

A Letter from the Editor



was my third choice for a while. It was not until I came for ‘freshman-for-a-day’ that I saw myself fulfilling all of my 5th grade dreams here. From the moment I stepped through the main entrance, I was welcomed into the STA community with open arms. STA was a place exploding with opportunities and I was ready to take full advantage of all of them.

Four years later, I am proud to say that I have made good on that promise. While my eleven year old self would be embarrassed to see me trip up the stairs, drop all of my books, and faceplant in front of a group of seniors my freshman year, she would be overjoyed to see me busting a move at Snowball, playing tag in between classes with my friends (sorry Mr. Fiore), getting hypnotized at a leadership conference, and cheering on the boys at a Friday night football game. But, my accomplishments have far surpassed anything I could have ever imagined. I am very blessed to have been inducted as a member into five national honor societies, been captain of our varsity cheerleading team and won four state and five national titles, to have led the Future Lawyers club as President to three mock trial victories, to have made my TV debut as one of News 12 New Jersey’s Scholar Athletes, to have been awarded Best Delegate for a wand duel I had during a Harry Potter committee at a Model UN convention, and to be Editor-in-Chief of the Satoma (just

to name a few). The friendships and relationships that I have made, the activities I have participated in, and the extra special moments that I have been able to undergo only at STA have had a profound impact on the person that I am today.

To the underclassmen, I pass on the wise words of Nelson Mandela, “It always seems impossible until it’s done.” I can recall countless all nighters studying for a Church History or APUSH exam questioning if the birds were actually chirping or if I had begun hearing things. I have pushed through blood, sweat, and tears to be able to compete with my cheer team. I have untied innumerable knots in my stomach as I mustered up the courage to present my case in front of a real judge and against St. Joes during mock trials. And I am still recovering after having completed the college application process. But, I am here to tell you that I have not only survived, but come out victorious from all of those instances. High school is a time to experience new things. Have the fearlessness to step out of your comfort zone and you will be rewarded in more ways than one. The sky truly is the limit. Hard work and dedication go a long way.

To my fellow seniors, it is time to accept the hard truth that Robert Frost so gracefully told us in freshman year English class, “nothing gold can stay.” Over the last four years, STA has been a home away

from home for us all. While everyone has had their fair share of achievements here, I know it is the little things that hold the dearest places in our hearts. Every school Mass, “Big House” song, PSAT meme, Instagram account, Mr. McCarthy split, and gym class speedball game united us as a family. And though we are all going our separate ways to start new chapters in our lives, be comforted by the fact that we will always have a home at STA. Congratulations to the Class of 2021! I am honored to have shared this time together and I am positive that each and every one of us will go on to attain greatness.

I leave STA with a collection of beautiful memories. Never in my life have I been surrounded, sometimes to the point of suffocation, with so much love and support. I thank God everyday for leading me to 1 Tingley Lane. Armed with perseverance, pragmatism, and my faith, I plan to heed Henry David Thoreau’s advice as I myself begin a new chapter: “Go confidently in the direction of your dreams. Live the life you have imagined.” And while I eagerly await what the future holds, I will try to make the most of each and every day because “today is the only day that you have guaranteed so go make it count” (Mr. John Roche). Thank you St. Thomas Aquinas High School, it’s been real.

Sincerely yours,
Gianna Strazzulla
Editor-in-Chief
(for the last time)

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Valedictorian 2021: Alison Picerno



BY: RAJOSHI BASU

When she is not going for runs, watching the Harry Potter movies, or traveling to NYC, Alison Picerno goes above and beyond in taking time to study hard and getting her assignments done. Possessing an amazing GPA of 4.77, she has earned the title of Valedictorian for the 2020-21 school year.

Picerno has an impressive academic record consisting of six AP classes and straight A's in all courses she took,

which led her to be on the Principal's List for all four years of her high school career. Because of her exceptional merit, she got academic recognitions such as the Honors Program and five National Honor Societies. Additionally, she was also a tutor outside of school for three years.

In addition to excelling in academics, she has acquired leadership roles such as co-president and co-founder of the Amnesty International Club, vice president of the Environmental Service Club, and secretary of the International Club. Along with this, she did lacrosse since her freshman year (lettering since her sophomore year) and volleyball during her freshman and sophomore years and she has been a part of the Art Club. Outside of school, she held two part-time jobs before currently working at a restaurant in Metuchen, volunteered for Indivisible Central NJ and Biden's 2020 Campaign last summer and fall, and received

the Society of Women Engineers Certificate of Merit. She has also been a member of the Christian Social Action Club, being heavily involved in writing letters to the Felician Sisters, bringing in donations for various collections, and making lunches; she also volunteered at the Menlo Park Memorial Veteran's Home. She also runs a food drive in her hometown. She was so happy to start this because she believes "it's important to be able to help and give back to the community you live in, especially when it's a chance to work together with others in your neighborhood." Moreover, when COVID-19 hit the United States, she expanded the reach of her food drive to combat poverty and hunger the virus created.

Picerno's credentials led her to receive acceptance letters from competitive colleges, such as Emory University in Georgia, Northeastern University in Massachusetts, Fordham University in New

York, and American University in Washington, D.C. Furthermore, she was offered more than \$498,000 in college scholarships for the next four years. She is sure that she will major in economics and sociology wherever she goes to college. Any interim experience in public policy or market research will help her in her goal where she wants to see herself addressing economic inequality and amending out-of-date policies. She wants to leave a positive impact through her work and to know "what I am doing in life truly matters." She would also love to travel and try to go to every continent, including Antarctica, at least once.

At last, when asked if she had any advice for underclassmen, Picerno had this to say: "You need to find a balance between school and your social life. At the end of high school, you want to be able to know you enjoyed the last few years and be proud of what you accomplished."

Salutatorian 2021: An Nguyen



BY: RAJASVI PATEL

An Nguyen has been given the title of the Salutatorian of the Class of 2021. He has been a high achiever in terms of academic performance. Nguyen has become a member of six Honors Societies: National Honors Society, Science, Spanish, Math, Social Studies, and Tri-M.

His favorite subject during his education at STA has "definitely been chemistry" because he had classes with Mrs. D'Addio for two years. In addition to these exceptional achievements, he has been on the Principal's List throughout his high school career. Nguyen has maintained a GPA of 4.770 and has been enrolled in six Advanced Placement classes.

Nguyen managed to balance his rigorous academic courses with extracurricular activities. He was a member of a variety of clubs and organizations in and outside of school. He has been involved in the Aquinas Star Executive Board and the CSAC Leadership Team as the coordinator for the St. Peter's Children's Hospital Collection. In addition, he has serviced St. Peter's Hospital outside of STA allowing him to work closely with the staff there. Nguyen

has also been a part of the Student Ambassadors team, the Student Crisis Management Team, and Peer Leadership.

Nguyen has a background of fine arts as well. He has been a part of the Concert and Jazz Band throughout his high school career and has been playing the violin for nine years. Outside of STA, Nguyen has been a part of the Edison High School orchestra for the past four years. His editing skills have also been brought to STA through his role as the Co-Editor-in-Chief of Insight for his second half of his high school journey.

As he embarks further education, Nguyen will be attending the Honors College at Rutgers University. As a participant in their six-year pharmacy program, he will be at the Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy, to ultimately earn a Pharmacy Doctorate degree. Nguyen wants to research and

develop medicines and drugs or become a hospital pharmacist. He stated that "The science behind medicine and drugs has always fascinated me..." and he wants to utilize his interest in this subject matter to help others.

Even though his journey at STA has come to an end, he is sure that "STA has definitely prepared me for the future, both academically and spiritually." Through STA's many opportunities to excel in academics and service, Nguyen is fully prepared to take on the endeavors post-high school. He has an important takeaway from his high school experience, and that is that "time is valuable." He is "...proud of everything I've been able to accomplish so far and it's a rewarding feeling." Nguyen has had a great support system at STA and "...I couldn't have made it through high school without them."

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Screaming for Ice Cream



Under the hot summer sun, it is common for people from all ages to be seen enjoying a nice treat. The United States is the biggest producer of ice cream, with the average American consuming more than twenty-three pounds of ice cream per year. Vanilla serves as the most popular flavor with chocolate following right after. While ice cream comes in a majority of tasty

flavors, there are also some wild ones out there. Some of the strangest flavors people enjoy are avocado, garlic, chili, licorice and bacon.

