

# Happy Holidays!



## WHAT'S INSIDE:

2022 MEMORIES  
P.2

BLACK PANTHER 2  
P.6

MID-TERM ELECTIONS  
P.10

WRESTLING  
P.14

BEST HOLIDAY MOVIES  
P.3

FIFA WORLD CUP  
P.7

CLIMATE CONFERENCE  
P.11

GIRLS BASKETBALL  
P.14

AQUINAS STAR MASS  
P.4

TOP ARTISTS OF 2022  
P.8

CHRISTMAS CONCERT  
P.12

BOYS BASKETBALL  
P.15

ADVENT RETREAT  
P.5

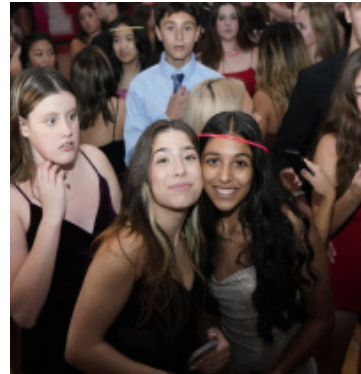
TOP SONGS OF 2022  
P.9

SPORTS SPOTLIGHT  
P.13

SWIMMING  
P.15



# Goodbye, 2022 . . .



# . . . Hello, 2023!



# The Satoma

NEWSMAGAZINE

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## Home Alone: the movie for the holidays



Christmas is centered around opening gifts, feasting on apple and pumpkin pie, and spending time with those you love most. How can anyone not enjoy Christmas with family, especially sitting by the fireplace watching a movie? There are hundreds of Christmas movies that everyone loves which makes it hard to choose a favorite.

There is one movie that everyone comes back to during the holiday season: "Home Alone." Released in 1990 and directed by Chris Columbus. The movie stars Macaulay Culkin, Catherine O'Hara, Joe Pesci, and Daniel Stern.

An eight-year-old boy is forgotten by his family as they travel for a Christmas vacation. He is left home alone and ends up battling two burglars. In this movie,

Kevin is seen as a troublemaker and feels forgotten in his large family. He is sent to the attic the night before the family leaves, then wishes they would all disappear. He gets his wish. The entire family wakes up late and there is chaos in the McCallister household. Having such a large family, Kevin's mother only realizes they have forgotten Kevin on their way to Paris. When Kevin wakes up the next morning, he is overjoyed to see the family is gone, thinking his wish came true. He spends his time alone eating ice cream, playing music, buying pizza, or so he thinks.

Two men, Harry and Marv, plan to rob the McCallister house, and it is up to Kevin to protect it. Besides his mischievous personality, Kevin is extremely smart. He is able to come up with several pranks to protect the house and himself from the burglars.

Usually Christmas movies are based around animations

to give people a sense of nostalgia. Although this movie doesn't give everyone that same feeling, it is still one of the most watched Christmas movies. "Home Alone" is a live action film that includes the essentials of Christmas, while still highlighting modern day issues. After his family leaves, Kevin is happy with his wish, but as the time gets closer to Christmas, he begins to realize how lonely he is. He ends up "meeting" Santa Claus and his one wish is to have his family back.

One of the reasons this movie became so popular was because of the lessons it taught. It educated many on independence, avoiding theft, and how important family is, no matter how angry everyone gets with each other. "Home Alone" is one of the best Christmas movies because it ties humor into everyday life during the holiday season. It is a comedic yet heartfelt movie, which many anticipate watching every year.

## The best Christmas movie: keeping it classic



There is perhaps no greater feeling than curling up under a warm blanket with a mug of hot cocoa on a cold winter night to watch a Christmas movie. Unfortunately, many of today's holiday flicks have devolved into the same trite, cheesy rom-coms about the spirit of Christmas. These movies are charming in their own way, but there is no denying the iconic and incredible quality of the classics, particularly the best Christmas movie of all, "Santa Claus Is Comin' To Town."

This 1970 musical fantasy aims to explain the origins of Santa Claus and various Christmas traditions through its narrator, a friendly postman on a mission to answer the Santa-related questions asked by the children of the

world. He describes the reason for Santa's jolly beard, his various aliases, his flying reindeer, and more. The story that the postman tells follows baby Kris Kringle, who is raised by a family of toy-making elves and friendly animals in a wintry forest. When he is old enough to make toys on his own, he delivers them to the nearby village of Sombertown. Unfortunately, Sombertown is ruled by Burgermeister Meisterburger, an angry old man who hates toys, going so far as to ban them from the town. Kris must team up with the legendary Winter Warlock and a local school teacher named Miss Jessica in order to outsmart the Burgermeister and bring toys and happiness to the children of the town.

The movie is particularly charming due to its classical style. It is made using claymation, a form of stop-motion film shared with other beloved Christmas films such as "Rudolph the Red-Nosed

Reindeer." This animation style gives it a classic kind of charm that provides the audience with a nostalgic, festive feeling.

Half the fun is the fact that this film is a musical. The soundtrack is light, fun, and catchy. From a number all about the Kringle family's business history, to a romantic lament by the future Mrs. Claus, to a jolly celebration shared by Kris and the Winter Warlock, there is an exciting musical number for every great scene. The finale of the movie features the postman and a group of children singing the iconic song, "Santa Claus Is Comin' to Town." Everything about the movie contributes to a festive mood filled with holiday cheer.

The film's innocent, playful comedy is timelessly charming, and there are many valuable lessons for audiences of all ages, earning "Santa Claus Is Comin' To Town" its title as the best Christmas movie of all.

# ‘Star’ filled celebration

BY: CLAIRE INNETTE

received a gift from the Aquinas Star board and gave the entire student body a gift in return - a day off!

Before the Aquinas Stars and their families went downstairs to enjoy some refreshments and play some basketball, the mothers of both boys came forward to express their gratitude to the students and faculty. Anthony’s mother spoke first saying, “Thank you for all you have done for Anthony, for making him feel so special, and for taking him into your family.” Brandon’s mother followed saying, “I’m completely overwhelmed and my heart is so full. The school has been such a blessing in our lives over the past several months.” Both women wished those gathered a happy holiday season and then re-joined their families.

A new tradition began immediately following the Mass, as members of the student council brought forward a Christmas tree to be lit by a very special guest - Santa Claus! As the tree was coming forward, Cullinan

and the music department performed Bruce Springsteen’s version of, “Santa Claus is Comin’ to Town” and the students danced and sang along to the popular classic tune.

Once the tree was in place, a count-

down began as the lights in the gym went dark and then Santa himself plugged in the tree. The gym erupted into applause and the students agreed it was a great start to the Christmas season.

On December 15th, the school community gathered together in the main gym for the annual Aquinas Star Mass. This long-standing tradition kicks off the Christmas season, but more importantly it celebrates the Aquinas Stars, both present and past.

The current Aquinas Stars, Brandon Barbarite and Anthony Zaccariah, attended the Mass along with their families. The concert choir and members of the band, lead by music director Joseph Cullinan, provided the music for the Mass. Counselor TJ Reilly continued one of the most popular traditions of the day by singing his beautiful rendition of, “Mary, Did You Know” as the refelction song after Communion.

