

# A LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



They say that time flies, and I wholeheartedly believe that expression is true. I'm not exaggerating (well, okay, maybe a little) when I say it feels like it was just yesterday that I was a 12-year-old girl wondering if high school would be like "High School Musical" and "Glee." While I was a little off in my anticipations, high school still managed to be an enjoyable experience for me, even if we weren't breaking out into song every 5 minutes or dancing on top of lunch tables.

Being a student at STA taught me many life lessons I'll always carry with me. It kickstarted the transition from 'kid fresh out of middle school' to 'college-bound adult,' and I was able to meet some of the most amazing people. Of course, like everything else in life, the ride wasn't without its bumps in the road. There are many things I wish I could redo, but I've realized that the struggles I faced throughout my high school journey have only helped further my development as a person.

During my first year at STA, I dabbled in a few clubs, such as Photography and Film, but dropped them later. I even thought about writing for the SATOMA, for I always had a fondness for writing, but I never got around to it. I also helped a friend with a MakerFaire project and quickly realized that I had no talent whatsoever in the STEM Field. I went to see the drama club productions and even thought about possibly playing a part in one of the shows, but I was

far too shy to audition (the shower is where I truly shine). Other than that, I didn't fully devote myself to these extra-curricular activities, despite Sister Donna constantly stressing the point of getting involved.

Then my sophomore year rolled around, and I made plans to get myself more involved in the STA community and improve my dire work ethic. I racked up the confidence and motivation to write several articles for the SATOMA, which only furthered my love for writing, and I helped out at the Makerfaire again despite not having any STEM-related skills.

Then, on March 13, 2020, the school delivered an announcement that would change my (and the rest of my classmates') school experience for the rest of my time at STA. We would be going virtual until further notice due to the rise of a little something called COVID-19.

It would be impossible for me to talk about my high school career without mentioning it. The pandemic shook everything up: we were all at home and on our computers, completing assignments and tests virtually and attending classes held on Google Meet and Zoom. Instead of seeing my teachers and classmates around me, I saw them in tiny windows on a screen. I did, however, appreciate waking up later and not needing to worry about catching the bus. As summer set in, I pondered whether we'd be back in person next September.

In Junior year, I found myself joining the SATOMA crew. I didn't have any electives under my belt yet, so I looked at the list of the ones available, and I immediately went for the SATOMA. I loved writing,

and I enjoyed writing articles in the past, so I knew I'd have fun working on the paper! And guess what? I did indeed, dear reader! I got to assemble article lists, work alongside two great seniors, get accustomed to Adobe Indesign, (which I admittedly struggled with at first), and meet Ms. Byrne. I also joined Choir and had a blast singing songs and putting on concerts with the rest of the group. We fluctuated between being in person and being virtual, but I spent half of the year remote, which I regret in hindsight.

And now here we are in Senior year. I became the editor-in-chief of the Satoma, and I couldn't be happier. I had two great people in the form of Tamia Burton and Abby Bera to help format the pages as well as write articles, so kudos to them for lightening the workload! I would also like to thank all of the other students who contributed pieces to the paper. If it weren't for you, the SATOMA wouldn't exist, so know that I truly am grateful that you all decided to write for us.

Before I end this letter, I'd like to share some parting advice. Most of you have likely heard this already, but I feel it's crucial to reiterate it. If you're an underclassman, make sure you get involved! Believe me when I say there's an activity out there for you, be it playing sports or performing up on stage. It took a while for me to get involved, and I'm still kicking myself for not doing it sooner. Not only will you be able to do something you love, but you'll also make lots of friends that'll help make the high school ride smoother. If I had gotten involved sooner, I would've gotten to know the rest of my classmates better, and

there's a good chance it would've helped me overcome my shyness. Also, make sure you keep on top of your schoolwork! Of course, you shouldn't overwork yourself, but you shouldn't fool around 24/7 either; it's all about finding that happy medium. Join a club! Go see a football game! Watch one of the plays! I don't think I'll ever get over my lack of involvement - I only ever dipped my feet into the sea of STA. Don't do that! Dive deep!

To my fellow seniors: know that no matter where you go, whether it's a university, community college, trade school, or wherever else, it is what you make of it. Each individual has their own path in life, so don't worry about what others are doing: just focus on yourself. Life is too short to live someone else's plans. I appreciated spending the last four years with you guys, even if I didn't get to know most of you very well and I hope that all of you enjoy whatever it is that you're doing after high school.

Although my high school experience was unconventional, I appreciate my time here at STA. While it may have been rough at times, and there were things I could've done much better, I wouldn't have gone to any other school. I now know how to manage my time better, how to cut down on my procrastination, and the importance of getting involved. Farewell, STA. Thanks for dealing with my shy, adolescent self. Now if you'll excuse me, I have to go and get some tissues to dab the tears that are currently welling up in my eyes.

- Samantha Christine

Editor-in-chief

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# Valedictorian looks to a pre-law/pre-med track



Vora has accumulated a GPA of 4.873 at the end of her senior year.

Vora's favorite subject has been history. She stated, "I've really enjoyed all my history classes here, particularly Western Civilization and AP U.S. History with Mr. Nolan." History is an important subject to her because she feels that the study of it "is the best window we have into the everyday lives of people just like us who happened to be born in earlier time periods."

As she ends her journey at STA, Vora would like to thank Mr. Nolan, Mrs. D'Addio, and Mr. Cullinan for the impacts they have made on her life. Through their respective concentrations on history, chemistry, and music, the teachers' passions for their classes have left a lasting impact on Vora.

As Vora moves to higher education, she considers pursuing Economics or Biology of Global Health as she attends Georgetown University. She enjoys the combination

of STEM and humanities, so she hopes to cater her majors towards that. As she states, "...I hope to fuse the two in college, ideally on a pre-law or pre-medical track."

Vora has a background of fine arts as she has been a part of the Concert Choir and Band, Select Chorus, Jazz Band, and Marching Trojans. She is the vice president of the Future Lawyers Club and co-president of the Model UN Club. In addition, she enjoys being a Student Ambassador, writing for the Satoma, and being an Honors Buddy to underclassmen!

Outside of STA, Vora participates in Indianica Academy Dance Studio in Iselin, New Jersey. She received her diploma in 2020 because she has been participating in kathak, an Indian classical dance, for almost ten years. Vora now assists as a choreographer and assistant teacher to prepare dances for annual shows. She said, "Dance has taken me far outside of my comfort zone and

made me a much more expressive person..." In addition to dance, Vora performed with Opera GoLightly, a light opera singing group. She has also served as the Secretary of Congressman Frank Pallone's Youth Advisory Council for the second half of her high school years.

STA has changed Vora's perspective on life. She feels that she is "much better equipped now to deal with setbacks, rejections, and failures, simply due to experience." She feels that the challenging circumstances she experienced at STA made her who she is today. She stated that "things we lose have a way of coming back to us in the end." However, "if not always in the ways we expect," as per Harry Potter.

Vora really values the people she has met at STA. As she stated verbatim: "I am always in awe of how talented, dedicated, and passionate Trojans are about what they choose to do, whatever that may be."

## VALEDICTORIAN SHIVALI VORA

BY: RAJASVI PATEL

Senior Shivali Vora has been a high achiever in terms of academic performance. Vora is a member of six Honors Societies, a member of the Honors Program, a National Merit Finalist, scholarship recipient, AP Scholar with Honors, and received the Middlesex County Secondary Principals' Association Outstanding Student Award.

# Salutatorian seeks career in biology

BY: OLIVIA RIVERA

Vera McCoy, is the Salutatorian for the Class of 2022. As surprised and overjoyed as she was to be honored with this title, it was well deserved. Vera has excelled in all academic areas, maintaining a 4.7473 GPA. Whether it is helping a classmate understand a chemistry problem or teaching someone how to use the miter saw, she goes above and beyond to help those around her without expectation of reciprocation.