Ice cream is a very profitable business with an \$11 billion industry that supports 26,000 direct jobs according to IDFA's Dairy Delivers statistics. Families are the primary customer group for ice cream retailers, and most ice cream is produced from March to July with July being the busiest production month for ice cream makers. This could be linked to the fact that July is National Ice Cream Month while the third Sunday in July is National Ice Cream Day in the United States. This was established by President Ronald Reagan in 1984 when he introduced Proclamation 5219, stating, "Ice cream is a nutritious and wholesome food, enjoyed by over ninety percent of the

people in the United States."

Many cultures have their own adaptation of ice cream like treats and it has appeared many times in history. Ice cream holds its origin in China 200 BC when a milk and rice mixture was frozen by packing it into snow.

Ice cream can also be beneficial to the body! It contains an important mineral, calcium, which is necessary for people to build strong bones and teeth. Human bodies do not produce calcium, so it is important to get it from food or supplements. It also provides energy for the body to function, yet it is important to eat in moderation. The National Frozen & Refrigerated Foods Association says that 87% of people have ice cream in their freezer at any given time, and that regular ice cream will remain the most popular in the category of frozen desserts.

What's Up with Fro-Yo



Warmer months are fast approaching, and that means grocery stores are stocking up on favorite summer treats. Hardly anyone can deny that ice cream is a delight to the taste buds, but unfortunately, it is a hit to the body. Except for calcium, it is low in most nutrients and extremely calorie-dense. One of the main reasons why ice cream intake should be limited is because it is chock-full of saturated fat. The American Heart Association advises against consuming too much-saturated

fat because it raises the risk of heart disease. Saturated fat also contributes to type 2 diabetes and obesity. Ice cream is also high in LDL, otherwise known as the notorious "bad" cholesterol that builds upon the walls of blood vessels over time.

Enter frozen yogurt, a similar yet different treat that has caught consumers by storm in recent years. Both frozen yogurt and ice cream are dairy-based products, but frozen yogurt consists of cultured milk rather than sweetened cream and condensed milk. The presence of live, active cultures in yogurt makes it a natural probiotic that benefits the digestive system by replenishing and supplementing good bacteria. Frozen yogurt's lower dairy content makes it an excellent choice for people who are lactose intolerant.

Not only is frozen yogurt significantly healthier than ice cream in many respects, but it is also still cold and creamy, and it tastes just as good. For people who find ice

cream too dense, sweet, or heavy, frozen yogurt is a perfect, lighter alternative. Frozen yogurt is softer and melts in one's mouth easier than ice cream, making it less likely to give one that dreaded brain freeze. Fro-yo shops generally sell by weight and have self-serve lines with buffet-style topping bars, making it easy for customers to mix-and-match flavors in the same cup and add fresh fruits and nuts that one would not ever find on an ice cream cone. There is also a much wider range of flavors that work well in frozen yogurt. For example, tangy fruit flavors like watermelon, orange, and blackberry are not suitable for ice cream, but they make for delicious, zesty, and low-calorie frozen yogurt. No dessert is ever going to be unequivocally "good" for people. That sweet, creamy taste needs to come from somewhere. However, frozen yogurt is a much healthier choice than ice cream, as long as it is eaten in moderation (like all things).

Spring concert at sunset

BY: KRISTEL RAMBAUD

On the evening of May 1st and afternoon of May 2nd, drivers passing by the corner of New Dover Road and Tingley Lane found themselves privy to some unexpected musical entertainment because the music department put on their annual spring concert outside this year, conducted by music director Joseph Cullinan.

Like most of the school year, this year's spring concert had to be adjusted to abide by COVID-19 restrictions. In prior years, it had taken place within the gymnasium. But this year, the bands and choirs assembled outside the main entrance of the school. As seamless as the transition from an indoor concert to an outdoor concert must have seemed to the spectators, the group had to overcome some challenges. For example, the lighting equipment had to be set in a way that would illuminate the students as they performed at night, and music sheets had to be pinned down so the pages would not flip because of wind. Senior Olivia Robinson even acted as the designated page-turner for Cullinan while he played the piano for the choir. Despite all the changes to this year's concert, senior Isabella Hamm noted that this concert still ran as smoothly as all the others in the past: "It was incredible- Mr. Cullinan really went

out of his way to make this happen for us, and all the seniors really appreciate it."

Act I of the spring concert began with the jazz band set. They opened with a rendition of Queen's "Crazy Little Thing Called Love," consisting of a congas performance by senior Kaitlyn Davis and drum performance by junior Kendrick Robles. The next song- "42nd Street," featured senior Abigail McCarty on drums and a stellar piano freestyle by senior Mary Strunak. They then closed with Michael Jackson's "Billie Jean," which featured vocal improvisations by senior Joseph Valenzuela and the jazz band's third drummer, freshman Michael Corradino.

Following the jazz band, the concert band came on to continue the first act. They opened with "Jupiter," a song that sounds akin to a popular hymn tune, which was then promptly followed with "...At Twilight." Coincidentally, on Saturday evening, the band got to perform the soothing song at twilight. They then closed the third act with a fast-paced, upbeat performance of "Fanfare on a Theme of Imagination."

The concert then continued with Act II, which consisted of performances by both the select choir and concert choir. Act II opened with a heavenly rendition of "When You Believe." The select choir then followed up with U2's "I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For," with



THE CONCERT CHOIR AND SELECT CHOIR PERFORM OUTSIDE IN THE MAIN COURTYARD OF THE SCHOOL. THEY SING THE SONG "AT TWILIGHT" JUST AS TWILIGHT SETS IN.

solos by seniors Gianna Kormondy, Anna Caruso, and Valenzuela. They transitioned to a concert choir performance of "May It Be" and then a select choir performance of "Can You Feel the Love Tonight," which featured solos by junior Jennifer Rihacek and sophomore Abigail Bera. Next up was "Peace I Leave with You" by the whole concert choir. The penultimate song was a "Yellow Submarine" by the select choir that featured fun, bouncing vocal inflections and timing that made the song stand out in the setlist.

The final performance of the night was "Be A Light," performed by the whole concert choir. The song acted as the closing to the concert as well as the Class of 2021's high school music career. This is why Cullinan featured Tri-M seniors

from the band as well. These five seniors included clarinet duo Kristel Rambaud and Robinson, four-year jazz band violinist An Nguyen, mellophone star Miles Farrell, and all-around percussionist Davis. Additionally, McCarty returned to the drums to close it out.

Before the start of "Be a Light," Cullinan explained a poignant story of light from his childhood. He then reminded the audience that even in the worst of times, there are wonderful things that brighten any situation saying, "you never know when the spark that you provide is gonna be the light that someone needs to see them through the dark." It was a touching reminder for all.

Congratulations to the Music Department for another outstanding concert!

Juniors enjoy 'mask'-querade prom



JUNIORS DANCE THE NIGHT AWAY AT THEIR PROM IN THE MARQUIS BALLROOM AT THE GRAND MARQUIS IN OLD BRIDGE.

(ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF STA PUBLICATIONS)

BY: MARIA GIANNOTTO

On May 7, the junior prom took place at the Grand Marquis in Old Bridge. It was a virtual learning day with an early dismissal for students so juniors would be able to have enough time to get ready for that night. Virtual learning sounds unusual, and that is because this school year has been different due to covid. After an 11:45 dismissal, junior girls began preparing their hair and dresses while junior boys put on their tuxedos.

Everyone started arriving at 7 pm, being greeted at the door with their mask on and taking pictures at the entrance. Juniors spent the night enjoying the food and the different

music choices provided by the DJ. As everyone anticipated finding out who won the title of prom king and queen, they were announced. Juniors Joey Vergel and Alexis Citro became prom king and queen. The prom came to a close at 11, and the juniors left, satisfied with their night. Junior Ava Cruz described the night: "Honestly, I felt old because having prom made me feel like high school was coming to an end. I had a great time with my friends and we danced the whole night. Seeing my best friend get king was the cutest and I was so happy for him."

The class of 2022 was pleased to have been able to celebrate the night together after such a challenging year.

Baccalaureate Mass and Graduation combined

BY: SAMANTHA CHRISTINE

On Thursday, May 27th, the class of 2021 celebrated a combination Baccalaureate Mass and Graduation ceremony at the Church of the Sacred Heart in South Plainfield.

The graduates processed into the church promptly at 3pm and participated in the Mass, which was presided over by Father Keith Cervine. Popular STA traditional hymns were sung including, "Sing Alleluia" and "Trading My Sorrows." Symbols of the Class of 2021 were brought forward while seniors described the importance of each one. Some of the symbols included a friendship chain, homeroom pic-

tures, and a Christ candle.