As part of tradition, the Mass was presided over by Bishop James Checchio who spoke about the season of Advent and preparing for the birth of the savior, Jesus Christ. Once the Mass was ended, Bishop Checchio



THE AQUINAS STARS, BRANDON AND ANTHONY, ARE WELCOMED BY BISHOP CHECCHIO AND THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

(ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF STA PUBLICATIONS)

# The opening of the Commons



STUDENTS WORK ON A PROCTOR ASSIGNMENT IN THE COMMONS

BY: MADISON PACCIANO

The Commons, formally known as the library, is back and better than ever! After over a year of renovations, The Commons has reopened and can be used by anyone. Opening hours are Monday-Friday, from homeroom until the end of the school day and after school. An appointment with librarian Sharon Taub is required at least one day in advance if you plan on staying after school

to use The Commons. Even with a reservation, it is only open until 3:00pm. The only definite time it will not be open during the school week is Wednesday afternoons, but keep in mind that there may be times where the commons is closed for several other reasons. For updates, look out for a note that will be posted on the door as a reminder. An important thing to remember when using The Commons is signing in when you enter and signing out when you leave.

The Commons is a safe environment to focus, study, be creative and catch up on school work. It has a variety of services including research materials, both hard copies and online, plus assistance in using them. If you’re working on a project or a paper and struggling to find any good sources, using The Commons for your research would be beneficial for your grade. Whiteboards are another available resource there, perfect for brainstorming or jotting down ideas to help get the ball rolling. There are also printers there ready to be used if you ever need to print anything out. If you ever lose your ID or lanyard, replacement ones can be bought here during homeroom and lunch only. The Commons is also an ideal quiet study space for if you want to really hunker down in your work or need to study for an upcoming test.

One thing to make sure of though is that no one is taking advantage of this space. It is a learning space meant for those who want to be productive and

get their work done in a quiet area, not for those who want to hangout and socialize with friends. There are many clubs or after school activities to choose from that could be great for socializing. If you’re looking to socialize, The Commons would not be the right place to choose, so be aware of your volume and be sure to keep it low. No food or drink is allowed inside The Commons because we need to make sure we are keeping the space clean and not risk damaging any of the resources.

The breaking of these few and easy rules will result in you being asked to leave the Commons, so please be respectful of the space and those in it. All are welcome, so if you’re struggling to catch up on school work, make good use of this space and your time. Feel free to make an appointment to stop by! For more information on how to make a reservation or for any other information, you can email Mrs. Taub or visit the school website.



# Anticipating the arrival

BY: SJ O'BRIEN

As with all good things, the Advent retreat began with prayer. On December 2nd 2022, Father Mike welcomed over 100 students to an overnight celebration of faith, filled with activities and games that prepared students for the birth of Jesus Christ and his eventual resurrection.

First, the students were split into 13 small groups and then introduced themselves through an icebreaker called the Snowball activity. Basically, each student wrote a unique fact about themselves on a piece of paper and crumbled it into a snowball before sharing it with their groups. In the next activity, Freeze Frame, students walked in circles around the cafeteria until they were given a prompt like "bake a cake" or "decorate a Christmas tree" and then as best they could, illustrated that action. Eventually, the students made their way back to their seats and waited for the first speaker to begin.

In the opening talk of the night, titled "Get Ready," Mrs. Alfaro emphasized the importance of preparing for Jesus' birth. She used the comparison of inviting guests over

without having cleaned or cooked in advance to show that spiritual preparation is essential to receive God's grace. She encouraged students to prepare for Jesus' birth by praying, reading scripture, and attending Mass. Afterwards, the small groups were invited to reflect on her words through a guided discussion.

Following dinner, students were invited to join the Music Ministry in the Little Theatre to sing songs like "Trading My Sorrows" before the second talk, "Clean the House." Led by Father Mike, the talk stressed the significance of going to confession, especially during the season of Advent. He used the brilliant analogy of cleaning a room to cleaning a soul and then proceeded to offer confessions in the Main Gym. As they waited, students participated in Eucharistic Adoration to create a spirit of prayer and worship that was led by the Music Ministry.

Later in the night, students split themselves into classrooms and rolled out their sleeping bags. "The girls in my room and I really bonded despite only having met a few hours prior," commented senior Amanda Doggett. In the morning, an enthusi-

astic Father Mike called the school to the Theatre for 8:00 am Mass.

*"The girls in my room and I really bonded despite only having met a few hours prior."*

~ Amanda Doggett

Afterwards, all the students gathered in the cafeteria for breakfast and more activities. It started with another song by the Music Ministry that transformed into a classic game of hot potato—which was really just room temperature tennis balls. Then, they all played a few rounds of telephone charades and sang more songs, even dancing along to a few.

"Welcome the Guests" was the last talk of the retreat and Mr. Lewon passionately explained the different ways in which students can welcome Jesus into their hearts. Above all, it is possible through prayer and by sharing with others. Meaning that finding ways to be compassionate, generous,

and forgiving, are fundamental to accepting Jesus into all parts of our lives.

In the end, everyone went home sleep deprived, with a sore back and a missing toothbrush, but ultimately with hearts that beat a little more kindness and a little more love, ready to share that admiration with Jesus.



AN ANGEL TELLS MARY THAT SHE WILL BEAR GODS SON. (IMAGE BY SCOTT ERICKSON, COURTESY OF GOOGLE IMAGES)

# Fostering future students

BY: SAVANNAH MCGUIRE

On Thursday, November 17, 2022, the drama department welcomed grammar schools within the Diocese of Metuchen to witness their production of "Little Shop of Horrors."

Inviting grammar schools to see the fall production has been a tradition for many years. Head of the drama department Lea Gossett said, "It exposes 8th graders to outstanding productions and they can be part of the dancing and the music and the story."

When asked what the main goal of this was, Gossett added, "If you want to do theater, a great place to do it is at STA."

Students involved in the production were called out early from class to begin preparing for the production. Many of the cast and crew said they were very nervous, and anxious about it. Some explained this was due to it being their first production ever. Others explained that it can be intimidating to perform in front of their former classmates. One of the crew members from Little Shop, Gabriella Ettore, said, "It's a lot of fun. But these are people you went to school with, and your teachers as well. Many things could go wrong but we try to think positively about the entire experience."

Buses began arriving roughly around 9. Students from each of the grammar schools walked into the theater and took their seats, anxiously waiting to see what this year's

show would bring. Many of the students brought up how excited they were.

Once the show had concluded, a roar of applause and cheers could be heard from the Little Theatre. The show was a huge success. "Little Shop of Horrors was an amazing production! I wish I could see it again!" Was a reply given by many of the students. Students were given a few extra minutes to ask questions to the cast and crew of "Little Shop of Horrors." When asked what he loves most about answering the kids' questions, Mr. Culinan responded, "I always love answering their questions about what goes into our concert programs. The questions are very interesting, being that not many schools have choral and musical programs. I find it especially interesting that in about half of the students, a light bulb goes off and they see it truly is possible." Once the questioning was over, students were dismissed.



