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What's Inside:

CHRISTMAS CHARACTERS P. 2

EDDIE VAN HALEN TRIBUTE P. 6

COVID-19 VACCINE P. 10

SWIM TEAM PREPARATIONS P. 14

WHAT'S TRENDING? P. 3

SHAWN MENDES ALBUM P. 7

CLIMATE CHANGE P. 11

WINTER TRACK TRAINING P. 14

JUNIOR RING DAY P. 4

LESSER KNOWN HOLIDAYS P. 8

FALL PLAY AND FIELD SHOW P. 12

GIRLS AND BOYS BASKETBALL P. 15

AQUINAS STAR MASS P. 5

ADDITIONAL FUN HOLIDAYS P. 9

SENIOR SPORTS SPOTLIGHT P. 13

CREATIVE ART WINNERS P. 16

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Dazzling dresses, delightful dancing, & Danny Kaye



My absolute favorite Christmas movie is *White Christmas*. As a dancer, I loved to watch Vera Ellen perform. I wanted to be just like her. My favorite scene was when she and Danny Kay danced to “The Best Things Happen While You’re Dancing.” I enjoyed that performance because she wore a beautiful baby pink dress and when she would spin the skirt

would flare out very gracefully. I adore the Haynes sisters (Betty and Judy) because of how they looked out for each other and tried to ensure the other’s happiness. Even though I am an only child, I have always identified with that kind of sisterly love with my best friends.

White Christmas is more than just a nice story about the holidays. In the movie, Betty and Judy go to Vermont with Bob Wallace and Phil Davis. There the group just happen to stumble upon the inn that is owned by the General that Wallis and Davis served under in World War II. When they see him they are reminded of when they first met on the battlefield, and how much their friendship means to them. They are similar to my friends and I in the sense that they are not related by blood, but in every

other sense they are family. This family grows to include Betty and Judy as they plan a Christmas show to bring customers into the struggling inn. The final Christmas show was another one of my favorite scenes because it was full of music, dazzling costumes, and of course lots of dancing. At the end of the show, they bring out the entire 151st division that served under the General and they all sing “The Old Man” (which is the song they sang to him on the day he retired from the army). It is a huge celebration and they raise enough money for the General to keep his inn. You cannot help but smile when you watch as friends who have not seen each other in years celebrate Christmas together again. It is such an overwhelming feeling of joy and love, which is what the holidays

are supposed to be all about.

The movie ends with Betty and Judy singing “White Christmas” alongside Phil and Bob. At the end of their performance Bob asks Betty to marry him, just as Phil asks Judy to marry him on the other side of the Christmas tree set. Then they open the barn doors to reveal the first snowfall that Vermont had seen that year. *White Christmas* is a movie that has been the one thing about Christmas that never changes for me. Even though I have grown up a lot since the first time I saw *White Christmas*, I still feel like a little kid when I watch it. I still want to wear all of Vera Ellen’s costumes and dance around in that pink dress. *White Christmas* has taught me that you should always hope for snow on Christmas Eve, no matter what the forecast is.

The man with a wonderful life



When people turn on their TVs this December and inevitably stumble upon a rerun of Frank Capra’s classic 1946 film *It’s a Wonderful Life*, many will find that the story of George Bailey, one of the most memorable Christmas figures in American culture, hits just a little bit closer to home this year than it usually does. Like so many people who were dealt one blow after another this year, George Bailey, the protagonist of *It’s a Wonderful Life*, finds himself in a dire situation on Christmas Eve 1945. He has spent his whole life making sacrifices and putting others before himself, but now he feels like life itself has forsaken him. His family business, the Building & Loan, is in serious danger

and criminal charges of bank fraud against George will soon result. This leaves him with no choice but to beg for a loan from Potter, his longtime rival, who mockingly refuses and tells George that he is worth more dead than alive. In stark contrast to George’s desperation, his younger brother Harry, whose life he once saved when the two were children, is returning home to Bedford Falls that very night as a decorated war hero. To top it all off, George’s daughter is sick and he takes out his frustration on his family. Hopeless, depressed, and angry at life in general, George drives his car into a tree and decides to take his own life by jumping off a bridge. Enter Clarence Odbody, the iconic guardian angel who saves George that night. He jumps into the river first, and George, always looking out for others even at his lowest points, rescues him. He confides in Clarence that he wishes he had never been born, so Clarence grants his wish and shows him what it would be like if that were true. George is shocked to see a very different town and the very different lives of his loved ones. Perhaps most strikingly, Harry is dead in this alternate reality.

When he sees just how much he has touched others’ lives, George realizes that his life is worth living

no matter how many times he gets knocked down, and that despite the challenges and hardships, it is still a wonderful life. He begs Clarence for his life back, and Clarence obliges. Even though he knows there will be an arrest warrant waiting for him, George returns home happily, only to find that the entire town has come together to help him make up the lost money. They have not forgotten his years of generosity toward them, and now they do the same for George in his time of need. Everyone celebrates George, and Harry tells him he is the “richest man in town.” He may not be the wealthiest, or the most successful, or the most famous person around, but he is rich in all the things that truly matter.

Though on the surface he is just the quintessential “ordinary” family man, George Bailey has gone down as one of the most selfless fictional characters, extraordinary but in quiet ways. At every step and stage of his life, he silently gives up his own future, his own dreams, and his own well-being for that of others -- all without making a big fuss about it or expecting anything in return. Few Christmas figures embody the spirit of Christmas -- giving without expecting to receive -- more than George Bailey. Of course, self-

lessness should not just be confined to the holidays, but Christmas is a time for us to evaluate ourselves and the way we are living our lives. Are we living for ourselves, or are we living for others like George?

George Bailey is by no means the most cheerful or spirited Christmas figure. In fact, he spends a lot of the movie utterly dejected. He is not perfect either; he has many glaring flaws, just like all of us, and that is exactly what makes him so relatable. Anyone can see themselves in George; we have all had moments when we feel like we have been abandoned, or that our good deeds and sacrifices are worthless and unappreciated, or that everyone else has achieved their dreams while we were left behind in the dust. But maybe this Christmas is a chance to step back and remind ourselves that despite everything, there is still much to be grateful for and much to look forward to.

So when people watch *It’s a Wonderful Life* this Christmas and are transported back to 1945 Bedford Falls, they might find that the timeless message applies just as well to life today. And when they hear the bell ringing, signaling that an angel has gotten his wings, and turn off the TV with a smile, they will remember that their lives have meaning too.

The Satoma NEWSMAGAZINE

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2020 Most Tweeted About People:

| | |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| 1. @realDonaldTrump | 6. @bts_twt |
| 2. @JoeBiden | 7. @narendramodi |
| 3. George Floyd | 8. @kanyewest |
| 4. @kobebryant | 9. @elonmusk |
| 5. @BarackObama | 10. @KamalaHarris |

Top Tik Tok Trends of 2020:

- #BoredInTheHouse
- #IAmLost
- "Savage" song/dance
- Ghost photoshoots
- "Say So" song/dance
- Pancake cereal
- "You have to stop..." audio
- #TwoPrettyBestFriends
- "Random things that just make sense"
- "How would they know" audio
- #RatatouilleMusical
- #PutAFingerDown
- "How Bizarre" audio

Top Songs of 2020

- "Rain on Me" by Lady Gaga & Ariana Grande
- "Blinding Lights" by The Weeknd
- "Savage" by Megan Thee Stallion feat. Beyoncé
- "Adore You" by Harry Styles
- "Say So" by Doja Cat
- "Dynamite" by BTS
- "Mood" by 24kGoldn feat. iann dior

Top Grossing Movies of 2020:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Bad Boys For Life | 7. After We Collided |
| 2. 1917 | 8. Dolittle |
| 3. Sonic The Hedgehog | 9. The Invisible Man |
| 4. Jumanji: The Next Level | 10. The Call of the Wild |
| 5. Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker | 11. Onward |
| 6. Birds of Prey | 12. Tenet |



Juniors 'ring' in the holiday season



JUNIOR ANNEMARIE CHIRICOLO RECEIVES HER CLASS RING FROM MR. FIORE AND MR. ZIEGLER.

