can be used to create chemical “blueprints” of biological tissue. Essentially, Raman spectroscopy allows scientists to generate a chemical report of what exactly lies inside cells, and this is extremely useful because normal cells and cancerous cells have many chemical differences. For example, cancerous cells have lower concentrations of

fatty acids, but higher concentrations of DNA and RNA. Different substances reflect light differently, so Raman spectroscopy can be used to distinguish between healthy tissue and malignant tissue, all while leaving the tissue inside the patient (in vivo), as opposed to a surgical biopsy in which it is removed from the patient before being examined.

Raman spectroscopy itself has been around for a while, but until recently it was too expensive and impractical to be commonly used. As the technique is fine-tuned and proven to actually work, though, it is becoming more readily available. The UK team focused on lymphoma (which affects the immune system) and other head and neck cancers, but the method is not at all confined to just those types. Dr. John Day, who is part of the team, said: “If our probe is successful in clinical trials for lymphoma, then it opens the door to applying it to many other cancers in the body” (Medical Press). Researchers from the University of California, for example, tested the accuracy of Raman spectroscopy in finding thyroid cancer. Their re-

sults confirmed that the method has an over 95% accuracy rate.

If the technology proves successful on the large scale, it could lead to an entirely new type of biopsy in which doctors would use the needle to penetrate under the skin’s surface and reach a suspicious area of tissue. The needle would then shine a laser beam onto the tissue, and the doctor would be able to determine whether or not it was cancerous based on the way it scattered light from the beam. The best part? The doctor (and patient) would get the results in seconds, all without invasive surgery or scans that use radiation.

In the near future, this innovation could revolutionize how cancer is diagnosed and lead to faster initiation of treatment, better chances of a cure, and reduced healthcare costs due to a reduced need for expensive and possibly unnecessary surgery. Most importantly, however, this cancer-detecting probe would improve mental health and peace of mind by giving patients definitive answers quickly. It is a prime example of how scientific research continues to have positive, tangible effects on our lives.

## How a small project is now saving millions

BY: ISABELLA DANNER

With the rise of COVID-19, scientists and engineers have been spending their days and nights trying to make life safer and easier. Distancing six feet apart, wearing masks, and staying home when feeling unwell is the main advice given from the Center for Disease Control (CDC). The issue that remains inquires: “How can we complete daily tasks, such as grocery shopping, without getting sick?”

Blue Ocean Robotics is one of the many companies trying to find answers to this question. Blue Ocean Robotics is a robot manufacturing company founded in 2013, in Odense, Denmark. They focus on creating self-driven robots that can assist in hospitals, agriculture, construction, and many other fields. Since 2016, Blue Ocean Robotics has been working on new technology to help eliminate bacteria and germs. They have primarily been working on a disinfectant to be utilized in hospitals. They began the construction of the robot as a solution to the issue of Hospital Acquired

Infections (HAI’s), unaware of how important its use would later be today. Each year, millions of patients are infected, and thousands die because of HAI’s. Blue Ocean Robotics has aimed to stop the spread of infectious diseases and viruses through the production of this new-found technology. The UV-disinfectant (UVD) Robot kills 99.99% of pathogens in just ten minutes! It accomplishes this by killing pathogens and microorganisms through the breaking down of the structure of the specimen. Through the use of ultraviolet-C (UVC) light, the RNA in viruses and the DNA in bacteria is manipulated and damaged, thus unable to reproduce and spread. This means that no harmful chemicals are involved in the sanitation process. The company claims that this state of the art technology is even more effective than the common disinfecting spray.

