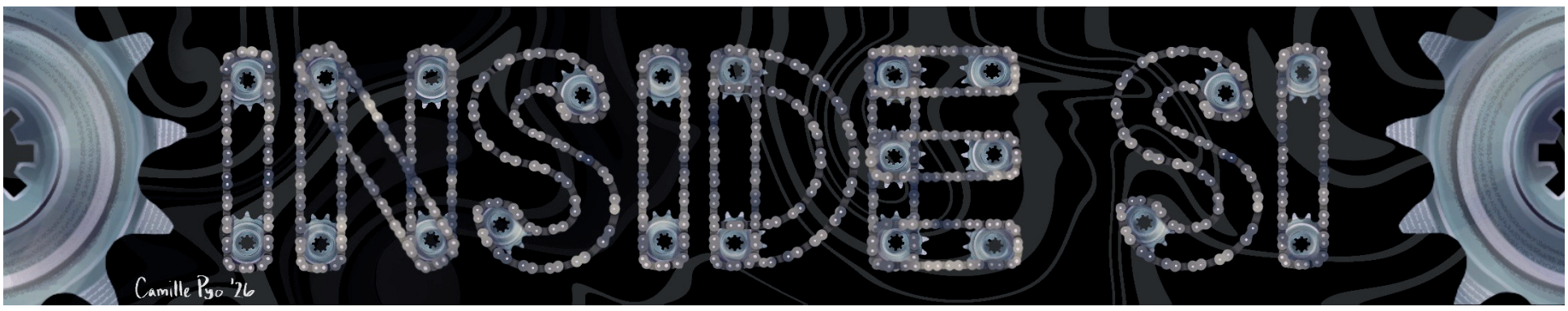

VOL 74 ISSUE 5 THE NEWSPAPER OF ST. IGNATIUS COLLEGE PREPARATORY DECEMBER 12, 2025

FEATURE

In this issue, we wanted to explore the "gears of SI" and dive deeper into what makes SI run smoothly.

On the surface, SI seems effortlessly maintained, but *Inside SI* uncovered the variety of intricate systems that sustain our school.

Through conversations with SI faculty and current students, *Inside SI* noticed the extent of coordination, care, and behind-the-scenes labor that contribute to every aspect of campus life. *Inside SI* wanted to highlight the decision-makers, visionaries, and volunteers who support SI's functions.

We hope this issue teaches you more about our own school so that we can appreciate the moving parts that come together to form a cohesive community.

- Editors-in-Chief -

Feature

Trustees Elect Joe Vollert '84 to be School President

Evelyn Conboy '26, Lucas Liang '26, Jordan Liu '26 and Annika Watkins '26
Editors-in-Chief

On Wednesday, November 19, SI's 16-member Board of Trustees unanimously elected Joseph A. Vollert '84 as the school's 32nd president.

In a statement, Niall P. McCarthy '85, chair of the Board of Trustees, said, "Joe has an unmatched dedication to the school, a keen intellect, boundless energy, and is constantly seeking to enhance the student's experience at SI. In short, he is undoubtedly the right person for the job."

Mr. Vollert, who had been serving as acting president since the passing of Eddie Reese, S.J., in August, was previously in charge of the school's fundraising and strategic initiatives as vice president for advancement. A graduate of Santa Clara University and San Francisco State University, Mr. Vollert's elevation to the presidency follows a three-decade-long career at SI as a teacher, coach and administrator.

"I love the mission of the school and what Jesuit education does writ large, and I think that's what's kept me here," Mr. Vollert told *Inside SI* after being named permanent president. "It's never felt like work."

Before his career, Mr. Vollert was a student at SI, graduating with the class of 1984. "I learned to be very inquisitive and curious and to not be deterred by any kind of setbacks in life," he recalled of his time as an SI student.

Mr. Vollert will be the second president in SI's history not to be a Jesuit, with the first being John Knight, who served from 2012 to 2014. "The Jesuits foresaw a time when they weren't going to have sufficient numbers to lead all of the schools," Mr. Vollert said. "So many of us lay people that work here, myself included, have gone through what the Jesuits call the spiritual exercises."

"The last piece is, I think as a lay person,

Continued on Page 8: VOLLERT

Sports

Basketball Preview

Read on Page 14

Liv Sanchez '27 eludes defenders to score against Miramonte.

Raymond Whitley '26 takes control of the court.

The 2025 Women's Varsity Basketball Team strategize their next play.

Shawn Boquiren '26 drives to the basket.

Julia Alcantara '26 scans the court.

Feature

How Wellness Counseling Keeps SI Running

Lauren Yu '27
Managing Editor

While many students think of counselors as the people they meet with when mandatory, their role extends far beyond scheduling questions and college planning. For SI counselors, work begins with focusing on every student's needs. "A counselor is available for whatever the needs of the student might be," Personal and Academic Counselor Ms. Merrell explained, "and every student has different needs."

When freshmen first come to SI, they have mandatory check-ins with counselors. While these check-ins are helpful for freshmen to integrate into the school community, Ms. Merrell noted that building trust takes time, and that perfectionism, a common challenge, is something SI Counselors can support students working through. Even those who appear organized and on top of everything carry heavy pressures and stress.

In addition, Ms. Merrell also de-scribed the common experience of introverted students trying to navigate a school culture that can prioritize more extroverted traits or experiences. Large class discussions and social expectations can make some students feel out of place, even when they are excelling academically. Helping students adapt to those dynamics without losing themselves in the process is a key part of counseling. Ms. Merrell continued, "Our job is to adapt to unique situations. The school gives us flexibility to meet students' needs while still helping them meet expectations."

In addition to academic counselors, there are also college counselors that support students as they plan for their future. Also, SI's Wellness Center provides licensed mental health therapists. This can be a vital part of constructing a community where students can thrive on campus. We are very fortunate, as a school, to have so many crucial components to student wellness. The school invests in prioritizing the availability of licensed mental health professionals, since academic and mental health needs are inseparable in student wellness.

Ms. Merrell reflected on the effects of the pandemic on SI Counseling,

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Robotics Competes in Madera

Farrah Almajdalani ’26 — Managing Editor

On November 7-9th, the SI robotics team participated in the Madtown Throwdown offseason robotics competition for the 2025 game REEFSCAPE in Madera, California.

With 48 teams competing in the event, the robotics team worked tirelessly to perfect their robot over weeks. Natalie Wong ’27 noted, “Everyone’s learning journey and hard work in the lab throughout the months paid off well when we got to present our operational robot Lemon at Madtown! Not only did all the veteran and new members perform fantastically during the offseason, we were really impressed to see everyone’s contribution in scouting, programming, and fixing the robot at the event. My favorite part of the trip is definitely the team bonding at Dave and Buster’s after a long day of competition and the van rides to and from the competition. We are so proud of everyone and excited to see what the season holds for us!”

Team 5924 celebrates after a hard-fought competition .

As the robotics team prepares for upcoming competitions, Raith Roland ’27 reflected, “Overall, the competition was a great learning opportunity. We created an entirely new robot just for this competition, but also saw new people step up into roles they’ve never been in before. It’s a brand new year, with new members, but we’re all ready for the 2026 competition.”

Support your classmates involved in robotics this season and swing by the SI robotics lab to see your peers in action!

The Robotics team prepares to head over to Madera.

SI Gambles the Night Away

Mika Cinco ’27 — Contributing Editor

Overnight, SI’s McCullough Gymnasium was transformed into a Las Vegas styled casino night with the theme of James Bond. Students received “Cat Cash,” the school’s themed currency for the night, upon entering. Cat Cash could be used at various game stations, including blackjack, roulette, and poker tables. At the end of the evening, participants exchanged their winnings for raffle tickets. Organized by the Student Council with the support of Ms. Finn and Mr. Glosser.

Casino night was a great success and had many winners with over 200 prizes. Member of Poker Club Connor Kam ’27 said, “It was great seeing so many people enjoy Casino Night especially their love of poker.” Casino Night had Mahjong hosted by the Chinese Culture Club, blackjack, horse betting, and many more fun activities. The Bannan Theatre hosted a mentalist, where he showed tricks to students. Overall it was a great time!