STUDENTS FROM IMMACULATE CONCEPTION VISIT OUR SCHOOL TO WATCH THE PRODUCTION OF "LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS" (ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF STA PUBLICATIONS)

# A bittersweet sequel for fans

BY KATERINA XON

The first “Black Panther” movie came out in 2018 and was an immediate success. It was no surprise the excitement for “Black Panther: Wakanda Forever” would be through the roof. The movies are inspired by the Marvel comic book superhero Black Panther created by Stan Lee and artists Jack Kirby. Ryan Coogler directed both films of Black Panther and gave life to the fictional African

Nation of Wakanda. While director Ryan Coogler was screenwriting, tragedy struck when actor Chadwick Boseman passed away in 2020. Boseman, who played King T’Challa (Black Panther), was diagnosed with stage 3 colon cancer in 2016. His death affected not only the Marvel cinematic universe but the real world.

The \$250 million film had its ups and downs. With the cast and crew mourning the loss of a friend and actor, actress Letitia Wright had her troubles during the film. Even though she faced those problems, her performance in the film was nothing short but raw emotion, and outstanding. The film is a clear representation of staff working together during a difficult time. The hardships of this film have made it an exceptional film to watch.

“Black Panther: Wakanda Forever” cannot be described in one singular word. The movie showed a representation of African and Hispanic cultures, and black women’s empowerment. The introduction of Namor and Ironheart was another factor why this movie had an exciting build-up. Coogler captured the best part of Meso-American culture. Tenoch Huerta (Namor) did a

phenomenal job at representing his culture in the Marvel cinematic universe. It is evident from his acting that he poured his heart out in every scene he was in. The backstory of how his kingdom Talocan was created, showed the actual sides of how Mayan tribes were drawn out of their region. Talocan was shown as a gorgeous underwater kingdom that captured the audience’s attention.

Angela Bassett, who plays Romanda, T’Challa’s mother, has many empowering scenes. After T’Challa’s passing, Queen Romanda takes control of Wakanda. Many parts of the movie show how Queen Romanda takes charge to protect her people and her country. After her passing, Shuri (Letitia Wright), holds the responsibility of becoming the new Black Panther. The region of Wakanda where Romanda and Shuri lived, has only women soldiers to protect them. Coogler effortlessly showed many ways of black women’s empowerment in this film. Freshman Leilani Wiggins had her own words to describe the film, saying “The movie was inspiring, and I loved the women’s empowerment in this film,”

“Black Panther: Wakanda Forever” received an 84% on Rotten

Tomatoes, and a 4.1 rating. Critic Moira Macdonald from the Seattle Times says, “There’s so much that ‘Black Panther: Wakanda Forever’ does right that it’s to blame it for the one flaw it can’t help,” she wrote. She also said, “But you watch it wondering about the movie that never got made, the story that never got finished, the life cut short too soon.” Another critic named Kambole Campbell from Empire said, “He’s a highlight, and imaginative adaptation of the veteran comics character, one who here speaks truth with convincing venom. Coogler ties him to Mesoamerican history and Spanish colonialism, and there’s a sense-Like Wakanda- of a tangible, real-world,” he talks about Huerta. He also commented on how “Wakanda Forever” felt overly busy. “Black Panther: Wakanda Forever” has made over \$500 million. Overall, the movie felt as if the viewer had a deep connection with the characters. Fans around the world shared the loss of an actor to whom many relate their struggles. It is shown through the production and acting that Ryan Coogler, staff, and actors put their hearts out for this movie, remembering their dear friend Chadwick Boseman.



THE OFFICIAL PROMO POSTER OF BLACK PANTHER: WAKANDA FOREVER

# The Addams Family re-imagined in ‘Wednesday’

BY MISHA HERCULES & KYLIE BARRETT

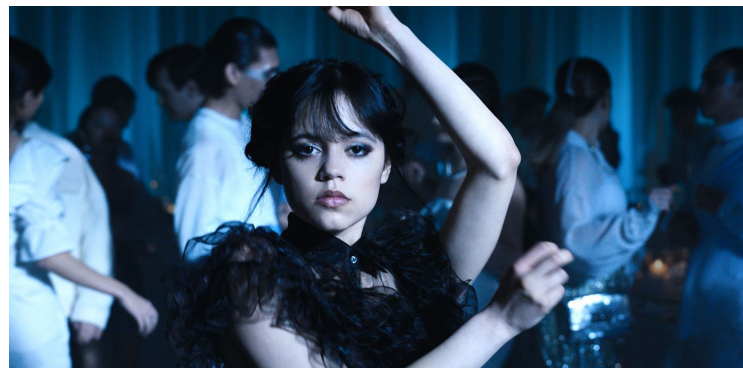
The show “Wednesday” is a comedy series that follows Wednesday Addams as she takes on a new adventure.

Wednesday Addams is the new mysterious student at Nevermore Academy, the school where her parents attended and fell in love at 25 years ago. Wednesday is paired up with a roommate, Enid Sinclair, who appears to be the complete opposite of her. Despite their differences, they soon begin to grow on each other and eventually become close friends. After discovering a secret, Wednesday finds a new passion: investigating the murders and mysteries that are surrounding Nevermore. Thinking she has ill intentions, she gets attacked by another student. She continues to investigate this throughout the whole season, while causing some

mischief and chaos along the way.

The main lead Wednesday is played by actress Jenna Ortega. Her bright and optimistic roommate, Enid Sinclair, is played by Emma Myers. Wednesday’s parents Morticia and Gomez Adams are played by Catherine Zeta-Jones and Luis Guzman. Along with this selection of cast members, there was even an old familiar face. Christina Ricci, who played Wednesday Addams in the 1991 Addams Family movie, returned to play Marilyn Thornhill, a botanical sciences teacher at Nevermore Academy in this new spinoff.

Even though the first episode of Wednesday was aired on November 23, 2022, it quickly rose to the top as the second most popular English-language series on Netflix. This show has not only been helpful to Netflix but it also helped out two artists because of a trend on Tik Tok, which features people dancing



JENNA ORTEGA PERFORMS DANCE ROUTINE WHICH SHE CHOREOGRAPHED HERSELF

(ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF GOOGLE IMAGES)

along to songs used in the show with Wednesday’s exact moves. These songs included “Bloody Mary” by Lady Gaga, and the original song from the show, “Goo Goo Muck” by The Cramps, which is back on the charts due to the show’s popularity. Half of the episodes are di-

rected by Tim Burton himself, who was also given the opportunity to direct the 1991 Addams Family Film, however declined. The show got 72% on Rotten Tomatoes and got an 8.4/10 from IMDb, and there are many rumors about another season being created very soon.