Following the Mass, the seniors re-set for graduation with the seniors who had participated in the liturgy returning to their seats for the graduation ceremony. Speakers during the ceremony included Salutatorian An Ngyuen, Valedictorian Alison Picerno, senior class officers Kaitlyn Adlassnig and Brianna Dy, Principal Harry Ziegler, and Bishop James Checchio. Class moderator Kevin McCarthy read off each graduate's name as the Bishop presented them with their diplomas. Once all of the students had received their diplomas, they moved their tassels from right to left and officially became graduates!



CLASS MODERATOR KEVIN MCCARTHY, BISHOP CHECCHIO, PRINCIPAL HARRY ZIEGLER AND THE CLASS OF 2021 LISTEN AS VALEDICTORIAN ALISON PICERNO SPEAKS DURING THE GRADUATION CEREMONY.

(ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF STA PUBLICATIONS)

SENIOR JOINS MARINE CORPS

BY: CHRISTOPHER O'CONNELL

Senior Miles Farrell, friend to many and scholar to all, will be going off to boot camp this August to join the Marine Corps. He agreed to sit down for an interview to discuss what made him want to join, his future plans, and to give advice to those considering a similar path.

When asked, "What made you decide on the Marine Corps opposed to the army, navy, or another branch?" He responded, "It started

when an army recruiter came to lunch. We exchanged details and I originally intended on enlisting in the army anyway and him coming to STA catalyzed the process. However, after thinking more about it, I eventually ended up deciding on the Marines because of how distinguished they are as a branch and I know the challenges I will overcome to become a Marine will give me a great deal of pride in myself and being proud of my work is something that is important to me."

When asked what he hopes to be doing in 5 years when he is done with his first enlistment he said, "My plan from the start was to gather the benefits from the GI Bill, which allows me to complete 4 years of college without any expense in exchange for serving one contract. I'll probably be attending TCNJ or Rutgers and getting my Bachelor's Degree in Computer Science. However, if I really enjoy my 4 years in the military I would like to re-enlist, but we will see in

5 years." Miles then gave his advice to underclassmen considering the same path as him: "It is a monumental decision that will certainly make an impact on your life. Make sure to do a lot of independent research on sites like Quora before contacting a recruiter. When you do reach out to a recruiter, they are going to try to get the process done as quickly as possible, but it's important to go at your own pace, and always remember it is ok to back out at any moment." Best of luck to you, Miles!

Seniors celebrate final social soiree

BY: MARIA GIANNOTTO

On May 20 at around 7 pm, seniors began arriving at Ariana's Grand in Woodbridge for their prom. It was their first prom since their junior prom was unable to happen due to covid. Students wore face masks and had to follow social distancing rules. As the school day ended at 1:45, seniors rushed home to start getting ready for that night; senior girls went to hair appointments and made sure their makeup was perfect, while senior boys fixed their hair and put on their tuxedos. As seniors arrived, they met up to take pictures in the outdoor space. Throughout the night, food and music were provided. Mr. McCarthy also led the seniors in dancing to "Fireball!" Something that se-

niors were looking forward to the most that night was the announcement of prom king and queen. The seniors who won that title were Amaris Hemmingway and Joshua Rivera. The senior prom, planned by class president Kaitlyn Adlassnig and vice president Bree Dy, was an amazing way to end their senior year. Senior Caroline DiMaggio said about the memorable night: "I was really grateful to have a prom. With such a difficult year, it was so nice to finally have something special because we missed out on so much. Although prom was very different from the way I have always imagined since I was a kid, the night was still filled with happy memories. Being surrounded by the people I spent the past four years with was the perfect way to conclude my high school experience."



SENIORS JOSHUA RIVERA, KYREE HENRY, JALEN JONES, JAMIE HAMILTON, AND JARED GARDNER SHOW OFF THEIR STYLE AT PROM AT ARIANA'S GRAND IN WOODBRIDGE.

The shield is alive

BY: LISA MOHABEER

The Falcon and the Winter Soldier, Disney Plus' most-watched series debut, premiered on March 19th with episodes being released every Friday until the sixth and final episode came out on April 23rd. The mini-series was originally planned to be released before WandaVision, but due to the pandemic, production was halted and those plans did not work out. In *The Falcon and the Winter Soldier*, Marvel brought out new sides of two characters from earlier movies in the Marvel cinematic universe, keeping them fresh after almost a decade. Samuel Wilson, played by Anthony Mackie, made his first appearance as the Falcon in *Captain America: The Winter Soldier* (2014). Sebastian Stan first portrayed James Buchanan Barnes in *Captain America: The First Avenger* (2011).

Following the events of Avengers: Endgame, Sam Wilson has been given Captain America's shield from Steve Rogers himself. *The Falcon and the Winter Soldier* is a must-watch as it contains at least three different storylines that will be picked up in Phase 4 of the Marvel Universe. The mini-series gives fans time to get to know Sam, which they haven't been able to while he was Steve's sidekick, and ultimately shows why Sam is the right choice for the role.

The Falcon and the Winter Soldier managed to incorporate a lot of plot into just six episodes. The series' main villain was the Flag

Smashers, an anti-patriotism group of super-soldiers led by Karli Morgenthau. Their mission was to restore things to the way they were during the blip - a united world without borders. The recreation of the Super Soldier Serum was being created by Dr. Wilfred Nagel and funded by the mysterious Power Broker. Twenty vials of the accurate recreation were made, and Karli took eight of them for her group, the other twelve hidden in a cemetery. It was up to Sam and Bucky to stop them, without knowing what they were getting themselves into.

Sam believed he wasn't worthy of the shield and that it truly belonged to Steve. He further explained, "Symbols are nothing without the men and women that give them meaning." Because he wasn't quite up to the task of representing the shield and Steve's legacy, Sam turned the shield over to the U.S. government with intentions of it being put on display to honor Steve. However, the government was up to something else and a different contender for the shield was presented. The government handed the role of Captain America to John Walker, a former captain in the Army, who unfortunately caved under the pressure of the title of Captain America. At the end of the season, Walker was given the title of "U.S. Agent," which will be a big role for Phase 4.

As for Bucky Barnes, he has come a long way since he was a brainwashed assassin and made it clear he is no longer the Winter Soldier. Stan plays Bucky Barnes exceptionally well and speaks a thousand



ANTHONY MACKIE AND CO-STAR SEBASTIEN STAN CARRY ON THE MARVEL LEGACY IN THE NEW DISNEY PLUS SERIES "THE FALCON AND THE WINTER SOLDIER." THE TWO ACTORS REPRISER THE ROLES THEY ORIGINATED IN THE MARVEL CINEMATIC UNIVERSE.

words through his eyes without the need to say anything; this is shown in a flashback scene of Bucky in Wakanda coming to the realization he is free, as the code words to control the Winter Soldier do not work on him anymore. Throughout the show, Bucky is seen with a notebook, which was previously Steve's, containing names of those he has wronged as the Winter Soldier. It is made clear that he has been trying to make amends for his crimes.

Characters such as Baron Zemo, an enemy turned ally, and Sharon Carter are back. Bucky shockingly helped Zemo escape from prison to figure out who the Super Soldier Serum was coming from. Zemo was seen wearing his purple mask just as he does in the comics. After Bucky, Sam, and Zemo got caught in their plan, Sharon Carter saved them with some newly developed skills. Once Zemo contributed his part in the matter, he was sent back to prison in the Raft. Sharon seemed to be "good" but there were many hints that seemed to reveal she is the Power Broker. The post-credits scene featured Sharon accepting a pardon from the Global Repatriation Council as well as her old job.

The series also expands to explore the implications of a black man being given the mantle. Sam Wilson questioned how a black man can represent a country that does

not represent him. Wilson was even more resistant to step up as Captain America after learning of the existence of Isaiah Bradley, the only survivor of a black group of super-soldiers, who was betrayed by his own government, imprisoned for 30 years, and experimented on to see why the serum worked on him. Isaiah Bradley was then hidden and legally declared dead. Bradley couldn't believe how a black man would ever want to be Captain America.

It was Sam's decision to keep the shield and take a leap of faith in thinking the U.S. government would let a black man be Captain America. Ending the finale with a touching speech, Sam Wilson proved himself to be a true leader. He does not have Super Soldier Serum or blonde hair and blue eyes as the government wishes, but he is still proved to be the best man for the role of Captain America. At the very end of the finale, the title changed from *The Falcon and the Winter Soldier* to *Captain America and the Winter Soldier*, showing respect to the new Captain America. *The Falcon and the Winter Soldier* served as more of a smooth transition from Anthony Mackie as the Falcon to Captain America. With Captain America 4 in the works, Sam Wilson as Captain America will undoubtedly be a key player in Phase 4 of the Marvel Universe.



