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New Staff on the Block

Here are some fun facts to help you get to know our new staff:

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

A.)
MR. ELIJAH SMITH
 1. PSYCHOLOGY AND SPANISH
 2. TCNJ (THE COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY)
 3. VIDEO GAMES, READING, HIKING, FRISBEE, SPENDING TIME WITH FAMILY
 4. MY STUDENTS
 5. CHOPPED
 6. MADAME THAI IN MORRISTOWN, NJ
 7. I HAVE BEEN TO SIX COUNTRIES

B.)
MR. JONATHAN MELENDEZ
 1. WORLD HISTORY + HONORS AND U.S. HISTORY I
 2. MONTCLAIR STATE AND RUTGERS
 3. PRACTICING MMA, WRESTLING AND READING BOOKS
 4. MY EUROPEAN HISTORY PROFESSOR DR. SHURTS + MY NATIVE AMERICAN HISTORY PROFESSOR DR. LEE
 5. GAME OF THRONES + THE ROMAN EMPIRE
 6. DEL MONICO'S IN CEDAR GROVE
 7. MASSIVE LORD OF THE RINGS FAN

C.)
MR. KEVIN FETTE
 1.) U.S. HISTORY I HONORS + WORLD HISTORY
 2.) KEAN UNIVERSITY
 3.) COOKING, FITNESS, VIDEO GAMES, READING
 4.) MY GRANDFATHER
 5.) SEINFELD
 6.) CHIPOTLE
 7.) I USED TO HAVE REALLY LONG HAIR - HALFWAY DOWN MY CHEST

D.)
MR. DEAN ZONKOWSKI
 1. ALGEBRA II, ANATOMY + PHYSIOLOGY, STATISTICS AND SPORTS MANAGEMENT
 2. OHIO STATE/DOWLING COLLEGE FOR UNDERGRAD, MONTCLAIR STATE FOR MASTERS
 3. HIKING, STRENGTH + CONDITIONING
 4. I WANTED TO HAVE A POSITIVE EFFECT ON THE FUTURE
 5. PARKS AND REC
 6. CAMILLO'S IN SAYREVILLE
 7. I HAVE FLOWN A SMALL AIRCRAFT AND HAVE A PILOT'S LICENSE THAT IS NOT CURRENT

E.)
FATHER MIKE TABERNO
 1.) RELIGION
 2.) SETON HALL
 3.) ROCK CLIMBING
 4.) GOD
 5.) PSYCH - C'MON SON
 6.) ANY PLACE WITH FREE REFILLS AND CURLY FRIES
 7.) I WAS THE THIRD FASTEST KID ON MY STREET GROWING UP

F.)
MR. MICHAEL LEWON
 1.) ENGINEERING + RELIGION
 2.) SETON HALL + NORTHEASTERN
 3.) READING, LEGOS, THEOLOGY
 4.) JESUS + VEN FULTON SHEEN
 5.) DOCTOR WHO AND STAR TREK
 6.) MY WIFE'S COOKING
 7.) EXPECTING MY FIRSTBORN SON IN DECEMBER!

G.)
MR. DARYLL BIRKHEAD
 1.) PRE-CALC + PRE-CALC HONORS
 2.) LA SALLE UNIVERSITY
 3.) AU SPORTS (I PLAY GOLF!)
 4.) HIGH SCHOOL PHYS ED TEACHER
 5.) BETTER CALL SAUL
 6.) RAVELLA TOSCANO
 7.) WAS A BATTING PRACTICE PITCHER FOR THE PHILLIES

H.)
MR. DUNCAN MERRIMAN-MENDEZ
 1. US HISTORY 2, AND US HISTORY 2 HONORS
 2. RUTGERS
 3. COLLECTING RETRO VIDEO GAMES, READING/WRITING, AND PLAYING CHESS
 4. AFTER BEING A SWIM INSTRUCTOR FOR A COUPLE OF YEARS, I REALIZED I REALLY ENJOYED TEACHING AND WANTED TO PURSUE IT.
 5. MINDHUNTERS OR SHAMELESS
 6. THE DINER
 7.) I AM THE HEAD COACH FOR THE GIRLS AND BOYS TENNIS TEAMS.

I.)
MS. SARAH HAMILL
 1.) ART 1 + ART 2 AND GRAPHIC DESIGN.
 2.) RUTGERS + KEAN UNIVERSITY
 3.) PAINTING, READING AND COOKING.
 4.) BEST FRIEND'S MOTHER.
 5.) I LOVE LUCY.
 6.) TOO MANY TO LIST!
 7.) I NEVER LEARNED HOW TO RIDE A BICYCLE!

J.)
MR. GIAN REYES
 1.) PHYSICS
 2.) RUTGERS
 3.) VIDEO GAMES + WRITING
 4.) MY SISTER + DAD
 5.) YOUTUBE AND WEBSERIES
 6.) DON'T HAVE ONE- I'M PARTIAL TO SANDWICHES THOUGH
 7.) I EXIST

K.)
MS. GABRIELLE REYES
 1.) BIOLOGY
 2.) RUTGERS UNIVERSITY
 3.) READING, WRITING, PLAYING VIDEO GAMES, AND DANCING
 4.) MY DAD AND MRS. HOLTZMAN (MY ART HISTORY TEACHER)
 5.) TEEN TITANS
 6.) PHO ANH DAO
 7.) I'M DOUBLE JOINTED

WELCOME NEW STAFF!



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

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Pros of Genetic Engineering/GMOs

By: VERA MCCOY

From the beginning of agriculture, people have been modifying plants and animals to suit the needs of a society. Originally, this was done by breeding particular organisms with each other to reach a desired result. More understanding on the subject of genetics came with Gregor Mendel's experiments on pea plants in the mid-1800s, allowing targeted and more predictable breeding. People began realizing the possibility of changing DNA intentionally when Hermann Muller used radiation to trigger mutations in genes. In the 1970s, DNA recombination, a process using viral defense enzymes to cut and modify DNA strands, came into practice. By the 80s, Californian labs were able to modify genes fairly predictably and genetic modifications of food products became a concern following environmental problems with various pesticides. Finally, in 2012, a method known as CRISPR Cas-9 made genet-

ic engineering substantially more accurate and easier to accomplish by researchers, opening the possibility of genetic treatments on humans in the near future. Today, genetic counselling for certain disorders is available, much of the food stocked in stores is genetically modified, and scientists have access to new technologies allowing further exploration of the human genome.

Firstly, gene editing has proven to be far safer and more predictable than hybrid breeding (between species), because it targets specific genes instead of allowing a random swap of traits between unique species. Secondly, there is no inherent reason that modifying the genes of food products should devalue the source of those products in any way (supported by the "Appeal to Nature Fallacy"). Finally, the concept of biological monopolies for certain genetic codes is a possibility, but at the same time, patents on gene sequences may be beneficial as national

laws work to catch up with technology. Once a genome is patented, it won't be legally produced until the patent-holder is able to produce it, which slows down such advancements and prevents labs from creating potentially hazardous or ethically questionable organisms (an especial concern when dealing with human-animal hybrid DNA).

The fears surrounding GMO foods mainly stem from the Non-GMO movement, a fairly dubious organization that provides near-false advertising on products. According to Kevin Mooney, the organization has worked to create a public fear of such foods and makes false claims about the relative safety of products, when manufacturers pay for their approval. Despite such claims, genetically enhanced foods provide the world with the necessary supplies to feed its constantly increasing population.

Genetically modified foods present little to no risk of any negative consequences and help provide for the world.

Cons of Genetic Engineering/GMOs

By: SAMANTHA CHRISTINE

Genetic Engineering/GMOs can lead to critical bioethical issues, including, but not limited to: negative changes in the genome, environment, human health; as well as cause socio-economic effects. Genes are crucial to one's body; if they were to be altered or modified in any way via genetic engineering, there's a chance that something could go awry- the genes could end up mutating harmfully, rendering them unstable for the body.