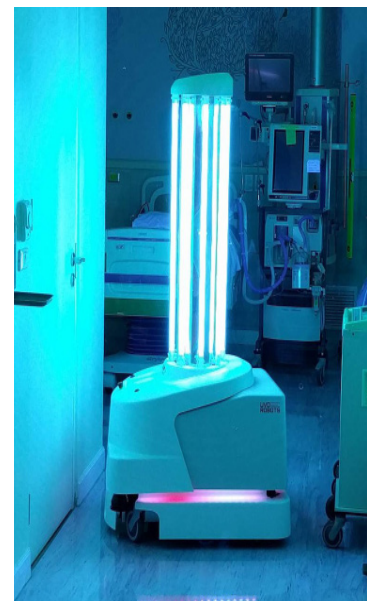
Now, the company finds itself deploying these robots in almost 30 different countries. This is largely due to combat Covid. In Italy, similar technology has been used at the Policlinico Abano hospital chain. It has been used during surgeries and

has assisted Dr. Cristiano Huscher on multiple occasions. Once the virus broke out, a few of Dr. Huscher’s colleagues got sick, but since they purchased the robot, no new staff cases have been reported. He believes that robots like these will be mandatory for sterilization and the safety of patients in all hospitals.

More recently, the UVD Robot has found itself in the United States. The Boston Dental Clinic is an “award-winning dental practice” in Massachusetts that has recently begun utilizing the UVD Robot. They have used this hefty bot to help ensure safety for all of their patients during this difficult time. The Boston Dental Clinic is a strong supporter of this autonomous technology, as they believe that it greatly increases sterilization and efficiency.

Overall, the feedback and results from the robot are positive and hopeful. As new daily challenges like Covid-19 are encountered, new opportunities for innovation and technology are found. Thanks to Blue Ocean Robotics, countless lives worldwide are now protected, creating a calm working environment. In

the future, people should hope to see even more advanced technology from this company, and others, as well.



THE UVD ROBOT DISINFECTS A ROOM IN UNDER TEN MINUTES. (IMAGE COURTESY OF GOOGLE IMAGES)

# As merry as can be Field show fantasy



THE CAST AND CREW OF *THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR* POSE FOR A PICTURE AS THEY TAKE A BREAK FROM THEIR DRESS REHEARSAL. (IMAGE COURTESY OF STA PRODUCTIONS)

BY: MORGAN RYAN

With Broadway closed and most local high schools learning online, it seems as though the world of live theatre has been put on pause. Fortunately for the STA community, the drama department has been hard at work to produce their annual Shakespeare show. This year's production was *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, directed by Ms. Amy Kate Byrne. The comedic play follows the story of Sir John Falstaff (Senior Joseph Valenzuela), a swaggering knight who arrives in the uneventful town of Windsor and turns everyone's lives upside down. He tries to obtain the money of Master Ford (Senior Anthony Cacchione) and Master Page (Junior David Irizarry) by seducing their wives. Unfortunately for Falstaff, Mistress Ford (Junior Jennifer Rihacek) and Mistress Page (Junior Tamia Burton) learn of his scheme and devise a plan to humiliate the deceitful knight with the help of the chattering Mistress Quickly (Senior Cayla O'Neil), the devout Sir Hugh Evans (Freshman Michael Corradino), and a cast of other wacky characters. Meanwhile, the awkward fool, Slender (Freshman Matthew Gluchowski), and the French doctor, Caius (Junior Patrick Ponik), compete for the lovely Anne Page's (Sophomore Abigail Bera) hand in marriage, but Anne only has eyes for her love, Fenton (Junior Joshua Pereira).

The drama department always puts a unique spin on Shakespeare by adding themes to his works around different times and places. This year was no different, with a fun country western theme. Actors were decked out in blue jeans, big hats, and cowboy boots. The set included a barn and an old western

inn. The thrilling conclusion of the show featured the entire cast dancing and stomping to lively banjo music.

Producing this show in the unsure and confusing time of COVID-19 certainly had its challenges. Students wore masks for the entire show and had to maintain social distance. Several jokes about distancing guidelines were added into the play, such as an alarm that went off whenever the actors got too close together, and players finding unique and humorous ways to hand things to each other without making contact. The show was also only performed live in front of a limited audience so as to adhere to capacity guidelines. These exclusive showings of the play ran from Friday, September 18th to Sunday, September 20th. The best turnout was on Saturday, though all three audiences were very supportive and thoroughly entertained by the students on-stage.