Throughout her high school career, Vera has dabbled in a number of extracurricular activities that have honed her career path skills and led her to where she is now. She is a member of five National Honors Societies: the National Honors Society, Math, Science, Latin, and Social Studies. In addition, she has also won awards including but not limited to the Rensselaer

Medal Award, the Society of Women Engineers Certificate of Merit, and the Principal's List for Academic Excellence.

Vera can almost always be found in the Maker Space creating projects and passing down her knowledge as STEM Club president to other members. She plans on attending the Massachusetts Institute of Technology this fall as a course 7 biology major. When asked about her proudest moment in high school, she said that it was when she went fishing for her freshman year biology class using a net that she made out of door mesh and pvc pipes. She always knew that she liked biology and the success of this project reaffirmed her interests and gave her the confidence to actively pursue it for the next four years.

Besides school related activities, Vera spends her time blacksmithing, coaching track at St. Francis Cath-

edral School, learning German and Japanese, and studying to get a commercial drone license. Her schedule is quite busy and when asked what advice she has for underclassmen, she kept it simple: "Don't stay attached to specific goals. Just because you thought you should or would do something doesn't mean that has to be the thing you do. You know yourself better now than you did at the start of freshman year. Trust your current self." Her freshman year of high school, Vera ran cross country and track and also danced in her free time. She no longer participates in those activities and she is incredibly happy with where she is in life right now because at the end of the day, "it's not a failure to switch horses."

In terms of future goals and aspirations, she looks forward to getting involved with the makerspaces at MIT



## SALUTATORIAN VERA MCCOY

and delving deeper into the world of biology.

From teachers who made her question life like Doc to friends made at lunch, she has had some amazing memories at STA that she will cherish forever. Vera leaves a legacy of inspiration for all those she has met during her time here and there is no doubt she will make even bigger steps at MIT this fall.

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# Monitoring misinformation - a must

In recent years, major technology firms such as Google, Twitter, and Facebook, whose services play integral roles in our lives, have come under fire for allegedly censoring free speech.

A study conducted by Gamblers Pick found that 60% of respondents believed that posts encouraging or inciting violence should be censored, while 59% felt the same about posts spreading misinformation. While Americans have conflicting views on this issue, many people oppose censorship in general but agree that it is sometimes the best course of action.

One thing is for certain: the First Amendment argument in opposition to censorship is invalid because the Amendment only protects individual rights from encroachments by the government, not by private entities like Facebook and Twitter. They have the right to shape the platforms that they own and to decide what can or cannot be displayed on them.

So no, it is not illegal for Twitter to delete Tweets

it judges to violate its terms and conditions--but does that make it right? Is it morally appropriate for a small group of powerhouse platforms, which have gained somewhat of a monopoly in the public sphere, to selectively silence voices?

There is no one-size-fits-all answer, but in some cases, censorship is undeniably necessary. For all its benefits, today's high-speed Internet allows misinformation and incendiary messages to spread like wildfire, and once it happens, it is very hard to stop. Thus, it can be argued that it is the moral responsibility of social media companies to monitor what happens on their platforms and ensure that they do not become breeding grounds for violence.

Opponents of censorship, claim that technology companies are exploiting their power to push their "Silicon Valley ideology," and that censorship is politically motivated. This argument also falls short, considering that the media today is chock-full of non-neutral organizations,

from newspapers to television channels, that promote--or at least side with--a certain political ideology. When it comes to social media companies, however, the question becomes a little more thorny. James R. Bailey, a professor at George Washington University, explains: "Newspapers can decide to publish something or not. But that's where social media gets hung up because they're not creating their content...and they're in this unfortunate position of having to police other people's content."

The solution to this, as recommended by the American Civil Liberties Union, is for each major company to maintain a transparent set of ground rules for what is and is not acceptable on their platform, and to then abide strictly by these rules.

So while the media should try to maximize the diversity of opinion that can flourish on its platforms, it should also err on the side of caution, because words are often not just words--they can lead to very real consequences.

# Education rather than censorship

The invention and subsequent widespread adoption of the Internet as the world's primary source of information have made acquiring knowledge easier than ever before. Unfortunately, not all online sources are accurate or truthful. In particular, social media services, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok, make it all too easy for someone to spread rumors, conspiracy theories, or blatant lies among their followers, and for others in turn to pass them further along.

Misinformation (along with its more insidious cousin disinformation) on the Internet is a serious problem that affects the lives of many vulnerable people today but censorship is not a viable solution. Instead, trusted authorities and members of the general population should combat misinformation by being proactive

in debunking any false information, spreading the facts, and educating others on how to recognize and fight misinformation.

While those who feel that censoring misinformation is helpful have good intentions, the fundamental problem is that it is akin to telling one's opponent in a debate to shut up rather than actually addressing their stated points. Banning certain accounts or preventing certain websites from appearing in search results to stop misinformation does no good and usually makes a bad situation worse, as those targeted can claim that they were "silenced for speaking the truth," which strengthens their general appeal and radicalizes those who support them. The terrible optics also alienate would-be sympathizers who do not believe the misinformation but are none-

theless put off by the dangerous precedent it sets.

Even if it is done responsibly and in good faith, entrusting any person or group with the power to censor what people post online is not the solution. No matter how hard they try, they will never be able to stop everyone from spreading misinformation or being exposed to misinformation. An educated populace can nullify its negative effects faster and better than the best automated sensors on the planet.

Regrettably, many websites have chosen to censor misinformation despite the aforementioned serious problems with doing so. However, we cannot afford to become complacent because of such ill-conceived measures, but rather must each take an active role in rooting misinformation out, both online and offline.



## POWDERPUFF A SUCCESS



PAIGE TIDABECK ZEROES IN ON THE BALL AS SHE RUNS DOWN THE FIELD, DODGING THE JUNIORS CHASING AFTER HER.

(ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF STA PUBLICATIONS)

BY: ELIZABETH BERA

On Wednesday, April 27th, the junior and senior girls geared up for an intense game of football, at the PowderPuff Football Game.

The students who signed up to participate wore their team shirts:

juniors—blue, and seniors—pink, to compete for the winning title, but it wasn't that easy. The participants met up for practice before they put their hearts out on the field on game day. They spent time learning how to play, and perfecting their skills.

"My favorite part was definitely the practice before where we learned the plays because we were all able to hang out and get to know each other," said Grace Farrell, who played on the junior team.

*"My favorite part was definitely the practice before, where we learned the plays, because we were all able to hang out and get to know each other."*

- Grace Farrell

But for other players, their favorite part of the whole experience came during the game, like senior Erin Ptack, "My favorite part of powderpuff was catching the football. I did fall directly after, but it was such an accomplishment.

The hardest part was definitely the weather. It was freezing cold, so standing in that was very difficult." Erin was not lying when she said it was cold!

Despite the weather, the juniors and seniors gave it their all. It was a fun day of bonding, competing, and hanging out with friends. The sidelines were full of energy and support, with some of the junior and senior boys cheering on their classmates as the cheerleaders. The boys also practiced for the event, rehearsing cheers and even learning stunts to perform for the crowd on the day of the game. The crowd cheered in excitement as the game came to an end, wondering who would be the winners of the PowderPuff Football Game.

It was a close game but it ended with a victorious win for the juniors! Even though the seniors didn't come out on top, they had a great time playing on the field.

People who attended and participated are excited to see what happens next year when the new junior and senior classes go head-to-head for the title once again!

## Catholic Schools Week

BY: ALEXANDRA SARDIS

Normally Catholic Schools Week is held in January, however, due to the pandemic, Catholic Schools Week was instead held in the second week of April.

On Wednesday, April 6th, a Mass was held to celebrate a season of hope and grace. The Mass featured a beautiful selection of songs from the choir and a very impactful and well organized liturgy. This was a wonderful way to kick off Catholic Schools Week.