Senior boys exclaim after a tough loss.

The mentalist reads students’ minds.

Winners pose with their prizes.

Bryce Killion ’28 and Andria Spink ’28 smile with their tickets.

Juniors Attend Immersion Solidarity Night

Evie Chen ’26 — Managing Editor

On Wednesday, November 5, St. Ignatius juniors, parents of juniors, and seniors gathered for the Immersion Solidarity Evening. At this annual event, juniors and their parents attend presentations made by seniors who went on immersion the previous summer. The event kicked off with student speakers Kate Ozaeta ’26, Gio Gonzalez ’26, Talia McGrath ’26, and Boyd Killion ’26 recounting their personal experiences with Immersion to the junior class. Mr. Mauricio Diaz De Leon and Dr. Kelley McCann, the Arrupe Center for Social Justice team, led the event and gave juniors and their parents an overview of Immersion values and logistics.

For seniors, the event served as a final time to gather with their Immersion groups and bring their journey full circle. The seniors who presented to the Class of ’27 attended the exact same Immersion Solidarity Evening one year ago, where they were presented to by the Class of ’25. After the event, juniors decide if they want to apply to Immersion and later attend all Immersion preparation events to get ready for their Immersion trips. The Immersions for the summer of 2025 included domestic and international locations such as Kenya; Chicago, Illinois; El Salvador; and Tacoma, Washington.

Overall, Immersion is a core tradition at St. Ignatius that offers opportunities for students to broaden their perspectives by immersing themselves in order to learn more about social justice issues around the world.

The L’Arche Immersion Work on the Conservation Farm.

WYWA Horror Competition: Nightmares for Days!

Lauren Yu ’27 — Managing Editor

The Women’s Youth Writing Association (WYWA) wrapped up October with its Horror Writing Competition, showcasing some of the most chilling, imaginative, and original student storytelling of the year. After an impressive lineup of submissions, three standout entries took the top awards.

1st Place – “Support Group” by Tory Robb

A grieving woman attends a mysterious support group hoping to reconnect with her late husband, only to discover that she is the one who never made it out of the fire.

2nd Place – “Take Me on the Other Side” by Colton McKie

A photographer discovers an uncanny old camera that reveals a distorted world behind the lens, pulling him into a reality where reflections move first.

3rd Place – “Are You Human?” by Georgia Parr

In a collapsing world stalked by inhuman creatures, a terrified survivor begins to question the nature of the visitors she lets inside, and whether anything outside her door is truly human.

These winning works will be published in WYWA’s end-of-year novel, so keep an eye out to read the full stories in print. If you’re interested in becoming a published author yourself or want to contribute to the end-of-year collection, WYWA welcomes new voices.

Email wywa.sicp@gmail.com for more information.

SI's Christmas Drive: The Season of Giving

Ava Miseray '29 Contributing Editor

It's the holiday season and along with Christmas, the season of giving back is upon us. SI is hosting their annual Christmas Drive, partnering with organizations like St. Dominic's, Ayudando Latinas a Soñar (ALAS), HealthRIGHT 360, and St. Anthony's. The goal of the drive is to respond to the challenges of our time by helping those in need. Through this initiative, students learn to live with and for others a main motto at Saint Ignatius. Like the years before, students are asked to contribute in a multitude of ways. Donations of hygiene products, new toys, and clothes are much appreciated and will go to families and children who may not have access to these items.

St. Dominic's and St. Anthony's are organizations that focus on food insecurity in the San Francisco and Marin communities. St. Dominic's provides both. housed and un-housed people with a place to get fresh groceries, a hot meal, showers, and laundry services. Similarly, St. Anthony's serves hot meals and distributes clothing to families and people in need. Through monetary and clothing donations, the community at SI can support 260 families with groceries and 450 kids will be able to receive toys.

ALAS is a Latino led organization that aims to create a community that celebrates their culture and traditions. The name, Ayudando Latinas a Soñar, means helping Latinas dream. They provide services such as mental health care, educational support, and assistance with the immigration process. While ALAS focuses on the cultural side of identity, HealthRIGHT 360 is everything healthcare. They help rehabilitate people back to health, recovery, and self sufficiency. Not only do they provide aid for physical health,

The Christmas Drive comes to a successful end.

but they also offer programs for mental health. These amazing organizations need SI's collaboration in donations to bring the Christmas spirit to every corner of our city. As a result, we will be "widening our circle of human concern" as Reverend Ben McBride challenged the SI community at the Social Justice Summit last year.

Dance Workshop Performs "The Body Speaks"

Ava Miseray '29 Contributing Editor

Dancers perform with fluidity and grace.

The Saint Ignatius College Preparatory Dance Workshop Program presented its annual Fall Dance Concert, themed "The Body Speaks." Performances took place on Thursday, November 20th at 7:00 p.m. and Friday, November 21st at 3:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. in Wiegand theater.

This year's dance concert drew inspiration from the renowned choreographer, Alvin Ailey, whose work celebrated culture, emotion, and the power of the human body to tell stories that words cannot. Each dance in the program reflects Ailey's influence, blending expressive movement with sharp shapes and transformation.

Pieces such as "The Illusion of Action" and "Rising" showcased the depth and variety of this year's choreography. Dancer Mika Cinco '27 shared his anticipation: "We've practiced for so long—I can't wait for people to see it. I'm most excited to perform 'The Illusion of Action.' I love the robotic feeling and the creativity this piece holds, it's so different."

Dance teacher and director Ms. Claire Calalo Berry reflected on the creative process: "The most challenging dance to create was 'La Fiesta.' It's our most theatrical piece—with a big cast, set elements, and a lot of energy. It really brought everyone together." Adding a unique cultural element, the Polynesian Dance Club also performed, honoring traditions a nd story-telling through rhythm and gesture, another way that "the body speaks." This year's Fall Dance Concert delivered an evening of emotion, artistry, and celebration. "The Body Speaks" reminded audiences that movement can express what words sometimes cannot.

Thank you to all who attended and supported SI's arts!

Dance Workshop dances the night away.

Fall Play *Our Town* Amazes Crowds

Alexandra Innes '28 Contributing Editor

On the week of November 11, the SI community came together to watch and celebrate the amazing work of everyone involved in putting on the play, *Our Town*, by Thornton Wilder. The performances ran from Wednesday to Saturday and consisted of two casts, Heliotrope and Sunflower.

Emily waits in anticipation before getting married.

It was directed by Fontana Butterfield Guzmán and was dedicated to Father Reese. Last year, Father Reese referenced this play during one of his homilies. He called for us to be the poets of this world and be aware of what's around us. This play serves as a reminder to become those poets.

Not only was it awesome to see our classmates do something that clearly brings them so much joy, but it told a very moving story about the importance of being present. The cast put in long hours and did more memorizing than most can even fathom, but they still found ways to have fun.

When asked what his favorite part of the experience was, stage manager Alex Goldberg' 26 said, "My favorite part is how the community in the play grows stronger as we perfect the performances. Through many rehearsals, not only do we get better, but we find community in the little moments, like me forgetting my lines in rehearsal, or talking about something new to improvise. We find joy throughout the play from each other, and we put that joy into our performances."

The townspeople mourn the loss of Emily Webb Gibbs.

The audience definitely saw that joy come through, and it was contagious. There was so much energy in that room and looking around at the intermission, everyone was full of smiles.

The play is about living life to the fullest, and being present for our communities. Not only did everyone that came to support the cast get to watch a great show, but they also got to show up for their peers, students, and family members .

The Choral Concert

The Choir is given direction to produce beautiful music.

The singers get ready to bow after a great performance.

The stage crew utilizes lighting to create ambiance that matches with the songs sung.