WYATT RUSSELL TAKES ON THE ROLE OF JOHN WALKER, THE GOVERNMENT'S NEWLY RECRUITED CAPTAIN AMERICA. (ALL IMAGES COURTESY OF GOOGLE IMAGES)

Black Widow backstory revealed

BY: ABIGAIL BERA

The Black Widow is back in business in another film from the Marvel Cinematic Universe. However, this time, her role is different. There is no Hawkeye or Captain America to support her and no S.H.I.E.L.D. Agents to back her up. This time, it is just Natasha Romanoff in her own film, *Black Widow*.

Black Widow is the 24th film in the MCU, as well as the first film in their "Phase Four" plan. Set to refresh the franchise in several new ways and delve into their characters' pasts, Phase Four will bring a slew of discoveries for audiences. Unlike the rest of the slate, Black Widow will take place before the events of the hit movie *Avengers: Endgame*.

After first appearing in Marvel Comics in the 1960s, Natasha Romanoff, aka Black Widow, was

introduced to movie audiences in 2010's *Iron Man 2*. She eventually went on to become one of the original six members of The Avengers superhero squad. Her character has exponentially grown in popularity with subsequent Marvel Films, and fans have been vocal about wanting the Black Widow in a titular role. These fans were thrilled when they heard that she would star in a film all about herself.

The film takes place after the events of *Captain America: Civil War* and tells the origin story of Natasha Romanoff, also known as the Black Widow. When a dangerous conspiracy with links to her past arises, she must escape to Russia to confront her past. Pursued by a force that will cease at nothing to bring her down, Natasha must deal with her history as a spy and the broken relationships left in her wake

long before her time as an Avenger.

The idea of a Black Widow solo film has been floating around since the character was introduced. At the time, she was the only female member of the Avengers. Though audiences will see the film this summer, its original debut date was much earlier, on May 1, 2020. Due to COVID-19 and the closures of cinemas around the country, the Black Widow release date was pushed back and now audiences can expect Black Widow to release in cinemas on July 9, 2021. It will also be available to stream on Disney Plus with a \$30 Premiere Access fee.

Black Widow stars Scarlett Johansson as the S.H.I.E.L.D. Agent and savvy KGB assassin. This time, she is joined by Academy Award nominee Florence Pugh as Yelena Belova, a sister-figure to Romanoff who trained in the Red Room as a



SCARLETT JOHANSSON RETURNS TO THE MCU FOR THE BLACK WIDOW SOLO MOVIE.

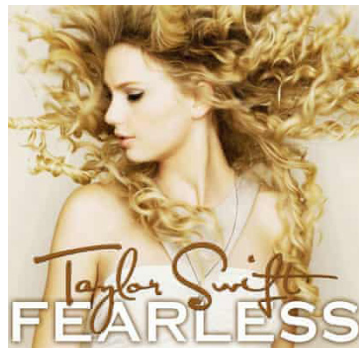
Black Widow. O-T Fagbenle, William Hurt, Ray Winstone, and Rachel Weisz will also be making appearances in the film. Fan favorite and *Stranger Things* actor David Harbour will also be joining in as the Russian superhero Red Guardian.

Black Widow is predicted to be one of the most popular movies of the summer. It is certainly a film viewers will not want to miss!

Taylor is back at it again

BY: KRISTEL RAMBAUD

Taylor Swift has been a household name in America for over a decade now. Her career has included Grammy Awards and #1 hits. Her classic hits like "Love Story" and "You Belong With Me" are unforgettable and were her first two songs to make it into the Billboard Hot 100's Top 10. Those songs were featured on Swift's second album: *Fearless*. Now, over a decade later, millions of people are rediscovering the album all over



THE COVER OF TAYLOR SWIFT'S NEWLY RELEASED ALBUM, FEARLESS (TAYLOR'S VERSION). (ALL IMAGES COURTESY OF GOOGLE IMAGES)

again. But this time, they're not listening to Fearless. They're listening to Fearless (Taylor's Version).

Fearless (Taylor's Version), released on April 9, 2021, is the first in a series of planned re-recorded albums by the artist. But why re-record her beloved music? That answer lies in Swift's history with her first record label: Big Machine Records. Swift had been with Big Machine Records for most of her career, producing six albums with them from the course of 2006 to 2017. When her contract expired, she signed with Republic Records. However, in 2019, Big Machine Records was acquired by Scooter Braun and his company Ithaca Holdings. Consequently, all ownership of her masters of her first six albums transferred to Braun. Both sides disputed if the acquisition of the masters was fair. Regardless, Swift wanted to have ownership over her old music again and thus decided to re-record her first six albums.

Oddly enough, Swift started with her sophomore album. *Fearless (Taylor's Version)* takes listeners on a nostalgia trip back to the days where a teenaged Swift exaggerated a fake country accent (yes, the accent was fake; she's from

Pennsylvania) and sang her heart out about her love life. Whereas *Fearless* features the vocals of a young, naive teenaged girl heartbroken and enamored by love, *Fearless (Taylor's Version)* features more mature vocals and wisdom that comes with being an adult.

When listening to *Fearless (Taylor's Version)*, people may sit there in confusion and say, "Wait, this just sounds like the original!" And that's because Swift produced the album to sound as close to the original as possible. Majority of the songs run the same time length, with only the occasional song differing by a mere amount of seconds. Even the giggle from "Hey Stephen" shows up in the re-record at the same time of 2:55. All the songs are almost identical.

Another nice addition to the album was the six songs marked as "from the vault." These songs were contenders to be included in the original but ultimately did not make the cut. A standout amongst the six is "Mr. Perfectly Fine (Taylor's Version) (From the Vault)," the perfect song to scream at the top of your lungs. "Bye Bye Baby (Taylor's Version) (From the Vault)" serves as a perfect ending to the re-record, as Swift sings to

the closing of both her relationship and to the end of the album.

The album sonically is a country album, heavy on strings and even utilizing a fiddle on some. It is a back and forth between softer songs that one can listen to as one wistfully drives along a road and songs that one would shout with their friends on a summer road trip. The repeated themes of heartbreak and longing and length of 26 songs can make some songs get lost in the shuffle. On the contrary, a song like "Forever & Always (Piano Version) (Taylor's Version)" feels like such a breath of fresh air on the album because it broke the pattern in instrumentals; the use of piano not only broke up the monotony and added another element to the album. To put it simply, just about anyone can find a song on this album that they could add to their playlists. Swift just has a way with her melodies and lyrics that some songs still stand out over a decade later. *Fearless (Taylor's Version)* is a triumph for Swift, representing both more control over her year and how far she has come since those early days of her career. In over a decade since the original's release, Swift has proven once again that she is fearless.

Sitting Down *with*

QUESTIONS: 1. LIST YOUR EXTRACURRICULAR INVOLVEMENT 2. WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE MEMORABLE MOMENT FROM HIGH SCHOOL? 3. WHAT HAS CHANGED SINCE FRESHMAN YEAR? 4. WHAT WILL YOU MISS MOST ABOUT STA?

Name: Kaitlyn Adlassnig



1. Varsity Gymnastics Team (Captain 2 years), CSAC, Medical Explorers Club, Ahr Choice, Environmental Service Club, Student CMT, Junior Class Secretary/Treasurer, Senior Class President

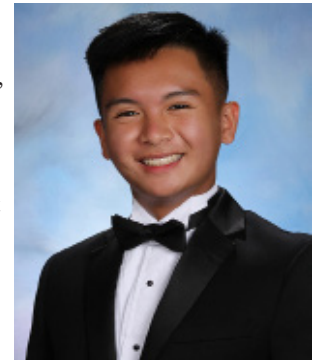
2. Becoming the President of the Senior Class

3. I have become a lot more involved. Joining clubs and activities made my high school experience so much better.

4. I will miss the amazing people and environment at STA. I love seeing my friends everyday in school and saying hi to the teachers in the halls. I am really going to miss the school spirit and screaming "Big House" at every school gathering.

5. Start the college process early. And meet with your counselor often to make sure you stay on track.

Name: Jaren Buliyat



1. Cross Country, Track, Basketball, Drama Department, Polar Plunge Committee, Student Ambassador, Medical Explorers Club, Chess Club, CSAC, Ahr Choice, President of Student Council, Sophomore Class President

2. Being able to plan events with the student council during COVID

3. I more relaxed now. Freshmen year I was always stressed out over absolutely everything. Now, thanks to my time management skills, I am more level headed.

4. The roche cookies

5. Never settle. There is always room for improvement in everything you do. Whether it be your school work, sports, the arts, clubs, or self care, you have to keep striving to do better.

