

THE AUGUSTINIAN

Merry Christmas!

Issue 3

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100 Years of Saints!

St. Augustine High School

The Return of the Saints Day of Service



Mr. Pruter stands beside the trees he planted five years ago.



By Patrick O'Leary ('23)
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Last Tuesday, November 29, saw the return of a beloved Saints tradition that was halted by the pandemic: the annual day of service. Saintsmen volunteered at 26 locations across San Diego, including county and city parks, schools, uptown ministry, and even a family farm.

This year was the first schoolwide day of service since 2019. Last year, due to

Covid, it wasn't easy to find places willing to accept large amounts of volunteers, so only the seniors were able to participate. But now, sites have opened back up, and the entire school was able to model the Saints virtue of Caritas once again.

The day of service has changed substantially over the years. Back in 2019, the school was divided into four groups of around 190 students, each sent to a different city park to assist the rangers in completing tasks like planting trees, building fences, and removing invasive

plants. This year, though, the school sent out many smaller groups, with only Flinn Springs and San Dieguito County Parks having more than a hundred students.

"It was probably more productive to have everyone spread out," said Mrs. Brophy, who organized the event. "That way, everyone has a job, and no one is just standing around."

Mrs. Brophy was responsible for planning and coordinating the entire day of service, reaching out to the various

locations and connecting students with convenient spots. This year, she began connecting students with volunteer opportunities at grade schools throughout the county. Students were excited to be able to serve at their old elementary schools and work alongside their previous teachers.

"It felt like a field trip," sophomore Noah Heuring said. "I got to return to my old school and give back to the community."

The smallest group consisted of only three students. Seniors Naish Kellmeyer and Nick Cianflone, as well as freshman Colton Kellmeyer, assisted Br. Mauricio at Uptown Ministry, sorting clothing donations and organizing their closet.

The vast majority of Saintsmen volunteered at city or county parks, helping rangers improve the areas. At Flinn Springs County Park, students cleared out a creek of stagnant water, and it was flowing freely by the time they left. Groups at the Los Penasquitos Preserve removed invasive plant species, built and repaired fences, and planted trees. At Batiquitos Lagoon, students trimmed overgrown plants alongside a trail.

The rangers throughout San Diego were extremely impressed with the work ethic and efficiency of the Saints students. They reported to Mrs. Brophy that Saints had done several months' work in a single day.

For example, at Potrero County Park, Saintsmen planted 80 trees, 30 more than the rangers expected, and finished an hour early. At Balboa Park, Mrs. Brophy was told, "We're running out of jobs for them. They're working too efficiently!"

Students enjoyed working alongside their classmates to deepen the bonds of

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Winter Sports Start Season With a Bang



By Jacob Soro ('23)
STAFF WRITER

Basketball

The 2022 CIF San Diego Section Open Division Championship banner comes back home. Saints' win last year earned them their 3rd Open Division banner, which surpasses that of any other program in San Diego. The team is hopeful to once again reclaim its #1 spot in San Diego, and progress higher in state.

Heading the team are seniors Derrius Carter-Hollinger, Jurian Dixon, and Jaden Matingou and juniors Ian de la Rosa and LoLo Rudolph, who all earned All-League honors. Dixon, Matingou, de la Rosa, and Rudolph also received All-CIF honors, with Dixon being named the CIF Player of the Year.

The basketball team picked up right where they left off last season. With all of their starters returning, the team has their eyes on a repeat. They have started off the season undefeated so far with a record of 5-0, with four games having been won by 30 points or more. They recently capped off their tournament run with a dominat-

ing 87-55 win over Otay Ranch to secure their 4th straight Madison Tournament victory. Rudolph showed tremendous talent and was named tournament MVP. Carter-Hollinger and Dixon were also represented on the All-Tournament team.

This year, they will be traveling to Las Vegas with hope of winning the Tarkanian Classic and the Torrey Pines Holiday Classic in San Diego. They also plan to go east to compete in the Hall of Fame Hoopball Classic in Springfield, Massachusetts. The basketball team is showing everybody what they are made of and look to go all the way this year.

Rugby

The rugby team is excited for their upcoming season after winning the league last year with an impressive 9-2 season. Their success earned them the #4 ranking nationally. Although they lost a few key players from last year, they have their returning stars ready to lead the team. Seniors Colin Duffy, Sam Johns, Aidan Kemp, and Lucca Rohrer are preparing for their last season as they look to lead their team to a state championship.

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Jurian Dixon drives against Montgomery. Courtesy of Saints Scene

Elon Bought Twitter: Let That Sink In



By Liam Olds ('26)
STAFF WRITER

At this point, we all know Elon Musk: co-founder of PayPal, CEO of SpaceX and Tesla, wealthiest man in the world. It's no longer shocking when he does something absurd, but buying Twitter for \$44 billion was a bit of a surprise. It seems as if Musk even surprised himself with his offer, so much so that he spent months and millions of dollars on legal fees trying to rescind his offer for Twitter. However, that's not even close to the craziest part of this transaction.

As the deal was reaching its closing stages, Musk decided to prepare his soon to be "home away from home" for his arrival. First things first, he brought a sink to Twitter's headquarters. That's right, when Musk walked into the San Francisco Twitter headquarters, he strode in with a porcelain sink, entirely so that he could tweet, "Entering Twitter HQ— let that sink in!"

Musk has been described in many ways - some say crazy or eclectic, others call him a genius. He's probably a bit of both, but he prefers to call himself "Chief Twit." His first move after acquiring the social media giant was to edit his bio to display his proud new nickname. Finally, when it seemed his well of jokes had run dry, he got straight to business.

Musk fired almost half of Twitter's workforce, cutting the company down from close to 7,500 employees to only about 3,800. To the remaining staff, Musk sent the now infamous midnight email asking them to commit to an "extremely hard core" work environment or enjoy three months of severance pay. From the already small pool of remaining employees, another 1,200 of them

decided they weren't willing to agree to his "hard core" terms. This means that the payroll was further whittled down to about a third of what it was before Musk's arrival.