(ALL IMAGES COURTESY OF STA PUBLICATIONS)

BY: OLIVIA RIVERA

On Thursday, December 10, members of the junior class of 2022 assembled in the main gym to celebrate this joyous occasion with a Mass and a ring ceremony that followed shortly after. Due to COVID-19, the event was limited, however, both the Mass and the ceremony were recorded for virtual students, parents, and friends to enjoy at home. Junior Ring Day is a hallmark high school experience. It is the day when a student and their fellow peers manifest their friendship and growth throughout the years into a single object.

The theme for this year's ring day was "Under the Mask," which represents not only the pandemic they

have resiliently prevailed through but also the idea of discovering the other side of themselves and others that is invisible to the naked eye. Alexis Citro and Emily Drill, the junior class officers, began the Mass with an introduction that entailed the memories they have made over the years, and the friendships that continue to grow stronger each day. The Mass continued with a liturgy, beautiful music from the Liturgical Choir, and a homily from Father Keith Cervine. In his sermon, he spoke about Mary, a young teenage girl who had to make a difficult decision: give birth to the blessed child of God and face scrutiny from others or take the easy road and deny God's plan. He compared their strength and adaptability to that of Mary, describing how they are all in

some way a reflection of her. Subsequently, Sister Cynthia said a few words about the class of 2022 and everything that they have endured.

After the Mass ended, the class officers read the history of the St. Thomas Aquinas Class Ring and what the symbols on the ring meant; Father Keith then blessed the rings. Philip Mascaro, the class moderator, called the names of each junior one by one to receive their rings from Principal Harry Ziegler and Vice Principal Mark Fiore. Once everyone had received their rings, they all recited the class pledge, and the ceremony concluded. Although family members and friends were not permitted to go to the ceremony, the celebration was still fitting for the hard work that the class of 2022 has put in.

School service opportunities spread joy

BY: RAJAVSI PATEL

Service opportunities abounded during this past holiday season.

The Aquinas Star Board came together to sell festive Aquinas Star Facemasks in order to raise funds to provide Christmas gifts for Aquinas Star Rocco and his family.

Another major service opportunity was writing virtual cards to the retired Felician Sisters at the Immaculate Conception Convent in Lodi, NJ. The Christian Social Action Club (CSAC) members wrote Christmas cards to be sent to the Sisters in Lodi. Along with CSAC, each religion class also spent time making cards for the retired Felician Sisters. It is very important

for STA to recognize the Felician Sisters and express appreciation for their contributions to the community. In addition to the letters, poinsettia plants were bought by CSAC for each Felician Sister at Lodi's Immaculate Conception Convent.

Since the cards are so popular, the CSAC members also wrote holiday Christmas cards for the residents at the Brandywine Living at Mountain Ridge nursing home.

Members of CSAC sang Christmas carols, shared holiday stories, performed the "Twelve Days of Christmas" and set up a viewing of a Christmas video produced by the Video Production Class for the retired Felician Sisters at the Immaculate Conception Convent in Lodi.

Every year during Christmas

time, STA "adopts" two families from Catholic Charities. Throughout the weeks leading up to Christmas, each religion class worked together to purchase Christmas gifts for the "adopted" families.

One of the most well-known fundraisers are the dress-down days. The funds collected this year provided toys for the St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry.

Holiday arts and crafts supplies were donated by school students to provide for the children at St. Peter's Hospital. Some items that were collected included Christmas coloring books, puzzles, stickers, glue, paint, markers, and crayons. Art supplies will be collected again for Valentine's Day for the Children's Hospital at St. Peter's Hospital.

The Dime-a-Day program will begin again shortly. It is held every year during Lent to raise proceeds for the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen. Further details will be provided closer to the beginning of Lent.

Items are collected throughout the school year to allow students to actively participate in service projects. Frequently, non-perishable foods are collected to donate to soup kitchens, hospitals, Veteran's home, and other places in need. Other items that may be donated for service credit are used prescription eyeglasses, soda tabs, Box Tops for Education, and used cell phones. There is always a need for these products so please continue to drop them off throughout the school year and continue to serve the community.

Light for all the world to see

BY: SAMANTHA CHRISTINE

Despite the troubles of 2020, STA has continued to band together and be a never-ending source of light and optimism. The school body solidified this at their 1st Annual Christmas Tree Lighting on December 10th. Organized by the Campus Ministry Department and the Student Council, this event kicked off the holiday season. Christmas carols such as "Do you Hear What I Hear," "Santa

Claus is Coming to Town," and "Joy To The World," were performed by the Select Choir. In addition, there was a reading of The Christmas Story, a prayer and blessing of the trees, and of course, the lighting of the trees - with a special appearance by the one and only Santa Claus!

The event planners, seniors Anna Caruso and Karina Diaz were ecstatic about how the event played out. "I was honored to be a part of planning and celebrating the very first STA Christmas Tree Lighting, which I think was even more

meaningful because we were able to make it happen during the pandemic," Caruso stated. Diaz added, "I thought it was an important event to introduce this year, an event that would bring the community together during a time of separation."

The Lighting of the Trees was an excellent way to show students that they can, and should be the light for the world. Even though times are dark, it is important to stay positive and keep one's head up. The school community hopes to continue this tradition in the years to come.



STUDENTS PRAY WITH FATHER KEITH BEFORE LIGHTING THE CHRISTMAS TREE FOR THE FIRST TIME.

O LITTLE STAR OF STA

BY: ABIGAIL BERA

On Wednesday, December 10, members of the STA community gathered to celebrate one of the most anticipated events of the year, the Aquinas Star Mass. Due to COVID-19, only a limited number of students were allowed to attend the liturgy. Even so, the spirit of Christmas was still present. The students gathered in the main gym to partake in this tradition. Those in attendance were honored once more to have Bishop James Checchio and Father Keith Cervine lead them in prayer. Unfortunately, Aquinas Star Rocco DiMaggio was unable to attend the celebration due to his ongoing treatments. His grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Rocco DiMaggio, were there on behalf of him and his family. The liturgy was filmed as well so Rocco and the rest of his family would be able to watch it.

The main gym found itself turned into a beautiful Christmas themed church with glittering Christmas trees, poinsettia plants, and lovely

angels. Christmas presents for Rocco were displayed in front of the altar, making it the perfect setting for this year's Aquinas Star Mass. Bishop Checchio and Father Keith were wearing purple cassocks, which reflected that it was the second week of Advent and almost time for Christmas. The students and faculty in attendance wore their Aquinas Star Face Masks to support Rocco, making the scene even more heartwarming.

Members of the choir and band provided the music. They led the school community in traditional songs of the season, including "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" and "Angels We Have Heard on High," as well as some school favorite worship songs, like "We Are One Body." They were under the direction of music director Joseph Cullinan, who played the piano for the liturgy.

Mrs. DiMaggio spoke after the liturgy to thank those in attendance for all they have done for Rocco and his family this year. She was very thankful for not only the Aquinas Star Board, but for the love, support, and prayers from the school community.

This event would not have been possible if it were not for the time, hard work, and dedication of Sister Cynthia Marie, the Aquinas Star Chairs, the Aquinas Star Board, assistant campus ministers John Roche and Kevin McCarthy, Father Keith Cervine, and Bishop James F. Checchio. They all worked together to make sure that this tradition continued this year despite the difficulties they faced with COVID-19.

Aquinas Star co-chair, senior Ryan Salamante, surmised, "It is more important now than ever that we share in the love and hope of the holiday season." And his counterpart, senior Joseph Simmons summed up his feelings about the event, "It meant the world to me they were still able to do the Mass, and even though Rocco wasn't there we were very glad his grandparents were able to make it on his behalf."



LEFT: STUDENTS GATHER THE GIFTS TO PRESENT TO ROCCO.



RIGHT: BISHOP CHECCIO GIVES HIS HOMILY AT THE MASS.

(IMAGES COURTESY OF STA PUBLICATIONS)

SOCIAL DISTANCING ON SOCIAL MEDIA

BY: ASHLEY PEREZ

There has been an immense increase in technology throughout the world, and STA has definitely represented that. Activities such as day in the life videos, Take over Tuesday's, freshman for a day videos, and holiday videos are examples of this. Day in the life videos, now called, "Come to School With Me," are recorded by a student as they go through their day. In a sense this acts as the Freshman for a Day program, a recruitment system in which an estimate of 200 middle school students who are interested in attending STA get to experience what it's like to be a part of the community. The video gets posted to the Instagram account, and anyone can watch and learn more about the school. Take over Tuesdays are similar to day in the life videos, but are posted on Snapchat. Instead of a video format, you follow around a student as their day goes by. Due to scheduling and virtual schooling, some Tuesday's have been missed,

but to compensate for this, Takeover Thursday's have been added as well.