Name: Caroline DiMaggio



1. Varsity Cheerleading (Captain), Honors Program, CSAC Executive Board, Ahr Choice, Student Ambassador, Peer Leadership, Student CMT, Dance Teacher, 5 National Honor Societies

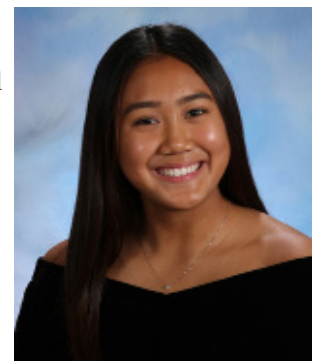
2. Being accepted into Peer Leadership

3. I have gained the confidence to achieve my goals. I have learned that I can do anything I set my heart and mind to.

4. I will miss the amazing people at STA the most. From friends to faculty, I have made so many great relationships at STA and I will miss seeing their smiling faces in the hallways.

5. Get involved! There are so many opportunities to be active in the school's community. Four years go by fast so don't miss out on doing all you wish to accomplish.

Name: Melanie Mallari



1. Peer Leadership, Student Council Social Media Representative, CSAC President & Leadership Team, Student Ambassador, Basketball, Soccer, Yoga and Meditation Club, Amnesty Club.

2. Receiving the Saint Timothy Award. I felt very honored to be recognized for my service and faith.

3. I gained a lot of self-confidence and learned the importance of doing what makes me happy.

4. I will miss the loving and supportive environment of STA, and the connections I have built with both students and teachers.

5. Push yourself out of your comfort zone and try different things. It is never too late to try something new. Most importantly, always do things that make YOU happy.

Standout Seniors

OUR PROUDEST ACCOMPLISHMENT FROM HIGH SCHOOL? 3. HOW HAVE YOU
A? 5. WHAT IS THE BEST ADVICE YOU WOULD GIVE TO THE UNDERCLASSMEN?

Name: Victoria Nasto



1. Varsity Soccer, Student CMT, CSAC, Student Ambassador, Peer Leadership, Fishing Club, Yoga Club, Grammar School Competition, Lunch Packing, Elijah's Promise

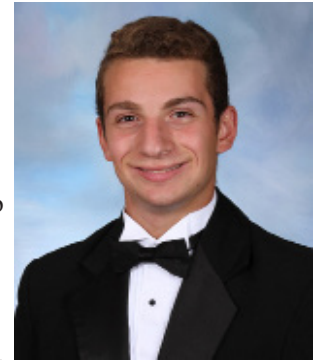
2. Being accepted into Peer Leadership

3. I think I have gotten more mature. I am much more independent and I feel more like an adult. I have made amazing friendships since freshman year and I think those people have changed me for the better.

4. I will miss the family atmosphere and community.

5. Get as involved as you can! It really does help to join a lot of clubs and extracurriculars. You will never regret getting involved or helping out at an event. Try and get the most out of your short time here and cherish every moment that you are in school!

Name: Christopher O'Connell



1. Track, Cross Country, Student CMT, Model UN, Ethics Bowl

2. Working my way up to all AP classes from starting in college prep classes freshman year

3. My skills under pressure have exponentially increased and I have a much deeper understanding of my strengths, weaknesses, and who I am as a person.

4. I think I will miss the comfort most of all. Now that I have been here for four years I have gotten so used to it and now I will be leaving for a new place.

5. Take as many advanced classes as you can handle and even look into summer classes offered by colleges. I took Calc the summer of my senior year through a college program and it helped me get accepted into more competitive colleges.

Name: Joseph Simmons



1. Varsity Baseball, Aquinas Star Co-Chair, CSAC, Student Council, Model UN

2. Making NHS and getting into one of my dream schools

3. I have become a lot more outgoing and proud of who I am.

4. Being involved with the Aquinas Star program and getting to know the incredible children we support. Definitely an experience I will never forget!

5. Get involved! It is how you will make the most out of your high school experience. There truly is something to do for everyone.

Name: Joseph Valenzuela



1. Drama Department (15 productions with 45 show nights), Music Department, d20 Club, Gaming Club, Aquinas Star

2. This year's Spring Musical, *Something Rotten!*

3. I have truly come into myself and begun the journey of self love. I learned that you don't have to do something alone when you're struggling, that it's OK to ask for help.

4. The loving, caring, nurturing and family atmosphere. This place has truly been a home away from home for me.

5. Never invest yourself in someone who doesn't want to invest in you. It is not worth it to pursue those relationships. And find the thing that sets your soul on fire and do it with every fiber of your being. Whatever it is, if you love it, never lose it!

The importance of proper shut-eye

BY: ISABELLA DANNER

Everyone has heard at least once in their life of the recommended hours of sleep per night - roughly seven to nine, but why is this so important; how does the number of hours and quality of one's sleep affect people? The National Sleep Foundation recommends the following based on age: eight to ten hours for teenagers, seven to nine hours for young adults, and seven to eight hours of sleep for older adults. Each person has a circadian rhythm, which can be referred to as the body's "internal clock." It is responsible for when one's body should feel/be awake and when it should be tired and sleepy as well. Adenosine is a powerful molecule within the body that interacts with cell receptors throughout the day. It collects up in the bloodstream as the day goes on and it breaks down during sleep at night. This molecule is responsible for the drowsiness people feel throughout the day. When the circadian rhythm is disrupted adenosine does not have the ample time to be broken down, causing people to feel drowsy earlier in the day.

Most people make the mistake of not prioritizing sleep. Instead, they go for a quick fix- caffeine. Caffeine blocks adenosine receptors so that while it continues to build, one does not feel the drowsy side-effects. The issue with this is that caffeine consumption becomes a vicious cycle. Many people believe that they are "addicted" to caffeine, but the National Institute on Drug Abuse differs from this statement. The so-called "withdrawal symptoms" felt after stopping caffeine consumption are actually just the natural side-effects from the buildup of adenosine. While on the surface caffeine may seem extremely useful, it can have a great effect on sleep. It can reduce the amount of sleep, the body's efficiency during, and the overall quality. Studies were held on the hours caffeine was consumed before bed and, according to the Sleep Foundation, studies show that even consumption six hours be-



MANY STUDENTS TODAY SACRIFICE THEIR SLEEP FOR THEIR GRADES. STUDIES SHOW THAT THIS PRACTICE ACTUALLY WORSENS ONE'S ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE BECAUSE ONE'S BRAIN IS NOT OPERATING AT ITS FULL POTENTIAL. (IMAGE COURTESY OF GOOGLE IMAGES)

fore bed interfered with sleep. It was shown that caffeine also affects the body's circadian rhythm and does not hinder the effects of long-term sleep loss. The study also adds that caffeine, particularly in carbonated drinks, can increase sleep-disordered breathing and symptoms of Obstructive Sleep Apnea, which occurs when the body involuntarily stops breathing (briefly) during sleep.

It would be nearly impossible, though, to get the suggested amount of sleep per night. Doctor O'Brien from Harvard Business Review noted that napping can be extremely useful when feeling sleepy, especially opposed to caffeine, but they should be quick. The idea of a "power nap" is to doze off for a bit and wake up feeling refreshed. Naps should only last about ten to twenty minutes, which can bring the body to stage two of NREM. This way, people can achieve enough sleep to help them feel energized without entering into stage three of NREM. Taking hour-long naps can bring people to this stage of deeper sleep, which is much harder to wake up from. After waking up from these longer naps, it can take up to thirty min-

utes to feel completely awake, but this may result in a groggy feeling.

Taking all of this into consideration, it is important to not only understand the aspects of quality sleep, but how to achieve it as well. The National Health Service of the United Kingdom states that melatonin, a hormone in the body, is released after dark and interacts with cell receptors to promote sleep. It works along with the body's circadian rhythm and in response to the body's natural surroundings as well. This is why a completely dark room is recommended for sleep- it allows the hormone melatonin to run through the body and induce tiredness. The best way to regulate the secretion of this hormone is through regulation of the circadian rhythm. By going to bed and waking up at the same time every single day, even on weekends, the circadian rhythm can adjust and regulate itself over time. At first, this may be difficult, which is why it is important to give one's body time to react and understand that it is time for sleep. In addition to dimming the lights, one can also turn down the temperature and do some

light meditation or yoga to destress the body beforehand. Being more active during the day can also help one to calm down and get more tired for the nighttime. Most doctors also recommend making the bedroom a screen-free zone, allowing the eyes and body to relax, helping the hormone melatonin to flow without interruption. The last tip, which may be quite obvious, is to make sure that one's sleeping environment is comfortable. Blankets, a soft mattress, and fluffy pillows are all important and can be personalized to each fit each individual's comfort needs. To conclude, there are many aspects of sleep, but it is important to completely understand each in order to assess how much energy is felt throughout the day. Many people want to change their sleeping habits but never find the motivation or do not know how to, but all of these small tips and tricks are sure to help. Sleep is so important and affects the body as a whole, as well as individual organs and specific functions. It is incredible how much can be controlled and impacted by just closing one's eyes, which further proves how amazing sleep truly is.