The following day, April 7th, was

a fun filled school event, teacher swap! Teacher swap encouraged seniors to take a hands-on approach to daily life at school. Seniors could choose any of their favorite teachers, administrators, counselors, or coaches and dress up and shadow them for the day. Many of these seniors taught the class and then included an interesting game to get the class to participate.

The final event of the week was Battle of the Classes on Friday, April 8th. Each class was assigned a color to show spirit for each year.



LEFT: THE JUNIOR BOYS GRIT THEIR TEETH DURING AN INTENSE ROUND OF TUG-OF-WAR



RIGHT: THE SENIOR GIRLS TUG AGAINST THE TEAM OF JUNIORS



LEFT: MORGAN BRENNAN AND KYLIE LUCAS SHADOW MR. MCCARTHY AND SR. CYNDI DURING TEACHER SWAP DAY.

RIGHT: FRESHMEN AND SOPHOMORES COMPETE IN MINUTE-TO-WIN-IT



The freshmen wore yellow, sophomores were in red, juniors were in green, and the seniors were in blue. Many students showed up in spirit wear and complemented their outfits with accessories and face paint and coordinated with their friend groups. The freshman and sophomores competed against each other while the upperclassmen played separately from them to make it a fair day.

In the main gym students participated in volleyball, basketball, speedball, and tug of war. In the the-

ater students played several rounds of Minute to Win It. A break in the cafeteria gave everyone a well deserved treat and refreshments, as well as a good opportunity to socialize with friends. Lastly, crossfire was set up in the Catanzaro gym, which was an intense match.

In the end, after all the points were tallied from the various events, the junior class emerged victorious followed by the sophomores, then the seniors, then the freshmen.

The week was a great way to celebrate together as a community.

# Bidding a fond farewell

**"We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future."**

**-Franklin D. Roosevelt**

BY: DIANE YEO &  
MORGAN RYAN

History builds the pillars of the future. As we turn the pages to a new chapter, it is inevitable that we must say farewell to those who have come to the bittersweet ending of their careers. The words they say before waving goodbye tend to be the most impactful. However, some are able to create strong, lasting impressions, from the moment they enter our lives until we have to say goodbye.

This year, our community must say goodbye to Sister Donna and Sister Cyndi, who are retiring after decades of service to our school. Sister Donna came to STA in 1970 as a math teacher and was the principal from 1982 to 2020, and the president in 2021 and 2022. Sister Cyndi came to the school in 1977 and is currently the head of Campus Ministry and the founder and coordinator of the Ahr/Aquinas Star program. As representatives of the Felician Sisters, they have both done many great things for the school and the community, from helping us navigate the difficult times of COVID-19 to leading the Christian Social Action Club.

They have been with the school for nearly its entire history, standing by the com-



SR. DONNA AND SR. CYNDI HAVE LEFT AN INDELIBLE MEMORY IN THE HEARTS OF EVERYONE WHO HAS COME THROUGH THE DOORS OF BGA/STA.

(ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF STA PUBLICATIONS)

munity through tragedy and triumph. Their influence is seen and appreciated every day by the school's many teams, clubs, and organizations. They can be found cheering on our sports teams at pep rallies and important games, or supporting the fine arts at drama productions and music concerts. They have also served as role models for students, demonstrating wisdom and kindness that we all strive for. The hallowed halls of STA will feel quite empty without Sister Donna zoom-

ing around on her scooter or Sister Cyndi calling students to room 106A on the loudspeaker.

In our school's five decades of history, Sister Donna and Sister Cyndi have remained a constant force, caring for the school and its students, faculty, and families. Together, they have provided a place of trust and strength and exercised admirable qualities of leadership. They have led a talented team of faculty and helped educate a strong network of students and faith-

ful alumni. Leaders are those who are attentive, flexible, and open-minded to those whom they lead. Both Sisters have led by example, living out their values every single day. Both are the highest models of modesty and charity. Above all, they work hard to spread the great message of God to our school. They have led us through the great journey of self-discovery and created for us a community that will never be broken and memories that will never be forgotten.

***"Who can say if I've been changed for the better but, because I knew you, I have been changed for good."***

***- Stephen Schwartz from "Wicked"***



# Highly anticipated award show returns



**BROADWAY PERFORMERS BEN PLATT, RACHEL ZEGLER, CYNTHIA ERIVO, LESLIE ODOM JR. PAY TRIBUTE TO STEPHEN SONDHEIM**

BY: LISA MOHABEER

The 64th Annual Grammy Awards ceremony, with returning host Trevor Noah, occurred on April 3, 2022. This was supposed to be the year the Grammy Awards went back to normal. In 2021, the pandemic delayed

the ceremony by six weeks and left organizers no choice but to put on a simple outdoor show with no audience. This year, after another delay caused by the Omicron variant, the 64th Annual Grammys were held in Las Vegas for the first time at the MGM Grand Garden Arena.

As the only peer-recognized music award, the Grammy is the music industry's highest honor. Of the 86 awards, all but a select few were presented at the premiere ceremony before the telecast. Two brand-new categories were introduced: Best Global Music Performance and Best Música Urbana Album. Best Global Music Performance was won by Arooj Aftab for her song "Mohabbat." Best Música Urbana Album was originally combined with the award of Best Latin Pop Album (as previously titled Best Latin Pop or Urban Album), but has now become its own Urban Album category. Best Música Urbana Album went to El Último Tour del Mundo by Bad Bunny, who now has two Grammys in a row for the same category.

The Grammys ceremony once again had an arena audience and full-scale performances by stars like Justin Bieber, BTS, Lady Gaga, Olivia Rodrigo, Silk Sonic, J Balvin, Lil Nas X with Jack Harlow, Bil-

lie Eilish, and many more. Many complications arose regarding the Grammys; Kanye West was banned from performing because of "unsettling online behavior," but he was still able to win two awards. The show remembered Taylor Hawkins, the drummer for the Foo Fighters, who was scheduled to perform at the ceremony but unfortunately passed away only a week beforehand. Artists also paid tribute to late composer Stephen Sondheim who passed away in November of 2021.

After many well-deserved awards and unforgettable performances, such as the creative heist-themed performance by BTS, the night ended with the most Grammys awarded to Jon Batiste, who won five awards, followed by Silk Sonic with four, and Olivia Rodrigo, who took home her first three Grammys all in one night. The ceremony was packed with entertainment and music lovers cannot wait for next year's Grammy Awards.

# Whisked back to the wizarding world

BY: SAHIB SINGH

On April 15, 2022, *Fantastic Beasts: The Secrets of Dumbledore* the third installment within the *Fantastic Beasts* series, was released in theaters. The series prequels the beloved *Harry Potter* franchise, written by J.K. Rowling.

This third installment delves deeper into the plot point of Grindelwald and Dumbledore. Albus Dumbledore realizes that his old companion, Gellert Grindelwald, is advancing in his grand evil scheme. He wants to be able to take over the wizarding world and do everything within his ability to remove the Muggles (the non-magical humans) from power. Dumbledore cannot stop Grindelwald alone, so he enlists the help of his old student, Newt Schemander, to lead a team to help combat this evil wizard. They soon encounter many beasts throughout their journey and fight against Grindelwald's supporters.

This movie has received some positive feedback from viewers nationwide. One of these praises has been for the performances seen on the big screen. Grindelwald was recast as Mads Mikkelsen, which stirred up a bit of controversy, but it seems as though Mikkelsen is up to

the role and has been doing a stellar job. Jude Law's performance really helped dive into Dumbledore's personal connection and was executed very well. Besides these two, audiences also see wonderful and familiar characters like Newt Schemander, Jacob, Queenie, Theseus, Yusuf, and Lalie.

A vast array of new magical beasts are seen in the movie and captured the hearts of theater goers. Fans were able to enjoy a stronger focus on these creatures, which is what the whole prequel's central theme is really about. Some notable moments of these beasts are between Newt's niffler and Pickett, who provide some comedic relief and have some adorable interactions with each other. It would be wise to keep an eye out for these fun moments when watching the film.