Boots and Beats: A CMA Roundup

Annika Watkins '26 — Editor-in-Chief

The 59th Annual CMA Awards on November 19, 2025, brought major energy to Nashville's Bridgestone Arena and delivered one of the most memorable shows in recent years. Lainey Wilson, who served as host, dominated the night with wins for Entertainer of the Year, Female Vocalist of the Year, and Album of the Year for Whirlwind. Her performance and stage presence set the tone for an evening focused on both strong artistry and the evolving sound of country music.

Rising artists made a noticeable impact as well, reflecting the surge in country music's popularity over the past year. Ella Langley and Riley Green earned widespread attention after winning Single of the Year, Song of the Year, and Music Video of the Year for their breakout duet "You Look Like You Love Me." Their success highlights how newer voices are connecting with a younger audience. Cody Johnson earned Male Vocalist of the Year, and Zach Top was recognized as New Artist of the Year, offering a glimpse of the performers who are poised to lead the genre as its fanbase continues to expand.

Established acts also received applause. Brooks & Dunn added another Vocal Duo of the Year award to their long list of achievements, showing that veteran artists remain influential in today's country music landscape.

The 2025 CMA Awards showcased a blend of tradition, fresh talent, and standout performances, creating a ceremony that reflected both the history of country music and its exciting direction.

Ella Langley and Riley Green accept the Single of the Year Award for "You Look Like You Love Me."

A First Look at the 2026 Grammy Nominees

Elizabeth Foster '27 — Contributing Editor

The 2026 Grammy Award nominations were announced on November 7, and this year's list is packed with big names, up-and-coming artists gaining recognition, and tons of fresh voices. With this annual celebration set for February 1, 2026, at Los Angeles's Crypto.com Area, the music world has plenty to say about the nominees for next year.

Kendrick Lamar leads the pack with nine nominations, the most nominations for any artist this year. His album *GNX* earned him another spot in the Artist of the Year category, reinforcing his status as one of the most influential rappers in modern music. His collaboration with SZA on "Luther" also broke many records, proving his continual shaping of the hip hop genre.

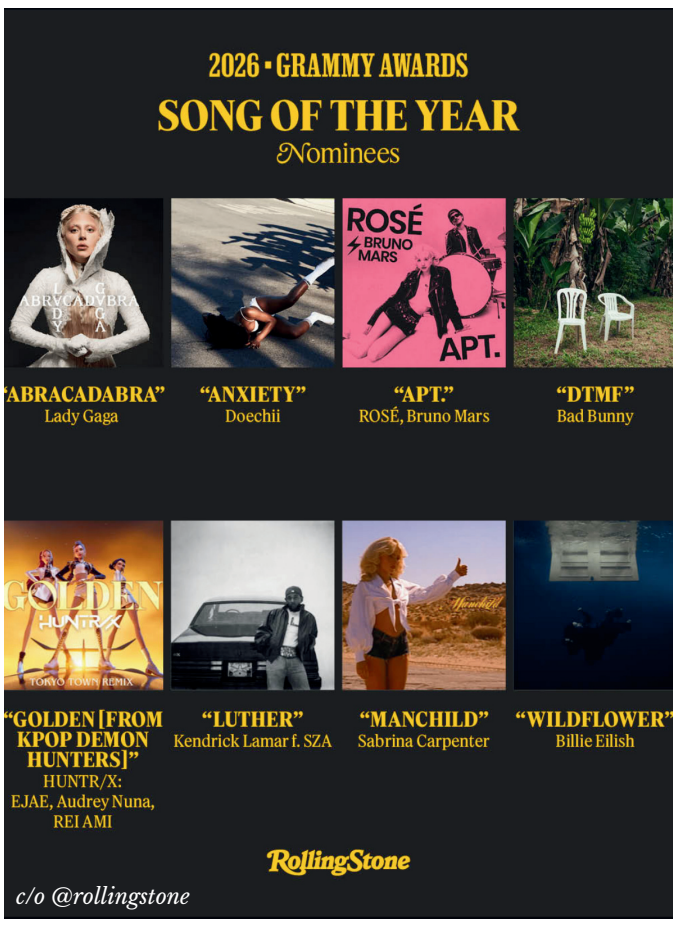
Behind him was Lady Gaga, whose album *Mayhem* and its hit single "Abracadabra" picked up several of the night's biggest nominations. Bad Bunny also made headlines by earning the top-category nominations with his Spanish language music, marking a major moment of recognition for Latin pop music on the global stage.

The Album of the Year race is especially competitive, featuring a mix of established stars and rising talents. Sabrina Carpenter's *Man's Best Friend*; Tyler, The Creator's *Chromakopia*; and Leon Thomas's *Mutt* round out the list, bringing a different style and fanbase to the competition.

The Song of the Year nominees emphasize strong songwriting and cultural impact. Songs like "Luther" and "DtMF" bring forward themes of identity, community, and reflection that resonated strongly throughout the year.

One of the most closely watched categories is Best New Artist, where the field is packed with fresh faces. This includes Addison Rae, The Marías, Leon Thomas, Olivia Dean, Katseye, and several others, showing the diversity that is coming to the music scene.

With the ceremony only months away, there is tons of speculation as to who will win each category. The 2026 Grammys are shaping to capture exactly where music is right now: diverse and constantly evolving.



The Rolling Stone poster highlights the Song of the Year Nominees.

Good News! Wicked: For Good

Mika Cinco '27 Contributing Editor

Wicked Hot Takes:

I thought it was really good. The themes of friendship were really important and powerful. I loved the characters and I loved watching them on the screen.

– Arwen Hwang '27

Although I enjoyed the second *Wicked* movie, it didn't land the way the first one did. The new songs didn't really move me, and even though the visuals were stunning, the story felt shaky in the second half. Elphaba's goal to "make good" got muddled, and overall it just wasn't adapted as strongly as the original."

– Sophie Barsoian '26

I liked Elphaba and Fiyero together more than than Glinda and Fiyero. Glinda and he are very forced and not natural, but with Elphaba, he actually liked her and their connection was better.

– Boyd Killion '26

I liked the movie. I felt bad for Elphaba's character. I also really liked Madame Morrible's character, but I know she wasn't the most popular character. I thought she was very evil and interesting to watch.

– Isaiah Marx '28

c/o Variety

c/o Variety

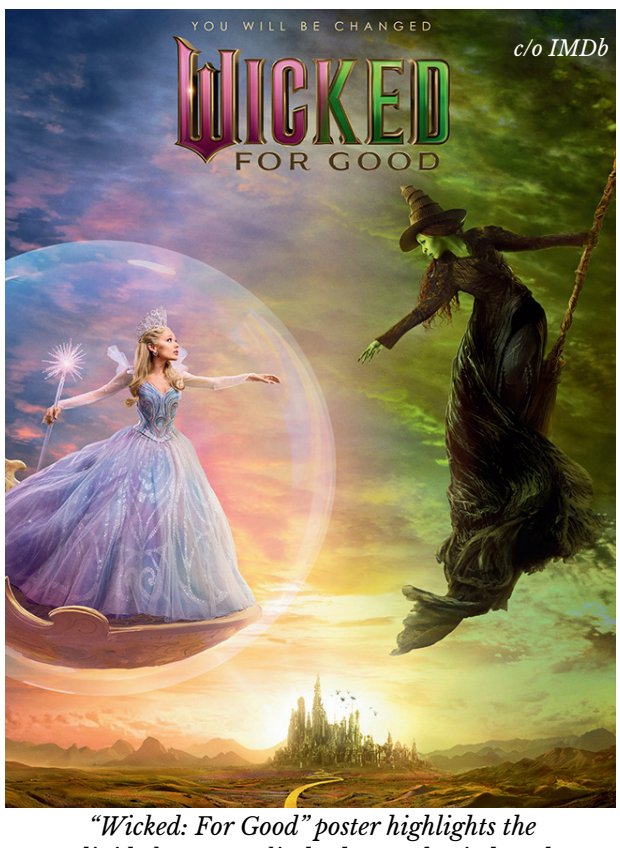
Cynthia Erivo, who plays Elphaba, and Ariana Grande, who plays Glinda, share a vulnerable moment of friendship.