New SpaceX satellites now in orbit

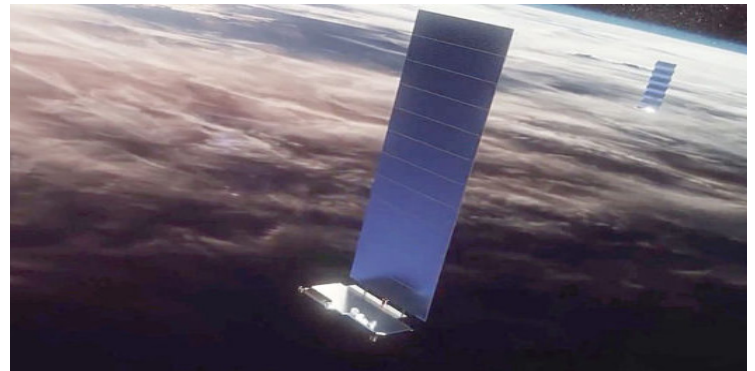
BY: CHRISTIAN PEREZ

On April 7th, 60 of SpaceX's Starlink satellites launched from Cape Canaveral, Florida and were successfully positioned into orbit above the Earth. This is not the first time Starlink satellites have been deployed to space, with 1378 previous satellites having been sent to space within the past three years. SpaceX plans to send 42,000 satellites into orbit by mid-2027. All of this is the culmination of a widely imaginative solution to solve one of the world's most pressing needs: Internet Access. Estimates by the BBC say up to 47% of the world's population still does not have internet access.

Starlink was created to solve the problem of lack of internet in developing countries without access to broadband and rural areas that did not have the infrastructure in place to support it. Starlink does this by connecting to terminals placed down by customers. Each terminal is small and portable, around the size of a pizza box, which is easy to set

up and install. All it needs is a clear view of the sky and the satellite automatically sends data from space to the terminal. The average speed that a connection to Starlink can transmit is 50 to 150 mbps (megabits per second). These speeds are comparable to the mobile data average of 76 mbps but are still inferior to the fixed broadband average of 182 mbps.

Starlink was first developed by SpaceX, an American space company headed by its famous CEO, Elon Musk. So far Starlink has been rolled out in seven countries, with three being approved just in April 2021, seeing its biggest success in rural America. In fact, SpaceX recently won an \$885 million grant by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to expand Starlink to provide internet access to 600,000 people in 35 states within the next few years. SpaceX has also worked on expanding their service to someday be put on ships and has even partnered with the United States military to use Starlink to connect to airplanes mid-air flying hundreds of mph.



SPACEX'S NEW SATELLITE TYPE, THE STARLINK, IN ORBIT AROUND THE EARTH GIVING INTERNET ACCESS TO THOSE WHO PREVIOUSLY HAD NONE. (ALL IMAGES COURTESY OF GOOGLE IMAGES)

But not everything is so chipper, there are some concerns posed by the expansion of Starlink, whether it be light pollution emanating from satellites, or the amount of space junk being left up in the atmosphere. Astronomers have complained about the amount of light pollution from the Starlink satellites, making the process of seeing distant stars hard-

er or even impossible from Earth. Some solutions have been tried but the light pollution is still an ever-present issue. The debris caused by Starlink satellites are also a problem, with the idea of 42,000 more satellites in orbit being something of a worry when it comes to satellite collisions and the possibility of debris from space smashing into one.

University of Pennsylvania has RNA breakthrough

BY: OLIVIA RIVERA

It is easy to go about one's day without realizing how much of what one does and eat is due to the advancements of science and technology. Science has proven time and time again that there is always a solution. From vaccines to antibiotics, there is always an answer to most problems.

At the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania, a research study on patients with Leber congenital amaurosis took place, which is an eye disorder that affects the retina and can impair a patient's vision. During the clinical trial, the study participants received an injection called sepfarsen. Sepfarsen has short RNA molecules in it that work to enhance the functions of the eye, specifically the retina, by increasing protein levels in the photoreceptors of the eye.

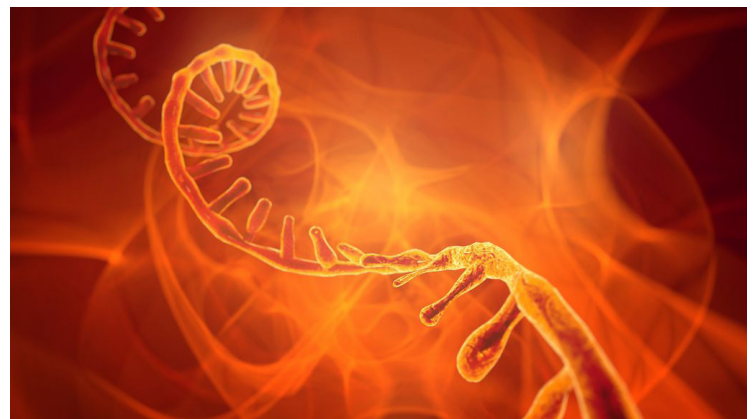
In the early stages of the experiment, the first 10 patients gained consistent vision when the injec-

tions were given every three months. However, the findings from the eleventh patient were a bit different. One month after the first shot, the patient saw visual improvements, which continued to spike, peaking after two months. However, receiving a second injection had some dangerous implications for the patient including the possibility of cataracts, clouding of the lens of the eye. After deciding to not get another injection, the researchers and the patients were shocked with their findings.

The effects of the first sepfarsen injection lasted over fifteen months and slowly improved over time. These results were wildly unexpected and left the researchers bewildered and excited for the opportunities this discovery could provide. "Our results set a new standard of what biological improvements are possible," said Artur Cideciyan, Ph.D., a research professor of Ophthalmology at Penn

Medicine's Scheie Eye Institute. With these new findings under their belt, the researchers are now considering changes in the dose schedules for sepfarsen and conducting other studies for incurable retinal disorders. This case study

has opened doors for so many other diseases to be cured and treated. This injection not only allowed the patient to see again, but it also opened the eyes of the scientists to new techniques and innovations that were right at their fingertips.



RESEARCHERS NOW BELIEVE THAT RNA COULD BE THE KEY TO CURING MANY DISEASES.

STA 'hearts' Booths for Heart



STUDENTS AND FACULTY SANG THEIR HEARTS OUT AT THE "I HEART RADIO" BOOTH. (IMAGES COURTESY OF STA PUBLICATIONS)

BY: CARISSA MATRALE

STA cares so much about not only their school community but also the community around them. Each year, a "Hoops for Heart" charity basketball game is held with all the proceeds going to the American Heart Association (AHA). Sadly, COVID protocols made it impossible to host a game this year, so the hoops committee had to get cre-

ative. They landed on the idea for "Booths for Heart;" an interactive event where students could participate in an array of heart-healthy, educational, and fun activities while raising money for the AHA.

The downstairs blue hallway transformed into the center of all the excitement. Senior student and teacher volunteers ran nine interactive "booths" that drew in all the students involved. The first booth was "I <3 me," hosted by Yamalka

Pichardo and Ms. DiBetta. The booth promoted self-love with a fun game of "compliment ball" amongst students. Next, there was "I Heart Radio," with Gianna Strazzulla and Caroline DiMaggio and the help of Mr. Mascaró. They held a music-guessing game that got teachers and students alike singing along.

"AHAhahah" was Abby Chadwick and An Nguyen's booth supervised by Mr. Van Doren. Here, students had the challenge of matching up the joke with the punchline. Chadwick's homemade jokes even included the names of some familiar STA faces.

"Stamp of Approval," run by Fiorella Merriman, Riley Ramos, and Mrs. Karabin was a fun heart-health- fact guessing game. Winners received a handmade heart stamp created in our Maker Space. "Namaste Heart Healthy" was run by Natalie Devlin, Angelina Iocca, and Ms. Caparino was an opportunity for students of all levels to learn the basics of yoga. "Cardio With Joe" run by Joseph Simmons, Antonio Ortega, and Jaren Buliyat along-

side Coach Zonkowski consisted of some simple but fun exercise routines. Melanie Mallari, Allison Tkacenko, and Mr. Fiore were in charge of "Stahs.net;" a basketball free-throw booth commemorative of the charity basketball game.