Certain gene types, such as allergenic ones, could accidentally be transferred to other species, potentially causing life-threatening allergic reactions. For example, an allergenic Brazil-nut gene ended up being transported to a transgenic soybean variety. Luckily, the gene was uncovered during the testing phase, so the soybean did not get re-

leased.

GMOs also increase defiance to antibiotics, which lessen the effects of medicines. If scientists were to do something such as genetically engineer babies, there's a chance that this could lead to many ramifications. The babies might be stillborn, miscarried, or worse.

The impact on the environment is another thing to consider. GMO seeds progress past the fields they're grown in. This can disrupt the food chain and make many unfortunate alterations to other living organisms; for example, scientists say that the butterfly population across America has decreased due to GMOs. Furthermore, there have been worries about digestive disorders, potential ties to cancer, and reproductive defects. Since no one is 100% sure of the long-term effects of GMOs/Genetic Engineering, it seems wise to stick

with natural material. Also, if genetic engineering were to fully arise, genetic diversity will be limited, possibly to a great degree.

The rise of GMOs has also put small farmers at risk. Terminator technologies, which are the genetic modification of plants to make them create sterile seeds, could stop growers from reusing the previous year's seeds for new crops. GMO production heavily prefers big companies over the small farmers and "monoculture" (the practice of growing a singular crop in an area). This is harmful to the environment because it ruins the balance of soil, which, in turn, hurts the farmers and consumers.

Finally, it's far better to eat food that is natural, as opposed to eating things that are artificially enhanced. In comparison to GMO-ridden food, Non-GMO foods are healthier and more organic.

Aquinas Stars welcomed at spaghetti dinner

BY: TAMIA BURTON

On October 7, 2021, The Aquinas Star program kicked off the year with a big welcome to Lauren Cervone and James Fucci at the 34th annual Aquinas Star Spaghetti Dinner. This program's mission is to love and support others by "adopting" families with children who live with chronic or acute medical illnesses. In 2020 the dinner was a curbside event; this year, the Aquinas Star Committee reintroduced the dine-in option. The STA community comes together every year to celebrate and welcome their new Aquinas Stars.

The dinner was filled with several volunteers and hard workers who helped the event run smoothly. When the Cervone and Fucci families entered the cafeteria, everyone greeted them with a warm-hearted applause. As the evening went on, James and Lauren met many people from the STA community. The Aquinas Star Board and Varsity Athletes surprised both Lauren and James with gifts. Aquinas Star co-chair Morgan Brennan said, "the most rewarding part of

the Aquinas Star Dinner was seeing the kids and how happy they were to be surrounded by our school community. Seeing their smiling faces while opening their gifts was also so rewarding." For many, witnessing the reactions of the Aquinas Stars is what makes the program so great. Both families expressed their gratitude for everyone. Filled with immense thankfulness, Mrs. Diane Fucci, James' mom and faculty member at STA, said, "We're grateful to be a part of the Aquinas Star program. James is having a blast, and we're looking forward to having more fun all year!"

Our Aquinas Stars, Lauren, and James have infectious personalities and are up for a good time. Lauren was eager to show off her basketball skills and impressed everyone who was there to watch. Aquinas Star co-chair, Kylie Lucas, has known Lauren for a long time and was thrilled to see everyone participating and cheering Lauren on. "I met Lauren about three years ago at buddy basketball, an organization for special needs children. There is one pal paired up with one buddy and I've been Lauren's pal ever



ABOVE LEFT: AQUINAS STAR CHAIRS, MORGAN BRENNAN AND KYLIE LUCAS PREPARE FOR THE DINNER WITH SISTER CYNDI

ABOVE RIGHT: AQUINAS STAR LAUREN MEETS SOME RUTGERS STAR SOFTBALL PLAYERS

(ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF STA PUBLICATIONS)

since," said Lucas. Though James is young, that did not stop him from flaunting his soccer skills. Brennan stated, "...it was so fun to roll the ball to him and him kick it back to me." Lauren and James were so happy to be surrounded by volunteers who were just excited as they were to have fun.

Over 175 student and faculty vol-

unteers devoted their evening to ushering guests, serving food, take out, cleaning, and delivering. There were over 850 plates of spaghetti served, and the program raised \$9,500 for the families. The Aquinas Stars are looking forward to a great year. Co-chairs Morgan Brennan and Kylie Lucas thank everyone for coming out and supporting James and Lauren.

Fun for freshmen and sophomores



LEFT: A GROUP OF FRESHMAN AND THEIR UPPERCLASSMAN HELPERS PARTICIPATE IN VARIOUS GAMES IN THE CLASSROOMS AND A SCAVENGER HUNT THROUGHOUT THE BUILDING.

RIGHT: A GROUP OF FACULTY MEMBERS JOIN IN THE FESTIVITIES AND PARTICIPATE IN A COMPETITIVE GAME OF DRAGON TAG

BY: STEPHANIE NGUYEN

WASTA Day took place on September 17, 2021 at St. Thomas Aquinas High School. WASTA Day stands for "We Are St. Thomas Aquinas." It

is a day to celebrate the new school year and to welcome new students. This is the annual celebration for the welcoming of the freshman class. This year's WASTA Day is also welcoming back the sophomores

to make up for their first year at St. Thomas Aquinas High School. Let's rewind back to WASTA Day!

The morning started off with the seniors or juniors picking up their freshman or sophomore to guide them throughout the day. The sophomores and the freshmen were split up and were taken to different rooms, and they would switch rooms throughout the day. The freshmen were going to be in the gym, and the sophomores were in the Little Theatre. In the gym, they started off with a video of the Student Council sharing their tips and tricks to survive and making the most of their four years in high school. Then, they were introduced to songs that are STA favorites. Such as "Trading My Sorrows," "Big House," and "We Are One Body," which are performed by the school musicians, who are directed by Mr. Joseph Cullinan. After singing all the STA favorites, the students played a variety of fun games and activities. The gym was full of energy as the students were shouting the STA cheer, led by the Student Council, and they also played an entertaining

game of Dragon Tag.

In the Little Theatre, they were given a paper and a pencil before they came into the room. The paper was filled with clues to find a room with a QR code in each room. The students would scan the QR code and would receive a letter to fill out. They would unscramble the letters to fill out the last clue on the paper to answer the last clue. After the scavenger hunt, the students were given snacks in the cafeteria to have energy for more fun and games.

Did you think that the fun was over? No, because there were still more games to play. The games were to introduce themselves and learn about one another. There were games like charades, Get Off the Bus, and This or That.

After playing some games in individual groups, they went back to the gym for more STA cheering and to get ready for some amazing barbecue. They had hamburgers, hotdogs, and cookies. The barbecue was a time to socialize with friends and to make new lifelong friends. This is the first mark of a great new school year!

School spirit celebration

BY: ALEXANDRA SARDIS

“STA Celebration Day,” was a spirit-filled event that took place on Friday, September 24, 2021.

The day began like any other day at St. Thomas Aquinas with home-room announcements and, most importantly, prayer. The STA community has not gathered together for a school-wide Mass since the start of Covid-19, so this day was especially important.

During Mass, Father Michael Taberno gave a moving homily about overcoming his fear of the dark with his nightlight. Following the Mass, the fall athletes made their way to the track, and each class packed the stands proudly displaying their “class of” signs. The students were very nervous, awaiting the festivities that

came with the pep rally. A DJ was included in this thrilling pep rally which added to the overall excitement that came from the students. The marching band performed their spectacular field show, which included various songs from spy movies such as “Mission Impossible,” “Soul Bossa Nova,” and “Live and Let Die.” “It was exciting to finally show the school our field show, and it was a great way to show our school spirit and celebrate with the student body,” said Jennifer Rihacek, Drum Major of the Marching Band.