Producing the holiday videos has provided difficulty because of the uncertainties with the school schedule, so the committee had to prepare in case the school wound up being closed unexpectedly. For example, the Christmas video for Instagram was planned and filmed in August, the Thanksgiving video for Instagram in September, and the New Year's Eve videos in November. The only way to produce quality holiday content was to be on top of things, and film much earlier than normal. Michelle Penny, the video production teacher, also had a part in producing these videos. She said, "The holiday videos are normally our biggest and most entertaining productions. They typically include numerous clips of large groups lip syncing to a song and dancing together. When you add masks and social distancing, that process becomes incredibly challenging. Through the use of green screens, camera angles, and a lot of student innovation, we

have been able to film and edit these videos with no issues." Despite the many challenges and fears students are facing, creating and sharing this content is a way to retain a sense of normalcy and school pride.

Followers are encouraged to get involved in one way or another, from commenting, and sharing to submitting their own content to post. Lastly, the green screen has allowed staff and students to produce content while adhering to the Covid restrictions. Many of the videos with multiple actors involve separate shoots for each one and then digital editing. It narrows the possibilities for story ideas and makes editing much more complicated, but it is what is necessary to stay safe.

The social media committee tries to keep things exciting by listening to followers' feedback, following the trends, and constantly evolving their content. Michael Kowalczyk, the Director of Web & Social Media, elaborated, "I'm not hesitant to discontinue a content series that I feel is getting stale and replace it with something new. Coming up

with the ideas is always the hardest part, especially for the holiday videos. Each platform has a different audience and we have to come up with ideas for what those followers will like. It takes a lot of thought and discussion." Additionally, he states that the social media pages would not be possible without the help of social media representatives, seniors Grace Lancia and Melanie Mallari. They volunteered to take these roles, and heavily contribute to coming up with ideas, helping script and film, communicating with students, and running apps like Snapchat. The biggest change for the committee this year is that two representatives were chosen instead of one. Kowalczyk said, "I knew how crazy the year would be in terms of planning and creating social media content and having them both involved has been a great boon for our platforms. With everything that's going on, I don't think anyone would have questioned if we had gone for simpler content this year, but instead we upped our game and I'm very proud of that."

Biding farewell to the 'Unchained' legend

BY: SANDRA ABRANTES

Through the years, there have been many different influences on various genres of music. One band, starting with two brothers from California, helped shape the rock community into what it is today. In 1974, after meeting David Lee Roth, who became their lead vocalist, and Michael Anthony, their bass guitarist, Eddie and Alex Van Halen formed the band so many have come to love: *Van Halen*. Their band reached stardom when none other than Gene Simmons, the bassist from rock band Kiss discovered them playing at a club and paid for them to record their first album. From there, they have come to record 12 studio albums and 56 singles.

In a never-before-seen, recently published 2011 interview with Eddie, he reveals that Eric Clapton from the band Cream greatly influenced his music career and playing style. In the same interview Eddie said, "What attracted me to his playing and style and vibe was the basic simplicity in his approach and his tone, his sound."

Eddie Van Halen was known as a lot of things in the music business, and one of the all-time best guitarists was definitely one of them. Along with Jimi Hendrix, Jimmy Page of Led Zeppelin, Eric Clapton of Cream, and Brian May of Queen, he will forever be known world-wide as a legend guitarist,

musical genius and inspiration.

While Eddie was known to have many influences on his music style and tone, he had his own way of sharing his love of music, and his guitar playing was extraordinarily unique. He was known for the amazing solos he would make at concerts and live performances that often demonstrated his distinctive playing style and technique. Eddie also used a guitar technique called finger tapping that he made popularly used by many guitarists. Tapping is where an artist uses both fingers on the fret board of their guitar and mimics hammer-ons by using either only their fretting hand or both their fretting and plucking hand. In songs like "Eruption," Eddie would use the two-handed tapping method with both hands working on the fret board. Eddie himself described in an interview at a What It Means to Be American event that he used his plucking hand as an extension of his fretting hand and had them work together to create the infamous two-handed finger tapping solos that people know and adore. He said he would start with a chord, which would lead to creating music pieces he would use in songs, and guitar solos. Going back to "Eruption," which is one of the best guitar solos performed in the history of rock music, Eddie set the bar for guitarists so high that his playing is truly one of a kind.

Artistic flair was definitely



EDDIE VAN HALEN PLAYS TO A CROWD OF THOUSANDS.

(ALL IMAGES COURTESY OF GOOGLE IMAGES)

something many would attribute to California's own Eddie Van Halen, and it showed through his music beautifully. Eddie made his own guitar that he became famous for using named "Frankenstrat." The guitar features a black, red, and white body with crossing lines of the colors. The Frankenstrat guitar is an iconic staple of Eddie's and inspired many other guitarists to cross breed different guitars to make their own with a unique sound. Along with his flashy guitar, '80's hair, and charismatic smile, Eddie Van Halen's motivation and perseverance is what made him so irresistible and lovable. His influence on the entire rock culture is shown through many artists and the

enthusiasm brought to the music. Knowing how to do guitar riffs, licks, hammer-ons, pull-offs do not make someone a rock legend. Knowing how to share one's love of music with others by utilizing what they know and having the incentive to spread their knowledge through the songs they play is what it takes to become a great musician.

This is what Eddie Van Halen's Legacy has been on the world, and what he taught to everyone through his music. "Rock stars come and go. Musicians play until they die," is a quote many rock fans took to heart after Eddie's recent death. He was a true musician, and with music as his passion, he never stopped playing.

Goodbye Peter Parker, hello Miles Morales



MILES MORALES SWINGS BETWEEN BUILDINGS.

BY: LISA MOHABEER

On November 12, 2020, Sony launched Marvel's *Spider-Man: Miles Morales* alongside the Playsta-

tion 5. This spinoff to 2018's Marvel's *Spider-Man* features Miles Morales as the lead web-slinger. The game comes in two versions- the Launch Edition and the Ultimate Launch Edition. The difference between the two is that the Ultimate Launch Edition includes a voucher code to download *Spider-Man: Remastered* along with all three of its DLC's.

About a year has passed since the events of the *Devil's Breath*. While Peter is off to vacation in Europe, it is up to Miles to step up and protect NYC from a threat that could destroy his new home, Harlem. Miles finds himself in the middle of a conflict between Roxxon Energy Corporation and the mysterious group known

as the Underground, led by the Tinkerer, the game's main antagonist.

Miles is still new to the art of fighting and learns to find his rhythm throughout the game; his fighting style is sloppier than Peter's, emphasizing his rookie status. While Peter's swinging animations are sleek and agile, Miles's animations are awkward and clumsy, further showing he is new to the superhero business. Although Peter's story is more emotional, Miles does have something which Peter lacks: connection. Miles has a strong relationship with his mother and best friend and easily makes friends in his new neighborhood as both himself and Spider-Man.

Throughout his adventure, Miles

learns many new tricks. An example of this is the ability to electrocute enemies and the power to turn invisible for a short period of time. Because *Spider-Man: Miles Morales* is a PS5 exclusive, the game takes advantage of the new DualSense controller.

Players will be able to feel every "thwip" as a web is shot. Miles also has a lineup of new suits available to unlock including his original *Into the Spider-Verse* suit straight from the movie. As players complete missions, Miles gains experience, making him stronger, faster, and more difficult to spot. The events and life-changing decisions that take place while Peter is away help Miles become the hero the city needs him to be.