This film has action, comedy, and emotional scenes throughout the storyline. All these scenes are played out well and the superb execution is really shown as the story progresses. There are a lot of events to process within the film and it takes an open mind, and for all the die-hard *Harry Potter* fans, an open heart, to appreciate it. Many fans have crowned this film as the favorite of the *Fantastic Beasts* trilogy by multiple fans so it is definitely something to check



**DUMBLEDORE'S CHOSEN TEAM, FORMED BY NEWT SCHEMANDER, GATHERS TO FIGHT AGAINST GRINDELWALD BEFORE HE CAN DESTROY THE MUGGLE WORLD.**

(ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF GOOGLE IMAGES)

out for those who want to experience the wizarding world.

Audience members were taken on a roller coaster and it looks as though true fans of the *Harry Potter* Universe were pleased with the endeavors of the cast and crew of this movie. While it has been speculated that the franchise will end here, and the movie does provide a way for it to be a proper ending, many have felt

that this movie lived up to the expectations of the fanbase.

There is hope by many interested parties that there will be a fourth installment carried out by Warner Bros as this film is truly one to remember. In the meantime, take time to become immersed in the magic once again and go see *Fantastic Beasts: The Secrets of Dumbledore* in theaters.

# MULTIVERSE MADNESS UNLEASHED



**||** DR. STEPHEN STRANGE FACES OFF AGAINST WANDA MAXIMOFF WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF NEW AND FAMILIAR CHARACTERS.

BY: GIANNA D'ASTOLI

## **Warning: this article includes spoilers for WandaVision**

*Doctor Strange and the Multiverse of Madness* follows Stephen Strange,

Wanda Maximoff, and a new Young Avenger, America Chavez. This title perfectly explains how someone would feel if they didn't have the necessary knowledge going into this movie. *MoM*'s plot points and intentions heavily rely on the viewer

seeing recent Disney Plus titles such as *Wanda Vision*, *Loki*, and the animated series *What If*. Viewing these titles is especially needed to connect with and fully understand the intentions of a primary character in this film, Wanda Maximoff (played by Elizabeth Olsen).

Wanda is portrayed as the main antagonist in this film and her actions and choices would confuse a viewer without prior knowledge as to why she may be acting this way. Wanda has gone through a roller coaster of a story arc both in the comics and the inspired MCU films. *Avengers: Age of Ultron* (2015) first introduced her as the antagonist to the Avengers. Wanda then appeared in *Avengers: Infinity War*, where she lost the love of her life, Vision.

This all unraveled in *WandaVision* where her emotional trauma caused her to create her own delusional reality. The emotional trauma and weight left on Wanda after the series made her especially impulsive, as

seen in *Multiverse of Madness*.

Wanda is a complex character and this movie heavily relies on her, so to fully enjoy and understand this film it is absolutely necessary to understand its antagonist, her struggle, and the pain that manifested into what she is now. Not only would going in blindly ruin the experience, but it would also undermine the message Wanda is giving: the moral question of what divides the hero and the villain. If Wanda is being perceived as a villain for actions that were displayed in previous Marvel heroes, is the difference between good and evil based purely on intention or execution?

This film not only had a compelling antagonist, but Sam Raimi's direction was inspired in its horror elements, which on their own are worth the watch. Still, it would be to the viewer's benefit to binge the latest Marvel films before seeing this one to understand the many intricacies of the plot and its characters.

# ‘Turning Red’ - turning heads

BY: ALEXANDRA SARDIS

Disney Pixar's new movie, *Turning Red*, is a smash hit on Disney Plus! *Turning Red* is a relatable story about the struggles of a presumably typical preteen girl. Mei Lee, is 13 years old and is going through the motions of middle school while also trying to abide by her strict family's lifestyle.

With her are her best friends Miriam, Priya, and Abby. Together these girls share many interests and hobbies that keep them stuck together like glue. Miriam is a laid-back, caring, and spunky tomboy who always looks out for others. Priya is a shy and reserved girl, who often portrays stolid mannerisms. Abby is an outgoing fireball who is energetic and loud, bringing life to the party. One main interest that they share is their love of the boy band 4\*TOWN, which consists of a group of boys who embody the stereotypes associated with 90's boy band sensations. The lead singer is called Robaire and the girls obsess over him. This interest is what fuels the main stake in this movie as the girls discover that the band will be performing a concert right in their own city.

Mei comes from a very traditional Asian family, so seeing a concert is the last thing on the schedule for her parents. Mei's family runs a tourist attraction/temple and the upkeep of it, along with family traditions, allows no time for Mei to be leisurely.

One night Mei's secret crush is discovered by her mom who confronts him, embarrassing her so much that the night is spent with Mei

crying her way through a variety of mood swings.

The next morning, Mei transforms into a giant red panda and discovers that the women in her family all submit to the spirit of the panda during times of frustration. Her aunts step in to help cleanse Mei in a ceremony on the night of the red moon. However, it turns out that that is also the night of the concert, and she and

her friends have been saving money for tickets. Mei must make a decision between rejecting her panda or accepting it; and seeing the concert or missing it.

It is during this time that Mei goes through self-discovery, makes amends with her friends that she had initially brushed off, fights off her controlling mother, and brings the movie to a satisfying close.



**||** MEI LEE HUGS HER FRIENDS AS THEY PROCLAIM THAT THEY WILL ALWAYS STAND BY HER NO MATTER WHAT LIFE MAY THROW THEIR WAY.

(ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF GOOGLE IMAGES)



# Seniors take survey, share

## ADVICE FOR THE UNDERCLASSMEN:



Jamie  
Metz

*Don't worry about what other people think and don't be afraid to try something new!*



Brian  
Mohabeer

*Don't get stressed over anything because it'll all pass. Don't procrastinate.*



Tamia  
Burton

*Make the most out of your time at STA because it is not long before you will be saying goodbye to the things and people you love the most.*



Matthew  
MacPherson

*Don't be afraid to be your own person. If you change who you are for what someone wants you to be, you will never figure out what makes you special.*



Olivia  
Rivera

*This may seem cliché but do the things that make you happy while you can. Joining new sports and clubs is what made my high school experience so much better and I can't imagine how different it would've been if I hadn't done that.*



Joshua  
Pereira

*Don't be afraid to stay true to yourself.*

### What is your favorite subject?

**History = 34.1%**

**English = 26.8%**

**Science = 29.3%**

**Math = 9.8%**

### What is your favorite production from STA?

**The SpongeBob Musical = 84.2%**

**All In One = 2.65%**

### What is your favorite STA hymn?

**Big House = 75.6%**

**Trading My Sorrows = 14.6%**

**We Are One Body = 9.8%**

### Homecoming

**Snowball = 32.5%**



# memories, and give advice

## FAVORITE STA MEMORIES:

Makerfaire my freshman year. My group created a mechanical mermaid named Carla. The entire building experience and the Makerfaire itself were really fun and a great bonding experience.

- Laura Grausam

My favorite memory is when the lights were out during marching band senior night, so we had to play in the dark with the tiniest of light coming from the audience's phones.

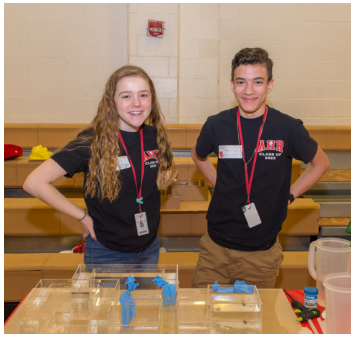
- Lesly Mayta

My favorite memory at STA was the Peer Leadership retreat my senior year. This helped me reconnect with those I hadn't talked to in a while and create new friends. It was an experience that started off my senior year on a good note.