The athletes who were assembled on the track were cheered on as they were called out one by one. Senior athletes were also recognized for their dedication and achievements made in their sport. The gymnasts showed off their impressive moves, making quite the entrance. The cheerleaders gave a Trojan spirit-filled cheer which got



STUDENTS JOIN IN THE CELEBRATION AT THE END OF THE MASS TO GET EVERYONE INVOLVED IN SINGING “BIG HOUSE.”

(ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF STA PUBLICATIONS)

the students involved and excited. Additional highlights of this exhilarating pep rally include a scooter race between Sister Donna and Sister Cynthia. The sisters intended to rip through the “wall” Covid had inflicted on the community, which symbolized a new start. It was quite an

uplifting sight to see. To wrap up this wonderful day, the students gathered outside to enjoy pizza and beverages and enjoy the rest of the day together.

Overall, the “STA Celebration Day,” was a fantastic event to start the school year and bring the STA community together.

Happening Homecoming



THE MEMBERS OF THE HOMECOMING COURT ARE GIVEN SASHES, FLOWERS AND CROWNS PRIOR TO THE START OF THE HOMECOMING GAME.

BY: ISABELLA DANNER

The homecoming game was held on Friday, October 22nd, against Governor Livingston High School. The theme of the night was school spirit and many students showed up with colors of white, black, and red. Alumni and students packed the stands to support the team, drawing on eyeblack, chanting cheers, and throwing baby powder to celebrate touchdowns.

The football team had an amazing season and remained undefeated throughout all their regular season games. To celebrate their success, the school geared up for an exciting

week, dressing down each day leading up to homecoming. Monday was pajama day, where students showed up in colorful fleece pants, sweat-shirts, and some with sleeping masks. Tuesday was decades day - the freshmen were 90s, sophomores were 80s, juniors were 70s, and the seniors were 60s. Wednesday was career day, where notable outfits included scrubs and lab coats, lifeguard apparel (sunscreen included), and crossing guard vests. Thursday was a pink-out to raise awareness for breast cancer in the month of October. Friday was an exciting day where students showed up in their school spirit wear.

Prior to the start of the game, the homecoming court was introduced.

The freshmen prince and princess were William Owens and Tabitha Appolon; the sophomore prince and princess were Zachary Diaz and Malaysia Cowherd; and the junior prince and princess were Isaiah Marelis and Esperanza Mojica. The senior court consisted of princes Tyler Kadi, Scott Lentz, Samar Abdullah, and Joshua Polanco; and princesses Jaylene Lugo, Dhvani Parikh, Ava Cruz, and Isabella Sanchez. They were led by Homecoming King Joey Vergel and Homecoming Queen Morgan Lavelle.

During halftime, already winning by a wide margin, the team and cheerleaders celebrated their senior night. This year’s cheerleader captains were Morgan Lavelle, Morgan Brennan, and Alex Delebar - all seniors. The marching band and color guard also put on an excellent show. This year they were led by drum major Jennifer Rihacek and color guard captain Abigail Marzan. The Trojans ended up winning by a landslide - 59-0, their seventh shutout in a row. This score tied the Middlesex County shutout record and was a huge win for the Trojans. Najee Lovejoy was named one of Big Central Gridiron’s Week 8 top players after putting on an excellent performance.

The game was followed up by the

traditional homecoming dance that Saturday night. The students and faculty dressed up in dresses and dress shirts. For the first time in two years, the school was able to come together to celebrate one of the most popular school-wide events of the year. The dance was held in the main gym from 7pm to 10pm. The dance was organized by student council members Grace Neno and Grace Farrell, who did an excellent job decorating and getting plenty of students to come out. The new DJ was given a great rating by the students, all of which said they had an amazing night.

After a tough past few years due to the pandemic, the STA Trojans have finally come out on top, setting the school on a great path for the rest of the school year with tons of spirit and hope for future seasons.



STUDENTS JOIN TOGETHER IN A LINE DANCE AS THE DJ PLAYS A POPULAR SONG.

SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST

BY: SAMANTHA CHRISTINE

Survival thrillers have been around for years. Audiences have seen them in many different forms of pop culture, including *The Hunger Games*, cult-classic film *Battle Royale*, and Spike Chunisoft's video game series *Danganronpa*. However, none of these thrillers, not even *The Hunger Games*, have reached the popularity levels of South Korea's newest show, *Squid Game*.

Debuting in September 2021, the series revolves around a total of 456 green tracksuit-clad players participating in children's games, with very deadly penalties, in hopes of winning a ₩45.6 billion prize, all while being monitored by guards and the game's Front-man. The players are all from different walks of life, but they have one main thing in common- they're severely destitute, making the prize money all the more desirable.

Some of the players include Seong Gi-hun (Lee Jung-Jae), a divorced

chauffer with a gambling addiction who wants to use the money to pay his many debts as well as gain custody of his daughter; Cho Sang-woo (Park Sae Hoo), a former classmate of Gi-hun's who is wanted for theft and massive debts; Kang Sae-Byeok (Jung Ho-Yeon), a North Korean defector who wants to rescue her parents over the border; and Abdul Ali (Anupam Tripathi), a Pakistani migrant worker who participates in the game to support his family. The show's creator, Hwang-Dong-Hyuk, stated that *Squid Game's* premise stems from his own financial struggles in life alongside class imbalance in South Korea. The script reached completion in 2008, but Hwang couldn't find a studio that would take it until 2019, when Netflix came along.

Netflix investing in *Squid Game* has proved to be a great move because its popularity has only skyrocketed since its premiere. It officially became Netflix's most-watched show in October, with a total of 111 million views, surpassing



THE CHARACTERS IN NETFLIX'S *SQUID GAME* FACE OFF AGAINST EACH OTHER IN A VARIETY OF PSYCHOLOGICAL GAMES.

(ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF GOOGLE IMAGES)

Bridgerton, another popular Netflix show. Critics have also showered the show in praise. Rotten Tomatoes gave it a respectable 92% rating, stating that, "*Squid Game's* unflinching brutality is not for the faint of heart, but sharp social commentary and a surprisingly tender core will keep viewers glued to the screen – even if it's while watching between their fingers." British magazine NME

awarded the series 4 out of 5 stars, calling the show a "white-knuckle watch, thanks to its visceral competition element."

Overall, *Squid Game* is a must-watch show. With compelling characters, a cleverly written storyline, and good themes surrounding the corruptness of society, it is clear to see why the series has generated the buzz it has.

Industry baby Lil Nas X releases debut album

BY: MORGAN RYAN

On September 17th, 2021, American rapper Lil Nas X released his debut album, *Montero*, which brings listeners through a beautiful, emotional, and thrilling set of fifteen songs.

Lil Nas X originally rose to fame in 2019 with his hit single "Old Town Road." People of all ages were immediately attracted to the



LIL NAS X SHOWS OFF HIS UNIQUE STYLE AS HE WALKS DOWN A MUSIC EVENT RED CARPET

flamboyant blend of country and hip-hop. For a while after the success of "Old Town Road," Lil Nas X was relatively inactive in terms of new music, only releasing a moderately-successful EP, "7," in 2020. However, he came back with a bang on March 26th, 2021 with his hit single, "MONTERO (Call Me By Your Name)." The catchy song and controversial music video sky-rocketed on the charts. With this new release, Lil Nas X told fans to watch out for his debut album, coming out at the end of the summer. In May, he dropped the deeply personal ballad, "Sun Goes Down." Another song from the upcoming album, "Industry Baby feat. Jack Harlow," was released in August, sparking even more hype and excitement around the album. Finally, on September 17th, the *Montero* album launched worldwide on several streaming platforms, reaching Number 2 on the Billboard album chart.