Fans inspired by Mendes' 'Wonder'

BY: CAROLINE DiMAGGIO

The waiting is finally over! Fans across the world are wondering what top artist Shawn Mendes has been working on since his last album release in 2018 titled "Shawn Mendes". On December 3rd 2020, Shawn Mendes' new album "Wonder" envisioned a passionate and dreamy dynamic. After tirelessly working to release his self-titled album, he feared he was losing the magic of the writing process and his inspiration was dwindling. Luckily, during the pandemic, artist Shawn Mendes was able to escape his fast paced lifestyle and embrace a new way of experiencing life. In an interview with the Zach Sang Show, Mendes says, "As time went on stillness kind of started to set in and I started journaling, and in the journal I started writing and reflecting on my entire life force, acting on everything that's going on in the world

at the time and I 'wonder' this when I 'wonder' that." Not only did Shawn Mendes take advantage of the quarantine to discover new elements and embark on a creative awakening, he continues to break the boundaries of the pandemic by streaming Q&As and live performances, called "Wonder: The Experience," for his fans to enjoy from home.

"Wonder" consists of fourteen tracks that encapsulate the young artist's raw, honest, and vulnerable self. On his album, he explores themes of masculinity, reality, and fear, all while surrounding intense imagery of love and passion. The most streamed song, "Wonder," explores the purity and authenticity of falling in love for the first time. He reveals the questions racing through his mind through his lyrics. "I wonder if I'm being real, Do I speak my truth or do I filter how I feel? I wonder, wouldn't it be nice to live inside a world that isn't black and white? I wonder what it's



THE COVER OF SHAWN MENDES' NEWEST ALBUM, "WONDER."

(ALL IMAGES COURTESY OF GOOGLE IMAGES)

like to be my friends. Hope that they don't think I'll forget about them." This song exposes a sensitive side of Mendes as he matures from the young creator his audience once knew. Mendes addresses this realness found in the album. He stated in an interview with Apple Music, "I'm still trying to know myself, but

that's the beauty of it. This album is like an audio scrapbook. It shows the things I thought about-how fearless I was, but also how scared I was." It is obvious that this album is unlike anything Shawn Mendes has ever produced and is certainly worth the listen. No "Wonder" he has so many fans across the globe!

COVID-19 changes consumer culture



MOVIE THEATERS SIT EMPTY DURING THE MAJORITY OF THE PANDEMIC.

BY: KRISTEL RAMBOUD

When the world came to a standstill because of the pandemic, just about every industry suffered to some degree, particularly the film industry, which has dominated the forefront of consumers' minds

and spending habits for decades. However, because of COVID-19, the landscape of the film industry changed drastically. These changes brought about by this pandemic can have lasting consequences on the industry in the years to come.

Before their doors closed, movie theaters were a staple of American

past-time. It was easy to make plans with friends and head out to the movie theater to catch the latest release. But, with the lockdowns, that was no longer possible. Movie theaters themselves suffered greatly.

With traditional movie theaters no longer being a reliable option, distributors like Disney faced a difficult situation regarding their 2020 movie slate. They had initially opted to push their release dates back, hoping for reopenings in the summer that could bring in large amounts of revenue. But as the months went on, they were faced with two options: wait for reopenings or release digitally.

Originally, Disney had taken a firm stance on waiting for movie reopenings. The media titan generates billions of dollars annually at the box office, so initially, they had opted to wait to release any of their films. As everyone has seen, that stance did not prove to be a permanent solution. Originally, Disney's live-action remake *Mulan* had been scheduled to premiere March 27, 2020, but it was postponed

months and months until Disney finally decided: release *Mulan* on its streaming service Disney+ at the price of \$30. The decision was criticized by the public, as people viewed 30 dollars to be an exorbitant price for one movie, especially when they were already paying for access to the streaming service.

Evaluating the response and the state of the pandemic, Disney opted to wait to release their movies. Nearly every movie on their upcoming slate has been delayed; most notably, the next installment of the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) *Black Widow* was pushed back multiple times, finally settling on May 7, 2021. An exception to this plan is Pixar's *Soul*, which is planned to release on Christmas Day 2020. Unlike *Mulan*, *Soul* will be available to all viewers without additional fees.

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the present, but it could have long-standing effects on the future, especially in the film industry. As the pandemic continues, studios will continue to debate the benefits of releasing theatrically or digitally.

DECEMBER 2020

SUNDAY

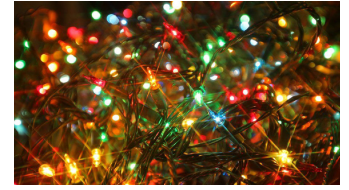
MONDAY

TUESDAY

If December was a band, Christmas would be the lead singer. But, it takes all the members to make great music. Here are some of the lesser known, but equally fun national holidays celebrated in December.

|| (ALL IMAGES COURTESY OF GOOGLE IMAGES)

1 CHRISTMAS LIGHTS



Kicking off the month bright!
Time to deck the halls!

6 ST. NICHOLAS



It is a common tradition for children to leave their shoes out in the hopes that St. Nicholas will leave a small present for them.

7 COTTON CANDY



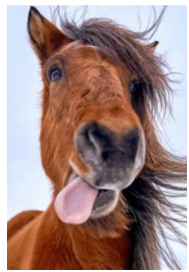
Celebrating our sweet tooth's joy, and our dentist's dismay!

8 TIME TRAVELER



The day is observed to enjoy the long-time fiction of time traveling as if it has become reality!

13 HORSES



A day to remember the economic, historic, and cultural contributions that horses have made.

14 FREE SHIPPING



Across the country you can have any item shipped for free when you order on this day.

15 CAT HERDERS



Cat lovers celebrate their appreciation for their feline pets on this day.

20 UGLY SWEATER



Ugly sweaters are either amazing or even uglier than their name implies, no inbetween.

21 SHORT GIRLS



Celebrating all the fun-sized girls out there!

22 COOKIE EXCHANGE



Sharing is caring!

27 FRUITCAKE



Celebrating the infamous cake of fruit.

28 CALL A FRIEND



Show your friends some love and give them a call!

29 "STILL NEED TO"



Have anything left on your "to do" list? Get it done now, before the year ends!

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

2 MUTTS



Today is all about embracing, saving, and celebrating mixed dog breeds.

3 DISABILITY



This year's theme is "Building Back Better: toward a disability-inclusive, accessible and sustainable post COVID-19 World."

4 SOCK



"One can never have enough socks." - Albus Dumbledore

5 NINJA



Ninjas are awesome.

9 CHRISTMAS CARD



Spreading love and joy in the form of a card!

10 NOBEL PRIZE



All 2020 Nobel prize winners were announced today. They are given to people and organizations who best benefit humankind.

11 MOUNTAINS



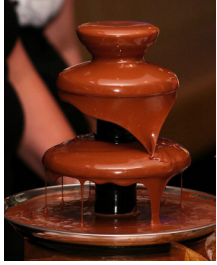
This holiday celebrates the opportunities and beauty of mountains across the world.

12 GINGERBREAD HOUSE



The construction of gingerbread houses is a sacred rite on this day.

16 CHOCOLATE COVERED ANYTHING



Get out the chocolate fountain and whatever foods you can think of.

17 MAPLE SYRUP



Maple syrup is an amazing breakfast addition celebrated on this day.

18 ANSWER THE PHONE LIKE BUDDY THE ELF



Don't call anyone today, trust us.

19 EMO



Get ready for a lot of black clothes, eyeliner, and guitar solos.

23 FESTIVUS



A holiday that's an alternative to the commercialism of the Holiday season. Popularized on classic sitcom *Seinfeld* episode "The Strike."

24 EGGNOG



A day to celebrate and drink a delicious cocktail of eggs, milk, cream, sugar, and spices.

25 JESUS' BIRTHDAY



A savior is born.

26 CANDY CANE



The candy corn of Christmas (although much better tasting).

30 BACON



Celebrate this classic breakfast dish!

31 NEW YEAR'S EVE



The last day of the year. The day we officially close the book of the old year, and start a new one. Here's to 2021!



Vaccine distribution begins



A HEALTH-CARE PROFESSIONAL PREPARES TO ADMINISTER A DOSE OF THE VACCINE.

(IMAGES COURTESY OF GOOGLE IMAGES)

BY: ISABELLA DANNER

It has been almost a year since the first confirmed case of Covid-19 and 11 months since the stay-at-home order was issued in New Jersey back in March. Cases in the US continue to rise, causing schools to institute virtual learning, sports to be put on hold, and restaurants to either reduce capacity or close entirely. Travel restrictions, stay-at-home orders, mask mandates, and social distancing have all been implemented for some time now. While the economy struggles, government leaders find it necessary to open back up to recoup lost jobs and businesses. But hope is on the way in the form of a vaccine.