- Erin Zafian

Getting to perform in so many productions onstage with my friends every year.

- David Irizarry



(ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF STA PUBLICATIONS)

## Favorite Drama in the past year?

**Peter and the Starcatcher = 10.5%**

**Julius Caesar = 2.65%**

## What is your favorite STA event?

**Battle of the Classes = 34.1%**

**Hoops 4 Heart/Heart Heroes = 9.8%**

**WASTA Day/Other = 39%**

**Aquinas Star Spaghetti Dinner = 17.1%**

## or Snowball?

**Homecoming = 67.5%**

## What will you miss most at STA?

**Friends = 73.2%**

**Clubs/Activities = 22%**

**Teachers/Staff = 4.8%**

# An enjoyable 'Enchanted Forest' evening



MEMBERS OF THE JUNIOR CLASS DANCE THE NIGHT AWAY AT ARIANA'S GRANDE IN WOODBRIDGE.

(PHOTOS COURTESY OF STA PUBLICATIONS)

BY: MORGAN RYAN

On Friday, May 6th, the Class of 2023 celebrated their Junior Prom. The event was held at the glamorous Ariana's Grand hall in Woodbridge. Students dressed their finest for the night, sporting dresses, suits, shoes, jewelry, all exquisitely accessorized with elegant hair, nails, and makeup.

The entire day leading up to the event, the weather was wet and dreary. However, the juniors did not let those clouds rain on their parade. Groups of friends huddled under umbrellas and flocked to houses,

restaurants, and other venues to snap pictures and hang out before the festivities of the night.

As the students arrived, they were greeted by flashing cameras and a warm welcome from Principal Harry Ziegler. They then mingled and settled at their assigned tables, greeting each other and complimenting each other's styles. Finally, the colorful lights turned down low and the music started, kicking off the real party.

The juniors danced all night to a medley of many different songs. They jumped up and down to Lil Nas X's "Industry Baby," sang their hearts out to ABBA's "Dancing

Queen," and showed off their moves during the "Cupid Shuffle." Couples enjoyed a few slow dances and friends gathered in circles to cheer each other on.

Attendees were able to enjoy the delicious food provided by Ariana's, including pizza, appetizers, chicken, fish, potatoes, vegetables, and Caesar salad. They stayed hydrated with Shirley Temples and orange juice as they danced and chatted. The night of exquisite dining ended with an ice cream bar and coffee. Before the meal, Father Keith blessed the food and the event.

After dinner, it was time for more dancing. The juniors partied and sang until it was time to unveil the prom King and Queen. Class officers Isabella Danner and Morgan Ryan revealed and crowned the winners in front of the junior class. The Prom King was Nico Tricoles and the Prom Queen was Kylie Ferber.

The theme of the night was "Enchanted Forest." The prom committee, headed by class moderator Ms. Amy Kate Byrne '05, worked hard to make the magical theme come to life. Members met after school to decorate lantern centerpieces with rocks and flowers to make sure each table came to life with the spirit of the theme. There was also an archway of vines and fairylights as part

of the photobooth, where friends and couples snapped enchanting photos of themselves throughout the night. "We really wanted to make this year's junior prom extra special and out of the ordinary," said prom committee member Allison Devitt. "The decorations helped add a whimsical atmosphere to the room."

Prom was a wonderful opportunity for the Junior Class to get together and have fun as a group, especially because the Class of 2023 has missed out on many parts of a traditional high school experience. Fortunately for them, this is just the first of many exciting events they will enjoy together before their graduation next year.



NICO TRICOLES AND KYLIE FERBER ARE CROWNED JUNIOR PROM KING AND QUEEN.

## Seniors embrace old Hollywood glam

BY: JULIANNE PEREZ & ABIGAIL BERA

On Thursday May 19 at 7pm, the senior class came together once more at The Imperia in Somerset for their prom. The seniors came dressed in this year's theme: Old Hollywood.

The festivities continued inside with everyone wearing gorgeous, lavish dresses and deluxe suits. Their hair and makeup were done to perfection. They made sure to get tons of pictures to keep as reminders of their senior prom experience with their partners and friends.

Father Keith led everyone in a prayer to begin their night, and soon after appetizers and entrees were served. On the menu, they had several choices, including: soup, pasta, salad, chicken francaise. Needless to say, there were scrumptious morsels

for all to partake in. Following dinner, they all enjoyed the music and the amazing view on the balcony. There was a lovely waterfall which was a great spot for pictures, as well as the gazebo out in front.

Seniors took to the dance floor and showed off their moves. Dancing came to a break for the announcement of the senior prom king and queen and then promptly picked up again.

This phenomenal prom would not have been possible without senior class officers Alexis Citro, Anne Marie Chiricolo, and moderator Philip Mascaro. Seniors raised their glasses and cheered with all of their hearts.

The night came to an end at 11:00 p.m. as chaperones reminded the seniors to get to their destinations safely. It was a truly enjoyable way for the seniors to be together as a class once more before graduating.



THE GAZEBO ON THE GROUNDS OF THE IMPERIA IN SOMERSET IS ONE OF THE MOST POPULAR SPOTS FOR STUDENTS TO TAKE PHOTOS DURING PROM.

(PHOTO COURTESY OF GOOGLE IMAGES)



# From students to alumni

BY: ABIGAIL BERA

On Wednesday, May 25th, the class of 2022 will commence their high school career with graduation. The ceremony will take place at the Church of the Sacred Heart in South Plainfield. These young people will walk in as students, and walk out as alumni.

For a high school senior, this time of the year is always bittersweet. It is the end of one chapter and the beginning of another. Gone are the days of wandering into first period, tired but determined to pass the quiz, or of listening to morning announcements, or being called down to discuss your classes. From prom, to finals, to the last day of classes, the seniors are saying goodbye to STA.

While processing into the church, they will carry the symbols that define their years in high school. One of the symbols, the Friendship Chain, represents the friendships that the

graduates have made and strengthened over the past four years. Student speakers during the Baccalaureate Mass will include Salutatorian Vera McCoy, Valedictorian Shivali Vora, class officers Alexis Citro and Anne Marie Chiricolo, and several others. Some faculty speakers will include principal Harry Ziegler and class moderator, Philip Mascaro. As always, music director Joseph Cullinan and the senior members of the choir will be providing the music.

Many students remember their first school Mass during their freshman year. Sister Donna always said that as freshmen, everyone walks into high school with a clean slate.

Remembering this four years later, the graduates will leave STA the same way they entered it, with a clean slate. It is up to them to choose who they will be in college and beyond.

The class of 2022 will finish their time at STA by receiving their

diplomas, moving their tassels, and celebrating their many accomplishments.

The students and faculty wish the

best of luck to all of the graduates, and they cannot wait to see them achieve all of their goals in the future!



THE 2022 AQUINAS GRADUATES PROCESS INTO THE CHURCH OF THE SACRED HEART IN SOUTH PLAINFIELD.

(ALL IMAGES COURTESY OF GOOGLE IMAGES)

# Outstanding achievements acknowledged



SYMBOLS OF GRADUATION SURROUND SENIORS.

BY: DAVID IRIZARRY

On May 23rd, 2022, the senior class gathered for the annual Aquinas Academic Awards Ceremony.

This event is held every year for the purpose of acknowledging the wide variety of scholastic and extra-curricular excellence displayed by the senior class during the previous four years. The categories for awards included, among others, Student Council, Theatre, Music, Academics, and Athletics.

Some of the early awards included certificates for all senior student council members and the school's

Top 10% in academics. Samantha Christine, the Editor-In-Chief of the Satoma, was awarded for her dedication and contributions to the production of the newsmagazine.

The next category revolved around exemplary performances and dedication in the school's Drama Department. Jamie Metz and Joseph Vergel received the Director's Award for Excellence in Dance. Erin Ptack and Jaylene Lugo received an award for most improved performances. For outstanding performances over all four years, awards were given to Tamia Burton, David Irizarry, Nicholas Lieggi, Joshua Pereira, Patrick Ponik, Jennifer Rihacek, and Gianna Vaynberg.