The album is titled for Lil Nas X's given name, Montero Lamar Hill, so it is no surprise that the central focus of the album is his own life journey: past, present, and future. The songs

on the album range from slow-paced and serious to quick and exciting, bringing listeners on an emotional roller coaster. The set-list kicks off with "MONTERO (Call Me By Your Name)." This song, as well as, "That's What I Want," and, "Lost in the Citadel," reflects on the rapper's love life, both the ups and downs. Lil Nas X is contributing greatly to diversity and acceptance within the hip-hop community, as well as the music industry as a whole. Despite backlash and controversy, he has shown time and time again that he intends to unapologetically be himself when it comes to his music. Tear-jerkers like "Sun Goes Down," a letter to his high-school self, "Life After Salem," and "Void," about struggles with mental health, struck a relatable chord with many listeners. While the slow, deep ballads are beautiful and touching, the thrilling bops are just as present and just as brilliant. "Industry Baby feat. Jack Harlow," a song all about success and fame, is sure to make listeners want to get up and dance. Other bangers include, "SCOOP (feat. Doja Cat)" and "Dolla Sign Slime

(feat. Megan Thee Stallion)," which are both unmatched collaborations. Other beloved artists featured on the album include Elton John on piano in the background of, "One of Me," and Miley Cyrus closing the album on, "Am I Dreaming." "Tales of Dominica," and, "Dead Right Now," tell of Lil Nas X's past and his relationship with family. Tracks like, "The Art of Realization," and, "Don't Want It," fill in all the gaps, resulting in the amazing combination of fantastic music that is *Montero*.

Many people on the internet have hailed Lil Nas X as a marketing genius, especially in how he went about promoting his debut album. Between flashy and bold music videos, a hilarious social media presence, and a full "baby shower" to celebrate his upcoming album, he has made himself and his music well-known around the world.

Montero is only Lil Nas X's first full album, so there is surely more incredible music to come from him in the future. His songs are deeply personal to a wide audience. Fans of Lil Nas X can only wait excitedly to see what he comes up with next!

Empowering women through music

BY: ASHLEY PEREZ

Music is often used to empower people, especially those of all diverse backgrounds, genders, shapes, and sizes. People also use music as a way to express themselves, and many women use music as an outlet to express what they believe in. Many artists such as Ariana Grande, Beyonce, Lady Gaga, and SZA use their music to exhibit female empowerment and shine a light on issues women face in their day-to-day lives.

Ariana Grande is an American singer, songwriter, and actor who originally started by performing on Broadway. She has many top hits about relatable topics such as love, and is known as an advocate for women's empowerment. In her top hit, "Positions," Ariana takes over the White House and becomes president of the United States, while appointing a female cabinet. The lyrics in the song and the images shown in the music video send the message that women should occupy positions of power usually taken over by

men. Ariana released this song just a few days before election day, and encouraged her fans to vote and take control of their futures.

Beyonce Giselle Knowles-Carter is an American singer who rose to fame in the 1990s as the lead singer of Destiny's Child. She is another famous example of a female singer who embraces women's empowerment. One of her biggest hits, "Run the World (Girls)," states that women are in charge of the world, and no one else can take this from them as long as women continue to fight and prevail. She repeats the word "girls," over sixty times, and makes sure to emphasize that women of all diversities are included. She shines the light on hardworking women who go through a lot, yet always return back to business no matter what.

Stefani Joanne Angelina Germanotta, professionally known as Lady Gaga, is an American songwriter, singer, actress whose work originated at open mic nights at bars and clubs. She constantly speaks out on important issues regarding women and a prime example of this



A DIVERSE GROUP OF FEMALE SINGERS INSPIRE YOUNG WOMEN.
(ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF GOOGLE IMAGES)

is her song, "Born This Way." She states that, "I'm beautiful in my way 'cause God makes no mistakes," explaining that no matter who someone is or what they identify with, they are perfect the way they are.

Solána Imani Rowe, otherwise known as SZA, is an American singer and songwriter who began making music in the early 2010s which resulted in large success. She often sings about her breakups and how she is healing from them, bringing a sense of unity and comfort to her listeners. She lets her audience know that these emotions are valid. An example of this can be seen in her song, "Normal Girl," with the lyrics, "This time next year I'll be living so good

won't remember no pain, I swear." In a British Vogue magazine she outright stated that, "We don't need men to survive or be valid functioning members of society. Women are representing themselves in a new grown-up demographic that's probably quite threatening to what we've always known."

These women promote essential messages that teenagers and adults need to hear. Additionally, they help show that no matter a person's background, gender, shape, and size, it is possible to gain success. Their diverse backgrounds give all women hope for the future and promote activism to hopefully end various inequalities.

Bringing back Broadway



THEATER GOERS REJOICE AS THE LIGHTS ON THE GREAT WHITE WAY ARE RE-LIT WHEN BROADWAY REOPENS ITS DOORS TO THE PUBLIC.

BY: RAJASVI PATEL

For so many years, Broadway has been a well-known highlight for tourists in New York City. It has always been a part of New York City's identity. The fact that it had to be shut down for such a long time was devastating for many fans. According to the New York Times, Broadway's closure has left forty-one theaters unoccupied and over a thousand employees (including actors, actresses,

and crew members) unemployed for nearly the entirety of the pandemic.

After over a year and a half of the worldwide pandemic, Broadway has decided to reopen its doors to the public. Broadway had been planning on opening up in May of 2021, but cases of the new Delta variant of COVID-19 started to rise, which postponed the opening until September of 2021.

During the almost two years of shutdown, Broadway lost a star to

Coronavirus. Nick Cordero, husband, and father of a toddler, was taken from the stage at age forty-one. He was a tony-nominated actor who starred in such shows as, *Bullets Over Broadway*, *Waitress*, and *A Bronx Tale*. The Broadway community was devastated by the loss of one of their own.

Along with the theaters' reopening came a lot of rules and regulations. The primary rule was that masks must be worn by all audience members throughout the entirety of the shows. In addition, Broadway.com stated that proof of vaccination has been mandated for entrance. This has been a rule for audience members who are of age twelve or older. Young audiences are required to show proof of a recent negative COVID-19 test. Since the theaters have been opened for full capacity audiences, it is important that the audiences are vaccinated, masked properly, and continue to follow all published rules for the duration of the shows.

Broadway has been worried about potential positive COVID-19 cases

in their own staff. If people are to test positive, a mandatory thorough cleaning and disinfection are required before opening that theater to a new crowd. However, if cases start to rise out of proportion, Broadway has decided that a shutdown could occur again, although it is not the most ideal situation or circumstance.

The most popular shows that were brought back with the reopening of Broadway were *The Lion King*, *Chicago*, *Waitress*, *Wicked*, and *Hamilton*. In addition, many other shows such as *Aladdin*, *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*, and Shakespeare's well-known *Macbeth* have been planning for their opening nights during the winter of 2021 and the spring of 2022.

Governor of New York City, Andrew Cuomo, announced in early May that Broadway would have its grand re-opening and on Tuesday, September 14, 2021, Broadway successfully opened its doors to the public and to the many fans who have been waiting for this moment for almost two years. The community hopes for continued success.

Celebrating School Sp

**Friday
November 12th
@ 8pm**

For tickets please visit stahs.net and look under the drama department page!



A Night of One Acts

**Monday
November 29th
@ 4:45pm**

Join us as we light the tree that will stand on the lawn of STA during the holiday season!

**C
Tre**



Peter and the Starcatcher

**Friday
November 19th @ 8pm
Saturday
November 20th @ 8 pm
Sunday
November 21st @ 3 pm**

For tickets please visit stahs.net and look under the drama department page!