This "hard core" approach to work is not anything new to Musk. He has used the phrase to refer to both Tesla and SpaceX in times of crisis, and he himself takes it to the next level. He is famous for sleeping on the floor of Tesla, and he is doing the same at Twitter.

His version of this "hard core" work environment encompasses everything from long hours to high-intensity days in which only "exceptional performance" will be tolerated. Musk has been accused of taking an overly drastic stance with his other companies when the "crisis" was mostly engineered for higher performance, but this time, he has put himself in a truly difficult position.

One of the reasons Musk claims to have had interest in Twitter was because he believed that it should be an uncensored exchange of ideas. Before his purchase, Twitter was partially censored, as their anti-disinformation policy had led to the banning of several accounts. Musk claims his plan is to reinstate many of them, something that has proved to be a sticking point for advertisers. Balenciaga, Chipotle, United Airlines, Volkswagen, Ford, and Pfizer have already pulled sponsorships.

While Musk no longer has to worry about pleasing investors after buying the entire company and making it private, advertisers are the primary way in which Twitter collects its revenue. Advertisers don't want to tie their brand to people who will make their companies look bad, and if there's one place to find a group of people who can make you look bad,



it's the list of Twitter's banned accounts. Among them, there are conspiracy theorists (Steve Bannon), COVID-19 deniers (Marjorie Taylor Greene), election deniers (you know who I'm talking about), people who have made antisemitic comments (Ye), a former Grand Wizard of the KKK (David Duke), and even Kathy Griffin, who was suspended for impersonating Elon Musk himself (yes, that really happened).

Musk has trapped himself between his conflicting ideals: making the platform a circus of unmoderated speech and

making Twitter profitable from advertisements. Having spent \$44 billion on buying the company, he can't entirely ignore its profitability to serve his own ends. He may be the richest man in the world, but not even Elon Musk wants to drop tens of billions of dollars with no return.

All I can say now is good luck, Elon, and try not to burn the world down! (P.S. If your neck is getting sore sleeping on the floor of Twitter, you could always talk to Mike Lindell, founder of MyPillow, supplier of disinformation and candidate for reinstitution on Twitter!)

Republicans!!!! What Happened????



By Alex Granda ('24)
STAFF WRITER

The midterm elections of 2022 were supposed to be a landmark election for the Republicans. Under the leadership of President Joe Biden, the U.S. had suffered one of its highest rates of inflation in history, and the overall dissatisfaction with Biden as a leader was at an all-time high. The economy was tanking, and Republicans were looking to capitalize on the discontent of the American people and gain control of the House and the Senate.

A "red wave" was supposed to take over the nation, and Republicans were finally going to have their big win. However, the election was a complete failure for the Republican Party, as Democrats

won control of the Senate again, and the Republicans only hold narrow control of the House of Representatives.

For most of the American public, the swing of votes to the Democratic party was because of two issues: Donald Trump and the overturning of Roe v. Wade.

The former president was criticized for spreading false allegations of voter fraud during the 2020 presidential election and instigating the January 6 storming of the U.S Capitol Building.

Dissatisfaction with the former president was high, and exit polls have revealed that about 13% of voters swung to the Democrats due to Trump's actions as president during his 2020 presidential campaign. His numerous endorsements of Republican candidates in the midterm

elections did more to hurt the Republican Party than it did to help them.

Abortion issues were also a huge factor in this election. In exit polls, 27% of voters said that their decision to vote for a Democratic candidate in the midterms was due to the overturning of Roe v. Wade. Republicans' anti-abortion stance may have been one of the reasons for their disappointing loss in the Senate.

Another metric Republicans were not looking at was the overwhelming support from young people for the Democratic Party. Although the total number of voters under the age of 45 mainly remained the same, Democrats won this demographic by 13 points, which may have been one of the biggest reasons for the Democrats' win against the red wave.

The red wave, which was supposed to

take over the U.S., was mostly quelled, starting with the Republican's biggest disappointment in Pennsylvania. In a landmark victory for the Democratic Party, senator-elect John Fetterman was able to overwhelm Republican candidate Mehmet Oz by more than 200,000 votes. Fetterman made history as the first Democratic candidate to win the Senate seat in Pennsylvania since 1962.

Although the Republicans faced a setback in Pennsylvania, they secured decisive victories in Ohio and Florida. In Florida, Governor Ron DeSantis won reelection by such a huge margin that the election was almost called as soon as the polls closed. In the Senate, Marco Rubio also won by a considerable margin of more than 57% of the votes. A swing state in elections, Ohio switched heavily to a red state during the midterms, as Republicans won both the governor and Senate races.

However, the biggest surprise of the midterms came in Georgia. Neither Democratic candidate Raphael Warnock nor Republican candidate Herschel Walker was able to capture a majority, and they are now facing a run-off in December. Although the Democrats have won the Senate, a win in Georgia could stop their reliance on Vice President Kamala Harris's tie-breaking vote. It would also give Dems a comfy majority in the Senate, which helps control committees and confirm judges.

The 2022 midterm elections have been one of the most polarizing and confusing elections in recent history. Calls of voter fraud have been rampant, and the Democratic party's fear of the incoming red wave never occurred. Calls for the reformation of the Republican Par-

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Team Feature: It's Called Soccer



By Ben Nault ('26)
STAFF WRITER

Welcome to *The Augustinian's* Team Feature article, where Saints sports are highlighted, and coaches and players alike are admired. This month's sport is soccer. The soccer season is just starting, and with tryouts concluded, this team is prepared for a successful season.

First off, this is a year of high expectations for our Saints varsity soccer team. Led by Coach "Chief" Johnston and Coach Thompson, the soccer team has maintained a high level of success in the local division and CIF in the last couple of years.

Two years ago, they won their second Southern California Regional State Championship. This incredible achievement, paired with a fourth consecutive Western League title last season, makes the team hopeful for another CIF title.

"We have a perfect ratio of senior experience to younger players, and the depth of talent I have seen from this team will give us the potential to do great things," senior captain Jack Elgas said. "I'm excited to see how our off-season efforts will elevate our game this season."