# FIFA World Cup 2022 takes place in Qatar



ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF GOOGLE IMAGES

BY AMANDA STADTMILLER

The 2022 World Cup was held in Qatar and is the first one held in an Arab country. The tournament opened on November 20 with Qatar and Ecuador and ended on December 18. The final four teams were Argentina, Croatia, France, and Morocco. Morocco was made history in this world cup. They were the first African and Arab nations to go to the world cup semi-finals. Only European and South American teams made it to the finals. Everyone's favorite soccer play-

ers were played in their final World Cup. This included Lionel Messi from Argentina, Cristiano Ronaldo from Portugal, and Neymar from Brazil. Messi is one of the best soccer players of all time. He played his first World Cup when he was 18 and is still playing now when he is 35. Messi is said to have the most assists in soccer history. Cristiano Ronaldo played in his first World Cup in 2006 when he was 21. Ronaldo is also said to be one of the best soccer players of all time. He is the first-ever soccer player to score in five World Cups. Ronaldo has scored 819 goals and has scored the most goals in soccer history. Neymar played in his first World Cup in 2014 when he suffered from a fractured vertebra and almost could never walk again. He was still able to score four goals in the 2014 world cup. Neymar is one of the top scorers in the World Cup and is known for his famous skills and tricks. Although it is sad to think it is all of their last World Cups, there are many rising stars that made themselves known in the 2022 World Cup.

Some of the most popular were Goncalo Ramos from Portugal, Vinicus Jr. from Brazil, Jude Bellingham from England, and Gavi from Spain. Goncalo Ramos started for Portugal in their game against Switzerland, where Portugal won 6-1. Ramos scored three goals for Portugal during that game. Vinicus Jr. was a crucial part of Brazil's win against Korea. He also assisted many goals, including Richarlison's bicycle kick goal, which was one of the best goals in the 2022 World Cup.

Jude Bellingham is only 19 years old and is already a rising star in soccer. He is the first teenager to assist in the knockout stages of the World Cup and one of the youngest players in the world cup ever. Bellingham is also the second-youngest scorer for England at the world cup. Another rising star is Gavi, who is making his mark at 18 years old. He received the Kopa trophy for best player in the world and helped Spain win 7-0 against Costa Rica. This year Kyliwan Mbappe is said to be the best soccer player in the

world cup and was the superstar player for France. He is known for his extreme speed, and in the 2022 World Cup, he scored five goals. He is also one of the youngest to score in the final stage of the World Cup.

Some interesting facts about the 2022 World Cup are as follows: this is the most expensive World Cup ever. Qatar spent 300 billion dollars to organize it. This is the first time Qatar has ever participated in the World Cup. The 2022 World Cup is the first to ever occur in winter because of Qatar's extreme heat conditions in the spring and summer. The youngest player in this World Cup is Youssoufa Moukoko from Germany, 18 years old. The oldest player is Essam El-Hardy from Egypt, who is 45 years old. The final game was between Argentina and France. The final score was 4-2 with a win from Argentina. The hosting countries in the 2026 World Cup are the United States, Mexico, and Canada. Make sure you buy your tickets for when it comes to MetLife Stadium here in New Jersey!

# 'Avatar' returns after thirteen years

BY LISA MOHABEER

The long awaited *Avatar: The Way of Water* was finally released in theaters on December 16, 2022 after numerous delays. Members of the original cast returned in a film that runs for three hours and twelve minutes. Thirteen years after the first film broke box office records and became the highest-grossing movie of all time, *Avatar: The Way of Water* brought audiences back to the vibrant world of Pandora. On its opening weekend, *Avatar: The Way of Water* dominated the box office, making \$134 million domestically and \$301 million globally. Over a decade later, *Avatar: The Way of Water* was able to capitalize on improved technology and an even larger budget to create more stunning visuals than *Avatar*. It is one of the biggest visual effects projects ever made, with only two shots in the entire film containing no visual effects. Nearly all of the water in the film is computer-generated. So far, more

than half of the film's viewers have been in 3D. This isn't surprising as *Avatar* is a 3D fan favorite, moreover the film was conceived as a 3D experience, shot with 3D cameras, and edited specifically to be seen in 3D. The vibrant, nature-filled life of Pandora has never looked more beautiful than in 3D. Viewers feel immersed in the forest as it comes to life and are able to experience the wonders of the deep blue sea.

*Avatar: The Way of Water* picks up nearly fifteen years after the events of the first film. Jake Sully lives as chief of the Omatiyaya clan and has raised a family with Neytiri: their sons Neteyam and Lo'ak, their daughter Tuk, their adopted daughter Kiri, and a human boy named Spider. After a familiar threat resurfaces, they must leave their home and explore the regions of Pandora. *Avatar: The Way of Water* includes other Na'vi clans which were only briefly shown in the first film. The underwater world of Pandora is introduced, presenting even more breathtaking creatures



THE METKAYINA CLAN PERFORMS A NIGHTTIME CEREMONY

and environments, as well as the Metkayina clan, showing fans how their culture differs from the forest-dwelling Omatiyaya clan. By the introduction of another clan, audiences are able to distinguish how each clan has different body characteristics that correspond with their respective environments. The Sully family must adapt to these changes while keeping each other safe, fighting to stay alive, and enduring tragedies. *Avatar: The Way of Water* in-

cluded many easter eggs from the first film, allowing fans to experience feelings of nostalgia. The Way of Water, however, focused more on the Sully children, especially Lo'ak, rather than Jake and Neytiri. This could indicate a potential shift over the span of the next films. In light of this, *Avatar* fans have much to anticipate, with three more films planned to come every other year starting with *Avatar 3* in 2024, *Avatar 4* in 2026, and *Avatar 5* in 2028.



# STA 2022 WRAPPED

## OUR TOP ARTISTS

#1 taylor swift

#2 the weeknd

#3 drake

#4 bad bunny

#5 kendrick lamar



## FAVORITE GENRE

pop

2022





We surveyed the student body about their favorite music in 2022. Here are the results...

# OUR TOP SONGS

#1 as it was harry styles

#2 die for you the weeknd

#3 heartless kanye west

#4 i like you post malone

#5 see you again tyler the creator and kali uchis



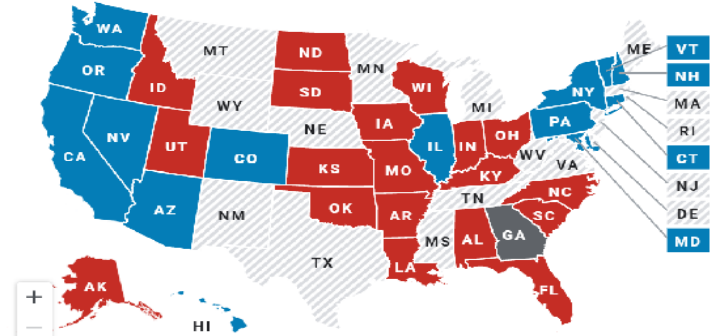
# 2022 2022 2022 2022



## Big upset caused by 2022 Midterm Elections

48 DEM GOP 49

Gained 1 seat Lost 1 seat  
2 seats held by independent senators who caucus with DEM



### 2022 MIDTERM ELECTIONS SENATE RESULTS

(ALL PHOTOS CORTESY COURTESY OF GOOGLE IMAGES)

BY: CHRISTIAN PEREZ

On November 8, 2022, Americans across the country voted on Election Day to decide which party would control Congress for the next two years. In a continued trend that started with the 2020 election, Democratic voters overwhelmingly chose to vote through absentee and mail-in ballots, with their Republican counterparts strongly preferring in-person voting either on Election Day or early voting days. As with every elec-

tion, all 435 U.S. House of Representative seats and 1/3 of Senate seats, 35 this cycle, are up for reelection. The midterms came as voters were concerned about record-high inflation and the recent Supreme Court decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, which overturned *Roe v. Wade*. Alongside this, President Biden faced increasingly low approval ratings with an average margin of disapproval being 11%.