Snow Ball

Spirit: Upcoming Events!



Christmas Lighting

**Friday
December 10th
@ 9am**

During the school day we will dedicate time to come together and pray with our Aquinas Stars and their families!



Aquinas Star Christmas Mass

**Saturday
December 4th
@ 7 pm**

Come rock around the school for our annual Christmas dance - the Snow Ball!

Stay tuned for details about how to purchase tickets!



Christmas Concert

**Saturday
December 11th @ 8 pm
Sunday
December 12th @ 3 pm**

Let the bands and choirs get you in the Christmas spirit!

For tickets please call the music department at (732) 549-1108 ext. 640!

(ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF GOOGLE IMAGES)

Endangered crocodile species discovered



THIS SIAMESE CROCODILE IS AMONG ONE OF THE RAREST CROCODILE SPECIES ON THE PLANET

BY: LISA MOHABEER

Mondulkiri province, Cambodia. Siamese crocodiles are one of the world's rarest crocodile species and, although they were once popular across Southeast Asia, they now face possible extinction.

Conservationists found footprints and feces, which prompted them to go searching. Researchers from the Ministry of Environment and WWF-Cambodia began conducting nocturnal surveys of crocodile activity in the wetlands. After four days, the conservationists discovered the reptiles. They shone a torch into a patch of water, and one of them spotted reflected eyeshine. The discovery of these crocodiles is proof that the species is breeding and has raised hope for its survival in the wild. They were thought to be extinct in the 1990s due to poaching, habitat destruction, and cross breeding with other species of crocodile. However, over the past two decades, small isolated populations have been discovered in wetlands in Borneo, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, and Vietnam. The news of the newly found Siamese crocodiles was rewarding as less than 1,000 remain in the wild, mostly in Cambodia.

Wildlife experts say conserva-

tion measures such as community engagement, captive breeding, and reintroduction programs will all help to ensure that Siamese crocodiles have a long-term survival. Conservationists have been captive breeding Siamese crocodiles to assist in the production of offspring, resulting in the release of more than 100 crocodiles into the wild. The new wild hatchlings will remain under strict and regular law enforcement efforts.

The Srepok Wildlife Sanctuary rangers will conduct boat and foot patrols inside and outside the protected area to make sure the hatchlings are safe. Platt of WCS said poaching to supply crocodile farms with animal hides and meat was once a major threat to the species, but is not much of a concern anymore. Platt feels optimistic that the hatchlings will be able to survive without disturbances from poachers as there is no longer a market to collect the crocodiles, giving them a break in the wild.

FDA to approve vaccine for children

BY: DIANE YEO
& TAMIA BURTON

to get vaccines is growing exponentially.

Recently there have been requests for the release of the vaccine for young children because of the Delta variant, which has affected children worldwide. Nipunie Rajapakse M.D., a pediatric infectious diseases physician at Mayo Clinic Children's Center, says "younger people are among these being infected with the highly contagious virus." Both Pfizer and Moderna have acknowledged that they must assemble a vaccine compatible for children under the age of 12 that would ensure the safety of children all over the United States. The FDA has authorized the Pfizer-BioNTech's Covid-19 vaccine for emergency use in children ages 5-11; while some are unsure about this move, many American parents support vaccinating their children. According to the New York Times, as of October 29, 2021, about 28 million children will be eligible to receive one-third of the adult dose, with two injections three weeks apart. Many Americans have long awaited the day for children to become vaccinated, and the CDC states that if the vaccines are approved, the shots may be administered to chil-



THE PFIZER VACCINE, WHICH WILL BE MADE ELIGIBLE FOR CHILDREN BETWEEN THE AGES OF 5-11

(ALL IMAGES COURTESY OF GOOGLE IMAGES)

The outbreak of Covid-19 dominated 2020, and the country is still feeling its impact today. Government officials made the executive decision to quarantine their citizens in order to lessen the booming number of cases and deaths. The Covid-19 frontline health workers are integral to the global response. Scientists raced to create a vaccine to combat the disease quickly and effectively.

After two years of detailed research, the first-ever Covid-19 vaccines were created by pharmaceutical and biotechnology corporations Pfizer and Moderna. The first round of doses was administered to frontline workers and the elderly since they were most susceptible to the disease. They were also made available to young adults ages 12 and above soon after. As more people got the vaccine, the number of Covid cases went down. According to the CDC, "vaccination remains the best way to protect yourself." More than 190.8 million Americans are fully vaccinated (CDC); with this equaling more than 50% of America's population, the demand for children

dren as soon as November 3, 2021.

The Biden administration prepares to make the vaccine readily available in pediatric offices, community health centers, children's hospitals, and pharmacies. Fifteen

million doses are ready to be shipped to health centers (New York Times). With more Americans, especially children, getting vaccinated, the United States is making its way back to normalcy.

President Biden's UN address

BY: SAHIB SINGH

On September 21, 2021, President Joe Biden delivered his first speech before the United Nations General Assembly in New York City. This was the 76th session of the United Nations General Assembly and President Biden took his time to speak on a variety of issues such as the pandemic, the withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan, new international relationships as well as restarting ones that were halted by the previous administration, and many other issues.

At the U.N, President Biden started with the event that's still on many leaders' minds, the pandemic. He talked about the 4.5 million people in the world who died from COVID-19, saying that their deaths were a "heartbreak" to them all. He says that their grief is "a poignant reminder that our collective future will hinge on our ability to recognize our common humanity and to act together." He urged the other world leaders to come together and fight this disease which has ravaged the majority of their countries. He said that they have a choice of whether or not to work together to save the lives of their citizens under their responsibility, defeat the virus, and make the necessary steps to defeat the next pandemic, for he says that, "There will be another one." And if they don't decide to work together

he says that they will, "fail to harness the tools at our disposal as the more virulent and dangerous variants take hold."

President Biden also made remarks about the threat of climate change and the failure in stopping its effects, which has the potential to create even worse droughts, floods, intense fires, hurricanes, heatwaves, and rising sea levels. He even stated that he is not going to fight the "wars of the past" and instead focus on shaping the rulers of the world in more modern crafts, dealing with the threat of terrorism, and dealing with the humanitarian crises around the world.

One of the more focused topics that seemed to be on most people's minds was the situation in Afghanistan. It seemed as though President Biden had focused on the bright side of things, stating that he and his administration are "opening a new era of relentless diplomacy" now that they have finally ended the United State's 20 years of conflict within Afghanistan.

President Biden additionally made it known that he will start rebuilding relationships in the Indo-Pacific, with the relations in that part of the world being the most consequential. He followed up by stating that he had reaffirmed the U.S.'s commitment to NATO's Article 5 and that he had renewed his engagement with the European Union. His administration has elevated the Quad partner-



PRESIDENT BIDEN ADDRESSES THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, DISCUSSING A VARIETY OF ISSUES.

(ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF GOOGLE IMAGES)

ship among India, Japan, Australia, and the U.S. to take on a variety of challenges such as health security and climate. He is engaging with organizations such as ASEAN and the African Union to focus on the people's needs. The U.S. is officially back to the table with international forums, such as the United Nations, working closely with COVAX to help give people around the world vaccines that can save their lives. And the Biden administration has worked to rejoin the Paris Climate Agreement and retake a seat on the Human Rights Council.

The President then stated that the U.S. will rally the world into action to fight against the threats that harm everyone today. He reaffirmed to everyone that the U.S. will defend itself from all attacks against the nation, as well as any attacks against its allies, but it won't use military power so recklessly; it will be the last resort for his administration. He said that a majority of today's problems can't be solved through guns and bombs, as is evident with the pandemic. He said that what they do need is the expansion of science and the sharing of those discoveries with everyone so that people around the globe can get the shots and drugs necessary to help prevent the spread of viruses like COVID-19. They have sent "doses of hope" around the world by spreading the vaccine and funding

organizations like COVID response. The U.S. will also be working to double their public international financing to help nations fight against the spread of climate change that has been negatively affecting their countries. There was also a mention of new technologies that can help the change in the climate. President Biden made the statement that the United States will work to make sure that people on Earth are treated humanely and no longer abused by power, which aligns with what the U.N. believes in.