Although lots of usual audience members were not able to attend the show live that weekend, it was not curtains for them. Over the course of two dress rehearsals, Mr. Kowalczyk and a small team of students filmed a full run of the show from several different angles. This footage was spliced up into a video of the entire play from beginning to end. This recording of the show was available to watch on a livestream on September 25th (or on demand the rest of the weekend) via the ShowTix4U website. Anyone who purchased a ticket to see this video could enjoy the show right from the comfort and safety of their own home.

There is a need for art, learning, and laughter more than ever right now, while the world seems upside down. The STA drama department is always happy to provide these things and more to the community.

By: Kristel Rambaud

"Is this the real life? Is this just fantasy?" That is what the Marching Trojans were wondering to themselves this summer as they began an unprecedented season full of questions and uncertainties because of COVID-19.

The summer looked a lot different for the band and color guard compared to years past. Rehearsals had to be adjusted in many ways to accommodate the guidelines. Drum Major Abigail McCarty reflected on how the group adjusted to the changes: "It was tough at first but honestly everyone was really cooperative because I feel we all wanted to be able to perform the field show." For most of the summer, it was unknown if they'd ever be able to perform the field show live. According to Color Guard Captain Anali Rodriguez, the uncertainty of the season gave the group extra impetus to work hard, "Not knowing if our season would be cancelled that same night we were practicing on the field or the next, we worked harder and harder each time." The group worked hard every night because they never knew if they would lose their season. But thanks to all the precautions taken, the cooperativeness of the students, and the leadership of the band director Mr. Cullinan and color guard coaches and alumnae Serena and Sabrina Gil, the Marching Trojans have been able to perform their field show of Queen's iconic "Bohemian Rhapsody" at the home football games.

There are several points in the show in which particular performers are highlighted. The iconic

opening lines are sung, rather than played on instruments, by Select Choir members and seniors Anna Caruso, Joseph Valenzuela, Gianna Kormondy, and McCarty. McCarty also showcased her versatility as a musician, playing the drum kit during the iconic rock section of the song and the trumpet during the remainder of the song. Other seniors, including Valenzuela, Victoria Serafin, and Mary Strunak, played multiple instruments in the show, highlighting the band's versatility.

The color guard, led by Rodriguez and First Guard Officer Isabella Hamm, also had their time to shine in the show, with their spectacular flag-twirling routines leaving spectators in awe. As a group, the color guard had a dance during the iconic rock section of the song. Also, as the song winds down, the color guard seniors were highlighted as they performed together.

All the seniors are glad to have been able to have their season, even in a restricted capacity. As the seniors prepared to say goodbye to their marching band careers, McCarty stated about the group, "I love everyone involved and my experiences with them make marching band what it really is." Similarly, Rodriguez is thankful for her time on color guard, "It has taught me discipline, confidence, attitude, and most importantly that I am so much stronger than I think I am." It was a weird summer for the Marching Trojans. But despite it all, the group came together to create a field show they're all proud of and made lasting memories and experiences with each other.



THE MARCHING TROJANS LISTEN TO A LAST MINUTE PEP TALK FROM MUSIC DIRECTOR JOSEPH CULLINAN. (IMAGE COURTESY OF STA PRODUCTIONS)