Typically, vaccines use the live virus itself in its composition. The chickenpox vaccine, for example, contains the chickenpox virus, but in a weakened state. When injected, one's immune system reacts and fights off the virus cells. Through this process, the t-cells collect genetic information about the invader, allowing it to build white blood cells, or antibodies, that can fight off the virus if the host is ever exposed. With breakthrough technology, scientists have now discovered a different way to create a vaccine. Rather than using the actual Coronavirus in the solution, the virus has been stripped and its RNA is copied. The vaccine contains the genetic instructions found in the SARS-CoV-2

RNA that allows itself to infect the host. On the enveloping layer of SARS-CoV-2, are small spikes sticking out of its shell. These are spike glycoproteins, which is what allows the virus to enter human cells. By using the RNA of the virion in the vaccines, cells can be taught to recognize this and fight it off.

Many companies have been focusing their attention to create a safe and effective vaccine, but three companies, Moderna, AstraZeneca, and BioNTech, seem to stand out in their studies. Each vaccine has been thoroughly tested and evaluated, entering phase three in their clinical trials. During this phase, vaccines are put in large-scale efficacy tests to determine any potential side-effects. Of course, each vaccine is different and has its pros and cons. Ultimately, it is up to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to decide for themselves which vaccine could be the best for all Americans.

Moderna, an American biotech company based in Cambridge, Massachusetts, has made some serious breakthroughs with their vaccine. They conducted a large study containing a large variety of participants, such as people aged 65 and older, and others with comorbidities such as heart disease, diabetes, and obesity. Overall, the results were beyond impressive. Considering such little time and yet such a wide variety of volunteers, the vaccine's 94.1% efficacy rate is to be highly regarded.

Importantly, no volunteers who received the vaccine contracted a severe case of Covid-19. This sheds great light on the future of vaccinations and use of genetic technology. Moderna plans to provide 20 million doses of the vaccine to the US by the end of December and is planning to charge \$32-\$37 per dose. In developing countries, the company plans to lower the price, hopefully making it affordable for all people.

Pfizer, an American pharmaceutical company, is collaborating with BioNTech, a German biotech company to create their vaccine. Also using RNA to implement the needed genetic instructions in the solution, Pfizer found that their vaccine had an efficacy rate over 90% as well. From phase I, research concluded that the BNT162b2 vaccine showed little side effects compared to its other regimens. They have greatly expanded their trials, going from 30,000 participants to 43,000. In October, Pfizer was given permission to include children as young as 12 years old in their trials, which has been unprecedented in clinical trials. Their phase III results were outstanding, holding a 95% efficacy rate and a 94% on volunteers aged 65 and over. There were no serious side effects to be reported. In the United Kingdom, they have given an emergency authorization of the Pfizer vaccine, which will be distributed to healthcare workers and nursing home patients first, starting December 4. Pfizer-BioNTech has requested an emergency use authorization from the FDA, in which they are currently waiting for approval. The company is expecting to produce 1.3 billion doses by the end of 2021.

AstraZeneca and the Oxford Vaccine Group are also in the final stages of their vaccine trials. Differentiating from both Moderna and Pfizer, they have a different composition for their vaccine and a different distribution plan. While Moderna and Pfizer use the SARS-CoV-2 RNA sequence to create their vaccine, AstraZeneca-Oxford uses DNA instead. This DNA comes from the Adenovirus, which is a virus, typically contracted by children, that can show in a wide variety of forms and infect several bodily systems. Other companies working on vaccines, including Johnson & Johnson, are using the same tech-

nology. A con to Moderna's and Pfizer's vaccine is found in the chilling temperatures the vaccine needs to be stored in. Moderna requires long-term storage in temperatures as low as -20 degrees Celsius, while Pfizer's requires a much more chilly temperature of -70 degrees Celsius, which are both difficult to support this demand worldwide. AstraZeneca, though, can store their vaccine at normal refrigerator temperature for at least six months. Adding to the topic of storage and distribution, the Oxford vaccine is working to be available to all people regardless of socio-economic background. They will be selling their vaccine for \$3-\$4 and will take no profit during the time of the pandemic. AstraZeneca-Oxford will be supplying 3 billion vaccines in 2021, 300 million of those doses for Americans. The only downside to its otherwise groundbreaking component is its 70% efficacy rate. Though, they are testing two dosing regimens, one being 90% effective, and the other, 62%.

In short, there are three main vaccines being put through phase III trials that are showing positive results. Moderna, Pfizer, and Oxford all have conducted intense research in such a short period of time. Their vast funding from countries all around the world, including the United States, has greatly contributed to their success. With efficacy rates surpassing 90%, there is a likelihood that a vaccine may be available to the public sometime in 2021.



STICKERS ARE GIVEN TO RECIPIENTS OF THE COVID-19 VACCINE.

Concerns over climate increase

BY: SARA ASDHIR

Climate change has become a major concern for the planet, and if not dealt with quickly, can jeopardize the future. Slowly the temperature of the Earth's atmosphere is increasing, and the safety and insurance of our planet is decreasing. If the United Nations acts quickly, they have the power to prevent climate change from causing more damaging outcomes. Without change, Earth is at risk for low water supply, wildfires, little food, health issues due to overheating, flooding, and erosion around the world.

While governments are becoming aware of the negative effects of climate change, they have yet to create any effective policies to prevent further damage. For example there is an immense line of production of fossil fuels planned to be constructed in the next decade. This will negatively impact the planet and the lives of millions. Scientists say that in order to limit the tragic impacts of climate change,

countries must lessen their production of fossil fuels by 6% by 2030. Instead, countries are presumed to produce 2% more each year. In 2020, various countries pledged to reach net-zero emissions by 2050, including the United States and China, the most fossil fuel emitting countries in the world. This means that coal, oil, and gas will have to drop by 18% in the next 10 years. The top tenth of all people majorly contribute to climate change because they use over 20 times more energy than the bottom tenth of people in the world. If people plan to fix this crisis, the wealthy must make major changes in their lifestyle; especially air transportation.

Over half of the flights in the UK are taken by the ultra-rich. This is a main cause of the UK's biggest source of pollution: air pollution. The coronavirus pandemic could be a blessing in disguise for climate change because of the less production of these fuels. Instead of using it as a guide and push to overcome climate change, over \$233 billion have been gathered to produce more fos-

sil fuels. "This is money that is borrowed from future generations. And if we are not thorough with how this money is invested and we keep investing in fossil fuels, we're going to give our children not only a climate that is in worse shape, but also will have wasted money," said Niklas Hagelberg, coordinator of the United Nations Environment Programme on climate change (Kezi News). Some businesses and companies have been working hard to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and this continued effort may lead society to a brighter future. For example, McDonalds has been supporting wind and solar energy projects, PepsiCo and Microsoft have doubled down and continue to do so on their climate goals, and Apple announced it will be carbon neutral by 2030. Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos, is leading the way with a pledge to reach net zero emissions by 2040. A twelve billion dollar fund for climate focused technology, and the Bezos Earth Fund has also been created for a better chance to save our planet. World policymakers have the chance

to use this pandemic to lead the world into rebuilding better fuel systems for a better future. If the promises that big countries like China have made are kept, and President Joe Biden lives out his plan for a clean energy revolution, the world could be very close to reaching the goal set by the Paris Agreement, the agreement dealing with climate change and greenhouse-gas-emissions among the United Nations.



IF IMMEDIATE ACTION IS NOT TAKEN, CLIMATE CHANGE CAN CAUSE DISASTROUS CONSEQUENCES FOR EARTH.