The varsity team is ranked sixth in the CIF Open Division. Notable schools included Del Norte, San Dieguito Academy, De La Salle, West Hills, Coronado, Point Loma, University City, and Cathedral Catholic.

Chief reflected on the team's strength of schedule and expectations moving forward. "We'll have a solid team this year. This is a tough league to win in. We have the top three teams in our league. But that doesn't stop this team from working every day to learn



Saints won their first game 5-0 against Granite Hills.

each other's playstyles and improve."

Tryouts concluded in mid-November, and the team sprang back into action for a 5-0 win against Granite Hills on November 30th, officially kicking off the season. Varsity soccer will also compete in the North County Elite Tournament and College Showcase in the coming weeks.

The Showcase is a three-game competition played in Orange County, and Saints will be given another opportunity to prove themselves on the field as they compete against some of the best teams in the state. Although the tournament's outcome does not directly impact the standings, it gives varsity soccer an opportunity to play at a collegiate level while gaining experience as a developing team.

Although the regular season is already underway, the open division matches begin on January 10, where Saints will look to defend its league title. The team is confident in their ability to remain a powerhouse in the division.

"We lost some seniors from last year, but that is just part of the game. We're fast and versatile on the field, and that is a huge facet of our game. We just need to play together and we'll do great things for this program," senior Tanner Wick said.

Developing team chemistry is one of the most critical aspects of winning at the high school level. A senior-heavy team that includes thirteen upperclassmen relies on a special kind of leadership to build strong bonds that translate to superior play on the field. In addition,

Courtesy of the Saints soccer team

a stronger sense of respect and communication between players will allow the team to reach its goals by the end of the season.

"As a team, our overall goal this year is to win in three places: league, CIF, and state," Chief said. But that is much easier said than done. "Soccer is a long game, and you never go into a game with a definite victory. It's all about playing the long game, and even the smallest of moments can contribute to a win."

Overall, Chief and the soccer team are confident in the training and dedication that all players have put in over the long summer offseason. Remember to support your fellow Saintsmen this winter as the varsity team looks to hang their fifth consecutive league banner.

Mr. Pruter: The Next American Idol



By Henry Barwick ('26)
STAFF WRITER

Following the Turkey Trot, many people had a question on their minds: Who was the heavenly voice that sang the national anthem before the race? The answer: Our very own Mr. Pruter.

Mr. Pruter is from the Los Angeles area, where he attended high school at St. John Bosco High School in Bellflower, California. He attended college at UCLA, Cal State Long Beach, and Azusa Pacific University. He has taught for twenty-six years, eleven of which were at Saints. At Saints, he mostly teaches United States history, with a block of World History, in addition to coaching Freshman soccer.

The Augustinian recently had the opportunity to sit down with Mr. Pruter to discuss his musical hobbies. The following interview has been edited for clarity.

The Augustinian: I heard that you were part of a band. Do you have any fun stories from your experience with that?

Pruter: The band was called the Jam Daddies. It was just a bunch of dads from the school I taught at, St. John Bosco. It started off with a drummer, Chris, and my friend, Paul, making noise in the garage. They needed a singer, so I volunteered myself.

We played a bunch of gigs in the Long Beach area – bar and grills, sports bars, backyard parties, etc. Some charitable events as well. We were just doing classic rock cover songs. Beatles, Stones, The Doors, John Cougar Mellancamp, Tom Petty, you know, classic rock. Fun fact, the band still exists today!



Donovin Bocalan ('23)

TA: What was your big influence to get into music in the first place?

P: That's a good question. My parents raised me on the same kind of music I mentioned. My dad was a big Bob Dylan fan and loved the Rolling Stones as well, all the classic rock, so I always had that.

My dad and my uncle were always quizzing me. "This is the tune, who's the band? Who's the guitarist, what's the name of the song, where are they

from?" So I was always inclined to think that way, although my parents aren't musical. I think also it was because I was an only child for thirteen years. I had to entertain myself, and that was how I got into it, really.

Then, I was in a good era of music. You know, the 80s, new wave, and then later, hip-hop, which I was really into throughout high school. MTV as well really influenced me. I was glued to the TV at my grandma's, always watching

the latest videos. So all of those helped shape my musical sense. Also borrowing, and later stealing, records from my parents' collection. I especially loved Motown, Temptations, Four Tops, and those groups. I thought they were really awesome, and I just loved their vocals and harmonies. That influenced me singing-wise, more so than just classic rock.

TA: Did you take any singing lessons or anything or that nature?

P: I was in the school choir at St. John Bosco, where I won the coveted Best Vocal Award in 1993. Our choir performed in Washington, D.C., for Bill Clinton's inauguration. That's the only vocal training I really had, from Mr. Stogart, our instructor. But that was very limited because he had to work with the choir, so it wasn't like he could work with me individually. So I kind of taught myself. You know, the shower has great acoustics, at least in my mind. I was encouraged by people along the way that gave me the confidence to make me think I was okay at doing this.

TA: How did you get involved with singing at Saints?

P: If it was my way, I'd be on the microphone all the time. I love the microphone, you know me. But my policy is if I'm asked, I will say yes. But I would never try to impose myself on the microphone. I think that's rude.

The element of surprise is good as well. I always like bands that are like, "Whatever happened to them?" and then they come out of nowhere. "Oh, I forgot about them, they're really good." So, I kind of think of singing in the

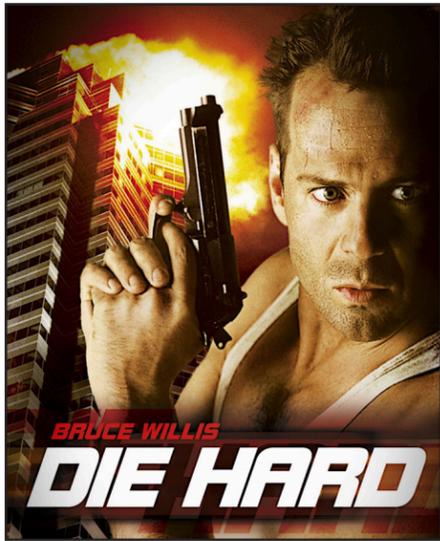
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Riley Ranks: The Best Christmas Movies



By Riley Scanlan ('23)
EDITOR

With the Christmas season fast approaching, all of the TV channels are playing the endless reruns of classic Christmas movies. From the nostalgia of childhood stop motion movies, to more modern holiday comedies, a good movie will never fail to get you in the Christmas spirit. Here is my ranking of some of the most popular Christmas classics.