# Senior Sports Spotlight

**Name:** Jaren

**Buliyat**

**Nickname(s):** Jar-ebear, Bananatrill, Benadryl

**Sport:** Cross

**Country**

**Favorite athletic**

**memory:** Getting a sub 20 5K for the first time

**Favorite pre-game snack:** Black coffee

**Lucky number:** 4



**Name:** Armando

**Cerasani**

**Nickname(s):**

Monty & Mont

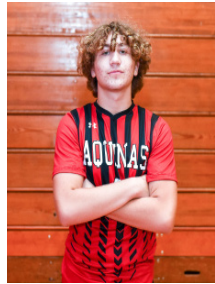
**Sport:** Soccer

**Favorite athletic**

**memory:** Our winning state game against Red Bank

**Favorite pre-game snack:** PB&J

**Lucky number:** 6



**Name:** Karina

**Diaz**

**Nickname(s):** Rina

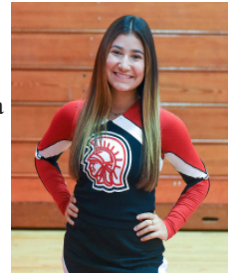
**Sport:** Cheerleading

**Favorite athletic**

**memory:** Winning states sopomore year as the underdog

**Favorite pre-game snack:** Trolli sour gummi worms

**Lucky number:** 13



**Name:** Caroline

**DiMaggio**

**Nickname(s):** Care

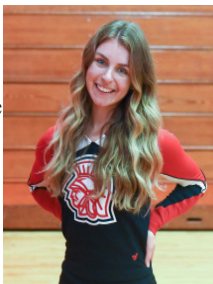
**Sport:** Cheerleading

**Favorite athletic**

**memory:** Winning States

**Favorite pre-game snack:** Trolli sour gummy worms

**Lucky number:** 7



**Name:** Jamie

**Hamilton**

**Sport:** Football

**Favorite athletic**

**memory:** Hitting the Del Val QB

**Favorite pre-game snack:** Popeyes chicken sandwich

**Lucky number:** 11



**Name:** Angelina

**Iocca**

**Nickname(s):** Ang, Angie

**Sport:** Soccer

**Favorite athletic**

**memory:** Camp Wayne

**Favorite pre-game snack:** Mini Oreos or clemintines

**Lucky number:** 3



**Name:** Rylan

**Krikorian**

**Sport:** Soccer

**Favorite athletic**

**memory:** Winning our first states game

**Favorite pre-game snack:** Granola bar

**Lucky number:** 22



**Name:** Melanie

**Mallari**

**Nickname(s):** Mel, Melly

**Sport:** Soccer

**Favorite athletic**

**memory:** Beating Colonia High School in soccer junior year in overtime on their senior night

**Favorite pre-game snack:** An apple and pretzels

**Lucky number:** 2



**Name:** Gianna

**Strazzulla**

**Nickname(s):** Gi

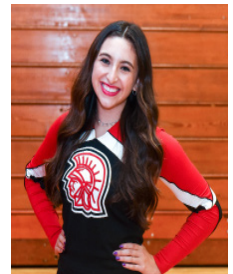
**Sport:** Cheerleading

**Favorite athletic**

**memory:** Winning three state titles my sophomore year

**Favorite pre-game snack:** A bagel and Trolli gummi worms

**Lucky number:** 6



# High flying spirits

BY: CAROLINE DiMAGGIO

The cheerleaders take the mat this year as they prepare for another phenomenal season. Through the hardship faced by the global pandemic, the girls are working harder than ever to stay on top. The cheerleaders can be seen supporting the football team in rain or shine, showing their school spirit at pep rallies, and leading the basketball team to victory, while they train behind the scenes for their own competition season. The work ethic, dedication, and sports-

manship displayed by all members of the team is the perfect example of the St. Thomas Aquinas spirit.

The cheerleaders never fail to give it their all on the mat with smiles on their faces. Through all the ups and downs at practices, the girls are always able to come together and give a performance better than ever before. Coach Chris and Coach Kelly bring the team together by supporting, leading, and challenging the team. The coaches work with a group of senior captains to make the most of this unusual season. Game day captains Karina Diaz and Caroline DiMaggio work with the cheer-

team to encourage Trojan spirit during games, pep rallies, and other school events. Non-tumble captains Rachel Freund, Gianna Strazzulla, and Savanna Westervelt lead the team in preparation to compete at competitions. Kristine Carroll and Ty Upton work hard to get the All Music Tumble team ready to take on the mat. The varsity captains are confident that the girls have a promising season in their future. They are all excited to see what this season holds for these amazing girls. Senior cheerleaders Kristine Carroll, Karina Diaz, Natalie Devlin, Caroline DiMaggio, Rachel Freund, Erin Ptas-

zynski, Naomi Southernland, Gianna Strazzulla, Savanna Westervelt, and Ty Upton make the most of their senior year on the cheer team as they create lifelong memories. Although this is not the senior year they were expecting, the girls remain positive and are determined to make the 2020-2021 season one to remember.