The United States will also operate so those nations will work together to create peaceful resolutions instead of through devastating warfare. It will also work to prevent nuclear weapons from falling into the wrong hands; Iran and the Korean Peninsula were used as examples. He also talked about the brave U.S. soldiers who lost their lives to the terrorist attacks in Kabul. They are now better equipped to deal with these attacks than they were during the horrible incident of 9/11.

President Biden ended the speech by saying that these crises, which affect not only the U.S. but all countries around the world, are his main focuses. He wants to work together to ensure that these problems don't grow out of control and that maybe by working together with other countries they can stop them altogether.



THE 76TH UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY IS IN SESSION IN NEW YORK CITY.

The spies come marching in



THE MARCHING TROJANS PERFORM THEIR SPY-THEMED HALFTIME SHOW.

(ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF STA PUBLICATIONS)

BY: SHIVALI VORA

The Marching Trojans, an approximately 45-member group this year that includes both the band and the color guard, are a staple at the all-inclusive home football games. They also perform at other events, like pep rallies and more recently the School Celebration Day.

The current season is an especially exciting one for the Marching Trojans because it has brought back a sense of normalcy that has been

so desperately missed in the past year-and-a-half. In the 2020 season, the Marching Trojans were only able to perform at three games due to COVID restrictions. This year, they have performed at almost all of them. Distance often makes the heart grow fonder, and accordingly the Marching Trojans have dived back into their regularly scheduled programming in full force. The 2021 field show is an amalgamation of music from spy movies. It includes three catchy songs: the theme from

"Mission Impossible," "Soul Bossa Nova," and "Live and Let Die." Highlights include a trumpet solo by senior Aliyah Schmidt and a dance choreographed by STA's director of service opportunities, Kevin McCarthy, during which the mallets, basses, and drumline take over the "music" part as the wind players simply entertain with huge smiles on their faces. There is an additional dance performed by just the Color Guard during "Live and Let Die."

When they're not performing their riveting halftime show, the Marching Trojans are in the stands playing popular tunes to hype up the crowd, from the classic "Seven Nation Army," to the fight song, "On Wisconsin," to "Bad Romance," notorious to musicians for being a lip-killer.

This year's group has a large number of seniors rounded out by underclassmen, many of whom are in their first season. Music director Joseph Cullinan has always maintained that no prior experience is necessary to join, and veterans automatically take newer members under

their wing, teaching them how to play an instrument or how to twirl a flag for the first time. This interconnected system gives underclassmen the support they need, so that by the time they are seniors, they have full confidence in their abilities.

As for this year's seniors, they are bidding farewell to a beloved activity. The 2021 Drum Major is Jennifer Rihacek, who has played flute in the band for four years. Other senior leadership includes Flank Commanders Alyssa Aure and Aliyah Schmidt, and Color Guard Captain Abigail Marzan. In just three months, these student leaders, all under the direction of Cullinan and Color Guard coaches Sabrina and Serena Gil, have shaped a group that was filled with newcomers in June into a coherent unit that puts on an amazing show not just at home games, but also at away games. The seniors were able to celebrate their accomplishments at their senior night on October 29th.

Come see the Marching Trojans in all their glory at any of the events in which they are scheduled to appear!

Beware the Ides of March!

BY: ABIGAIL BERA

On September 17th, 18th, and 19th, the Drama Department opened this year's season with the famous Shakespearean tragedy, *Julius Caesar*. Shakespeare's political thriller tells the story of Caesar's life, assassination, and the aftermath. The play is centered around a conspiracy crafted by the envious Cassius (sophomore Michael Corradino) to murder the Roman dictator Julius Caesar (senior David Irizarry). Cassius recruits several conspirators and enlists the support of the highly respected friend of Caesar, Brutus (senior Tamia Burton). Although Brutus has her doubts, she goes through with the plan and eventually betrays Caesar by stabbing him, along with the other conspirators, culminating in his assassination. Traumatized by the brutal death of her beloved friend, Antony (senior Jennifer Rihacek) seeks revenge for Caesar and declares war on Brutus and her army. The two armies fight to the death in a civil war until Caesar's murder is avenged.

To keep the play engaging for a modern audience, Julius Caesar incorporated a twist. Audiences were immersed in a dystopian society facing Caesar's exponential growth in power. The theme was evident in every detail from the costumes and set to the music and lights. The play opened with a dance number that featured flashing lights and intense choreography. The number served as a foreshadowing of Caesar's famous assassination and helped the audience understand what they were about to see. What followed was two hours of engaging and dramatic scenes and intense fight choreography that kept the audience on the edge of their seats the whole time.

Performing Shakespeare is always challenging, but the show was incredibly arduous for the performers. Every actor had the task of putting on a genuine performance that matched the tone of the play. No challenge can be too great for the Drama Department. Under the guidance and mentorship of director Amy Kate Byrne, the cast triumphed in pulling off such a feat. When asked about

the most difficult part of playing the titular character, Irizarry said, "The most difficult part of playing Caesar was fully embodying someone as confident and as full of himself as he is."

Julius Caesar marked a pivotal moment in the STA Drama Department. Stepping away from the world of live streaming, the Little Theater brought in its first in-person audience in almost two years. Having a present audience made it a very emotional performance for the cast and crew. They had yearned for the

sound of applause, and they were finally able to experience it again. Hearing the audience's reactions and seeing how invested they were in the play made it even more rewarding for the actors. As with every STA production, the show was a huge success. Audience members were so eager to be back and fill the seats in the house. Students, faculty, and alumni came out to support the department throughout the run.

Julius Caesar was a fantastic debut to the drama season. Audiences can't wait to see what's next!



BRUTUS AND CASSIUS MEET WITH ANTONY AND OCTAVIUS ON THE BATTLE FIELD PRIOR TO THE BEGINNING OF THE WAR.

Sports Spotlight

Name: Alexander Cocuzza

Nickname(s): Alex

Grade: 11

Sport: In the fall & spring, Cross Country; and in the winter, Track

Favorite pre-game snack: Salted Vinegar Chips

Lucky number: 2



Name: Amanda Cariaga

Grade: 12

Sport: Tennis

Favorite athletic

memory: Accidentally hitting my partner in the head - we laughed about it on the court!

Favorite pre-game snack: Dragonfruit vitamin water & tangerines

Lucky number: 12



Name: Katherine Gleason

Nickname: Katie

Grade: 12

Sport: Soccer

Favorite athletic memory: Scoring the game winning goal against Metuchen in double overtime

Favorite pre-game snack: Chipotle

Lucky number: 9



Name: Armanii Agarwala

Nickname: Manii

Grade: 12

Sport: Gymnastics

Favorite athletic memory: Finishing my routine after making an error

Favorite pre-game snack: Red Bull/Monster Energy + Cliff Bars

Lucky number: 8



Name: Morgan Lavelle

Grade: 12

Sport: Cheer

Favorite athletic

memory: Winning states my freshman year + trip to Florida for Nationals

Favorite pre-game snack: Yellow RedBull + Muddy Buddies

Lucky number: 7



Name: Jaylene Lugo

Nickname: Jay

Grade: 12

Sport: Tennis

Favorite athletic memory: Bus rides with friends

Favorite pre-game snack: Chicken Nuggets

Lucky number: 26



Name: Elizabeth Pepe

Nickname(s): Liz

Grade: 12

Sport: Cross Country

Favorite athletic memory: Winning the Division Meet in 2019

Favorite pre-game snack: A Banana

Lucky number: 4



Name: Sherrod Hudson

Nickname(s): Rodd

Grade: 12

Sport: Football

Favorite athletic memory: Scoring touchdowns

Favorite pre-game snack: Gatorade protein bars

Lucky number: 21



(Photos courtesy of STA Publications)

Setting new 'goals' Building traditions



season. This year's team consisted of seniors: Altis Scafe Jr, Matthew Kelly, Cuyuche, Ryan O'Connor, Philip Halecki, Alex Enfield, Steven Tekel, Nick Lieggi, Prince Swain, Diego and Javier DeJesus, Tahir Reaves, Eshaan Patel, Joshua Polanco, Joseph Spaltro; juniors Maxi, Jalen Edwards, Julian Buitrago, Alex Pasquale, Yash Vakil, Aren Melendez, and Jack Dotoli; and sophomores Martinez and Ryan Dillard. No matter the result of the game, the team continued to work harder to improve themselves.