"Good News!" The second half of the Broadway hit musical *Wicked* is finally here. On November 21st, *Wicked: For Good* officially hit theaters with its star-studded cast. After a long year of waiting for the conclusion of Elphaba and Glinda's story in Oz, Director Jon M. Chu is here to break our hearts. With the two new songs added ("No Place Like Home" and "The Girl in the Bubble"), it was surely a heart throbber.

For Good goes for the emotional core of the story: Cynthia Erivo's Elphaba and her relationship with Oz, the corruption behind the Wizard's regime, the caging of animals, the building of the yellow brick road, and, most importantly, the increasingly strained relationship between the Wicked Witch of the West and the Good Witch.

Many of you may know and have watched The Wizard of Oz. But unlike the classic tale, the film focuses on the pain caused by the storyline of how those who do good still can be punished. "No Good Deed" goes unpunished is the story of how Elphaba heroically wants to free the animals yet is painted as the villain.

Janice Yan '27 shared, "The soundtrack was amazing and it was a really emotional experience." From mirrors, sticks, and bubbles, the cinematography alone is reason enough to watch and enjoy the second movie of this beloved franchise.



c/o IMDb

"Wicked: For Good" poster highlights the divide between Glinda the Good Witch and Elphaba the Wicked Witch of the West

Not Your Typical Romcom: Regretting You

Connor Kam '27 Contributing Editor

I'll be honest, when my friend first asked me to see *Regretting You*, I said yes without doing a single second of research. No trailer. No reviews. I didn't even know the genre. I just heard "movie" and assumed it would be something chill where I could sit back and enjoy some popcorn and nachos. Then I got hit with two things at once: It was a romcom. It was not the kind of romcom I thought it would be.

I walked in expecting basic romcom vibes, maybe the usual "they fight, they make up" ending. Instead, this movie starts tossing emotional landmines around like nobody's business. I kept thinking, Okay, NOW I know where this is going, and then the plot would basically say "Actually, no you don't" and pull the rug out from under me again.

The craziest part? As annoyed as I was, I was kinda getting into it.

The whole story is more about the messiness between a mom and her daughter than it is about romance. It feels like you're watching two people who love each other, but have literally no idea how to communicate without accidentally setting off World War III. And because I went in blind, each twist hit harder than it probably should have. I didn't have time to see it coming.

The characters felt like people, not the usual cliche. You could tell the movie wasn't just trying to force you into some "believe in love again" moment.

c/o Rotten Tomatoes

Mason Thames and McKenna Grace star in Regretting You.

It was more like, families are complicated, grief is even more complicated, and sometimes everyone deals with it in the worst possible way.

And somehow, it was good. It pulled me in way more than I expected. I'm not suddenly converting into a romcom guy, but *Regretting You* definitely surprised me in a good way.

If you ever want to watch something that knows how to drop a plot twist without warning, going in blind to *Regretting You* might be the move. I'm not the only one who enjoyed it, Michael Cinco '27 said, "It was so funny, and if you like the book, you will love the movie."

BSU Celebrates Thanksgiving in Its Largest Event of the Year

Aisha McCulloch '27 — Contributing Editor

On Thursday, November 21st, a large group of Black Student Union members gathered on the third floor to celebrate Thanksgiving a little early. The affinity group's big fall event—BSU Thanksgiving—is usually held in tandem with the African American & Latino Parents Association on a Thursday in November, and this year was no different. This event has become one of the BSU's most anticipated gatherings of the semester, and this year's celebration drew about 40 students from all grade levels (little siblings included!).

Members came together to enjoy a potluck-style feast with students and families contributing both homemade and store-bought dishes that filled a long table. Highlights included chicken, ribs, green beans, and macaroni and cheese with desserts ranging from donuts and brownies to sweet potato pie. Sharing food in this way is part of what makes the event feel so warm and communal and it's what keeps Thanksgiving one of the BSU's big events.

Throughout the evening, students played games including a Black Pop Culture Kahoot! and "Guess that Song," both led by the BSU leadership team. It was a great way to bring everyone together," said Vievon Coleman '29, "I could tell we were all getting closer."

It's moments like these that are central to the Black Student Union's mission, creating spaces where all grade levels feel welcome, supported, and able to take a breather from the stress of school and extracurricular activities. BSU Thanksgiving is one example of the group's broader goals for the school year.

> It was a great way to bring everyone together. I could tell we were all getting closer.
>
> – Vievon Coleman '29

The BSU hosts community-building events like this every month or two, each designed to strengthen community and create a sense of belonging on campus. The events hosted so far this year include a Game Night and Movie Night, both of which drew representation from every corner of campus. This November's gathering felt especially meaningful: one of the affinity group's moderators, Mr. White, is expecting his first child around Thanksgiving week so students honored him with a card signed by members of the SI community along with a cookbook, baby books, diapers, and other gifts. Many people had something nice to say about Mr. White's positive impact on the BSU and around campus.

Overall, this year's BSU Thanksgiving served as a reminder of what affinity spaces on campus strive to do: take intentional time to come together, build community, and celebrate the people who make that possible.

BSU members attended the BSU Thanksgiving celebration.

Hanukkah: Past and Present

Alexander Goldberg '26 — Managing Editor

Nights arrive earlier in the evening, the rains pour down more frequently, and winter festivities. Many Christian and secular families will be celebrating Christmas, but Jews will be celebrating Hanukkah. Hanukkah this year lasts from December 14 to December 22, where Jews will celebrate with food, festivities, and togetherness. Let us explore the history of Hanukkah, how it is celebrated, and its significance for Jews around the world.

Hanukkah, also known as the Festival of Lights, celebrates light over darkness. This holiday originated in the 2nd century BCE, when Judas Maccabeus led the Maccabees (the Jewish resisters) in persistent resistance against the Greek forces. When the Maccabees won after 7 years, they rededicated the Second Temple. When they attempted to light the Menorah (a source of divine light in the temple), it only had enough oil for one day. However, the oil miraculously lasted for 8 days, expressing God's commitment to the Jewish people.

Hanukkah in the United States is commonly celebrated by lighting the Menorah once a day for 8 days, in order to symbolize the miracle that occurred more than 2,000 years ago. We play Dreidel, which is a spinning top, and eat foods such as latkes (potato pancakes) and sufganiyot (jelly doughnuts). We give gifts, sing songs, and spend time together with people we may have not seen in a long time.

Each Jewish family has their own special experience with Hanukkah. For example, student Chloe Dean '26 shared, "I really enjoy it because it helps me feel more connected to my family and our traditions and it helps me feel more festive for the, holidays. I like knowing that my family on the other side of the world are lighting their candles the same way we are, and it helps me to think about everyone else in the world who are celebrating in all different countries." Hanukkah helps all Jews to feel more connected with each other, even if they are halfway across the globe.

Hanukkah reminds us of perseverance and triumph over challenges in life. We are also reminded to always be ourselves even when it is difficult, and to find community with each other.

The Jewish Affinity Group will host a Hanukkah event today 12/12 for all students and faculty during the Club & Activities in room 430 to play Dreidel, eat a variety of great food like chocolate covered matzah, and enjoy each other's company. Shalom SI and Chag urim sameach!

Navidad y Nochebuena

Geraldine Segura '27 — Contributing Editor

This is a poem about Nochebuena, which means "Good Night" in Spanish. It is the traditional Christmas Eve celebration celebrated in Latin American, Hispanic, and Filipino cultures.

Creak goes the door as you step in
The smell of warm, fresh *caldo*
hits your nose

Imagine, the smells of warmth
and parental love hitting you all at once

You look to your left and to your right
Tamales and *pan del mercado*
sitting on a table set for many.

Summer came and left,
and now the *Nochebuena* begins.

Tú familia enters your cozy home
Creating chaotic love and happiness
greater than your favorite shows
combined.

Whatever you dreamed of before,
now becoming a reality. La luna
just slightly peaking through
las cortinas de la sala

Tonight
is la Nochebuena

But to the south of your home
it is la Navidad.