With this political climate, Republicans were expected to perform strongly with polls showing a red wave, indicating that Republicans would likely gain 10-15 seats in the house and would have a margin of 2 seats in the Senate. However, Republican prospects of sweeping both houses of Congress were dashed and what was expected to be a red wave turned into more of a red trickle. Republicans lost competitive senate races in Arizona and Pennsylvania by large margins and barely lost the state of Nevada by 8,000 votes. They did however win Florida by wide margins, with New York being the only state they made in-roads in.

Democrats, on the other hand, overperformed in the Wisconsin and Ohio elections. The Georgia senate race led to a recount with neither candidate winning the necessary 50%. Still, Democrat Raphael Warnock won against his Republican opponent Herschel Walker by about 100,000 votes in a December 6 runoff election. These results give the Democrats 50-49 senate control with the Georgia runoff only increasing a Democratic majority.

Elsewhere in the House, Republicans won an extremely tight majority of only four votes, much less than

the 10+ expected. Even with a disappointing election, Republicans won the generic ballot by 2.9%, showing that Republicans did turn out despite the results.

In some states, such as New York, there were four flipped House seats that were crucial to flip the House of Representatives. Candidate quality and personality were other factors, with more moderate Republicans performing better than their more rightwing colleagues. In the Georgia general election, Senate candidate Herschel Walker received 200,000 fewer votes than incumbent governor Bryan Kemp.

The 2022 midterm election may come down as one of the bigger upsets in United States political history.



PENNSYLVANIA RESIDENTS VOTE FOR STATE OFFICIALS

## Tropical storm Nicole makes landfall in Florida

BY: EMMA FLYNN

Hurricane Nicole was a late-season Category 1 hurricane that took place in November 2022. It originally formed as a subtropical cyclone on November 7th and transitioned into a tropical cyclone the next day. Nicole made landfall on November 9th, where it hit part of the Bahamas and strengthened to a category 1 hurricane.

As Nicole continued to strengthen, it made landfall twice on November 10th in Florida; the first time was south of Vero Beach and the second was northwest of Cedar Key. After making landfall in Florida, Nicole weakened while moving over the Florida Panhandle. By November 11th, Nicole transitioned to an extra-tropical cyclone, before collapsing over northern New England on November 12th.

Even though Hurricane Nicole was a Category 1 hurricane, it still caused dramatic damages, which include, but are not limited to, 11 total

fatalities and about \$500 million in damages. In addition, Nicole reached wind speeds of 75 miles per hour and the lowest pressure recorded was 98-mbar (hPa). After it weakened into a post-tropical cyclone, it brought severe thunderstorms to the Carolinas and Virginia. This hurricane came only 6 weeks after Florida was devastated by Hurricane Ian, and was the first hurricane to make landfall on Florida's east coast since Katrina in 2005.

Overall, Hurricane Nicole affected the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, The Bahamas, and Southeastern United States. Hurricane Nicole was the first hurricane in 40 years to hit the US in the month of November. Additionally, when Nicole maintained hurricane intensity until landfall south of Vero Beach, it broke a previous record set by the Yankee Hurricane, which landed on Florida's east coast on November 4, 1935.

Many scientists argue that climate change is responsible for the



DAMAGE TO FLORIDA AFTER NICOLE LANDED ON NOVEMBER 11, 2022

increasingly unusual behavior from these most recent tropical storms and hurricanes. In 2020, a new record of 30 named hurricanes hit the US. In 2021 there were 21 named storms including seven hurricanes. These back-to-back years marked the first time that two consecutive hurricane

seasons used the list of 21 storm names.

Overall, the affected areas from Nicole's destruction are still trying to recover from it all. Though, the clearing of roadways and trees, restoring power, and tending to damaged property are already being conducted swiftly.



# Egypt hosts UN climate change conference



**COP27**  
SHARM EL-SHEIKH  
EGYPT 2022

2022 UN CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE (ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF GOOGLE IMAGES)  
BY: AMELIA YUEN

The 27th United Nations Climate Change Conference, or the COP27, took place in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, from November 6 through November 20, 2022. The conference hosted more than 100 heads of state and government, more than 35,000 participants, and multiple booths exhibiting climate action around the globe and across various sectors.

For years, the UN's Climate Change Conferences have been long debat-

ing the best strategy for dealing with the effects on communities whose livelihoods have been disrupted by the harsh effects of climate change. The conference concluded by welcoming the decision to initiate a loss and damage fund for vulnerable nations undergoing calamities from climate change.

Despite a challenging geopolitical environment, countries delivered a package of resolutions at COP27 that reaffirmed their role in keeping global temperatures from increasing

to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. The package also boosted the financial, technological, and capacity-building assistance that developing nations need to reduce their emissions of greenhouse gases and adapt to their unavoidable impacts from climate change. Antonio Guterres, the UN Secretary-General stated that more needs to be done to substantially reduce emissions. Guterres sets a dangerous line to not cross with the 1.5-degree temperature limit. Intense heatwaves, rising sea levels, and the eradication of 70–90% of coral reefs are all predicted to occur if it's crossed.

This fund marked an important point of progress to help developing nations respond to loss and damage, governments made the unprecedented decision to create new financial arrangements and a dedicated fund. Additionally, The Sharm el-Sheikh Adaptation Agenda, introduced by COP27 President Shoukry, aims to increase resilience for residents from the most climate-vulnerable towns by 2030. Also, The Sharm el-Sheikh Implementation Plan, emphasizes that at least USD 4-6 trillion in annu-

al investments are anticipated to be needed to transition the entire world to a low-carbon economy. Delivering such finance will involve a rapid and thorough reform of the financial system.

It was highlighted with considerable concern that the developed country's target of gathering \$100 billion annually by 2020 had not yet been achieved. Developed countries were asked to do so, while multilateral development banks and other international financial institutions were urged to provide climate funding. With all that said, the decisions made here today reiterate the crucial importance of providing all stakeholders with the means to participate in climate action, particularly through the Action for Climate Empowerment plan, and the intermediate review of the Gender Action Plan.

These results will give all Parties the opportunity to collaborate in order to address engagement imbalances and give stakeholders the resources they need to promote more extensive and inclusive climate action at all levels.