"This year we had a young hard-working group that never gave up with whatever challenge came our way," said Cuyuche, "I couldn't have asked for a better team this season." Maxi agreed with this statement saying that, "Although we had many ups and downs, I had a great time this season and I will miss all the seniors."

Their coach, Maxwell Adjei-Acquah, values commitment, respect, and perseverance and taught his players to value those as well. The team looks forward to next season.

JUNIOR CHARLES MAXI DRIBBLES THE BALL ACROSS THE FIELD, PREPARING TO PASS TO HIS TEAMMATE.

BY: KAYLA FOLEY

The boys team made tremendous strides over the course of the season under the leadership of captains senior Renzo Cuyuche, junior Charles Maxi, and sophomore Andy Martinez. The team made great improvements from the beginning of the season to the end, which was a direct result of hard work and the desire to get better. The hope is to continue this improvement into next year's

BY: KAYLA FOLEY

The girls varsity soccer team, under the leadership of Coach Josephine Cutietta, had a strong season due to the hard work and dedication of the players.

Work for the team started the



SENIOR KATHERINE GLEASON CHARGES DOWN THE FIELD AND SKILLFULLY PASSES A DEFENDER TO MAKE HER WAY TO THE GOAL.

week after school ended last June, with players coming to school at 8 A.M. for conditioning and lifting 3 times a week in preparation for the upcoming season. The returning players were nervous about the upcoming season due to losing 13 seniors from last year's team as well as their previous coach. Senior captains Katherine Gleason, Olivia Rivera, and junior captain Grace Farrell stepped up to ensure a successful season. "It was such an honor to be chosen as a captain as a junior and I took that role with great responsibility," said Farrell, "I am super proud of how our season has turned out this year. The girls have worked super hard with all the difficulties that have come our way. I am grateful to have been able to play this season and I look forward to improving in the future."

With the regular season coming to an end and the state tournament beginning, the girls have much to be proud of this season. They are excited about next year's season and hope to improve upon the skills they built this year.

Sprinting ahead 'Set' for success

BY: CHRISTIAN PEREZ

The girls and boys on the Cross Country team started their season off with a bang, under the leadership of head coach Michael Mazzei. The boys team is headed by junior captains Alex Cocuzza and Neal Choksi, while the girls are headed by co-captains senior Lia Acosta and junior Emily Wall.

After training throughout the summer, the boys and girls recorded remarkable performances across



SENIOR LIA ACOSTA MAKES HER MOVE ON THE OUTSIDE OF THE PACK

the board. Some examples include Acosta crossing the finish line in 1st place during the Blue Division meet and junior Isabella Danner medaling in multiple meets alongside her captain. Other girls, such as freshmen Catie Frost and Kait Hall, medaled on different occasions as well.

On the boys team, Cocuzza and Choksi medaled multiple times as well, with freshman Reed Kerstetter medaling at Shore Coaches Invitational, finishing 30th. Some of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic included an increase of dual meets and some cancellations. The amazing effort the athletes put into their practices showed what a great season could be. The races the track teams have participated in are the two miler at Thomson Park, dual meets against Middlesex and Piscataway, the Shore Coaches Invitational, the Blue Division meet, the Greater Middlesex County conferences, the NJCTC championships, the NJSIAA championships, and the regionals in New York, which will be attended by the boys varsity team as well as Danner and Acosta.

BY: MACKENZIE CRUZ

2021's varsity volleyball team has had an amazing season, led by Coach Michael Scheuermann and captains junior Danielle Suter and sophomore Olivia Alicante. With a record of 19-4, the girls made it all the way to the first round of GMCs where they unfortunately took a tough loss against Piscataway. It was a great game and they fought to the last second.

Some outstanding stats for this season include: 36 blocks by senior Madyson Epps, 99 digs by junior Alyssa Miel, 241 kills by Alicante, and 340 assists by Suter.

At a heartfelt senior night, the close knit team had to say their goodbyes to seniors Anne Marie Chiricolo, Megan Kibalo, Jenna Campagna, Karina Delgado, Epps, Sofia Jonte, and Ariana Paniagua.

One thing that definitely stood out this season beside the awesome display of skill and talent, was the friendship between this year's team. "This year we had a very close team, it was easy to work together...really good chemistry," Suter stated. That



SENIOR SOFIA JONTE SETS THE BALL FOR HER TEAMMATE TO STRIKE.

(ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF STA PUBLICATIONS)

teamwork led to a very successful 2021 season and great turnouts at the home games.

Undefeated season Fostering spirit



passing yards and 674 rushing yards respectively; senior Sherrod Hudson has obtained a total of 70 defensive tackles and 557 rushing yards; and fellow senior Jon Wyatt has 325 receiving yards. Junior Najee Lovejoy contributed with a defensive interception and junior Isaiah Marellis assisted the defense with 2 defensive sacks. Meeney's impeccable coaching skills and the boys' perseverance all contributed to this phenomenal season. The players on the team live by their coach's philosophy, "Everything counts."

JUNIOR JOEL MARELLIS SPRINTS PAST DEFENDERS AND INTO THE ENDZONE.

BY: SAMANTHA CHRISTINE

The football team is proud to boast an undefeated season this year (9-0). Led by Coach Brian Meeney and many talented players, the team dominated their division and proved that the Trojans are the team to watch in the future.

The stats of the players have been off the charts: juniors Jayden Young and Joel Marellis have a total of 708

"Everything counts"

- Coach Brian Meeney

Be sure to come out and support the team at their next game, which will take place on Friday, November 12th. They will face off against St. Joseph's Academy in Hammonton.

BY: LAUREN MULLEN

This year's cheerleaders are back and better than ever. The girls are excited to be back in the gym working together on their cheers for the sidelines and their routines for their various competitions that will take place throughout the year. Under the leadership of their new coaches Tiffany Vandenberg and Dana La-



SENIOR CAPTAIN ALEX DELABAR GETS THE CROWD PUMPED UP DURING THE SENIOR NIGHT GAME.

Penta, alongside their senior captains Morgan Lavelle, Alex Delabar, and Morgan Brennan, they are looking forward to a successful year.

They have been working hard in practice since the summer improving on their technique to put forth their best performances yet this season. One of the best things about the team is that they always show up to support each other, they truly are a family. The cheerleaders attend almost every event, from open houses to pep rallies, and, of course, are on the sidelines at football games and in the bleachers come basketball season. The cheerleaders have come to be known over the years for their all music routines. An all music routine uniquely includes a stunt sequence, a pyramid, a jump section and a dance. This year's 2021- 2022 all music routine's theme is witches and magic, which is fitting for the halloween season.

Both of these routines are completed throughout the year at competitions including GMCs and states so keep an eye open for dates to come out and support the team.