The cheerleaders plan to continue upholding an impressive reputation of determination and stellar performances as they go through this competition season. Despite the sweat and tears, the girls know their efforts will be rewarded by the support, smiles, and friendships surrounding them.

## Kickin' It Girls 'goals'

BY: THOMAS KOENIG

The boys soccer team is working hard, thanks to the guidance of the Athletic Director, Jerry Smith, and the work ethic of the team. The team puts up a great fight during every game and improvements can be seen. Due to the leadership from the senior captains Armando Cerasani, Rylan Krikorian, and Sean O'Leary the boys push themselves past their limit every day. The coach, Danny Cardona, always emphasizes the importance of teamwork and how they must help and push each other. At the end of the day, the team is always pushing to improve and be better than they were yesterday.

The seniors on the team this year consist of Armando Cerasani, Thomas Koenig, Rylan Krikorian, James Mingo, Sean O'Leary, Connor Owens, and Andres Sullivan. Underclassmen members of the team are freshmen Ryan Dillard,

Jack Joyce, and Andy Martinez; sophomores Jack Dotoli and Charles Maxi; and juniors Renzo Cuyuche, Ryan O'Connor, and Eshaan Patel.

Over the summer, the boys became a very close knit team through their training. Every day, they run two valleys (two laps around the school perimeter) in order to warm up along with stretching. They also try to make everything they do enjoyable and exciting while still being productive. Half of the season is already over because of the limited games due to coronavirus. There has been a large emphasis on taking each game one at a time and evaluating how to optimize their chances to win. One thing the coach always tells his players is to play their hearts out when they are the most tired. Playing with one's heart means that one leaves everything on the field no matter how tired they are, it means when they go home and look in the mirror they can honestly tell themselves they did their best!

BY: CARISSA MATRALE

The girls varsity soccer team, led by senior captains Kiara Cronin, Melanie Mallari, and Victoria Nasto, has been training since July. The team is working on planning a safe senior night, where players and their families can show support and celebrate the graduating members of the team. "My senior year soccer season is definitely one to remember," says Mallari. "So far it has been very different from previous seasons but it is going pretty well. We have played challenging teams and have pulled out good wins. I definitely wish the season could have been longer, but I am grateful we even have the chance to play." This sentiment is one shared by essentially all of the team's players. Although they wish the season could continue as it normally would, the girls are extremely grateful to have a season; something not every school's teams have the opportunity for. Not only

are the players excited for the season to come, but so are those in the stands. There are big things in the future for STA's girls soccer teams, so make sure to stop by the next game!



SENIOR MEGAN DRISCOLL DRIVES THE BALL DOWN-FIELD. (IMAGE COURTESY OF STA PRODUCTIONS)

## 'Serving' talent and teamwork



THE GIRLS TENNIS TEAM RELAXES BEFORE A MATCH. (IMAGE COURTESY OF STA PRODUCTIONS)

BY: ANNIKA ZAVALLA

2020 has been a tough year, but the girls tennis team has been working very hard through it all. They are saying a sad goodbye to the seniors, Krishna Parikh, Anna Tran, and Sarah Girod. Throughout the years they learned that it is most important to get involved and enjoy

high school. "Tennis is a game of patience and chance," said Eunice Mbawa. The girls tennis team constantly works hard to play efficiently and improve their technique on the court, but the best part of the season was the friendships they made. It would not have been such a successful season without the support they had for each other. During the

fall season, they can be found everyday after school working hard at the tennis court on Oak Tree Road. Their coaches, Mr. Mohrmann and Mr. Chaneski, taught them that what makes a good tennis player is how quickly you can recover from the bad phases of a match. The season has come to an end, but the underclassmen can not wait to play next year.