# 'Zero Covid' policy fuels protests

BY: ISABELLA DANNER

With the explosion of the Coronavirus pandemic in 2020, Chinese President Xi Jinping took to drastic measures to achieve numerical results, known as the 'Zero Covid' Policy, which planned to eliminate virtually all cases of Covid-19. Precautions taken included lockdowns, frequent testing, mask-wearing, and border controls. With citizens anxious to travel or leave their homes, businesses struggled and people feared to invest in companies. The economy suffered and the stock market made no major improvements, leaving little chance for China to reach its 5.5 percent annual target of GDP growth.

The weakening economy impacted nearly all aspects of life, and many wealthy chose to flee the country. An attempt was made to salvage the plummeting market, particularly in the real estate sector. Though, despite an initial ease, cases immediately spiked, and the government returned to 'Zero Covid' measures. After three years of such policies, Chinese citizens are pushing back, especially in the wake of publicized atrocities.

For many citizens, their protesting goes beyond the limitations experienced from pandemic policies - it is a fight for rights over the Chinese government.

The true impact of such restrictions lies deeper than the hopeful elimination of Covid cases. Many people were sealed into their homes, unable to leave. A large majority could not receive necessary medical care in proper timing due to intense restrictions. Clothes, food, and water were scarce for most. Hung banners, shouts from balconies, and clanging of pots and pans signaled the Chinese suffering. As living conditions worsened, many protesters still took to the streets to voice their opinion across the country, risking arrest.

However, the last straw was the fire outbreak in Urumqi. At least ten died in the tragic building fire, which was direct result to strict lockdown restrictions. People were locked in, unable to escape. Further evidence revealed the guarding of fire-protection equipment, which infuriated the Chinese population. The event truly showcased the control over citizens, especially as the idea of the 'Zero

Covid' policy, an attempt to save lives, did the very opposite.

As a result of the fire, an explosion of protestors pushed Xi Jinping to ease Covid restrictions. Now, mass testings will no longer be conducted in high risk areas and testing is no longer required for travel among regions in the country. As for infected populations, patients can isolate within their homes after five days, as opposed to hospitals and makeshift quarantine facilities. Within areas of heavy isolation and lockdown, many

are to be lifted as soon as possible. Most importantly, local governments cannot impose on businesses during such lockdowns, or force an area into one unless new cases arise.

These are all great landmark decisions towards pleasing the Chinese population's pleas. But, despite this, scientists have made opposing views on the lift of such restrictions, even though civilians are in favor. Overall, the movement reaffirmed the power of banded citizens and strengthened morale through such a difficult time.



CHINESE PROTESTERS OUTSIDE A PEOPLE'S BANK OF CHINA BUILDING IN ZHENGZHOU, CHINA

# Annual Christmas concert 'sleighs'

BY: OLIVIA LOCANDRO &  
MORGAN RYAN

On December 10th and 11th, the music Department performed their 25th Annual Christmas Concert. The concert was divided into two acts featuring student musicians of all grades. The first act consisted of the choral pieces. The Concert Choir opened the concert with a prayer, followed by the classic hymn "Angels We Have Heard On High." Then, they sang the "Carol of the Bells," a Ukrainian acappella piece. The Concert Choir continued their set with "Breath of Heaven," and "Carry the Light," which featured a solo by senior Gabriella Hamm.

The Director's Select Chorus also performed a triad of a cappella pieces, including "Follow That Star" (which featured solos by juniors Sean Lacko and Jasmine Torres), "The Alleluia Madrigal," and "O Magnum Mysterium." The entire vocal ensemble finished out the act with a rousing rendition of "Do You Hear What I Hear?", an annual tradition for the choir. They were accompanied by several alumni of the music department, who are invited to join the final number every year.

After a brief intermission, audience members returned for the instrumental portion of the concert. Act 2 opened with the jazz band's performance of "All I Want for Christmas Is You." They then performed "Nutcracker Swing," a medley of tunes from the beloved Christmas ballet, featuring solos by seniors Mason Farrell on mellophone and Victoria McLean on baritone. The jazz band concluded their set with "I'll Be Home for Christmas," which included solos by junior Madeline Rogala on violin and senior Sierra Smith on trumpet.

The concert choir then took the stage. They began with "A Festive Fanfare," a medley of classic Christmas carols. Next, they performed "Christmas Time Is Here," the iconic track from *A Charlie Brown Christmas*. Senior Abigail Bera provided a beautifully enchanting interlude to the band segment with her solo vocal performance of "O Holy Night." The grand finale of the concert was the full band's performance of "Sleigh Ride," which they perform as an annual tradition.

The driving force behind the concert is Mr. Joseph Cullinan, the di-



THE HORN SECTION PERFORMS THE ORIGINAL VERSION OF "SLEIGH RIDE"

(ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF STA PUBLICATIONS)

rector of the music department. The Satoma interviewed him to discuss the details of the production. He said, "It was the most well-attended Christmas concert that we've ever had, and I'm excited for what that means for the program in the future." He encourages all students to get involved in music for the new semester, regardless of age or experience. "There's still time for everyone, no matter what year you are at the school, to discover your voice

and discover your sound. This is an excellent opportunity to get together with like-minded people and make a joyful noise."

Following the success of the Christmas concert, the choirs and bands are already hard at work in putting together this year's upcoming spring concert. The hard work done by the choirs and bands is a must seen performance, so bring your family and friends to watch the upcoming Spring Concert!

# Junior 'shines' in lighting design



EMILY SMIETANA DILIGENTLY WORKS ON THE CUES FOR THE UPCOMING SHOW IN THE LIGHTING BOOTH OF THE LITTLE THEATER.

BY: ELIZABETH BERA

When students and families come to see a show, they always see how hard the actors work to put together show-stopping scenes, dances, and musical numbers. Behind the scenes, though, junior Emily Smietana is hard at work writing cues in the booth, designing lights, and contributing to the overall visual aspect of the productions in the Little Theatre.

Smietana has designed, worked on, and operated lights for seven shows. These shows include: The

2019 *Spookerama*, *Something Rotten*, *Julius Caesar*, *Peter and the Starcatcher*, *SpongeBob*, *Don't Say Macbeth* and *Little Shop of Horrors*.

Prior to high school, she didn't have any experience with lighting, but she did have theater experience. As an audience member, it would be difficult to tell, thanks to her amazing mentor, English teacher Amy Kate Byrne. In an interview with Smietana, she listed the most important skills for a lighting designer to have. Smietana said, "I feel like it is

important for one to be very calm when you are doing something like this, even though for me it is hard to do. For *SpongeBob*, I had more than 700 cues, and since it was my first musical as lighting manager, it was very difficult for me to handle all those cues at first without stressing out about it. Once I got more comfortable with it, it became less stressful and 100 times more fun. I know I keep saying it's stressful, but it is the best thing I have ever done. This has become one of my passions in life and it has given me a way to get involved in theater without having to be on stage."