12. *Die Hard* (1988): I understand that some people may not view this as a Christmas movie, hence why it is last on this list. Bruce Willis delivers a stellar performance in this film, and the action is unparalleled. His heroic defeat of the terrorists absolutely sums up what Christmas is all about: the birth of Jesus. Jesus may have died for our sins, but Bruce Willis killed for them.



11. *The Muppets Christmas Carol* (1992): In the greatest version of this iconic story since Dickens himself, the Muppets help Ebenezer Scrooge learn the true meaning of Christmas. By taking the original story, and adding that special Muppet twist, this film takes a stuffy 19th-century book and makes it suitable for children. By sitting through an entire Fozzie Bear comedy routine, Scrooge changed from a grumpy, Christmas-hating, old man into a very manly Muppet. Or was it a Muppet of a man? I forget...

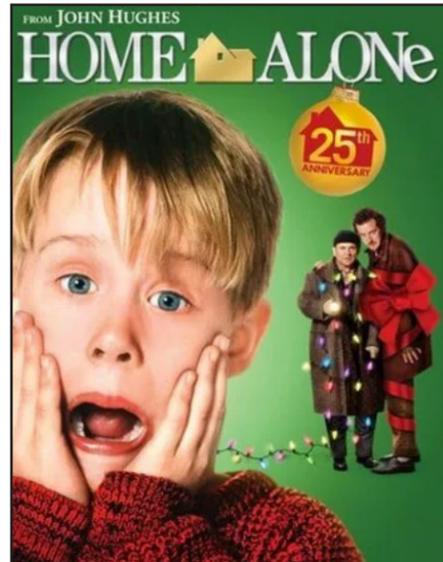


10. *A Charlie Brown Christmas* (1965): What can I say? It's an utter classic. *A Charlie Brown Christmas* is a cheerful example of all the joy that is felt during the Christmas season. It just

goes to show that even the most unattractive among us might still be wanted by a group of obnoxious children.



9. *How the Grinch Stole Christmas!* (1966): I guess there's just something so great about the animated Christmas shorts and *How the Grinch Stole Christmas!* is the prime example of this subgenre. The only reason it is so low on my list is because it encourages the mistreatment of animals. Max the dog did not deserve to have an antler tied to his head. Plus, the Whos were also pretty mean to the Grinch, so they kind of had it coming.



8. *Home Alone* (1990): Many people will say *Home Alone 2* is better, but you can't beat the charm of the original. If nothing else, at least appreciate the bravery of Kevin McCallister. Not many people would've had the guts to face off against Joe Pesci, let alone slam a can of paint into his face. Pair that with an Oscar-nominated score from John Williams, and you have an excellent Christmas film. It also doubles as an instructional video on how to defend your home without the aid of a firearm.



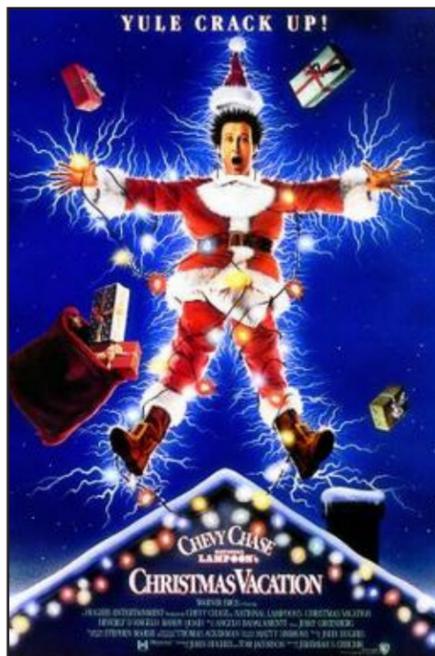
7. *A Christmas Story* (1983): Look, I know Ralphie gets a lot of hate for being kind of a wimp. Sure, Kevin McCallister would beat him senseless in a fight. And yeah, he did end up shooting his own eye out. But at least Ralphie was... Ralphie had that great... You know what, I got nothing. Why did I even put this movie ahead of *Home Alone*? Ralphie would have been eaten alive by Joe Pesci, and I'm not even sure he knew how to do his own laundry. His only redeeming quality was not getting his tongue stuck to that pole.



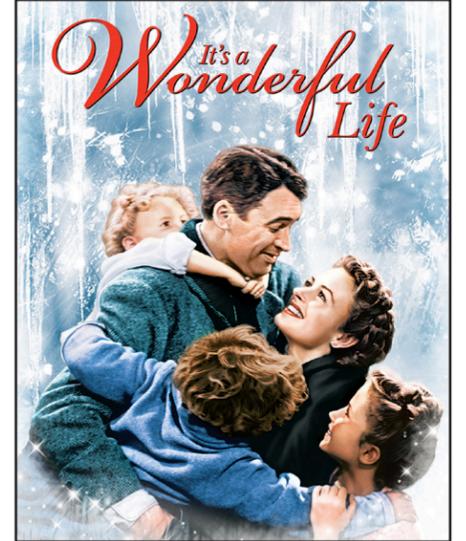
6. *The Polar Express* (2004): Look, I know that the animation is a little creepy to say the least, but come on, it is such a great story. The music is excellent, and the spontaneous dance number about hot chocolate is just perfect. Tom Hanks is always amazing and completely carries this movie to be the masterpiece that it is. Unfortunately, the movie is slightly dragged down by the obnoxious kid with glasses, but other than that, it's pure gold.