You lift a plate of your food to
the countries further South
You stare at la Luna, while South
states at el Sol.

"Feliz Nochebuena," you say
"And a feliz Navidad"

Owlets (Geraldine Gabriela Segura's stuffed animal) on Christmas tree.

SI's Pasko Celebration: A Highlight of the Season

Genevieve Arcenio '27 Managing Editor

On December 7th, ASC, SI Parent's Asian Club (SIPAC), and the SI community came together to celebrate Pasko. Pasko is the Tagalog word for Christmas. It originates from the Spanish phrase 'pascua de navidad'. In the Philippines, Pasko festivities start as early as September. Families celebrate with traditions such as making parols (star-shaped lanterns), attending Simbang Gabi (9 dawn masses) leading up to Christmas, and having grand feasts on Christmas Eve.

Pasko is one of SI's largest parent-organized events of the year. This year marked the 17th celebration of Pasko. It was a celebration full of laughter, dancing, singing, and of course, delicious food. There was commotion in the student center as attendees lined up for the assortment of Filipino meals, including fan favorites such as lumpia and lechon. SI students prepared for weeks to perform in a cultural dance and a fashion show displaying clothing from a variety of Asian countries. Individual performers and performance groups were also given the opportunity to share their talents with the school community. There was much excitement for a raffle fundraiser held to raise funds to support SIPAC where attendees could win gift sets such as an SI Pride basket and a Sports Fans basket.

Pasko brought together families, friends, and teachers of all generations and cultural backgrounds. The highly-anticipated event sold out early as always this year. Across the board, attendees expressed their appreciation for the chance to celebrate Filipino culture. Faye Florendo '27, one of the performers in the cultural dance at Pasko this year shared, "Pasko has always been important to me because it gives me the opportunity to connect with my culture and my people. The community is so welcoming and friendly, and I've made great connections within the program." Sr. Orque, one of the co-moderators of ASC reflected, "To me, Pasko is a joyful celebration of Christmas shared with my family and the SI community. It's important to celebrate Pasko at SI not only because it marks the Christmas season, but because it has become a meaningful tradition. For 16 years, it has brought together ASC students, SIPAC parents, and the entire SI community for a festive Filipino meal and a lively program featuring student performances such as singing, dancing, and the Pasko Cultural Dance and Fashion Show."

c/o SlickPic

SI students performing Tausug, a traditional Filipino dance.

c/o SlickPic

The beautiful decorations in the gym for the celebration.

c/o SlickPic

Andrew Monterola '26 and Sean Abello '26 perform "Harana."

c/o SlickPic

Senior students emcee the show in traditional Filipino attire.

ASC Attends Asian-Pacific American Museum Discussion

Radhika Saha '28 Contributing Editor

On November 17, 2025, the ASC Board attended an event at the Chinese Culture Center in San Francisco's Chinatown to discuss the creation of the National Museum of Asian Pacific American History and Culture. The museum will honor centuries of Asian Pacific contributions, including art, that are often missing from dominant culture's history.

The museum's commission has received no federal funding and must raise 100% of its budget through private donations. Funds will support research, community engagement, and a major report for the President and Congress that will guide the museum's development.

The ASC Board's presence allowed younger voices to witness cultural preservation in action. Board member Maddie Dela Rama said, " It was great to see leaders from Asian communities across CA and even DC advocating for the museum. Their strong opinions were inspiring, and it was meaningful to see our community speaking up for their beliefs."

c/o Maddie Dela Rama '27

ASC leadership attended an event at the Chinese Culture Center in San Francisco's Chinatown to discuss the creation of the National APA Museum. Pictured from left to right: Radhika Saha '28, Maddie Dela Rama '27, Jett Dixon '26.

Leaders emphasized that small Asian communities, like Pacific Islanders and South Asians, must also be represented so their histories aren't marginalized or hidden. The museum aims to ensure that all Asian Pacific American stories are included and celebrated nationally with their artwork.

The commission, sponsored by the Asian American Arts Alliance, accepts tax-deductible donations. Supporters can reach them at commision@nationalapamuseum.org Learn more about their mission at nationalapamuseum.org.

VOLLERT

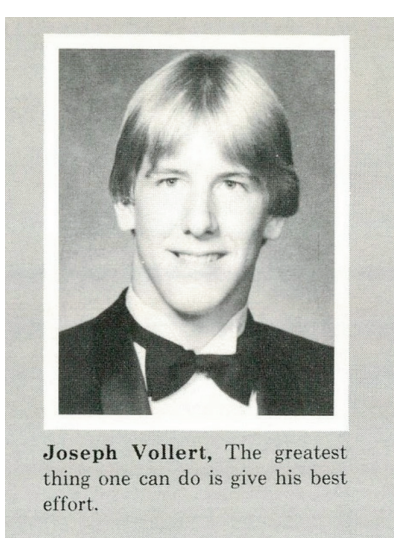
Continued from Front Page

I can give witness to the importance of what it means to be a Jesuit school in a way that maybe a Jesuit can't," Mr. Vollert continued. "We've had Jesuits come back here, who used to teach here, and they'll say SI is more Jesuit now than it was 30 years ago, when we had a lot more Jesuits working here, because we've had to be intentional about who we are as a Jesuit school."

> We've had Jesuits come back ... and they'll say SI is more Jesuit now than it was 30 years ago ... because we've had to be intentional about who we are as a Jesuit school.
>
> – Mr. Vollert

Mr. Vollert has big goals for SI's future. His biggest project currently is the New Learning Commons, which was initially started by Fr. Reese. "As it pertains to the new building, I'm blessed. We're blessed with a great team of folks here on campus that really get into the details, offer their advice, and more often than not, I just go with that," Mr. Vollert said.

Building upon Fr. Reese's legacy to make an SI education more accessible, Mr. Vollert wants to create a scholarship pool large enough to make SI affordable for more families. "As a Jesuit school, we want to educate future leaders," he said. "I worry that potential Ignatians turn us down because of financial reasons."



Mr. Vollert's 1984 senior yearbook picture.

Mr. Vollert said that the most important part of his new job is "showing up and being present" for the community. "One of the things I love most is sneaking into orchestra practice on a Monday afternoon and hearing them practice," he said. Mr. Vollert noted that showing up sends a message that the president "is invested in what our students are doing and cares deeply about it."

In his free time, Mr. Vollert's hobbies include gardening and cooking. "I love to cook a chicken marsala," he said. "I can get some good fresh mushrooms and make a good, nice marsala sauce." Mr. Vollert also does yoga every morning and loves having a good dinner with friends. "That's one of the things I really enjoy about life," he remarked.

Mr. Vollert speaks at Father Reese's funeral.

Joe Vollert addresses SI faculty and staff after being announced as SI's permanent president.

SI leadership smile for a photo in the temporary campus ministry chapel. Pictured from left to right: Board of Trustees Chair Niall McCarthy '85, President Joe Vollert '84, Principal Michelle Nevin Levine.

Inside Your Student Council

Finley Wolfgram '28 — Contributing Editor

Student council welcomes the Wildcats back at the start of every school year.

Your Wildcat Student Council is the power behind events like Homecoming and Casino Night. Think that you could do a better job at rallying the student body into prime school spirit? You are encouraged to run!

The council is organized by grade levels to plan events like Fun Fridays and Halloween contests. There are also sub-committees like social media who run the class and spirit accounts. Becoming a member of the coveted student council requires a "let's do it" personality or questionable popularity. Your student council sacrifices their resources and works lunches and breaks to sell event tickets and organize events like intramurals. Joram Ford `28, a member of your sophomore student council, stressed the impact of student council, saying that student council "gives students a voice" and "empowers them."