Awards were also given for outstanding performances in the school's band, marching band, and choir. Some of the instrumental awards include the Frederick Chopin Piano award, which was given to William Zhang, and the Leonard Bernstein Musicianship, which was given to Shivali Vora. For the choral categories, the National School Choral Award was given to Megan Kibalo, Rihacek, Burton, and Irizarry.

In addition to Band and Choir,

the Music Department also awards the Semper Fi Marine Corps Marching Band Award. This year's award was given to Raymond Zebrowski and Rihacek. Overall, an impressive number of students were honored for their improvement and success in the school's Music program.

Several awards were also given for Video Production, including the On-Camera Excellence Award given to Prince Swain, Pereira, and Ptack. The production category continued with the Outstanding Contribution Behind-the-Scenes Award, given to Alexandra Kachurick, Ponik, and Vergel.

After that, a select group of students were acknowledged for their outstanding abilities in particular school subjects. Awards for perfect attendance were given to Madyson Epps, Vera McCoy, and Elizabeth Powers. Excellence Awards were given to McCoy for writing and S.T.E.M., and Burton for Satoma participation. Emily Lim took home the Art Award, Elizabeth Pepe the English Award, Tyler Kadi and Jenna Campagna the Health & Physical Education Award, Ava Cruz the Spanish Award, and Thomas Wysz-

kowski the Biological Science Award. Olivia Rivera was chosen as the recipient of the Bishop Checchio Religion Award.

Acknowledgement for making the principal's list for all four years was given to 22 students. For the 2021-22 principal's list, 61 students were awarded. Kenny Cogan and Katherine Gleason received the Middlesex County Scholar Athlete Award, and Sydney Zeszotarski was presented with the Robin Cone Memorial Award. The U.S. Marine Corp. Athletic Award was given to Samar Abdulla, and Jacob Pil received the Air Force Math & Science Award. Finally, to round out the night, trophies were awarded to the schools Valedictorian and Salutatorian, Vora and McCoy, respectively.

Especially over the past three years, the class of 2022 has overcome many obstacles. For a while, they were one of the only classes that knew what a high school atmosphere looked like without masks and COVID restrictions. Despite these odds, the class showed outstanding displays of flexibility and were able to accomplish more than even they themselves thought possible.

# Musicians shine inside and outside



maestro, Joseph Cullinan, the sound produced by both groups truly lit up the world with songs from the Concert Choir such as a rendition of Owl City's "Fireflies" and "For Good" from *Wicked*. Additionally, the auditioned Select Chorus performed a few pieces including the melancholy "Hallelujah" and a rendition of "Drift Away" by Mentor Williams.

Choir soloists consisted of Patrick Ponik, Kendrick Robles, David Irizarry, Megan Kibalo, Shivali Vora, Jamie Metz, Erin Ptack, Tamia Burton, and Jennifer Rihacek. In parallel to the choir, the Concert Band demonstrated their ability through songs such as the *Kingdom Hearts* theme, "Hikari" and a mix of many themes from the popular movie series, *Transformers*.

Prior to the Concert Band, the Jazz Band made their presence known with exceptional numbers like "Moondance" by Van Morrison, and "Walking on the Sun" by Smash Mouth. Band soloists were made up of William Zhang, Tom Wyskowski, Aliyah Schmidt, Emily Lim, and

Eugene Tak. Senior William Zhang made his breathtaking debut through his solo piano presentation of "Nocturne No. 1" by Francis Poulenc.

Straying away from the music aspect of the concert, all individuals involved in the showings put one-hundred percent of themselves into creating the best experience and sound for their audiences. Both musical groups worked and rehearsed one to two times a week since early January in order to deliver the absolutely wonderful performances; especially managing well while working together to fit around very tight schedules and surmounting any difficulties or troubles that came their way.

This is distinctly true for the seniors, who have adapted and molded themselves to overcome challenges like COVID-19. This concert was monumental in importance to them, as it was their last performance for the music department for the remainder of their high school experience. Nearing the end of "For Good," the last song in the entirety of the con-

cert, audiences could hear the raw emotion in the voices of Burton and Rihacek, who got a bit choked up singing their duet, knowing that it was the last song they would sing for the school.

The crowd electrified the air with applause and cheers, creating a bubbly and lively atmosphere. The SATOMA staff offers their best wishes to the Class of 2022 and their future endeavors, as well as to the music department, for many more spectacular productions.



SHIVALI VORA, EMILY LIM, AND ANNIKA SCHMIDT FOCUS ON THE LOW BRASS SECTION.

THE CHOIR PERFORMS THE FIRST VERSE OF "FIREFLIES" BY OWL CITY.

BY: WILLIAM OWENS

On April 30th with a show under the stars and on May 1st with a show in the school gymnasium, the Concert Choir and Concert Band swept the audience off their feet in an extraordinary performance known as "The 24th Annual Spring Concert Without a Theme." Led by the exceedingly skilled director and

# Students poignantly portray religious figures

BY: TAMIA BURTON

On April 12, 2022, the community gathered in celebration of Holy Week. Each grade level was invited to pray and experience the Stations of the Cross, presented in the Little Theater. Fine Arts Department head-Lea Gossett directed the presenta-

tion, and music director Joseph Cullinan accompanied on the piano.

The Way of the Cross commemorates Jesus Christ's last day on Earth as a man. The Stations were first presented to each grade during the school day. At the beginning of each presentation, those in attendance were invited to follow Christ's jour-

ney of suffering and death. Each station was portrayed by students who volunteered to be a part of the sacred tradition.

Students who attended and participated recalled and meditated on each event from Christ's last day at each station. Prayers were recited until all 14 stations were complete.

In the evening, attendees were invited to partake in the Simple Soup Supper, where families enjoyed their soup before making their way up to the Little Theater. Before the presentation began for the friends and families of the community, the simple soup was prepared by the Dama family. It has been about three years since the community was able to gather together and pray at the Stations of the Cross in person. To be able to come together again was a blessing.

The stations ended with this final prayer: "We have journeyed with the characters of your passion and have seen the strengths and weaknesses within the human heart. We have discovered within us that same human heart, with its light and its shadow. Give us true humility to acknowledge our strengths and our weaknesses and to have a compassionate

heart for others. Amen."

The community was blessed to come together and pray at the Stations of the Cross to close out the Lenten Season.



SIMON (SENIOR JOSHUA PEREIRA) HELPS JESUS CARRY HIS CROSS TO CALVARY HILL.



MARY (SENIOR JENNIFER RIHACEK) HOLDS HER SON JESUS (SENIOR JOSEPH VERGEL) AFTER HE IS TAKEN DOWN FROM THE CROSS.

(ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF STA PUBLICATIONS)



# Sports Spotlight

**Name:**

Whitney  
Pepe



**Nickname:**

Whit

**Grade:** 12

**Sport:** Cross Country &  
Spring Track

**Favorite warm-up song:**  
"You Belong with Me" by  
Taylor Swift

**Favorite pre-game snack:**  
Banana

**Lucky number:** 6

**Name:**

Etinosa  
Igiebor



**Nickname:**

Nosa

**Grade:** 12

**Sport:** Football

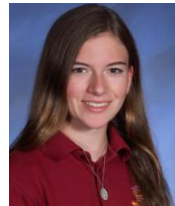
**Favorite warm-up song:**  
"Black Ball" by Youngboy  
Never Broke Again

**Favorite pre-game snack:**  
Spicy chicken sandwich  
from Chick-Fil-A

**Lucky number:** 12

**Name:**

Mackenzie  
Fizer



**Nickname:**

Mac

**Grade:** 12

**Sport:** Softball

**Favorite warm-up song:**  
"The Spins" by Mac Miller

**Favorite pre-game snack:**  
Celcius

**Lucky number:** 5

**Name:**

Prince  
Swain



**Nickname:**

Prince

**Grade:** 12

**Sport:** Soccer

**Favorite warm-up song:**  
"Can You Feel My Heart"  
by Bring Me The Horizon

**Favorite pre-game snack:**  
Rice Crackers

**Lucky number:** 7

**Name:**

Paige  
Tidabeck



**Nickname:**

Paige

**Grade:** 12

**Sport:** Softball

**Favorite warm-up song:**  
Whatever the team is play-  
ing

**Favorite pre-game snack:**  
Pop Tarts

**Lucky number:** 20

**FARE-  
WELL AND  
BEST OF  
LUCK TO  
ALL OF  
OUR  
SENIOR  
ATHLETES!**

## Lacrosse teams build on success



SENIOR KATIE GLEASON CHARGES DOWN THE FIELD.

(ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF STA PUBLICATIONS)

BY: TAMIA BURTON

The boys and girls Lacrosse teams have made impressive strides during their respective seasons. The boys Lacrosse team is led by senior captains William Pucci and Jacob Pil who were persistent in their training during the off-seasons.

When spring came around, the boys team, coached by Matthew VanDoren, was ready to make their way onto the field during practice and on game day. The boys team consists of seniors, William Pucci,

Shray Patel, and Jacob Pil along with junior Michael Jurina, sophomores Andrew Delabar, Joe Kachurik, Trevor Lavelle, Tyler Nerges, Valentine Barron, Michael Serrano, and Khalil Stubbs, and finally freshmen Brandon Barbarite, Joe Service, and Evan Wells.

All the athletes worked hard to make this season a success, a few of the team members were especially rewarded for their efforts. Pucci, Pil, Barron, and Delabar each made the all-division title for their dedication and skill within their sport.

Amid any and all adversity the girls Lacrosse team kept their heads high and continued to work hard during their season. The captains of the girls Lacrosse team are seniors Jenna Campagna, Claire English, Genna Arduini, and Anne Marie Chiricolo.

Campagna had some thoughts on how the season went for the team: "While we may not have shown out in the number of wins we definitely improved and are more confident on the field, and overall we had a lot of fun." Two senior team members made all-division this season: seniors Morgan Brennan and Anne Marie Chiricolo.

## 'Putt-ing' It All Together

BY: SAMANTHA CHRISTINE



SENIOR JOHN VENTRIGLIA PUTTS HIS BALL ACROSS THE GREEN, HOPING TO SINK IT IN THE HOLE.

The Aquinas Golf team has made their presence known to the rest of the conference! Led by Coach Clem Bottone, they finished their season with a 7-8 record that placed them third overall in the 2022 GMC Standings. The team has gone up against many other schools, including Woodbridge, Calvary Christian, South River, and New Brunswick.

After wins against New Brunswick and Calvary Christian but lost against Woodbridge and South River. Despite those losses, the team pulled through and was able to end the season with decent stats.

The seniors on the golf team are Amanda Cariaga and Ethan Hung, both of who have also served as leaders of the golf team. It's clear that they'll be missed greatly by the underclassmen.

Overall, the golf team put in a lot of effort throughout their season, and it showed in the conference standings. Clem Bottone and the team have a lot to be proud of. Congratulations to all!

## BOYS CLINCH BLUE DIVISION TITLE

BY: KAYLA FOLEY

The Varsity Baseball team had an outstanding season, with a current record of 13-5 as they head into the first round of the State tournament. They look to further improve their record, hoping to win another title in the process.

Led by head coach Tom D'Agostino as well as Coach Frank, Coach Jared and senior captain Tyler Kadi, the team became the GMC Blue Division Champs for the first time in 6 years. Kadi led the team in hits, runs, RBI's and home runs, while junior Ricky Del Rio led the team in strikeouts. While there were many talented upperclassmen, the team included several extremely capable underclassmen as well. Freshman Reed Kertstetter was nominated as one of the top 100 Freshman in New Jersey. With Kertstetter and the other underclassmen learning from the impressive senior leadership, the future of the Aquinas baseball team is promising.

While the baseball season is technically in the Spring, our baseball athletes started training hard right at

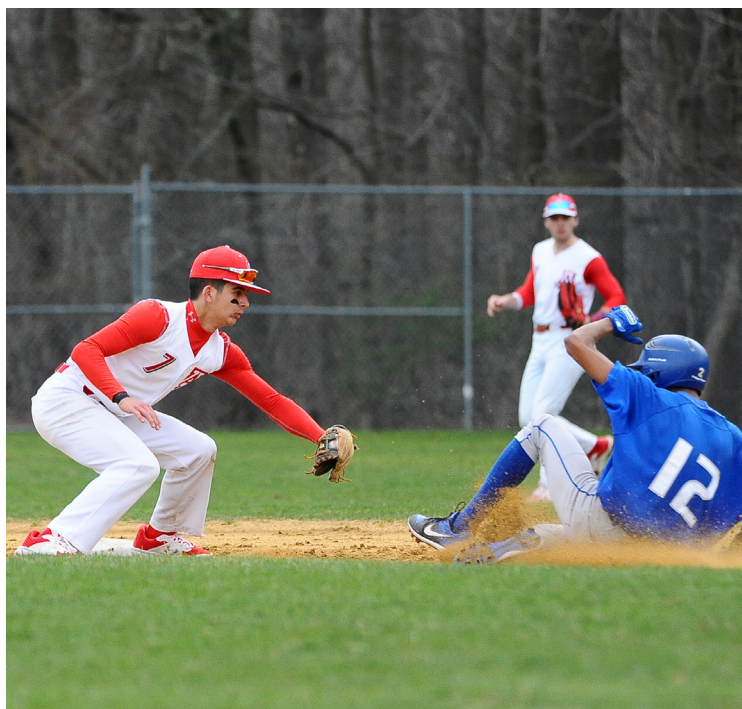
the end of last season, working hard and building chemistry to make this season the best.

Sophomore David Ryden says, "I think one of the key factors in our team's success this year has been the chemistry we built with each other throughout the off-season. I'm excited to see what we can do next year as this is only the beginning."

After winning two games to start the season, they had 2 tough losses to South River (16-3), and Piscataway (6-0). They bounced back with a 5-3 win over South River and this was the first game in a 9 game win streak.

As the season continued the team gained more confidence and they beat teams by large margins such as their 16-0 win over Somerset Tech or their 24-2 win over New Brunswick. Due to their hard work, they soon became ranked in the Greater Middlesex Conference and continued strong throughout the remainder of the season.

Congratulations to the baseball team and good luck in the State Tournament! Everyone will be rooting for you here at STA!



JUNIOR SHORTSTOP CHRISTIAN SCAFF SNAGS THE THROW FROM THE CATCHER AND PREPARES TO PUT THE TAG ON THE INCOMING RUNNER WHILE SENIOR TYLER KADI BACKS HIM UP IN RIGHT FIELD.



# SOFTBALL CONTINUES TO DOMINATE



BY: EMMA FLYNN

The softball team has been on a great run this season! The GMC tournament is still in progress and our Lady Trojans are in the final four! This team has won the GMC championship three years in a row, and is making strides toward their fourth straight title.

STA opened their season on April 1 with a resounding 7-0 victory over Lodi Immaculate, which included a home run by senior Mackenzie Fizer and an amazing 20 strikeouts by sophomore Hayley Wiczerzak.

From that big win, the Trojans built an astounding resume that included big wins over all their divi-

sion opponents, and a thrilling, 5-4, nine-inning win over the #2 ranked team in the state, Immaculate Heart.

The softball team is comprised of many talented athletes across all four classes, making for a constant pipeline of talent that will be competing for the scarlet and white for years to come!