5. *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer* (1964): Obviously, the best character was Bumble the Abominable Snowman. Yes, that's his actual name. He was easily the most entertaining part of the entire movie, with the possible exception of the "Silver and Gold" song. It would be higher, but the annoying noise that Rudolph's nose made whenever it glowed really held the movie back.



4. *National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation* (1989): I don't know if you guys have noticed, but for some reason, Raising Cane's has revolved their Christmas decorations around this movie. I don't blame them. It is one of the classics of Christmas comedy movies. A sequel to *National Lampoon's Vacation* (1983), it continues the Griswold's story right into the holiday season. Chevy Chase plays the perfect comedic role as Clark Griswold and keeps audiences laughing every Christmas. Plus, the movie poster is so iconic, I had to include it on my list for that reason alone.



3. *It's a Wonderful Life* (1946): There is nothing better than a heartfelt classic, and *It's a Wonderful Life* conveys all there is to love about the Christmas season. The message alone brings me back to this wonderful film every year as the viewer watches the sheer impact that George Bailey had on the lives of those around him. The movie is so good that Mr. Bachynsky got goosebumps when he saw that I included it on the list. He also added that it's a mortal sin if you haven't seen it before you die.



2. *Santa Claus Is Comin' to Town* (1970): This movie brings so much charm to the Christmas season by just being the perfect classic movie. The stop motion of the film gives viewers a completely different experience to nearly any other movie and makes the project timeless. On top of the visuals, the surrounding characters open up the world to how Santa Claus came to be. I mean, come on, how can you not like songs such as "Put One Foot in Front of the Other" or "No More Toymakers to the King." The one factor holding this movie back from the number 1 spot however, is the fact that Mrs. Claus, aka Jessica, has the most awful glow down of any character in movie history.



1. *Elf* (2003): *Elf* is utterly perfect. I honestly find myself entering into the Christmas season every year more and more excited for my annual watch of this wonderful movie. Starring Will Ferrell, the viewer is welcomed to the best Christmas comedy there is to date, as it also tells a heartwarming story of the importance of family and love during the holiday season. The jokes get better and better with every watch, and I always find myself quoting all the ridiculous lines given by Buddy the Elf.

Play Christmas Music Right After Halloween



By Caden Webster ('23)
STAFF WRITER

It's the most wonderful time of the year! The halls are decked with boughs of holly, mistletoe is hung where you can see, and even Santa Claus is coming to town. Christmas is not Christmas without the addition of Christmas music. It signifies the start of a joyful season, where family, gift-giving, and delicious food are present.

Christmas music originated in the second century, when pagan carols were adapted to express the Christian faith. During the Middle Ages, the popularity of Christmas music ebbed and flowed. It was during the 1930s and onwards that it expanded to fit today's traditional Christmas music. The sheer amount of time that Christmas music, both religious and secular, has existed is evidence enough to show why it is a positive addition to the Christmas season.

There are some who believe Christmas music to be a negative part of Christmas. They feel as though the music overstimulates the brain, bringing down the good feelings associated with the season. This is simply not the case. In fact, a study by Scripps Hospital has shown that Christmas music has a "pleasant neurological effect," releasing the chemicals dopamine and serotonin to the brain.

I would assume most people like to feel happy; therefore, I'd recommend listening to Christmas music as soon as possible to keep a long duration of Christmas dopamine. Take advantage of the opportunities that Christmas music offers you, and you will never have another "bah, humbug" moment again this season.

In addition to the positive feelings



which Christmas music can bring, it also is tied to positive memories. When someone listens to a song, it generally brings back feelings and memories associated with the song. Think of decorating the Christmas tree or putting up Christmas lights. It would lack a certain feel without hearing about a certain reindeer named Rudolph, who had a very shiny nose.

This means that Christmas music is actually very beneficial for remembering the pleasant memories of Thanksgiving. Unfortunately, though, Thanksgiving lacks the music necessary to keep those special memories of this national holiday. No one is really going to want to turn on the radio and hear an upbeat song about cooking a turkey, but they will want to hear a slow, solemn song about having a blue Christmas. This is why I

encourage people to listen to Christmas music as soon as the first of November, so those precious turkey memories will be cherished forever.

Opposition to Christmas music may argue that hearing the same repetitive songs every year may induce annoyance or stress. Although this is an issue, it is easily remedied. There are almost 10,000 different songs on the topic of Christmas. If someone wants a little change in their Christmas routine, they can turn on one of the other 9,999 songs to fix the dullness.

Christmas music is structured to make people enjoy it. It has a very predictable pattern, and predictable patterns make a person subconsciously expect a certain thing to happen. When the lyric or note that was expected to happen

takes place, the brain triggers a positive response, because it was right.

Overall, Christmas music is scientifically proven to have positive effects. It has existed for generations, induces good feeling chemicals, brings back positive memories, and triggers positive responses within the brain. Christmas music is for everyone, and it can help brighten up the dull hours of the festive season.

Personally, I begin listening to Christmas music on the first of November. Thanksgiving should get credit where credit is due; however, preparation for the accepted Christmas season must come early. Listening to Christmas music here and there during November puts me in a good mood. When Christ-

SEE XMAS MUSIC, pg. 6

The Christmas Season Starts Too Early



By Griffin Cappiello ('24)
MANAGING EDITOR

Don't get me wrong, I love Christmas. Personally, I think it is one of the best holidays. The lights, the trees, the music, the overall feelings of the holiday season. It really is the most wonderful time of the year. That said, there is a time and a place for Christmas—and anytime before Thanksgiving is not it.

Allow me to set the scene for you. It was November 2, 2022, and I was feeling a little chilly. I decided to make a quick little stop at Starbucks before heading to school. I went in and out and grabbed a nice, warm cup of apple cider—the perfect beverage for a cool fall morning. Upon entering Star-

bucks, I came across a horrific scene. All of the employees were wearing red aprons. All of the cups had been replaced with new ones with "festive" designs. And worst of all, Christmas music was playing.

The over-commercialization of Christmas is not a new concept; major companies obviously want to capitalize off of a holiday concerned with the giving of gifts. But should Christmas decorations really be going up as all the Spirit Halloween stores come down?