Designing lighting cues is not an easy task, "It is a very interesting process. A couple of weeks before the tech process officially begins, Ms. Byrne and I start focusing and hanging lights to our show's needs. When actually writing cues, it can become very stressful. Sometimes it is easier than others and goes very smoothly, but others are pretty difficult when trying to keep everyone

lit. Writing a cue is a process of trial and error, to see what works and what doesn't. Overall, writing cues is a very fun process which we can get a few laughs out of," described Smietana. She says that the most important aspects of lighting design are knowing where all the lights are, where they are focused, what color they are and having patience.

Her hard work does not go unnoticed, especially when those actors hit the stage and are perfectly lit. "I think *Peter and the Starcatcher* was my favorite show to do," exclaimed Smietana. This vivid, imaginative show presented last year combined a series of visual effects and special lighting to make it come alive.

Even though the fall season is over, Smietana's job is not complete just yet. Right now, she waits in the wings to begin the lighting design process for the spring musical, *Legally Blonde!* Smietana is a great example of what time, passion, and effort look like when it comes to lighting design.



# Sports Spotlight

**Name:** Alexandra Sardis

**Nickname(s):** Alex

**Grade:** 12

**Sport:** Bowling

**Position On Team:**

Captain

**Favorite Athletic Memory:** Coaching the girls and spending quality time with them

**Favorite Christmas Movie:** *Rudolph The Red Nose Reindeer*, The 1964 one



**Name:** Julianna Van Ness

**Nickname(s):** J,

Jules, Juli

**Grade:** 12

**Sport:** Wrestling

**Position On Team:** Wrestler

**Favorite Athletic Memory:** Advancing to states sophomore year



**Name:** Sierra Smith

**Nickname(s):** Sierra

**Grade:** 12

**Sport:** Swim

**Position On Team:**

Flyer

**Favorite Athletic Memory:** Second place at GMA's last year

**Favorite Christmas Movie/Song:** *All I Want for Christmas is You*



**Name:** Sherief Guinyard

**Nickname(s):** Rief

**Grade:** 12

**Sport:** Basketball

**Position On Team:** Forward

**Favorite Athletic Memory:** When we stormed off the court after winning GMC's



**Name:** Landon Kearns

**Grade:** 12

**Sport:** Wrestling

**Position On Team:**

150 weight class

**Favorite Athletic Memory:** Wrestling in the State Tournament in Atlantic City

**Favorite Christmas Movie:** *Home Alone 2*



**Name:** Alyssa Ingram

**Grade:** 12

**Sport:** Bowling

**Favorite Athletic**

**Memory:** Winning

the State Sectional last season

**Favorite Christmas Song:** *Last Christmas*, by Wham



**Name:** Chris Santner

**Nickname(s):** Big

Country

**Grade:** 12

**Sport:** Basketball

**Position On Team:** Center

**Favorite Athletic Memory:** Winning back to back MVP in a charity tournament with my friends

**Favorite Christmas Movie:** *Elf*



**Name:** Kamal Lee

**Nickname(s):** Slim

**Grade:** 12

**Sport:** Basketball

**Position:** Point Guard

**Favorite Athletic Memory:** Our big win last year against Gill St. Bernards

**Favorite Christmas Movie:** *Prep and Landing*



## Pin it to win it

BY: CATIE FROST

The girls and boys wrestling season has been exciting for all of the very dedicated wrestlers on the team. With all of their hard work, the teams have had a very successful start to the season. The boys wrestling coaches are Nick Tonzola, Vincent Gioffre, Jason Kearns and Gabriel Roman, with captains Landon Kearns, Beniamino DiCocco, and Vincent Gioffre. The girls wrestling program is coached by Jason Kearns, with Apryl Coffman as captain. With only a couple of matches so far, both teams have already proven what they are capable of. The boys team took home a huge win on December 16th against Middlesex high school, with the final score of 57-15. On December 17th, the boys team competed in the Ricky I Invitational, and finished 2nd place overall. Landon Kearns (wt 150) and Steven Cohan (wt 215) both came in first place for their weight class. The girls took a trip down to Jackson Liberty High School, to compete in the Queen of the East tournament.

Overall the team took 5th place earning 89 points in total. Three of the girls were on the podium as well: Senior Apryl Coffman (wt 185) came in second place for her weight class, and sophomores Sanyah Queen (wt 145) and MaKayla Decker (wt 152) both came in second place for their weight class. The boys program is also looking to win their fifth consecutive division title this year. Junior Beniamino DiCocco says “I’m really excited for this season and to hopefully win five-peat division titles.”



KIERA GUEVARA HOLDS OFF HER OPPONENT AS SHE SURVEYS HER NEXT MOVE.

## Crossing the finish line

BY: BRIANNA ROMERO

This year, the winter track team consists of mostly cross country runners, as well as those who participate in field events. Having lost seven seniors, the team is rebuilding itself, using the underclassmen to further invigorate the team. The team is led by Coach Miller and Coach Hush. Although there are very few meets, most of the runners agree that it is more about preparing for the spring season.

The returning seniors are Isabella Danner, Neal Choksi, and Alex Cozzuzza. The runners practice on and off the field, bracing themselves for GMC’s and invitationals. Cozzuzza, despite getting injured halfway through the season, managed to have a healthy recovery and a strong comeback. He ran a personal record of a 4:50 for the 1600 meters, and a 2:11 for the 800 meters. Sophomore Gabriella Politi says “I do winter track to stay consistent for the spring season coming up. I hope that my consistency with practice

helps keep other people consistent as well.” Politi, who lettered her freshman year, placed eighth in the state of New Jersey in the shot-put category. Danner, who was out for half of the cross country season due to an injury, has a very enthusiastic outlook concerning the team. She looks forward to improving more as the season progresses.

*“I’m sad that it’s my last season but I’m ready to get out there and prove myself. Track is filled with its ups and downs, but the best part is being able to enjoy it with my best friends.”*

*—Isabella Danner*

## Dribble, shoot, win!

BY: NICOLE CASAS

The girls basketball team has started their season off strong. They are currently 15th in the state. Led by Coach Joe Whalen and captains Nia Clemons and Amarilis Shubick, the team won their first five games, giving them a current standing of 5-2. The girls competed at the Viking Classic in Delaware. Here, they beat the number five team in Pennsylvania and lost to the number one team by 3 points in the final. They took an unfortunate loss to the 10th in the state, Ewing, at the Schoolcraft North South Girls Basketball Showcase in Belleville, New Jersey. However, sophomore Leah Crosby led with 13 points and 12 rebounds, while senior Jessica Cooper had 10 points and 10 rebounds.

The team continues to grow with new, talented players. They have welcomed four new members: sophomore Sabrina Desio and freshmen Vanessa Ascione, Jordan Barnes, and Reese Sebok. The team consists of two seniors, one junior, four sophomores, and three freshmen. For the



SENIOR JESSICA COOPER GUARDS HER OPPONENT.

(ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF STA PUBLICATIONS)

past three years, the girls basketball team has won the GMC championship, and they plan on continuing that streak this season.