Keeping consistent State qualifiers

BY: OLIVIA RIVERA

The camaraderie of the girls tennis team coupled with a new coaching staff has made for an exciting season. The starting roster was as follows: Amanda Cariaga in first singles; Jessica Kubiak in second singles; Alexa Quintanilla in third singles; Dhvani Parikh and Sara Asdhir in first doubles; and Rachel De Mesa and Eunice Mbawa in second doubles.

The overall record for the season has been three wins and eight losses. Seniors Quintanilla, Parikh, Cariaga, and Jaylene Lugo are sad to go but the memories of 7/11 trips after school and music filled bus rides to matches will stay with them forever. This year was slightly different for the team with a recent change in staff. Head coach Duncan Merriman-Mendez and assistant coach Jon Manzo have helped to make this year a great one, especially for those who will not be returning next year. Cariaga commented that, "the new coaches changed my high school tennis experience because they brought a fun

and vibrant environment to practices and matches...but also pushed us to make us better tennis players."

Coach Merriman-Mendez commented that, "the most effective coaching strategy for the girls tennis team so far [has been] consistency." By consistently showing up to practice and working their hardest, new skills became quickly "ingrained into the team." Whether on the field or off, the girls could be seen having fun and pushing each other to be their very best.



SENIOR AMANDA CARIAGA ZEROES IN AS SHE PREPARES TO RETURN.

BY: SAMANTHA CHRISTINE

The gymnastics team has finished their season with flying colors! With a record of 5-2-0 and a runner-up plaque from the Greater County Championship, the girls have really outdone themselves this time. At the County Championship, sophomore Nina Sangiuliano placed 4th in the All-Around, winning medals on the Vault, Bars, and Beam, and was named for the GMC Conference team alongside sophomore Allie Pompliano. Freshman Jenna Cerchio finished seventh in the All-Around and medaled on Vault.

The team will spring their way into the NJSIAA State Sectional as the third seed. Senior Captains Armanii Argawala and Isabella Garcia will lead fellow state qualifiers Sangiuliano, sophomore Gianna Varady, freshman Sanjana Parikh, and freshman Olivia Donato through the Championship portion of their season.

With such a dominant, young

group of gymnasts, the future of the program is looking very bright indeed. Be sure to come out and support the girls at states!

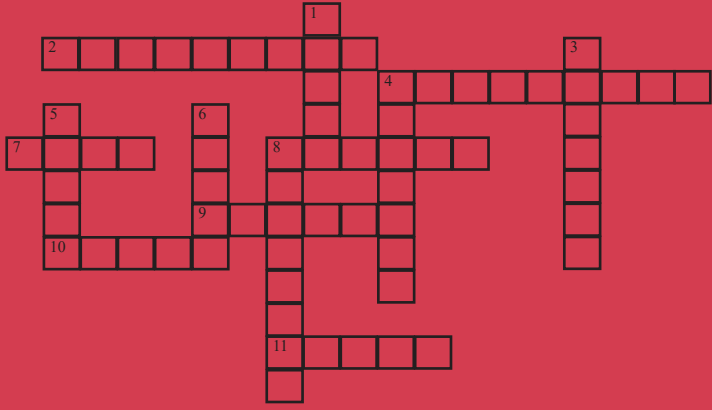


SOPHOMORE ALEXANDRIA RIVERA PERFORMS HER ROUTINE ON THE UNEVEN BARS.

(ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF STA PUBLICATIONS)

The SATOMA staff challenges all readers to test their brain strength against these 'spirited' puzzles.

Curriculum Crossword



- ACROSS**
- THE GYM WHERE THE GYMNASTS AND WRESTLERS PRACTICE
 - LAST NAME OF THE MODERATOR OF THE FRESHMEN CLASS
 - PLACE IN THE BUILDING FOR ALL THE FUTURE ENGINEERS
 - THE TITLE OF THE SCHOOL'S NEWSMAGAZINE
 - SCHOOL MASCOT
 - LAST NAME OF THE ATHLETIC DIRECTOR
 - FAMOUS COOKIES MADE BY THE MOTHER OF 5 ALUMNI
- DOWN**
- DEPARTMENT RUN BY MRS. LEA GOSSETT
 - CLUB RUN BY MR. DENNIS O'KEEFE
 - LAST NAME OF MS. CZAJKOWSKI'S FAVORITE ACTOR
 - THE SCHOOL HAS TWO OF THESE THIS YEAR AND HELD A SPAGHETTI DINNER FOR THEM
 - LAST NAME OF THE PRIEST THAT TELLS EVERYONE TO "MAKE IT A GREAT DAY!" EVERY MORNING
 - WHAT SISTER DONNA AND SISTER CYNDI CRUISE THE SCHOOL IN

SCHOOL SPIRIT CIPHERS

- KL. LZGESK SIMAFSK ZAYZ KUZGGD
- OW SJW SIMAFSK!
- BGAF LZW LJGBSF SJEQ!
- KZGO QGMJ LJGBSF HJAVW!
- PX EHOX HNK TJNBGTL LMTKL!
- NVKAJLN XDA CAJMRCRXWB!

Resource Riddles

- MELODIOUS SOUNDS ECHO FROM WITHIN MY WALLS, DEEP IN THE BOWELS OF THE SCHOOL...WHAT AM I?
- SOFT CARPET BLANKETS MY FLOOR AND A CROSS ADORNS THE WALL... WHAT AM I?
- STUDENTS COME TO ME TO CHOOSE THEIR CLASSES EVERY YEAR AND TO WORK ON THEIR COLLEGE APPLICATIONS...WHAT AM I?
- WHEN THINGS ARE LOST STUDENTS CAN COME TO ME TO HOPEFULLY FIND THEM...WHAT AM I?
- ONLY THOSE STUDENTS WHO HAVE TRAVEL PROBLEMS OR BEHAVIOR ISSUES WILL COME TO ME...WHAT AM I?
- ATHLETICALLY MINDED STUDENTS WILL COME TO ME TO LEARN MORE ABOUT TRYOUTS FOR THE MULTITUDE OF SPORTS TEAMS AT THE SCHOOL... WHAT AM I?
- DONATIONS FOR FOOD DRIVES ARE DROPPED OFF TO ME IN THE MORNINGS AND YOU CAN SIGN UP FOR SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES HERE...WHAT AM I?
- GRADUATES WHO RETURN TO THE SCHOOL ALL STOP BY TO VISIT ME TO UPDATE THE SCHOOL ABOUT WHAT THEY'VE BEEN DOING...WHAT AM I?
- THOSE WHO ENJOY BEING IN THE SPOTLIGHT OR WORKING BEHIND THE SCENES WILL FIND THEMSELVES COMING TO ME AT SOME POINT...WHAT AM I?

ANSWER KEYS:
CROSSWORD: ACROSS: 2 - CANZARZO; 4 - CAPORINO; 7 - STEM; 8 - SATOMA; 9 - TROJAN; 10 - SMITH; 11 - ROCHE; DOWN: 1 - DRAMA; 3 - FISHING; 4 - CLOONEY; 5 - STARS; 6 - KEITH; 8 - SCOOTERS
CIPHER: 1ST - ST. THOMAS AQUINAS HIGH SCHOOL; 2ND - WE ARE AQUINAS!; 3RD - JOIN THE TROJAN ARMY!; 4TH - SHOW YOUR TROJAN PRIDE!; 5TH - WE LOVE OUR AQUINAS STARS; 6TH - EMBRACE OUR TRADITIONS!
RIDDLES: 1 - MUSIC ROOM; 2 - CHAPEL; 3 - COUNSELING; 4 - BOOKSTORE; 5 - VICE PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE; 6 - ATHLETIC DIRECTOR'S OFFICE; 7 - ROOM 106; 8 - ALUMNI OFFICE; 9 - LITTLE THEATER