In the Catholic Church, the Christmas season begins on the evening of December 24, at the Christmas Eve vigil mass. Contrary to American popular culture, the Christmas season extends after Christmas Day, all the way until the Sunday after January 5,

when the three kings of Orient arrived to visit the Baby Jesus and Epiphany is celebrated.

This is where we get the song "The Twelve Days of Christmas," which marks the time from the birth of Jesus Christ on Christmas Day to the visitation of the three Magi to the Baby Jesus by counting excessive numbers of birds, people, and rings.

The time leading up to Christmas, that is, what usually makes up the holiday season in American culture, is actually an entirely different season in the Church. Advent, which comes from the Latin word *adventus*, meaning "coming" or "arrival," makes up the four weeks leading up to Christmas, as Catholics expectantly wait and prepare for the birth of Christ.

As the liturgical year begins in the Catholic Church, people light candles on an Advent wreath to mark the passage of time and the nearing arrival of Jesus. Churches tend to begin to be adorned with the color purple, the chosen color representing Advent.

But I get it, it's a lot easier to listen to Christmas carols than to prepare for the coming of the Lord. The sweet melodic sounds of "Run, Rudolph, Run" can definitely drown out even the most devout Catholic singing "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel."

Personally, I think that Advent is an appropriate time to get the Christmas tree out. In my eyes, part of the preparation and anticipation of Advent includes decorating the house with lights, wreaths, and, of course, a Christmas tree.

However, certain establishments tend to choose to decorate early. Our

very own Saint Augustine High School had garlands and lights put up all the way back in October. Since then, the United States has celebrated Halloween, Veterans Day, and Thanksgiving (and Election Day if you choose to view that as a holiday). Superseding these holidays with Christmas is ridiculous—we barely had time to order pumpkin spice lattes before peppermint took its place.

This phenomenon does not occur during any other time of the year — you'll never see anyone in a rush to skip over Valentine's Day in order to drink even more beer for St. Patrick's Day. And yet, Thanksgiving always seems to get the short end of the stick.

It's no coincidence that people refuse to take the time to be thankful for what they have. In modern society, people seem to be more concerned with giving (and getting) gifts rather than giving thanks. But in reality, what greater gift is there than spending time with family around the Thanksgiving dinner table?

Let Thanksgiving have its due. Enjoy the turkey, enjoy the football, enjoy the pumpkin pie and family time. Once the dishes are all cleaned up, then the jingle-belling, the hall-decking, and the rocking around the Christmas tree can begin.

You best believe that on November 25, I'll be wearing my Santa hat, happily singing (secular) Christmas carols, watching the USMNT dominate the English a la 1776. But until then, I'll be the Grinch. Don't celebrate Christmas until after Thanksgiving. Bah, humbug!

The Saints Experience During WWII

An Excerpt from *The Saintsmen: A Century of Unity, Truth, and Love*



By **Edwin Hearn**
PRESIDENT

The following is an excerpt from pages 35-36 of *The Saintsmen: A Century of Truth and Love* written by President Edwin Hearn. It discusses what Saintsmen did during the time of World War II:

WWII brought prosperity to Saints, and the school focused its attention on serving both the San Diego community and U.S. war effort. Saints students learned first-aid, sold defense stamps, collected old papers and gathered scrap iron.

During this time, Fr. Kirk had welcomed any chaplain to dine or stay at the monastery before shipping out. The Augustinian community also served Camp Miramar. Long after the war, many diocesan priests and members of different religious orders recalled the San Diego Augustinians' hospitality and extraordinary goodwill.

During the war, many friars volunteered for chaplain duty in the armed services. With the build-up for the war in the Pacific, San Diego became a port of departure for thousands of soldiers, including eight West Coast Augustinians who served their country as chaplains during this time. All eight friars served at Saints before the war or right after signing the peace treaty that ended hostilities with Japan.

Chaplain's Corner



Fr. **Max Villeneuve, OSA**
COLUMNIST

Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, the true Sun of Justice, so shone upon the earth as not to leave the heavens, remaining there eternally, but coming here for a time; there determining the everlasting day, here enduring the day of humanity; there living perpetually without the passage of time, here dying in time without the inroads of sin; there remaining in life without end, here freeing our life from the destruction of death. There He enkindles the minds of angels with the fiery splendor of His majesty; here He determines the lives and characters of men. There light is received which no one extinguishes by sin; here Man is born who clearly defines all sin. There God is with God; here He is God and Man. There He is Light of Light; here, the Light which enlightens every man. There by a word He spreads out the heavens; here He shows a way of reaching the heavens. There with His Father He confirmed the mystery of His nativity; here He formed His human members in His Mother. There sitting at the right hand of the Father, here lying in a manger; there feeding the angels, here on earth a hungry Child; there unfailing Bread with perfect powers, here, along with speechless children, needing the nourishment of milk; there doing good, here suffering evil; there never dying, here rising after death and bestowing eternal life on mortals. God became man so that man might become God. The Lord took the form of a servant so that man might be turned to God. The Founder and Inhabitant of heaven dwelt upon earth so that man might rise from earth to heaven.

-St. Augustine, Excerpt of Sermon 191

Two of these friars, Fr. Henry Carr, OSA and Fr. Al Monte, OSA were detained at Santo Tomas, a prison camp in the Philippines, from April 1942 until their liberation in February 1945.

In the 1944 Saints yearbook, Thomas McLaughlin '43, a young navigator, was presumed killed in action over Nazi Germany. He was later liberated from a POW camp before the yearbook was released and would surprise his mother when he returned home. He became an Augustinian priest, serving until his death.

Saints students had a front row seat to WWII. With relatives and friends deploying through San Diego to the war in the Pacific, San Diego was constantly in motion. Battle and supply ships came and went from the harbor at Point Loma and North Island. Looking up, the boys saw hundred of B-24 Liberators, the primary bomber during the war. And right in their own backyard, the PBY Catalina Seaplanes that could land on the water were being built by Consolidated-Vultee Corporation.