# Football team drives forward

BY: LAUREN MULLEN

It is safe to say that the 2020-



JUNIOR JONATHAN WYATT DODGES A DEFENDER. (IMAGE COURTESY OF STA PRODUCTIONS)

2021 football team has experienced a season like no other. They had to overcome some of the season's most difficult challenges before facing a single opponent. When asked about the many bumps in the road brought on by Covid-19 sophomore Jayden Young said, "At first it was hard getting used to the new rules set in place by the league and school like wearing a mask and social distancing. But we knew that at any given moment our season could be taken away so we made sure we stayed on top of everything so we could continue to play." Even though they were adjusting to a new normal the Trojans have been nothing short of a success this season!

The team opened their season with an overtime victory on October 2nd against the South River Rams

ending the game with a score of 38 to 32. The Trojans then set out to face the North Plainfield Canucks on October 9th. North Plainfield pulled ahead towards the end securing a small victory, ending the game with a score of 38 to 30. After enduring their first loss of the season the Trojans were determined to pull out a win against Spotswood on October 17th. The Trojans had an incredibly successful game defeating the Chargers with a score of 54 to 14. On October 31st, the football team spoiled Metuchen's senior day. The game ended with a score of 46-0. These performances show that the 2020-2021 football Trojans are truly a force to be reckoned with.

When asked about his favorite moments of the season senior Jamie Hamilton said "My favorite moment

of the season by far was our comeback tour. We beat South River and Spotswood, two teams we lost hard against last year." While what Jamie refers to as the "comeback tour" did not feature any pyrotechnics or guitar solos, it featured several rockstar status performances. Some stand out performances include Jayden Young's (10) 46 yard touchdown pass to Jonathan Wyatt (11) (this was one of five touchdown passes thrown by Young during the Spotswood game). A 49 yard drive with a 23 yard touchdown pass to Jamie Hamilton (12). To wrap up the Spotswood game Joel Marellis (10) capped the Trojan's victory with a 63 yard touchdown run. Based on the events of these four games the Trojans are expected to do great things on the field and secure more wins in the games to come.

## 'Tracking' wins

BY: JAREN BULIYAT

The boys cross country team is led by new coach Michael Mazzei, a St. Thomas Aquinas Alumni and track runner at Rider University. Coach Mazzei was handed the difficult task of coaching a team mixed with new and experienced runners. However, Mazzei was able to push the boys past their expectations. "I've constantly pushed the boys, testing their limits every week, but they realized that all of their hard work paid off when they saw their improvement." Coach Mazzei is very proud of what the boys have accomplished this season and is excited to get to the indoor track season.

The boys cross country team has two fantastic boys to lead them to victory. The team is led by captains Chris O'Connell and Michael Cocuzza. The two have worked together to improve their times and improve their teammates' times as well. Both always try their absolute best at every practice to set an example for the rest of the team. They also are always there to motivate their teammates to strive to be the best, whether it be in a race or a workout. "I am more than honored to be the co-captain of this great team. We have such a great chemistry, and I cannot wait to see what the future holds for this program." said Cocuzza. The two have been phenomenal captains, and they

hope that their hard work will rub off on their teammates for the future.

The varsity runners for the boys cross country team are Jaren Buliyat (12), Cocuzza (12), O'Connell (12), Sam Corry (12), Antonio "Big Jelly" Ortega (12), Michael "Tubes" Rivera (11), Neal Choksi (10), Alex Cocuzza (10), and Lukas Kebuladze (10). The seniors were thrown for a loop when the pandemic hit, being very unsure whether a season would even happen, but they knew that they all still had to work hard no matter the circumstances. "Not a lot has changed. I'm still doing the sport I love. I still have the same goal," said Ortega.

Because of the pandemic, the boys had to deal with new restrictions in meets. They had to wear their mask to the starting line in some meets and hold it the entire race. In others, the race was split up into three different races.