The American Heart Association Booth was run by juniors Jenna Arduini, Grace Neno, Mrs. Loftus, and the American Heart representative Heather helped to inform the student body about the American Heart Association's goals and what they start for. The final booth was quite the showstopper. Mr. McCarthy, Rachel Freund (senior), and Gianna Conditto (sophomore) ran "Dancing Hearts" where they led the student body in a Zumba-esque dance class with some fun extras.

Mr. McCarthy closed out the event by bringing his dance skills to the whole school with a conga line through the hallway and one final dance party in the lobby! The event was a success, raising over \$1500 for the American Heart Association! Perhaps there is a new STA tradition?

Makers, creators, inventors oh my!

BY: MORGAN RYAN

The beloved Maker Faire took place on April 23rd. Though the event is usually held in the Catanzaro Gym, it was outside this year in the junior parking lot in order to adhere to social distancing guidelines. Despite masks and capacity restrictions, the Maker Faire was, as always, a hit.

Students got to explore a plethora of fascinating stands. There were interactive activities, demonstrations, and giveaways. Some students built things in the school Maker Space based on their favorite movies and other interests. Landen Gonzalez and Eunice Mbawa (sophomores) used 3D printing to create a chess set, which students used to play against each other in some very intense competitions. Jackson Boomer (sophomore) put his own spin on the 3D-printed chess set, making one entirely themed around the Star Wars prequels. Kiran Bhattacharya (junior) built an Iron Man helmet and showed off its practical functionality using magnets. Madeline Rogala (freshman) constructed a wooden sword and showed it off at her stand,

providing a brief history lesson and showing off her defensive moves. A group of students, calling themselves PAIADICA, crafted cute pewter pins depicting some of the world's most terrifying supernatural creatures.

There were also plenty of opportunities to play games and partake in friendly competitions with classmates. Giant Jenga (revived from the 2020 Maker Faire) and Giant Uno were two of the most popular games. Students could also decorate the parking lot with sidewalk chalk. Elizah Villar (junior) provided a stress-relieving hand drill station, but tensions sometimes got high as friends raced each other to see who could drill the fastest.

The science department was also on full display. Freshman biology students showed off the results of their semester project, and introduced visitors to their class fish. Forensics students helped people lift fingerprints using tape, paper, and a pencil. Members of the anatomy class had perhaps the most disturbing, or fascinating, stand; they displayed dead rabbits and minks that they have dissected in class this year.

Just as the name "Maker Faire" suggests, students were able to make a variety of exciting crafts and art pieces. Erin Zafian and Leila Scarlet (juniors) walked visitors through the process of soap-making so they could make their own soap using a variety of colors and shapes. Giovanna Luminello (freshman) got help recycling old clothes into dog toys for shelter animals. Juniors Armani Agarwala, Gabrielle Szulc, and Owen Disbrow made stress balls out of balloons and cornstarch. Students could glam out their fingers and ears by making jewelry from beads and wire with Isabella Danner and Olivia Cascio (sophomores). With Amanda Doggett and Valery Romero (sophomores) students were able to write and decorate prayer cards with beautiful drawings. Sara Ashdir, Emily Wall, and Annika Zavalla (sophomores) provided records, flower pots, and coasters to paint. Misha Hercules and Marisa Nieves (freshmen) led the hydro-dipping stand, where visitors could dip items from keychains to shoes into oil-based paint and water, instantly making them burst with color. Anyone look-

ing to add pizzazz to their school lanyard could visit Abigail Chadwick, Fiorella Merriman-Mendez, and Carissa Matrale (seniors) for a marble name tag using shaving cream, food dye, and impressive calligraphy. The Charity Ornament Club provided Trojan keychains to paint for even more lanyard decoration.

Despite the challenges facing the Maker Faire, such as strong winds, postponement, and the looming threat of COVID-19, it was able to be an amazing event that provided joy and reprieve to the entire school community.



STUDENTS WORK HARD TO CREATE ABSTRACT NAME TAGS.

Senior Sports Spotlight

Name: Kiara Cronin



Nickname: Kiks

Sport: Golf

Position on team: Third

Favorite Summer Olympic Sport: Gymnastics

What are you looking forward to most this summer?: getting ready for college

Name: Timothy Drake



Nickname: Tim

Sport: Baseball

Position on team: Infielder

Favorite Summer Olympic Sport: Beach Volleyball

What are you looking forward to most this summer?: trips to the beach

Name: Alexa Gates



Nickname: Lex

Sport: Lacrosse

Position on team: Attack

Favorite Summer Olympic Sport: Gymnastics

What are you looking forward to most this summer?: spending time with friends before college

Name: Kyree Henry



Nickname: Ky

Sport: Basketball

Position on team: Guard

Favorite Summer Olympic Sport: Basketball

What are you looking forward to most this summer?: bonding with new teammates at college

Name: Kayla Natelli



Nickname: Kay

Sport: Volleyball

Position on team: Setter

Favorite Summer Olympic Sport: Beach Volleyball

What are you looking forward to most this summer?: spending time with friends and getting ready for college

Name: Kristen Ortiz



Sport: Volleyball

Position on team: Middle Blocker & Middle Hitter

Favorite Summer Olympic Sport: Volleyball

What are you looking forward to most this summer?: making memories before college

Name: Riley Ramos



Nickname: Ri

Sport: Lacrosse

Position on team: Offense

Favorite Summer Olympic Sport: Skateboarding

What are you looking forward to most this summer?: going down the shore

Name: Victoria Serafin



Nickname: Serafin, Tori, Vicky

Sport: Golf

Favorite Summer Olympic Sport: Rugby

What are you looking forward to most this summer?: white water rafting and travelling Europe

Name: Naomi Southerland



Sport: Gymnastics

Position on team: Co-Captain

Favorite Summer Olympic Sport: Gymnastics

What are you looking forward to most this summer?: traveling before going to college

Boys tennis strengthens team Volleyball serves up wins

BY: SANDRA ABRANTES

Retired English teacher Al Mohrmann, coach for the boys and girls tennis teams, wears a mask that reads, "School is important, but tennis is 'importanter.'" Every day after school the boys can be seen walking to the courts on Oak Tree Road, ready to prepare and practice for their matches. Their coach is always found smiling and ready with his trusty cap on to lead them to victory.

At the start of the season, they did not have many interested players due to Covid-19. In addition to that, many of the prior players returned to their homes in China



JUNIOR KIRAN BHATTACHARYA RETURNS A SERVE.
(ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF STA PUBLICATIONS)

for the holidays and were learning virtually. They did start the season with 9 players, two gaining injuries from other sports, leaving one player having to sit out and the other out for a two-week recovery period. Thankfully, four new players joined the team just in time to start their season! They were freshman Solim Khan, and seniors Chris O'Connell, Chris Nguyen, and Marvel Prime. Aside from them, three other seniors that have been a part of the team for a few years are Connor Owens, Thomas Koenig, and Nihal Walia. Rounding out the team are two underclassmen; sophomore Kameron Johnson, and junior Kiran Bhattacharya. Although sad to see their seniors go, the boys will continue to work hard and be a team, regardless of wins or losses.

The team was led by Owens at 2nd singles and Johnson at 1st singles. It was a challenging season but the boys endured and grew as a team. They are looking forward to improving their skills for next season. Mohrmann encourages any boys reading this article to consider coming out for tennis next spring, as there will be great opportunities to play on the varsity level and try something new!



SENIOR RILEY JACKSON LEAPS TO SEND THE BALL BACK OVER THE NET.

BY: LAUREN MULLEN

It's safe to say that the volleyball team had to overcome several obstacles to play this year. But with hard work, determination, and some of that Trojan fighting spirit, the girls were able to kick off a successful season on March 16th with a 2-1 victory against Highland Park. They continued this trend with victories against Wardlaw-Hartridge (2-0), New Brunswick (2-0), South Plainfield (2-1), and South River (2-0) back to back at the top of the season. The Trojans suffered two

losses to Mother Seton but bounced back to round out the season with 5 more wins. They faced Wardlaw-Hartridge (2-0), Highland Park (2-1), New Brunswick (2-0), and South River (2-0) again. Then they faced Timothy Christian (2-0) to emerge victorious. They faced one more loss against Mount Saint Mary's and ended the season with an overall record of 9 victories and 3 losses. Overall, the girls consistently performed well.