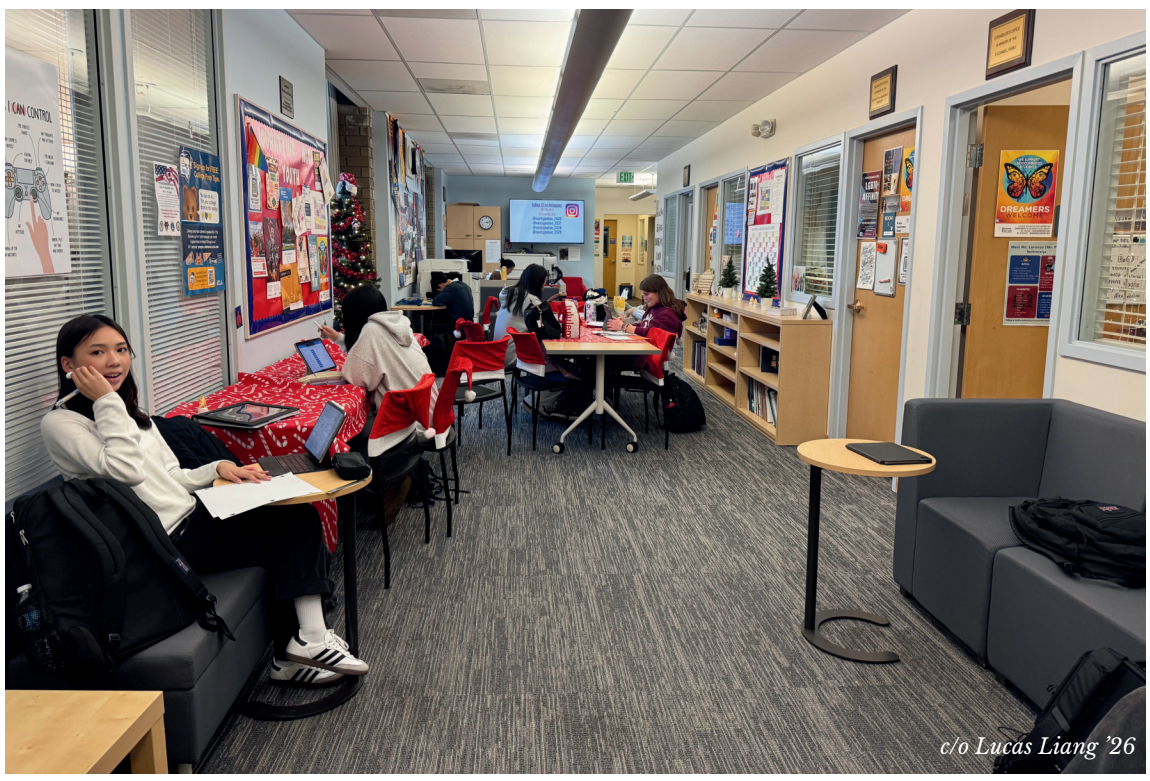
He mentioned how the Council sets up expectations for other leaders, like club presidents, to be active and take advantage of the resources available to them.

Please take a moment to appreciate your student council members. Countless hours of thought and preparation go into the student activities you see on campus.

Student council members pose with Ms. Levine and Iggy to ring in the new year.

COUNSELING

Continued from Front Page



c/o Lucas Liang '26

Students work in the counseling center after school.

c/o McCann O'Brien' 26

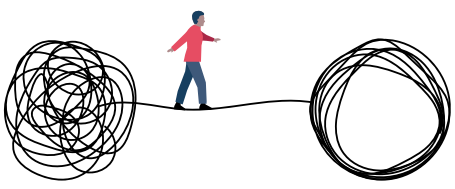
The entrance and help desk of the counseling center.

claiming that it brought students back to their basic needs. It reminded students what they took for granted and allowed a pause in their fast-paced lives to reflect. During the pandemic, the SI counseling department had specific breakout rooms and zoom calls dedicated to meeting students' needs. This allowed counselors to get to know students deeper, and counselors noticed that they were still able to make connections with students, in spite of the challenges of social distancing. This was a very significant support for many students.

The challenge the department faces now is to make sure those lessons of connection and appreciation aren't lost in the rush of post-pandemic life. Counselors continue to incorporate that awareness into their approach, encouraging students to recognize when they feel out of balance and to slow down when needed. When students picture wellness, many imagine simple "stress tips" or a list of strategies. SI takes a much deeper approach. Counselors model groundedness and teach students how to reconnect with their bodies to understand what overwhelm feels like. "My counselor always listens to my problems and gives me good advice. Mr. Delaney always has a solution for me and gives me reassurance." Anna Garcia '27 said.

> My counselor always listens to my problems and gives me good advice. Mr. Delaney always has a solution for me and gives me reassurance.
>
> – Anna Garcia '27

Despite all the resources available, many students still access counseling only when something goes wrong. Or worse, they avoid it because they think their problems aren't "big enough."



Ms. Merrell stated she wished this would change. She imagined a model where students could connect more consistently and authentically, not only when a crisis hits. However, stigma around stress, perfectionism, and asking for help still gets in the way. Part of the department's mission is to dismantle this stigma around mental health.

At its heart, counseling is about reminding students that they don't have to navigate SI alone. It's about supporting students thriving on campus, understanding themselves and their relationships, and ensuring every student knows they have someone looking out for them. The work may happen in the background, but its impact is felt everywhere. For many students, that presence is one of the most meaningful parts of their SI experience.

Spotlight

Ms. Angeles Appreciation: Love for Our Counselors

Madison Dela Rama '27 — Managing Editor

In everyone's frosh year at SI, students are assigned to a personal academic counselor who is meant to guide them through choosing classes and the struggles of being a student. I was lucky to have Ms. Angeles as my PAC Counselor; ever since freshman year, she has been someone I look up to and a great mentor during my time at SI.

As a person, Ms. Angeles has helped me push through sophomore and junior year—two academically challenging years that seem ridiculously impossible to move forward from. She has offered me so much advice, and I can't thank her enough for it! Her office door is always open when I need to talk about my classes or life, or if I just see her and want to engage in fun conversation.

I asked Ms. Angeles her own story, and why she became a counselor. She said, "Being a school counselor has several of the core aspects that make up who I am. One of those is education: as a child of immigrants, my grandma only went up to 3rd grade and my dad made it to college but didn't graduate. Both being from the Philippines, they knew that if they moved, their children could have a better future. This story makes me want to stay in this field—to help other kids continue and receive their own great education. There are so many aspects of being a counselor that are so rooted in my own upbringing—about who I am."

When asked about the mental health aspect of counseling, Ms. Angeles said, "As a school counselor, I get to break this generational or stereotypical mold for students. It is okay to talk about mental health, especially when in relation to your education and adolescence. High schoolers are still trying to figure everything out for themselves."

Ms. Angeles is one of the kindest people I know, and regardless if she's your PAC Counselor or not, her door is always open to listen. She is always there for her students, which is something I admire greatly about her.

c/o Jordan Liu '26

Ms. Angeles is one of the personal academic counselors at SI.

The Importance of Sports Med

Amanda Oberto '27 Contributing Editor

It's no secret that a huge part of SI is our athletics programs— from playing on the field or watching from the stands, most students make great memories and become better versions of themselves through sports. However, on the field or to the side, an important community of students are putting in the work to protect our athletes and make the joy of athletics possible. One of the most popular and active clubs at SI is Wildcats Sports Medicine. Popular for their instagram reel interviews, Sports Med is a household name at SI. However, the responsibilities of Student Aids extend far beyond the 230 club members and form an unseen yet integral part of the SI community.

The members that SI students might recognize, the ones that give out water and stand on the field of football games, are called student aids. Becoming a student aid requires shadowing and a lot of practice to ensure that the student has the skills required to keep people safe. Student aids have to come in three hours a week in order to work any game, most often taping and helping with rehabilitation. Taping helps stabilize the body and facilitate pain management, which is incredibly helpful for most athletes. For example, taping helps football players stabilize their wrists. Some student aids assist trainers at SI to help with on field emergencies, or to assist in rehabilitation or PT.

c/o @si_sportsmedicine

SportsMed club decorated pumpkins at their September meeting.

Student aids have the option to become CPR certified, and have even had the opportunity to shadow doctors.