"This year is different from last year, but we have grown exponentially, as a team and individually. Our potential has skyrocketed. I am so proud of what these boys have accomplished," said O'Connell. The boys cross country team has genuinely personified the word "resilience." They were able to tackle adversity head-on and work their hardest every week. With a new coach, new training, and lots of potential, the boys cross country team has a bright future ahead.

## Building momentum

BY: DIVYA ELENJICKAL

The girls cross country team has had a great fall season. The girls have been training all season with their coach Timothy Miller. To start the season strong, the team ran a 5K at Middlesex High School on October 1st. Eleni Alvarez (12) and Lia Acosta (11) took the lead, placing first and second in the race, and took the lead again at Thompson Park on October 10th.

Despite juggling practice with school and other activi-

ties, the girls have still managed to pull off an amazing season. Their hard work and determination is definitely being showcased through their great times and races.

On October 15th, the girls ran a 5K at home with Elizabeth Pepe (11) taking first place, Whitney Pepe (11) taking second, Amanda Doggett (10) taking third and Divya Elenjickal (10) taking fourth. Senior Eleni Alvarez took on Thompson park one last time on October 30th. She took 1st in the GMC red division with a time of 19:34.



CAPTAINS CHRIS O'CONNELL AND MICHAEL COCUZZA LEAD THE PACK ON THE FIRST LEG OF THE RACE.

(IMAGE COURTESY OF STA PRODUCTIONS)

This issue students were asked to create pieces of writing and artwork dealing with the topic of ‘hope.’ They were challenged to turn this intangible idea into physical works. The Satoma Staff is proud to publish these exceptional creations.

“Where there is no hope, it is incumbent on us to invent it.”- Albert Camus

### *All That's Been Done*

BY: CHRIS O'CONNELL

Sitting on a rocky cliff I thought to myself. I think about all I have done and all that has been done to me. I look out to the sun now high in the sky and recount my past. I remember that night in the city, that singular star glowing bright as can be in the abyss of the night sky. That star was my light, my dream, my companion. It led me to my favorite spot in the city.

As a child, I would come to this pond and sit on the bridge connecting the two sides. I did this every day for years without fail. I felt at peace there. If you look out right at the heart of the bridge, the skyline parts and you can see the rolling hills and mountains beyond the metal majesties. At night my star would be in the crux of the buildings, reflecting on to the lake and staring into my soul.

I think about all I have done, all that has been done to me, and suddenly, I am back on the cliff. It is no longer day, rather, the moon has replaced the sun in its eternal dance. After a fleeting moment, I see it. My star is accompanied by countless more. Joining together, they light up the night brighter than I have ever seen before. They remind me of the pond, and how I have always focused on the bad occurrences in my life. Although my experiences have been difficult, they have made me who I am today. They have guided me through the darkness while also being my darkness. They have always been there with me, showing me the right path, leading me through the crossroads of life. With that realization, I walk away from the cliff. I leave that place and go on to discover the rest of my journey. And all along, after all this time, the stars of the night have been watching me, smiling.



ARTWORK COURTESY OF ABIGAIL CHADWICK.



ARTWORK COURTESY OF MARY SAUER.

### *Seldom Futile*

BY: ALEX GOFERMAN

Well you've messed up, haven't you?

If you're up at night reminiscing

Then something must've gone wrong,

Horribly wrong—but how?

All those times you aimed to change

Were just in vain, for here you are

Realizing habits tend to stay,

And you're still hideous within.

That clean slate now scraped

And cracked down the middle.

You wonder—perhaps I ought

To embrace my inescapable nature.

Destiny's flagging me down,

Telling me, “This is who you are.

You hurt, you fail, you never change.”

Yet, to follow Destiny's advice

Is to subjugate yourself; you are you.

So get out from under the rubble

And start anew. Wherever you go,

There's always a chance—seize it!

No one can dictate your conduct but you.

Don't embrace what keeps you up at night.

Pursue the life that brings you peace.

It's seldom futile to strive for growth.