Some stand-out performances include Danielle Sutter's 5 kills and 4 digs and Kayla Natelli's 11 assists at the Highland Park game, Kayla Natelli's 14 assists and 2 aces at the Wardlaw-Hartridge game, and Amaris Hemingway's 8 aces at the New Brunswick game.

The volleyball program truly demonstrates that being a team is about more than what happens on the court. Sophomore Esperanza Mojica mentioned that her favorite part of the season was how the team supported and pushed each other to get better and better each game.

Although their season was shortened considerably, the girls still managed to take 2nd place in their division, proving that hard work and team work truly do pay off. Congratulations girls and good luck next season!

Lacrosse grows program

BY: CHRISTOPHER O'CONNELL

This year, the boys lacrosse team made waves with their brand new all-star lineup. Led by seniors Anthony Maya, Michael Jakielaszek, and Adam Kubisiak, they trained relentlessly during the off-season and even harder when spring came around. While many of those on the team were new to the game, the leadership of the seniors and faculty coach Matthew Van Doren led them to improve exponentially over the course of the shortened season. When asked about the team's progression, senior captain Kubisiak said, "I have never worked with such talent before. This year we had a very well motivated team that really wanted to get better at the game. Even while doing this they managed to keep it fun. I will always remember this team for their dedication and hard work." Even with the shortened season, the team

was able to pull out some victories.

Despite all the challenges of this year the girls lacrosse team made it through with their heads held high. The team was led by senior captains Kristine Carroll and Rachel Freund. Other seniors on the team included Madison Bailey, Alexa Gates, Nia Anderson, and Riley Ramos. The team had one win over Sayreville, which coaches Leo and Cutietta were very happy about. Senior Alexa Gates commented about the team: "Over the course of the season the veteran players taught all the skills they knew to the more inexperienced players. We wanted to leave them with all we knew so that they can grow the program in the years to come. This dynamic created great team chemistry and led to a great atmosphere. I will never forget all the friends and memories that I have made from playing at STA." Overall the girls season was a great learning experience for the new and returning players.

'Putting' in the effort

BY: CARISSA MATRALE

The golf team is in the prime of yet another great season! Coach Clem Bottone and his team have been practicing weekly at Inman Golf Range in Edison to prepare for all of their upcoming matches. They play at their home course of Fox Hollow in Raritan and travel around the area to verse other teams. Their current record is 5-5, making the team, coach, and all supporters alike very proud. Senior team captains Kiara Cronin and Michael Cole are doing their part to lead the team not just in winning, but in golfing skills, good sportsmanship, and passion for the game. When asked about her experience on the team and her role as captain, Cronin explained, "I love playing golf with the team, it's always a fun time. We all get along so well and we all get

a little better everyday!" A highlight for the team was senior Edward McGillicuddy, who made 1st team all division. Congratulations to him and to the entire team for working hard all season.



SENIOR KIARA CRONIN PRACTICES HER PUTTS BEFORE HER MATCH.

A homerun of a season

BY: ABIGAIL BERA

The softball season began on April 1st with a week of tryouts. Many girls showed off their skills in hopes of making it onto the remarkable team. The Trojans always put together an excellent team every year, and this year was no exception.

The team was comprised of eleven girls under the leadership of seniors Katie Abrams and Jenna Schwartz, who also had the job of being the team's captain. The team also featured juniors Aamori Paterson, Mackenzie Fizer, Madyson Epps, Paige Tidaback, Melissa



JUNIOR PAIGE TIDABACK WINDS UP TO DELIVER THE NEXT PITCH.

(ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF STA PUBLICATIONS)

'Tracking' success

BY: RAJOSHI BASU

The track and field team has been training very hard all season with their head coach Ron Hush. The results of their hard work, determination, and patience can be clearly seen in their extraordinary times. The team was led by Eleni Alvarez, Lia Acosta, Jamie Hamilton, and Antonio Ortega. Some unbelievable positions attained at the GMCs were: Alvarez (12) taking first place in the 800 meters race with a time of 2:22, Alvarez taking third and Acosta (11) taking fifth in the 1600 meters race, Acosta taking fourth and Alvarez taking fifth in the 3200

Martinez, and Kaitlyn O'Neil. The underclassmen were sophomores Mary-Kate Murray and Amya Hill, and freshman Hayley Wiczczak.

Since the team took a year off, the practice was crucial. The girls trained every day, six days a week. Melissa Collazo, the varsity softball coach, made sure they were on top of their game for the season. They practiced hitting, pitching, and other drills to sharpen their skills and prepare them for their first game, which they won. Their first win propelled the girls into a highly successful season.

The varsity team pulled through with a 15-0 record (at the time of writing) and a 13-0 record in the Greater Middlesex County (GMC) Red Division. The team had numerous great games throughout the season. They defeated Piscataway 19-0, allowing them to secure the Red Division championship. Other big wins were against JP Stevens, Metuchen, Edison, and East Brunswick. One of the team's most challenging games was against South Brunswick. Though it was a tight game at first, the Trojans reigned victorious with a 7-1 win.

Even after taking a year off because of the pandemic, the girls showed their strength and hard work. The team is very talented and capable of reaching huge milestones next season.

Come out to the game this Sunday, June 6th to support the girls as they compete in the county championship game!

meters race, and the girls taking fifth in the 4x800 meters relay race. Furthermore, a big congratulations goes to Acosta for earning the GMC Sportsmanship Award.

Despite juggling practice with school, upcoming finals, AP exams, and other activities, the track and field team has managed to pull off an amazing season. However sadly, they had to say their goodbyes to the seniors on the team, Alvarez, Fiorella Merriman-Mendez, Ortega, Jared Gardner, Hamilton, James King, and Jalen Jones. The underclassmen wish them the best of luck for their futures and also cannot wait to run next year.

Flipping to victory

BY: SAMANTHA CHRISTINE

The gymnastics team found themselves experiencing much success, finishing the season undefeated as well as ranking number 3 in the state. Of course, the path to victory wasn't without its challenges. Because of COVID-19, the girls had to practice at an outside facility, which they could only go to for three days a week.

Despite all of this, the girls kept their heads held high and pushed forward. The top four teams in the division competed in a POD, and the girls were victorious! Seniors Ty Upton and Kaitlyn Adlassnig were champions in the vault/balance

beam and uneven bars respectively. Upton also won in the uneven bars competition.

Overall, the girls did a fantastic job this year; Congrats!



SENIOR NAOMI SOUTHERLAND FOCUSES ON HER NEXT ROTATION.

Baseball bouncing back

BY: SHIVALI VORA

The baseball team made a commendable comeback under the leadership of head coach Tom D'Agostino. Unfortunately, baseball and many other spring sports lost their entire 2020 seasons to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, while the team could not have their usual months-long season, the Trojans did compete in the Last Dance Tournament for three days in July, during which seniors in the class of 2020 got an opportunity to take the field with their high school teammates one last time. The Trojans competed in a pool of 222 teams. The summer tournament also served to set the stage for the boys to hit the ground running in 2021.

The varsity team this year is under the able leadership of senior pitcher Dan Rankin and junior shortstop Tyler Kadi, who was also named the top freshman baseball player of the year in his freshman year. The team is filled with talented underclassmen whose achievements have shown that the future is bright for



SOPHOMORE ARTIS RAY ROUNDS 3RD AND HEADS FOR HOME.

STA baseball. The Trojans returned to the Greater Middlesex Conference Blue Division, where they currently stand fourth with a 7-6 record, with many games still left. The season got off to a bit of a rocky start with a series of losses in April, but the team picked up valuable lessons from those losses, because their performance soared in the latter part of the season. The boys got right back on track in May, winning their first game 11-1 against Carteret. Contributing to the victory were Rankin with 3 strikeouts and 5 RBIs and Tyler Kadi with 2 runs.

From there the Trojans quickly picked up steam and showed their prowess at the plate, on the mound, and on the field with a series of four straight wins, a doubleheader against Dunellen (23-7 and 18-4) and another two victories over South River (3-2 and 16-4). The boys then went on to edge out Pennington 8-6 and sweep Highland Park with two wins, 14-0 and 12-0. In the later games of the season, the underclassmen gained more confidence and really shone; contributors to recent wins included freshmen Phil Unangst, Zach Diaz, and David Ryden, sophomores Artis Ray and Ricky Del Rio, and many more. The other seniors on the team are Joe Simmons, Austin Ramos, Pablo Rodriguez, Tim Drake, and Joe Schroll. Currently, the Trojans have won seven of their last nine games, and it looks like their winning streak will continue to finish the season strong.

The Satoma Staff wishes the best to our seniors! Congrats to the Class of 2021!



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