Sarina Gefter '27, the co-president of Sports Med said, "You learn a lot about the human body, why things work the way they do…we learn a lot around the brain, because there are a lot of concussions. It's interesting to watch protocols and see why we take the steps that we do to clear people." Sarina also mentioned how great of a community Sports Med is, and how helpful it is for someone interested in the medical field-or simply someone wanting to support their friends on the field.

"It's a gateway into medicine, and I also think it's really needed. It's a great way to be a part of your community because you support your friends and classmates that are playing sports and keeping them safe," she reflected. Sarina, like many other students that are a part of Sports Med, has become an important leader and someone who contributes to the SI community through her club.

The Sports Med club builds students' character through important experiences in medicine, leadership, and other skills necessary for real jobs, all while contributing to the health of our school community.

Speech and Debate Sweep at Heritage High School Tournament

Farrah Almajdalani '27 Managing Editor

Winning awards in all three divisions, novice, JV, and Varsity, speech and debate's most recent tournament was on November 8th at Heritage High School in Brentwood.

One varsity team finished undefeated, one JV team finished undefeated, and a novice team earned a winning record. The debate was centered on the topic: "Resolved: The United States federal government should require tech companies to provide lawful access to encrypted communications."

As many new debaters joined the team for this competition, Keelin Duffy '27, one of the debate co-captains, stated that, "It was really exciting to see how first-time debaters rose to the challenge and supported each other in improving through every round." Additionally, Autumn Ragone '27, another one of the co-captains of the debate team, shares how the results of debate tournament are an, "Exciting continuation of the season and a reminder of how hard our students continue to work." She also added that, "After these early-season tournaments, the team will continue building skills and community through a holiday gathering before shifting focus to the upcoming Berkeley Invitational, where we'll face thousands of competitors from across the country."

Meanwhile, the speech team also had an exciting tournament on October 18, with 4 finalists and students who placed first. Raith Roland '27, a member of the speech and debate team, noted how, "We had around 15-17 people competing, with a good majority having it be their first competition. There were many many different schools and we did pretty well." The speech team continues to prepare for its second tournament at Las Lomas High School in Walnut Creek, where students will compete in Impromptu, Original Oratory, and Declamation. Congratulations wildcats and keep up the great work!

Mock Trial Scrimmages in Menlo

Farrah Almajdalani '27 Managing Editor

On November 15 and 16, the varsity Mock Trial team competed at Menlo College, facing three rounds on the first day and two on the second. Against a total of 10 teams, the team performed impressively. Josie White '28, a varsity team member, reflected on the competition, sharing, "It has been a really fun experience and we are hoping to make it to states this year. Everyone on the team has been working really hard." Lyla Shaver '27 also commented on the event, stating, "This tournament was my first time presenting at a mock trial match. I found it to be a very positive and interesting experience. I got to see professionalism and the approaches of the other teams."

Although county rounds, which determine selection for states, don't start until after Christmas break, on the first weekend of December, the varsity and junior varsity team will compete in Lynbrook High School. Make sure to support your fellow classmates who are part of SI's Mock Trial team for all their hard work this year so far!

Government Shutdown Finally Ends

Alexander Salentine '26 Managing Editor

The longest government shutdown in history has ended. After a historic 43 days, the government finally reopened on November 12th, with President Trump signing the funding bill into law.

This deal followed many failed attempts to fund the government. "This shutdown dropped morale in the office and increased stress," said Tiago Chicas '26, whose mother is a San Francisco government employee.

> This shutdown dropped morale in the office and increased stress.
>
> – Tiago Chicas '26

Republicans wanted to focus on funding the government as soon as possible. Yet, Democrats held off, using their leverage with the filibuster to attempt to extend Obamacare funding, which was set to expire this year. Eventually, though, eight Senate and six House Democrats voted for the GOP-backed bill with one important caveat: Affordable Care Act (ACA) funding will be taken to a vote in December. That's right, this bill only funds the government through January 30th; when that time comes, lawmakers will need to construct a bill about healthcare funding that both sides can agree on to avoid another shutdown.

This short-term bill funds SNAP, legislative agencies, and the military. It also pays and backpays over 1.4 million federal workers who haven't been compensated in over a month. This funding also helps restore normal flight traffic, which has been subject to many cancellations and delays due to the shutdown. Although funding has been temporarily restored, the shutdown has left a lasting impact. According to the Congressional Budget Office, a non-partisan organization that tracks government spending, the shutdown will result in $11 billion in irreversible economic damage. Flight delays have reduced travel spending, Americans have spent less due to reduced consumer confidence, and federal workers and SNAP beneficiaries have spent less, permanently reducing economic activity.

c/o ABC7

Staffers walk out of the the U.S. Capitol Building.

This shutdown highlighted the state of a deeply polarized Congress, which struggles to make a deal unless the situation is dire.

Republicans have tried to propagate their vision from the 2024 election win, whereas Democrats have attempted to use their reduced leverage with the filibuster to advocate for their agenda. While a deal has been made for now, lawmakers will need to make an unlikely compromise to solve Medicare on the 30th. As Samantha Goethals '26 stated, Americans need "to look towards real and lasting solutions" to solve these complex issues rather than relying on temporary spending bills.

UN Endorses Gaza Peace Plan in Major Step Towards Peace

Joram Ford '28 Contributing Editor

On November 17th, the Gaza peace plan was formally endorsed by the UN, bringing an end to a long-standing era of conflict in the Middle East. President Donald Trump announced the plan on September 29th, 2025 while at the White House during a press conference with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. The deal was signed and put into effect on October 9th.

Details of the plan include an immediate ceasefire, the return of all hostages, and the demilitarization of the Gaza Strip.

This also signifies potential for a conditional and guided path towards the recognition of Palestinian statehood. Mediators of the plan include the United States, Qatar, Turkey, and Egypt, with supporters of the plan including France, Russia, Canada, the United Kingdom, and many more.

Michael Rawles '26 stated possible reasons for and key info on the peace deal, sharing, "It's about mitigating [the effects of] the situation that is already out of hand...The fact that there is even a peace deal is still a good outcome." When the plan was introduced, it was approved with a 13-0 vote, but there are still major developments that must be planned before the deal can be put into action.

All this to say, tensions are still very high in the area, with both sides having violated the peace deal multiple times since its signing. However, the hope is that once the correct actions happen, violence in the area will slow down to a halt. This will show other countries with conflicts what a plan of peace can look like, serving as a turning point in the region and for the world.

Supreme Court Declines to Hear Same-Sex Marriage Case

Mika Cinco '27 Contributing Editor

In a decision that brought different reactions nationally, the Supreme Court announced that it would not be hearing a case challenging the constitutionality of same-sex marriage. The case, brought by a group hoping to reverse the 2015 ruling *Obergefell v. Hodges*, was turned away by the Supreme Court.

For many people in San Francisco, the news was a huge relief. Ever since the challenge was filed months ago, discussions have popped up locally and online. Skylar Chung '27 expressed, "Among all the troubles in the world today, I am glad that the Supreme Court is taking us in the right direction. This choice will come to benefit many and allow them their right to marry the person they want to be with."

Because the Supreme Court declined the case, the existing nationwide legalization of same-sex marriage will remain. Nothing changes legally, which supporters of the ruling say proves that the Supreme Court does not want to revisit this issue on the constitutionality of same-sex marriage.

Conversely, proponents of the case challenge felt frustrated. The lead organizer, Mark Daniels, told reporters that he felt the Supreme Court "ignored an important constitutional question." They want to keep fighting. Yet, with the Supreme Court having formally turned away the challenge for now, the debate on same-sex marriage's constitutionality has calmed down; however, this doesn't end the conversation on rights and equality, which is far from over.

Trump's SNAP Revisions: Weighing Policy Goals and Public Concerns

Angeline Hsueh '27 Contributing Editor

On November 1, 2025, President Donald Trump made changes that altered the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Key provisions include stricter work requirements for certain recipients, limits on categorical eligibility, and measures that shift more program costs and administration onto states. These changes are intended to reduce federal spending and oversight while encouraging workforce participation.