From the hilltops of Mission Hills, Saintsman Larry Manzer '53, had an eyewitness account of the sacrifice being made by so many to defend democracy. As a small boy, he remembered the excitement of seeing Marines and Navy sailors shipping out to the Pacific Theater year-round.

Hal Rover '52 saw so many planes flying overhead from his La Mesa family home at the top of Mt. Helix that he could name each plane by its sound. After Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, six Saintsmen volunteered for military service and did not return to Saints until after Christmas break their senior year: Edwin Murray, Solly Hemus, Andy Shaules, Gerald Hartell, Otto Ketland, and Melvin Ketland. Solly Hemus, 17 years old, had his mother sign for him as he was not old



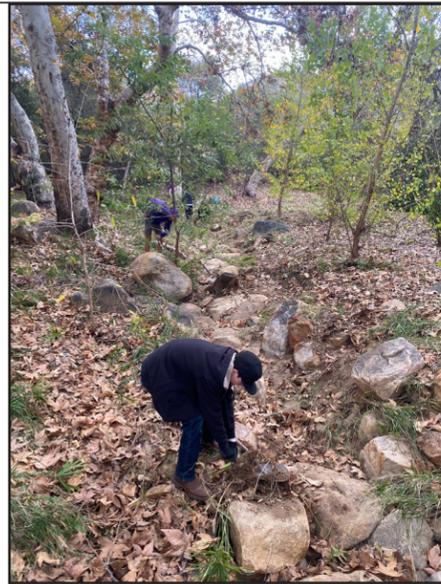
From Ed Hearn's book *The Saintsmen*

enough to serve.

In the 1942 yearbook, two Gold Star dedications took place on Vasey Patio for fallen Saintsmen. A Gold Star flag flew under the Stars and Stripes for the duration of WWII. The flag reminded the Saints students that freedom was not free and required personal sacrifice. Saintsmen realized they might face these dangers after graduating high school as well.

In the 1943 yearbook, four Saintsmen who passed in the war effort were hon-

ored: John Dougherty '25, Fred Simpson '32, Phil Kilcoyne '37, and John Berg '39. Phil Kilcoyne died in the initial attacks on Wake Island on December 7, 1941. Of the 35 graduates in 1944, 28 served. Many of the seniors were uncertain about their future, but believed there would be a victory with God's guidance. The quote in the 1942 yearbook showcased the power of Saints faith: "Foremost in our minds, let there be a prayer that God may grant us victory with a lasting peace!"



SERVICE Noah Villafana ('23)
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the Brotherhood. "It was super productive, plus it was fun to work together with our peers and develop closer relationships," senior Nick Aldrete said.

Saintsmen were also able to work hand-in-hand with their teachers, often with a level of competitiveness. "Mr. Yoakum didn't think we'd be able to remove a massive stump, but we proved him wrong," junior Sam Fries said.

The day of service is an especially rewarding experience for teachers, who get to return to the same locations year after year to see the lasting impact of Saints' volunteer efforts. At Oak Oasis County Park, Mr. Pruter was shocked to see that the oak trees his group had planted five years ago had grown almost four times his height. "That made my day," he remarked. And in the case of these trees, the impacts of the Saints day of service will be felt for nearly 200 years!

MIDTERMS

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ty's policies are becoming louder. With Trump confirming a presidential bid in 2024, the future of the Republican party is still up in the air.

With the Democratic Party's surprising victory, Joe Biden is set to end the gridlock he has faced during his first two years in office. He will most likely call for support from his fellow party members for sweeping reforms, which he believes will help our nation's struggling economy.

Democrat or Republican, the future of the United States government is uncertain. Our nation is struggling, and our people are growing restless. One can only hope that in one of the nation's most significant moments of disunity, Americans from all over the country can come together and unite against the enormous problems we currently face as a country.

PRUTER

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same terms. It's always a good compliment when the person has never heard you sing and they say, "Oh my god, I didn't know you could sing!" That's kind of the goal in some sense.

TA: For people who have never taken one of your classes, in what ways has music been involved in your teaching?

P: As you may know, there is the Reggae Friday tradition in my class. Only reggae music is allowed on Fridays. If it's Friday and there's reggae music, you can't be in a bad mood. It's impossible. Then in the classroom, when we get to the 1960s, we look at popular songs of the decade that revolve

around the three common themes of the 60s: war protests against Vietnam, the civil rights movement, and hippies, psychedelia, and counterculture. They have to analyze the songs and present them. We look at the lyrics, and we look at the context of what the songs were about and how they influenced society.

TA: Of course, I have to ask: What are some of your favorite albums and songs?

P: The Beatles' *Abbey Road* comes to mind. My favorite Beatles song would have to be "A Day in the Life." There's so many good albums. I've been listening to a lot of Real Estate lately. Their album *The Main Thing*, I play that a lot. Randomly, I've started listening to Pulp again. They're a band from England. *Common People*. That's a great album in mid-90s Brit-pop. A guilty pleasure musically is always Oasis. I love Oasis' first two albums, I could definitely be made fun of for that.

XMAS MUSIC

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mastime comes around, I feel mentally prepared to take it on. This early listening may seem radical to some, as it most definitely is, but if you're not hardcore enough to start on November 1st, mid-November or at least the day after Thanksgiving is better than nothing.

Christmas music unites everyone during the holiday season, bringing people together under one common interest. I would encourage everyone to listen to some Christmas music this holiday season, even those with hearts two sizes too small. The only warning I have: watch out for Mariah Carey, all she wants for Christmas is YOU.



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Dr. Griffin, Ph.D: The Lies Behind Christmas

By Griffin Cappiello ('24)
MANAGING EDITOR

The holiday season has always mystified me. There are so many odd traditions and customs that we as a society choose to practice, and I often find myself asking, "Why?"

I believe that the biggest culprits for these strange practices are Christmas characters. From encouraging children to follow a life of crime, to overt messages supporting communism, the figures from your childhood Christmas carols and movies have a negative impact on modern society.

I understand that you may be apprehensive of this subject matter. However, I, Dr. Griffin, Ph.D, have a doctorate in Christmas studies. If anyone knows what's really going on here, it's me.