(ALL IMAGES COURTESY OF GOOGLE IMAGES)

Virtual shopping skyrockets



STORES LACK THE USUAL NUMBER OF IN-PERSON CLIENTS

BY: ITALIA WILEY

Black Friday is the day after Thanksgiving when retailers deal out immense discounts to kick off the holiday season. It is a critical day for all stores, as the holiday season accounts for almost 20% or more of annual sales (NRF). The term "Black Friday" predates e-commerce, suburban shopping malls, and even city-center department stores. It is not a static holiday. Its evolution reflects socio economic shifts that have fundamentally altered the fabric of American society. The Macy's day parade is very

well known and held every Thanksgiving morning in New York City. The parade has drawn crowds from all over, which has inspired department stores to remind their audiences they are open for business. Over time, Thanksgiving parades marked this unofficial start to the holiday season. The average American spends about \$400 only on Black Friday. In total, consumers spent about \$9.0 billion that weekend and almost surpassed last year's cyber monday record (Spendmenot). Because of the Covid-19 outbreak, Black Friday has changed dramatically. According to a new shopping survey from Deloitte, nearly 51% of shoppers feel anxious about shopping in-store during the holidays and 64% of their budget is expected to be spent online.

It is very important to be mindful of those nearby and take proper safety precautions when going shopping outside of one's home. Wearing a mask seems like a natural reflex at this stage of the quarantine and can sometimes feel exhausting. The number of in-store shoppers was down 37% from a year earlier on

Black Friday, while online shoppers on that day rose 8% and topped 100 million, according to a survey from the Wall Street Journal. On Thanksgiving Day itself, in-store shoppers declined 55%. Many stores were closed on Thanksgiving Day this year, in contrast to previous years. Amazon, a multi-billion dollar company, continues to make boatloads of profit every single day. The holidays are a 'prime' season where gifts are bought and money is spent. Despite the pandemic, this year was no different than last year. Over the holiday season alone, the revenue for Amazon will be \$112 billion to \$121 billion in the period ending in December, Amazon said in a statement. Other popular, well known retailers, such as Walmart, joined Target and Kohl's as major retailers that struggled during the holiday season. Amazon was and is doing very well, pushing the shipping envelope yet again with a shift to one-day delivery in 2019, crushing expectations with a record holiday quarter.

As a result of the pandemic, companies have expanded their big

digital footprint, leaving smaller stores without much online capability, to go out of business. Many small businesses and personal store owners were forced to close down due to a lack of profit, leaving many large corporations doing the job. It is uncertain whether these stores will ever reopen.

It is almost nostalgic to imagine a mob of Black Friday shoppers, running frantically through every aisle just to find the perfect gift for their friend or family member. This year, there was clearly no rush, for many of the stores had better online sales than in store. Holiday discounting has not diminished completely. Instead of condensing all of Black Friday into one quick day, stores have spread it out over a long period of weeks or even over a month. Home Depot took this to a whole other level. They announced that their Black Friday deals are going to be lasting about two more months starting in November. As Black Friday and Cyber Monday simmer down, it is important to be grateful for what is given during this hectic holiday season.

The theater company that couldn't



THE ACTORS STRIKE THEIR FINAL POSE AFTER ENDING ACT I OF THE PLAY WITHIN THE PLAY, "NOTHING ON."

BY: TAMIA BURTON

On the weekend of November 20th, the Drama Department performed "Noises Off," a fast-paced play directed by drama director Lea Gossett. The three-act play showed what happens on stage and backstage while a manic theater company performs a fictional play titled, "Nothing On." This play within a play filled the theater with an abundance of laughter with its dysfunctional group of characters.

The show begins at the cast's final dress rehearsal, the night before their first performance. Tensions are running high as the director, Lloyd Dallas (Senior Joseph Valenzuela),

struggles to get the cast to focus on the production, which is a farce full of slamming doors, falling trousers, and of course, sardines. Lloyd has to cope with actors who cannot remember their lines or cues and a set that isn't completely finished. The frustration that builds among the actors amounts to many problems in their final performance. The cast of "Nothing On" consists of a neurotic group of actors, including: Garry Lejeune (Senior Anthony Cacchoine), the performer who never finishes a sentence and instead completes them all by saying, "you know;" Frederick Fellowes (Junior David Irizarry) a dim-witted actor who has a severe fear of violence

and blood which leads to many nose bleeds; Dotty Otley (Senior Cayla Shea O'Neil) the forgetful middle-aged actress who attempts to make Garry jealous when she meets with Freddy; Brooke Ashton (Sophomore Abigail Bera) an attractive and confused actress who is oblivious to what is going on around her and is constantly losing her contact lenses; and Selsdon Mowbray (Junior Patrick Ponik) an elderly alcoholic who hides his bottles onstage and is always finding himself in trouble when he forgets an entrance. The entire cast cares for Selsdon, who seems to be a very lighthearted lovable character. In such a dysfunctional group of people, there is always one person who manages to be reliable. Belinda Blair (Senior Anna Caruso) is a cheerful and sensible actress who is protective of Freddy and tries to keep the cast on track throughout the slowly disintegrating production.

In a regular production, the audience usually sees what is happening on stage; "Noises Off" shows the audience what it is like behind the scenes. Master Carpenter Steve Restaino built a mobile set. In Act I and III, the audience saw the standard-setting. In Act II, the audience was surprised when they saw the

set moving and becoming "Nothing On's" backstage area. Hard at work was Tim Allgood (Junior Nicholas Lieggi), the overworked stage manager who does more than his job title entails. Tim does it all, from running to the flower shop and fixing the set to understudying both Selsdon and Freddy. Tim's assistant, Poppy Norton-Taylor (Junior Jennifer Rihacek), also works behind scenes of this disastrous production, trying to assist with lines, costume changes, and cues. She is entangled in a love triangle with Loyld and Brooke. The actors and backstage crew try to cover mishap after mishap, and things get worse and worse.

Seeing the actors dealing with flubbed lines, missed cues, and the overall mayhem of this theater company was humorous for the audience in many ways. Due to Covid-19, the Drama Department performed "Noises Off" in front of a limited audience. The show was recorded and streamed, so anyone who purchased a ticket online could watch the show from the comfort of their own home.

The Drama Department never ceases to amaze with their outstanding productions. Congratulations to the cast and crew of "Noises Off" on a phenomenal performance!

Strike the harp and join the chorus

BY: MORGAN RYAN

Exciting things have been happening all over STA, both inside of school and online. The Music Department has been hard at work since the beginning of the school year, so their 23rd annual Christmas concert could prevail through the pandemic. The concert took an entirely new form this year, though; there was no live event. Instead, music videos of the different songs performed by the band and choir were periodically uploaded to the school's YouTube channel throughout December, where they could be streamed by anyone for free. This was similar to the way the Marching Trojans presented their field show, via an online video.

Members of the choir filmed themselves singing from their homes, decked out in traditional concert attire and camera-worthy smiles. Mr. Cullinan, the director of the music department, then put the videos and audio tracks together to show everyone singing together on the screen.

The band approached the situation differently. Members of both concert and jazz band met with Mr. Cullinan and filmed their songs in the Catanzaro gym, safely socially distanced from each other as they played their instruments. The Select Chorus also had their own unique addition to the virtual concert: a music video starring the members dressed in festive outfits and, of course, masks. In the video, set to the lively song, "A Festive Madrigal," the singers help an exhausted Mr. Cullinan decorate the Little Theatre stage with garland, snowflakes, poinsettias, and ornaments. The virtual concert lasted two weeks, with new videos every few days. The first was the Concert Choir's "Child of Peace and Love," and the thrilling conclusion was the Select Chorus's rendition of "Twenty-Fifth Day of December." The videos collectively raked in hundreds of views on YouTube, and received supportive comments from impressed family and friends.

Even though the concert was not

its usual spectacle this year, our student musicians have been working just as hard as any other year, perhaps even harder! Rehearsals took on an odd appearance this year. Students singing in the choir had to wear masks and distance themselves from each other in the school cafeteria, where practice took place instead of in the typical music room. The concert choir was also split into two different groups to accommodate capacity regulations, so members never rehearsed alongside some of their peers. The band rehearsed outside, where they could safely be around each other while playing their instruments without masks on, even late into November as temperatures dropped. "I think the hardest part of preparing for the Christmas concert this year was making the adjustment to the new rules put in place because of COVID," said Mason Farrell, a sophomore and member of both the band and choir. "It was strange going from practicing in the music room to either out-

side, in the gym, or in the cafeteria."

Despite living in such a confusing time full of restrictions and surprises, our student musicians have not allowed their spirits to be crushed. They are already hard at work preparing for the upcoming Spring concert, no matter what shape it may take.