## Eat, sleep, cheer, repeat

BY: ASHLEY WALL

This winter season, the cheerleading team is ready for a successful season. The cheerleaders can be found on the court, cheering the boys and girls basketball teams to victory with their school pride and pep. Besides performing at basketball games and pep rallies, the winter cheer team is preparing to take the mat with smiles and energy at their first competition on January 29th. The team has been working extremely hard during practices to perfect stunts, tumbling, and other skills, for an exciting and clean routine. The girls will be competing at multiple competitions, and hope to be successful at states. Coaches Tiffany Vandenburg and Julia Fedor help both the sideline and competitive teams by leading, supporting, and challenging them. Senior captain, Lauren Mullen, shares her feelings about the upcoming season. “The energy in the stands at basketball games is always amazing! Winter is prime time for us, as it’s when we start our own competition

season. I am so proud of all the hard work the team has put in so far, and I’m looking forward to an amazing season!” Mullen also expresses her excitement for the team’s performances. “This year things look a little different, because we are doing a game day style routine. The routine is super fun and high energy, with a focus on clean execution of classic motions and stunting.” Alongside Lauren Mullen, her fellow sideline senior cheerleaders include Shealyn Yorke and Alison Devitt. Although facing challenges, the team has only become stronger and more determined to be on top.



THE CHEERLEADERS PROVIDE SUPPORT FROM THE BLEACHERS



# Trojans strike again Shooting to the top

BY: ABIGAIL BERA

The boys and girls bowling teams are tearing up the lanes this season. Under the coaching of Richard Maddock and Chris Wilton, both teams have worked really hard over the past several weeks to do their best during every match.

The boys are led by seniors Miguel Rodriguez and Patrick Regis. Both have been on the team since their freshman year, and are excited to round out their bowling careers during their senior year. When asked about his biggest goal this year, Rodriguez said, "For the remainder of the season, I hope to continue pursuing a more consistent average and push higher scores to close out the season."

Rodriguez is one of the team's best bowlers, having earned himself a spot on the GMC All Blue Division Team last season.

The girls are led by seniors Alex Sardis, Nika Kudirka, and Alyssa Ingram. They started their season off with a 4-0 victory over JFK, and have won every match since. Some stand out performances from the girls include Ingram's career best

215 game, and junior Victoria Aldridge's impressive 547 series.

Matches continue throughout the months of January.



MIGUEL RODRIGUEZ APPROACHES THE FOUL LINE AS HE PREPARES TO THROW THE BALL DOWN THE LANE.

BY: WILLIAM OWENS

The boys varsity basketball team has so far created an astonishing 7-0 record. They stand at the top of the Red Division and at the top of the Greater Middlesex Conference. Freshman Jebron Harris, sophomore Craig Belfield, juniors Davon Grant, Michael Jones, Jaden Kelly, and Samir Thomas, and seniors Jayden Defense, Sherief Guinyard, Kamal Lee, Jalen Pichardo, Terrell Pitts, and Chris Santner continue to impress and progress throughout the season. Currently, the biggest win has been against Old Bridge High School in a 83-41 blowout. During the game, Terrell Pitts (G/F) dropped 18 points, Michael Jones (G) had 11 assists, Kamal Lee had 7 steals, and Jalen Pichardo (F) had 8 rebounds. In terms of team leaders in individual stats, Michael Jones is leading the team in a total of 102 points, 30 steals, and 60 assists. Jalen Pichardo is leading the team in rebounds with a total of 65, while Chris Santner has 10 blocks.

These diligent players put in maximal effort in order to produce wins



JADEN KELLY LOOKS AROUND THE COURT CONTEMPLATING HIS NEXT MOVE.

and create success with the help of Coach Robert Turco, who has a plethora of experience in coaching the sport and serving as a leader for players to look up to. Aside from Coach Turco, the players owe it to individuals on the side lines such as assistant coaches, the rehabilitation team, the athletics department, and of course, the student section. The dedicated fans attend each of the games and fill the players with adrenaline. They bring electricity to the court both at home and away games.

# Taking a deep dive into the season

BY: MADISON BREW

The swim team is coached by Amanda Cleveland-Miller, who gathers the girls for three morning practices a week. Captains Natalie Neno (junior), Sierra Smith (senior), and Maria Arias (senior) have so far led the girls through a successful season. Within the team are freshmen Emma Figueiredo, Leahana Ortiz, Raquel Diaz, and Samantha Villacis, sophomores Kaitlin Hall, Hailey Zeszotarski, Kamerin Collado, Madison Brew, and Selena Catanzano, juniors Alexandria Rivera, Caithlyn Caballero and Natalie Neno, and seniors Maria Arias, Amaris Guevara, and Sierra Smith.

Following a previous successful season, the girls are back and ready to win GMC's this year. The team's strong bond allows them to support each other during events and throughout the ups and downs of the season. Captain Natalie Neno says "We all are very close and have a family bond. Our goal is to do our

best at every meet and have fun; and to go into GMC's not only ready to win but to have a good attitude." She

*"Our goal is to do our best at every meet and have fun, and to go into GMC's not only ready to win but to have a good attitude."*

*~Sierra Smith*

hopes for a positive and fun year.

Mrs. Miller speaks about her plans to score the most points and push the girls to their best. She says "The team has been working hard in the early morning hours to ready themselves for the tough season ahead in the new realigned GMC red division." She agrees that the team has a strong

returning line up led by event specialists Natalie Neno, Sierra Smith, Kaitlin Hall, and Hailey Zeszotarski. Adding to their strength is Samantha Villacis who has already qualified to NJSIAA Meet of Champions.

On December 21st the girls swam against South Brunswick, in an unfortunate 93-77 loss. Although losing the first meet of the season, the girls are still very positive and are coming back stronger than ever. Captain Maria Arias reports that "we

have to stay positive and just keep swimming." They are putting in work to overcome their loss and be first in the Red Division.

To assure this, the team carries on their superstition of carrying a stuffed dinosaur as their good luck charm. The dinosaur was with them for last season's GMC meet where the girls took second place. The stuffed animal as well as the support they give each other will help them have a successful season.



NATALIE NENO CHARGES DOWN THE LANE DOING HER BUTTERFLY STROKE.

(ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF STA PUBLICATIONS)

## It's never too late to get involved!

### Creative Writing Club

Collaborate with your peers to develop your writing and story-telling skills!



Contact: mryan23@stahs.net

### African American Heritage Club

Explore and celebrate the achievements and culture of African Americans!



Contact: mcowherd24@stahs.net

### Charity Ornament Club



Make and sell ornaments for charity (Great opportunity for service hours!)

Contact: ssmith23@stahs.net

### MATHLETES



Train your brain, get homework help, learn, and have fun!

Contact: rbasu23@stahs.net

### DANCE CLUB

An open environment for anyone who loves to dance-- regardless of experience!



Contact: fdanner24@stahs.net

### Italian Club

Discover Italian food, games, music, culture, and more!



Contact: mgiannotto24@stahs.net

### Model U.N.

Learn about world politics, meet like-minded people, and debate current events!



Contact: rbasu23@stahs.net

### Future Medical Leaders Club



Students interested in the medical field can deepen their understanding through activities and lessons!

Contact: svempati24@stahs.net