The full team roster included Wiczerzak (193 pitching strikeouts), senior Paige Tidaback (.328 BA), senior Aamori Patterson, senior Kaitlyn O'Neill, freshman Gwen Negron, freshman Liz Negron, junior Mary Kate Murray (led the team in hits, runs, HR, and RBI), senior Melissa Martinez, junior Amya Hill (.329 BA), senior Alison Herka, Fiz-

er (.327 BA), senior Madyson Epps (.403 BA), freshman Brielle Cubala, freshman Kamerin Collado, and sophomore Rebecca Airel. The team was led by head coach Ms. Missy Collazo '01 and Mr. Mark Fiore '95.

Wiczerzak and Tidaback led the team with their excellent pitching. Between the two of them, the Trojans amassed 272 strikeouts in just 23 games. At the time of this publication, their record was 17-6 overall and 9-0 in the GMC Red Division.

The team won their Division and continue to march forward in their tournament play, hoping to achieve a few more victories. Congratulations to all of the girls on their success this season!

KAITLYN O'NEILL PREPARES TO FIELD A GROUND BALL.

## Aces and achievements across the board

BY: EUNICE MBAWA

The boys tennis team looked to build on their past success this season, in the hopes of building the foundation for the future. What they found was more than just athletic success, they found a new appreciation for their sport and their teammates.

In getting to know new head

coach Duncan Merriman, the team also learned to emulate his personal style - mostly how to stay calm, cool, and collected at their matches.

To gain insight on what it's like to be a part of the team, the staff asked junior student Solim Khan, one of the the tennis team's newest additions, about what it is like to work with Coach Merriman. Solim recounted "Coach Merriman as well as my team members are very helpful, I

feel as if I can count on them to help strengthen me mentally as well as physically. Being a part of the team helped me realize that tennis is more than racquets and tennis balls, it's about serving others, as well as tennis balls in order to help us all win."

As their season comes to an end, the team places in the blue division for the county, notching six wins in what has proven to be a fantastic year of growth for the entire squad.



SENIOR KIRAN BHATTACHARYA PREPARES TO RETURN THE BALL ACROSS THE COURT TO THE OPPOSING SERVER.

## Racing into the record books

BY: ISABELLA DANNER

The 2022 Spring Track season has certainly been a fun one for all the dedicated runners and throwers.

Training began in early March, just after Indoor GMCs, held on March 1st. Each day after school, rain or shine, students laced up their sneakers and headed out to the track for their daily runs and workouts.

The track team is functionally split in two, separating the distance runners from the sprinters, so that each group can focus on their respective workouts. The distance team is led by Coach Tim Miller and captains Lia Acosta, Emily Wall, Alex Cocuzza, and Neal Choksi. The Sprinters are trained by Coach Hush.

Junior Captain Wall was kind enough to share her thoughts on her senior teammates, "Just a few years ago the upperclassmen on the team were strangers to me, but now they're my second family. I've got-

ten so close with all of them and made some of the best memories with them over the past few years. They have been so supportive and encouraging and I'm going to miss them so much but I know they are going to do amazing things. I am so excited for them!"

The White Division Championship was held May 14th and was a day filled with PRs and team spirit. Choksi smashed his previous PR of 5:04 with an impressive 4:51, finishing 6th in the 1600m. Cocuzza followed close behind him, running 4:54, placing 8th. 800m runners Shane Samuelson and Nick Leung both posted personal records in their event as well, with finishes of 2:16.62 and 2:16.79. Even though typically an 800m runner, Wall successfully broke the barrier, running a 1600m PR of 6:55, something she had long been aiming for. Jayden Young and Najee Lovejoy both post-

ed personal records in the 100m dash and doubled in other events, Young in the 200m and Lovejoy in the long jump, setting personal records yet again. Nico Tricoles took first in the shotput finals, throwing a 39-06.25.

Esperanza Mojica took second in the 400m and PRed with a 1:02.44, additionally throwing discus and running the 100m dash. Freshman Sanjana Parikh and senior twins Elizabeth and Whitney Pepe all ran the 800m, putting up impressive times and personal records. Overall, it was a successful meet and the team was more than satisfied with the results.

With so many more races left to run, including (but not limited to) the GMC Championship and the State Championship meets, the future is bright and exciting for our Track Athletes and there is much to look forward to with the summer months and beyond!



SENIOR LIA ACOSTA WARMS UP PRIOR TO A MEET.

# In Memoriam: Coach Brian Meeney



COACH BRIAN MEENEY WITH HIS LOVING WIFE, RANDI, AND HIS TWO BEAUTIFUL DAUGHTERS, MADISON AND REILLY.

(PHOTO COURTESY OF THE MEENEY FAMILY)

BY: MARIA GIANNOTTO

Coach Brian Meeney was a passionate man who changed many lives in various ways. He served as the head football coach for three years and guided the players to an outstanding season this past fall, with only one loss in the last game.

In 2019, his first year, he won 4-6, in 2020 during the pandemic he won 4-3, and in 2021 he won 9-1. Many of his student athletes went on to college.

In his early days, he took on the head coaching position at Newark East Side, coached at Memorial of West New York, Bergen Technical Schools in Paramus, where he was a teacher, McCorristin Catholic High School, and Trenton Catholic Academy. He also coached basketball and softball for the Maywood Recreation Department. He was a member of the National Education Association, the New Jersey Education Association, and the Bergen County Education Association. He served as a father figure and mentor to all, having such an influence on so many lives that it was as if he became part of the players' families. He had a major role in his own family, as he was a beloved husband to Randi Cabana, and father to two daughters, Madison and Reilly, both of whom looked up to him.

The comments left on the school's instagram post regarding Meeney's

passing were flooded with sorrow; from the players telling him how much of an impact he had, to parents sending their condolences, to his family, friends, players, and former students.

To honor Meeney, the players will be getting stickers of his initials to wear on their helmets next season. The players will also be receiving t-shirts with the words "Be About It" printed on them, which was one of his sayings.

Athletic director Jerry Smith previously coached Meeney in his early days before working together over the past several years. He had much to share about their father-son relationship: "When I was hired at STA the first person I called was Brian. At the time there was a varsity program that was having a difficult time attracting players and Brian was the one I wanted to help me rebuild the football team."

***"When I was hired at STA the first person I called was Brian...[he] was the one I wanted to help me rebuild the program."***

**- Jerry Smith**

Smith added, "We went out every night to speak with youth programs and told the players we aren't good. Come to STA and you can play right away and teach us how to be better. Brian LOVED winning. He was the father figure to a lot of these players. Despite his hard coaching on all of them, he always turned the negatives into positives. He cared about them so much. He actually had a garden that he grew vegetables in. He would bring them in and give them to the players to eat before practice. He would always come in to Mrs. Wilton and I's office and give us some. I told the players to honor his memory, and play next season for him."

Sophomore Thomas Schwegler discussed the impact Coach Meeney had on him: "Coach Meeney meant a lot to me. He was there for me no matter how good or how bad I played. He had faith in me even when I had little faith in myself. He was a great coach and an even better person. We will all miss him."

Sister Donna ended this article with a meaningful quote that should be heard by many: "In your lifetime, you're lucky to meet unique people. Coach Meeney was unique and in a

***"...He had faith in me even when I had little faith in myself. He was a great coach and an even better person. We will all miss him."***

**- Thomas Schwegler**

sense that he touched the hearts of people by his caring, motivational skills, and his love of God."

It is important to keep Coach Meeney and his family in our prayers, and keep in mind the effect that he had on so many people. He was a man who wanted to make a difference in everyone's lives, whether he knew them for years or they were just acquaintances. May he rest in peace, he will be missed by many.

## "Be About It"



COACH BRIAN MEENEY IN HIS ELEMENT; COACHING THE TEAM FROM THE SIDELINES AND ENCOURAGING THEM TO ALWAYS STRIVE TO DO AND BE THE BEST THEY COULD BE.

(PHOTO COURTESY OF STA PUBLICATIONS)