CONCERT BAND MEMBERS SAFELY PRACTICE OUTSIDE EVEN AS THE TEMPERATURE DROPS. (IMAGES COURTESY OF STA PUBLICATIONS)

Senior Sports Spotlight

Name: Eleni Alvarez

Nickname:

E'Leonard, Len

Sport: Winter Track

Position on team:

Captain & Distance Runner



Best gift you have ever received: Hamilton tickets

Favorite Christmas song: "All I Want for Christmas is You" by Mariah Carey & "Carol of the Bells" by Pentatonix

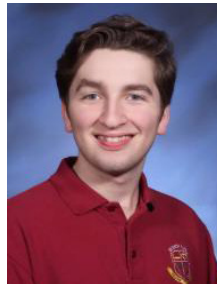
Post-game tradition: French onion soup

Name: Anthony Cacchione

Nickname: A Cash

Sport: Swimming

Position on team: 50 & 100 Fr Swimmer



Best gift you have ever received: Millennium Falcon Lego set

Favorite Christmas song: "Rockin' Around the Tree" by Brenda Lee

Post-game tradition: Getting a spicy chicken sandwich from Wendy's

Name: Brianna Dy

Nickname: Bree

Sport: Swimming

Position on team:

Captain, Breaststroker, Sprinter



Best gift you have ever received: Homemade Snickerdoodle Cookies

Favorite Christmas song: "Santa Tell Me" by Ariana Grande

Post-game tradition: Blasting music in the locker rooms and eating out with the Nenos

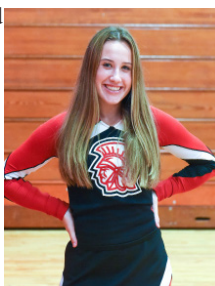
Name: Rachel Freund

Nickname: Rach

Sport: Cheerleading

Position on team:

Captain & Main Base



Best gift you have ever received: A necklace my grandma gave me

Favorite Christmas song: "All I Want for Christmas is You" by Mariah Carey & "Little Drummer Boy" by Justin Bieber

Post-game tradition: Going to Chili's

Name: Jared Gardner

Sport: Football

Position on team:

Wide Receiver & Safety



Best gift you have ever received: My grandma's necklace

Favorite Christmas song: "The Christmas Song" by Nat King Cole & "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas" by Mic Lowry

Post-game tradition: Dancing in the locker room and eating cookies

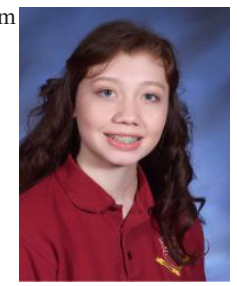
Name: Isabella Hamm

Nickname: Bella & Bel

Sport: Colorguard

Position on team:

First Guard Officer



Best gift you have ever received: Tickets to see Taylor Swift in concert for her 1989 tour

Favorite Christmas song: "Underneath the Tree" by Kelly Clarkson

Post-game tradition: Getting pizza

Name: Erin Ptaszynski

Nickname: Nenny

Sport: Cheerleading

Position on team:

Base



Best gift you have ever received: My dog named Charlie

Favorite Christmas song: "Holly Jolly Christmas" by Burl Ives

Post-game tradition: Going to Chili's

Name: Gabriella Shevlin

Nickname: Gabby, 1KGinger, GTheBrat

Sport: Girl's Wrestling

Position on team: Wrestler



Best gift you have ever received: My friends and family

Favorite Christmas song: "This Christmas" by Chris Brown

Post-game tradition: Going to Friendly's

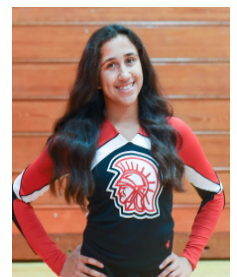
Name: Ty Upton

Nickname: Upton

Sport: Cheerleading

Position on team:

Captain & Flyer



Best gift you have ever received: My puppy

Favorite Christmas song: "Grandma Got Run Over By A Reindeer" by Elmo & Patsy & "Run Rudolph Run" by Chuck Berry

Post-game tradition: Listening to music

A safe return to the water



ATHLETES SHARE A LAUGH BETWEEN TRAINING.
(ALL IMAGES COURTESY OF STA PUBLICATIONS)

BY: Wafa Qureshi

As STA prepares to kick off its winter sports season after the state delaying it until February, the STA swim team is unsure on how it will get on its feet. There are plenty of changes this year, so this season will be a lot more different than usual. Due to a surge of Coronavirus cases in the state and the numerous outbreaks caused by sports teams, it is unclear how high school swimmers will operate. Since the sport is in-

doors and swimmers from all over the county swim in the same pool, it is likely to cause an outbreak even if there were precautions taken. As Murphy announced at his Coronavirus briefing in Trenton on November 16th, "As a parent, I understand the importance of watching our kids play and the thrill of cheering them on. But, right now, with the numbers we are seeing, we have to take these steps to preserve and protect, as best we can, public health and to try to slow the spread of this virus."

The season is already starting to look a little different, the Greater Middlesex Conference and the New Jersey state championships are canceled and practices have to be under the 10 person limit indoors. The STA swim team has over 10 people including the JV and Varsity teams, so it would be difficult to maintain this limit. Home swim meets may have to take place virtually with each school filming their swimmers and sending their recorded times to an official for final judgements. As for STA, the fate of the 2021 high school swim season is still unknown, if STA does get a swim season, it would be shortened from February 18th to late March. The team captains are still unannounced and there are currently no events scheduled for the year. A few of the high schools in Middlesex County have decided to cancel the 2021 swim season altogether and wait until the 2022 season, which will affect what the competition schedule would look like and who STA will face if the season moves forward.

Last year, the STA swim team won 9 out of 11 events in the white division. The team won over Edison High School, Colonia High School, the Wardlaw-Hartridge School, and many more in events like the 200 Free, 100 Back, and 400 Free Relay. The swim coach, Amanda Cleveland-Miller was named All-GMC coach of

the year and the team had 11 out of 22 swimmers named into All-Conference and All-Division teams. The team had 5 All-Conference swimmers including alumna Sarah Hardy, senior Brianna Dy, sophomore Sierra Smith, junior Grace Neno, and junior Sydney Zeszotarski. Also, the swim team had 6 All-Division swimmers in the 2019-2020 season including alumna Lara Espirutu, sophomore Gabriella Hamm, senior Isabella Hamm, senior Sean O'Leary, junior Sarah Shao, and alumnus Dominic Lawas. Brianna Dy, Sarah Hardy, Grace Neno, and Sydney Zeszotarski set a new GMC record as part of the Girls 200 Medley Relay Team. Due to last year's team, STA now holds all 3 relay records and 4 individual event records in the conference.

The team had 6 seniors last year and two made All-Division. This year, the team has 5 seniors including Isabella Hamm, Sean O'Leary, Brianna Dy, Anthony Cacchione, and Thomas Koeing. It is unclear what the team will look like because tryouts are not until February 1st. Despite the doubts of a new season, STA is hopeful that the seniors will have their final season and end on a good note before they leave. Hopefully, the entire swim team has the chance to compete and showcase their skills for the 2021 season.

Mental toughness needed

BY: Alex Cocuzza

One might think that the winter track runners would have a break from running due to the pandemic. This however, is not true. The runners have been in constant contact with the new boys distance coach, Michael Mazzei. Coach Mazzei and Coach Tim have been sending the runners their workouts so that they can complete them on their own at home. This makes their work even more difficult by forcing the runners to run in the cold solo. Mental toughness will be key during this new season. With the season starting tentatively on February 12th, there is plenty of time to prepare. If there is some kind of bad weather condition one could think of, they have run through it. The boys dis-

tance team has recently run through both of the snowstorms that New Jersey has experienced, even having done a speed workout during one. This season will be drastically different from seasons past. Currently, the expected end date is in March and goes right into spring track, creating a kind of "super season." The runners are hopeful that they will be able to race and bring their times down. Senior Chris O'Connell said this when asked about racing; "I do really miss it. It gave us something to look forward to and work for. The adrenaline rush you get is like nothing else." As the team continues training on the track, they also continue to utilize the weight room when possible. The runners work everything from shoulders to back to legs and even arms. While there

are no guarantees, the runners are optimistic about the upcoming season and what it has to offer them all. Working out alone is never easy. The brotherly duo of senior Mike Cocuzza and sophomore Alex Cocuzza are lucky enough to have each other to pace off of and motivate each other through their toughest runs. Other runners on the team complete their workouts solo to ensure the safety of everyone involved. The coaches have not been taking things easy on the runners in this difficult time either. Grueling speed workouts twice a week ensure that the runners are at peak physical performance. Coach Tim Miller always reminds our athletes, "If you aren't sore after the workout, you didn't do it right." Good luck to the Winter Track Team on the upcoming season!