So just hear me out. What you learn may surprise you...

First, allow me to direct your attention to the popular Christmas song "Santa Claus is Comin' to Town." A seemingly innocent tune, celebrating the joy that comes with a jolly man with the spirit of giving to others. But, alas, there is much more behind this song.

You better watch out, because this man is no friend, but rather a predatory stalker who encourages illegal practices. The song clearly references Santa Claus' international network of spies that he uses to watch children while they sleep. He sneaks into their house at night in order to take their cookies and milk.

"But Dr. Griffin," you may be saying, "Santa leaves presents for the children!" Indeed he does. However, by entering one's house without their consent, with the intent to take something that does not belong to him, he is committing burglary in the state of California. Is this the role model that you want your children to follow? Trespassing, breaking and entering, and theft?

If you still require more evidence of the sinful nature of Santa Claus, look no further than his name. Rearrange the letters in the word Santa, and what do you get? That's right - Satan. He is attempting to counteract the birth of Jesus by running an international crime scheme on Christmas Eve.

Santa is not the only criminal at-large running rampant through the streets during the Christmas season. Even Frosty the Snowman committed atrocious acts in



the presence of children. He quite literally ran throughout the town, not bothering to stop at red lights or wait at crosswalks. Apparently he thinks he's above the law because he's made of snow.

Frosty even disobeyed a direct order from a law enforcement officer. The police man on the corner clearly told him to stop, but Frosty ignored him, instead continuing his crime spree throughout the city. What's worse, he did all of this with children following behind him. Frosty encouraged the children to resist arrest, racing through the streets with a complete disregard to the safety and well-being of those around him. Some role model.

Other Christmas figures may not encourage outright crime, but instead are proponents of something much worse - communism. It's no surprise that Rudolph's shiny nose burns fiery red in the night sky. It's the only thing that you're supposed to be able to see, meaning they only want you to think about the communist messages of the Soviet Union. It's no coincidence that Rudolph's antlers suspiciously look like a hammer and a sickle.

In Rudolph's song, many of the lines have echo lines that are added at the end. For example, the line "You would even say it glows," is followed by an echo of "Like a lightbulb." At the end of the song, it is suggested—rather arrogantly, in my opinion—that Rudolph will "go down in history." The echo that follows compares him to Christopher Columbus: a man who lives in infamy. If Rudolph is on the same level as Columbus, who knows what atrocities he has committed? His song

does not provide us with the answer, but one can only assume the horrors of his actions given his obvious past as a Soviet sleeper agent.

Another, slightly more subtle, communist in the Christmas tradition is none other than the Grinch himself. Sure, he may be green, but that's clearly a distraction to throw you off of his trail. His actions, on the other hand, have the undeniable stench of a Marxist.

He stole presents from the hard-working people of Whoville, who put in long hours in order to purchase said presents.

SPORTS

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The main focus over the offseason has been mostly developing fundamental skills, building strength, and encouraging team chemistry between returning members and newcomers. Most of the varsity team is composed of underclassmen, but with proper leadership and practices six times a week, they feel confident and prepared for the start of the season. There are a total of eight games scheduled for the entire season, all of which are organized by the Southern California Interscholastic Rugby Federation (SCIRF). This program ensures the highest level of competition for our varsity rugby team.

Soccer

The soccer team has a hot streak of four consecutive league titles, and they begin the year looking to continue those impressive accomplishments with a star-studded team. Led by veterans like Jack Elgas, Dylan Kelley, and Iain Wagner, the varsity team is ready to prove its abilities against competitive teams such as Torrey Pines, San Pasqual, and Cathedral Catholic in the Open Division. They currently sit ranked at third in the county, which gives them a shot at a CIF title.

At the North County Elite tournament, they are hoping to demonstrate their potential as an elite team in the San Diego Area. Then, they hope to show their skills against the top teams in the state at

Then, he redistributed the gifts to those that he deemed needed them the most. Sure, he claimed that his heart was a few sizes too small, but a good dose of capitalism would surely help his heart grow even more.

Finally, there is the generally unpleasant undertones found in many other Christmas songs. I'll just list off a few for you rapidfire, just to spare you from having to suffer the next time it comes on in the grocery store.

"Run Rudolph Run" tells the story of a speeding maniac committing vehicular manslaughter on the freeway.

Mariah Carey's "All I Want for Christmas Is You" explains her succumbing to the innate sexual desires of the flesh.

"Let It Snow! Let It Snow! Let It Snow!" is about a man addicted to cocaine, excitedly awaiting his next high.

You'll certainly have a "Blue Christmas" when you're alone on Christmas Eve, slowly dying of asphyxiation.

At the end of the day, I can't stop you from celebrating Christmas. I can only reveal to you the true meaning of what goes on behind the beloved holiday. But if there's anything a doctorate in Christmas studies has taught me, it's that there's always more to your favorite Christmas story than originally meets the eye. So enjoy your winter holidays, but this year, maybe celebrate Hanukkah if you want to avoid the wrongdoings that occur around Christmastime.

an invite-only college showcase up north at Chapman University. These events hope not only to prepare our Saintsmen for a successful year but also experience competition at a higher level.

The season opened with a definitive 5-0 victory against Granite Hills, and the team looks to build upon their record in the coming weeks with matchups against Canyon Crest and San Diego.

Wrestling

The wrestling team is ready to rumble after an impressive season last year. Kevin Clements, now #8 in the state at 195 pounds, put up a great effort at the CIF State Wrestling Tournament in Bakersfield, California. Clements was the first Saints wrestler to go to state in over 20 seasons.

The team enters the new season with new head coach, Mike Perez, who was a former D1 wrestler at Stanford. As the former head coach at Valhalla until 2011 and the assistant coach at Saints until 2020, Coach Perez brings new leadership to the team.

Team superstars Blaze Ackerman and Clements enter their senior season with high ambitions and eyes on the state title. The upcoming youth in Gabe Estrada and Braeden Steele help provide the competition needed for a winning team. The wrestling team trains weekdays as they strive to win league.

Steve!!!!!!

by Edgar Alcoser ('23)



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