IN THE MIDST OF COMPETITION, THIS ATHLETE PUSHES HERSELF TO FINISH THE RACE.

Searching for success

BY: CARISSA MATRALE

This year is definitely unconventional but that will not stop our girls basketball team from continuing to work hard and play to their best ability. The team began practicing in the beginning of January and was met with a group of new coaches. They were pushed to their limits but as always, it paid off. Varsity seniors Akyia Baker, Melanie Mallari, and Cianna Mquiller were ready to lead their team to victory through these uncertain times.

Their first official game is currently scheduled to take place on January 26th at Monroe. Senior Melanie Mallari said, "From the beginning of the season we knew it was going to be different. We lost a lot of strong players in last year's graduating class and COVID restrictions have changed so much, but I'm confident that we can pull together as a team to make ourselves and our past teammates proud." Since the girl's basketball team at Perth Am-

boy is unable to play this season, the team has gained the opportunity to play against two state-ranked teams. This is a new and exciting challenge that the girls are anxiously awaiting.

Even though spectators are unable to attend games, it is still important to show the team support in any way you can. Make sure to check in online for updates and to follow the girls' success this season.



THIS ATHLETE FOCUSES ON SINKING A BASKET.

Aiming for turkeys in February

BY: ALEX SARDIS

Last year the boys and girls bowling teams had a strong season, making several incredible wins along the way. The girls ended their season with ten out of seventeen matches won, ranking them as the second best team in the Blue Division. The boys finished their season with eight out of seventeen matches won, giving them a ranking of fourth in the Blue Division. Sophomore Alexandra Sardis led the girls team last year with a high average of 156, a high game of 212, and a high series of 536. On the boys team, alumnus Kyle Imperial led the way with a high game of 267, a high average of 215, and a high series of 749.

While the winter season has been heavily delayed, a start is finally beginning to take place. With a shorter season starting soon, a new head coach has been assigned to take over Coach Terence Reilly's position. Reilly, who is a school counselor, coached the bowling team for an astounding seventeen years. Unfortunately, this year, he decided to resign as head coach, allowing Richard Maddock to take the helm.

Coach Maddock was the head bowling coach at Woodbridge high school from 2007-2012, he has many years of experience on the lanes, and is excited to join the STA community. Chris Wilton, class of 2016, will continue to support the team as assistant coach and he shares Coach Maddock's enthusiasm. Last year's team captains, Catheryn Duarte and Ryan Gluchowski, have since graduated and headed off to college. Several other bowling team members graduated last year as well, but the coaches are hopeful for many new members to join the team this year.



AIMING FOR A STRIKE, THIS ATHLETE WORKS HARD AT PRACTICE.

Shooting for a great season

BY: GIANNA GUZMAN

In past years, the boys basketball team has been victorious. Despite all of the changes they are determined to succeed and win the Greater Middlesex White Division Championship. Last year they went 14-0 and were the top team in the GMC Blue Division. This year they are determined to keep the success they built in the past year. The NJSIAA and Governor Murphy have decided that January 11, 2021 will be when basketball teams will start practicing. However, they will not be on the court until January 26, 2021. Despite all inconveniences, they are still training, weightlifting, attending open gyms, and taking care of their health. The boys basketball teams participated in the Hoop Group Fall League Showcase. Their performance was at high standards as they went 2-0. Since July, they have had outdoor practices working on quick hitters on offense and defensive drills led by Coach Bob Turco. Turco has elevated the boys' program to the next level, considering what they accomplished last year. Senior Kyree Henry said that Turco has been extremely supportive and provided great encouragement. "Buy into what I'm sell-

ing because this is the year to win a ring," is one of the sayings Kyree took to heart. But it is not only the coach that brings the encouragement, Henry and senior Tristan Jeffries are the ones who step up when the coach is not around. Two new faces the team will be seeing this year are transfers senior Joshua Rivera and junior Adam Silas. The basketball team's first official game of the season is January 26, 2021. They will be competing against John F. Kennedy Memorial High School at 7:00 pm. The team understands that because of the circumstances they are in, it will not be the same. Jaquan Harris, a junior, stated "I dislike the idea of the season being shortened. But I understand that because of the circumstances we are in it is something we will have to deal with. I wish we could play a full season with fans able to attend; we just have to work with what we got and hope things get better." There will not be a STA fan section cheering them on, the season is cut short, and there is a big possibility there will not be having sectional finals. But most importantly, the seniors got the opportunity to play their final year at STA and win the GMC White Division championship.

Taking it to the mats

BY: GIANNA STRAZULLA

Michael Jordan once said, "Obstacles don't have to stop you. If you run into a wall, don't turn around and give up. Figure out how to climb it, go through it, or work around it." Even though Jordan may have played basketball, his advice has been heeded by the wrestling team.

The 2020-2021 wrestling team has faced many challenges due to Covid-19. But, like the hard working athletes they are, the wrestlers are determined to come out on top. The season is set to begin on March 1st. Due to coronavirus restrictions, it has been difficult for the team to meet together and practice. However, both the boys and girls teams have had scheduled workouts since the summer with the school's personal trainer, Coach Zonkowski. Individu-

ally, the athletes have been conditioning and running drills on their own during this unusual preseason.

Senior Yamyka Pichardo shares her expectations for the season: "I hope that our season will make it through to the end and both the boys and girls teams will be able to celebrate our senior nights. Personally, I aspire to win as many matches as I did last year. We all just want to make the most of our season. Family always sticks together!" With persistence, a positive mindset, and of course practice, the wrestling program has the potential for a great season.

As Coach Nick Tonzola says, "With a young group of hungry wrestlers and a strong schedule STA is always looking to get to the next level every season." Best of luck to the wrestling team as they plan to squash it this season!

This issue students were asked to consider what the holidays mean to them. They were challenged to transform the spirit of the season into physical works. The Satoma Staff is proud to publish these exceptional creations.

“Blessed is the season which engages the whole world in a conspiracy of love.” - Hamilton Wright Mabie



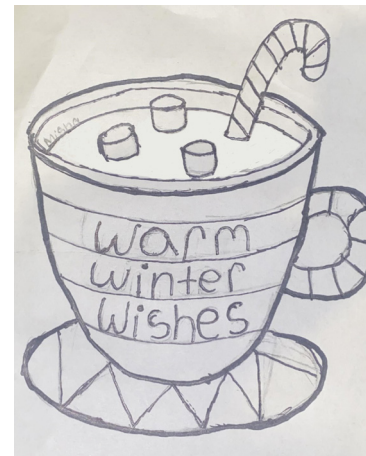
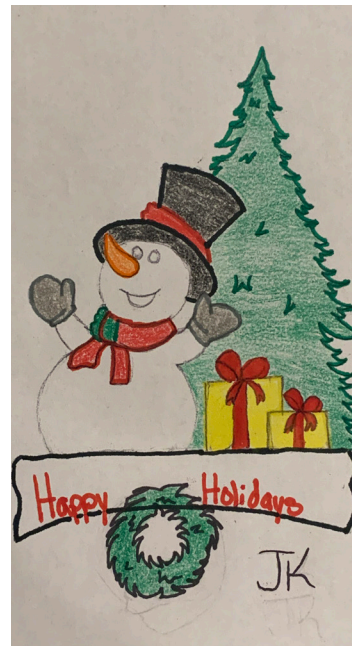
ARTWORK COURTESY OF SENIOR ABIGAIL CHADWICK



ARTWORK COURTESY OF SENIOR OLIVIA ROBINSON



ARTWORK COURTESY OF SENIOR FIORELLA MERRIMAN-MENDEZ



LEFT: ARTWORK BY FRESHMAN JADEN KELLY

ABOVE: ARTWORK BY FRESHMAN MISHA HERCULES

The Satoma staff would like to thank all who submitted work for consideration.