Analyses from nonpartisan budget and policy organizations warn that the reforms could remove benefits from millions and reduce overall SNAP spending by tens of billions over the coming decade. The Congressional Budget Office and similar policy groups project that expanding work mandates and tightening eligibility

c/o Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

A grocery store displays that they accept SNAP/EBT food stamp benefits.

c/o Los Angeles Times

Southern California residents wait in food bank line because of SNAP lapse.

would lead to larger reductions in enrollment and benefit levels for some households.

Supporters of the changes argue that the reforms promote fiscal responsibility and program integrity by discouraging long-term dependency and identifying misuse. Opponents contend the cuts risk increasing food insecurity, especially among children, seniors, veterans, and people with unstable work. It is suggested that this could have negative ripple effects for local economies that depend on SNAP spending. Municipal leaders and hunger-action groups have warned of harm to households and small businesses if benefits fall sharply.

Reflecting local perspectives, Ms. Carrillo, a staff member ant SI, observed concern for vulnerable people, asking, "how are they going to feed themselves?"

> How are they going to feed themselves?
>
> – Ms. Carrillo

Simultaneously, she expressed a desire for regular review to distinguish emergency use from long-term reliance. This comment highlights the public tensions between weighing two policy goals: limiting federal outlays and misuse versus preserving a national safety net that supports health, hungry communities, and economic activity. Continued monitoring, state-level implementation choices, and independent data on food insecurity will determine how changes translate into real-world outcomes.

The End of a Transit Era: Muni Retires its Breda Fleet

Heather Yee '27 Managing Editor

On November 3, the San Francisco Municipal Transit Agency (Muni) announced that it would be retiring a San Francisco icon, the Breda light rail vehicles. Easily recognizable by its boxy silhouette and characteristic jingling down the city's tracks, the Breda fleet has served Muni passengers for the past three decades and has tallied over ten million trips.

The Breda trains were first put in service in San Francisco in 1996, succeeding a fleet of aging Boeing trains from 1979 — the city's first generation of light rail trains. Between 1996 and 2004, 151 Breda trains were added to Muni's fleet, becoming the stronghold of the city's streetcar system. They also helped expand the scope of several lines, allowing them to reach the eastern and western edges of the city in the Dogpatch and Ocean Beach neighborhoods.

Having been introduced to the city at the height of the dot-com boom — a period of major investment in internet-based companies in the late 1990s and early 2000s — there was a greater demand for commuter transit, which the Bredas were specifically designed to help with. Since then, the fleet has remained an integral part of the San Francisco transit system, connecting riders to all parts of the city.

In 2021, Muni began phasing out the Bredas, replacing them with the third generation of light rail vehicles: Siemens-built trains were designed to be more reliable, have fewer delays, and be more

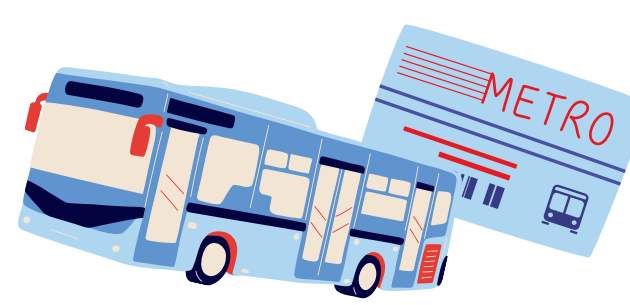
c/o Heather Yee '27

A J Church Muni train from the Breda fleet passes through a San Francisco neighborhood.

wheelchair-accessible. They are also quieter and smoother, though they do not quite share the Breda's characteristic quirks, such as the intermittent blackouts and the blocky destination displays.

Transit enthusiasts and loyal riders alike had the opportunity on November 12 to ride the Breda one last time during Muni's farewell event: Bye Bye Breda. A Breda train ran up and down the J Church line, offering fans a chance to bask in its final runs and listen to its charming jingle, PA announcements, and clacking on the tracks.

Though the Breda trains will no longer run through the city's streets and tunnels, one Breda car will be preserved nearby in Solano County at the Western Railway Museum. For now, riders can enjoy the smoothness and quiet of the Siemens fleet.



Society Depends on Faith and Trust

Aryana Lau '29 — Contributing Editor

Humanity's greatest gift is our shared imagination, our ability to believe in and uphold collective truths and values—this gift allows our institutions to function in the first place. It is faith in societal morality and citizens' trust in each other's values that enable society to work at all. Without shared ethical principles, we lose motivation to work together, to believe in common goals, and to trust that others will uphold the collective demand for truth and justice.

Today, we live in an age of paradox. Never before has humanity possessed so much information, yet never have facts and values felt more fragile. We call this the "post-truth" era, a time when lies spread faster than facts, promises ring hollow, and shared truths are vulnerable to manipulation. Our most revered institutions still exist yet the deeper fracture in trust has become evident.

Trust is the least visible form of wealth and security a nation possesses, yet everything else depends upon it. It is what gives words meaning, laws legitimacy, and promises weight of meaning.

When the foundation of mutual faith begins to crack, every institution built upon it falters. How can a teacher inspire learning when her students no longer trust the very idea of knowledge?

Trust is the least visible form of wealth and security a nation possesses, yet everything else depends upon it. It is what gives words meaning, laws legitimacy, and promises weight of meaning.

How can a soldier know she is fighting on the right side of history without confidence in her country's leadership? How can a doctor heal a patient who doubts science itself? None of them can, because the foundation that sustains their work has already broken.

As Youval Harari writes in *Sapiens*, we owe our species' dominance "not to stronger bodies or sharper teeth, but to something far more ethereal, our ability to believe in shared stories." Governments, money, and laws have no real power unless we trust them. In a time when faith in institutions is eroding, revisiting that fragile bond is more essential than ever.

Society undoubtedly relies on its workers, its thinkers, its leaders, those who generate and sustain collective value. But their work only matters because we still believe in them and their honest purpose, because in our respective roles, each of us is keeping our promise to the community. Even the act of speaking assumes that words will be met with a measure of sincerity. Without that invisible contract, our institutions, our systems, even our labor become mere theater, motion without binding meaning. In order for our society to operate in reflection of our shared expectations, we must each be trustworthy in how we engage.

The Resurrection of Movie Theaters

Nora Shaskan '27 — Managing Editor

Roofman, the movie telling the true story of Jeffery Manchester's life as a criminal, was released this October and over quarter break, and my dad and I went to watch it while still in theaters. It starred big names such as Channing Tatum, Kristen Dunst, and Peter Dinklage, actors and actresses with award-winning reputations and world-wide recognition. However, as my dad and I walked back home, I was quite disappointed—not in the film itself, for we were unconvinced Manchester's story was too bizarre to be real until they played footage of actual interviews during the credits—but in the fact we were two of less than a dozen viewers in the theater. Nation-wide, world-wide, the seats have emptied.

c/o IMDb

1946's *It's a Wonderful Life.*

Movie theaters have hit an all time low in the past years as streaming services have claimed the norm. Most people are now accustomed to watching movies from the comfort of their own couch without having to leave the house.

1946 was the year movie theaters had the most attendance, probably because people couldn't just wait to stream *Its A Wonderful Life* for free. Now that that's possible, human beings have proven once again their laziness dominates their willingness to experience films as they were meant to be.

I encourage people to sacrifice the dollar and go to the movie theater on occasion. It is part of a culture, of a tradition, but also the most important part of the film industry itself.

Hannah Tran '27, described going to the movie theater as "a classic experience" and says she's sad "people don't go as much as they used to."

But this doesn't just change the tradition of movie-watching— it also threatens the quality.

Movies aren't making as much money

c/o IMDb

Channing Tatum stars in Roofman.

c/o San Francisco Chronicle

Regal Theater at Stonestown.

in the box office as past films, meaning filmmakers' budgets will have to be cut. The average movie costs $100 million, but movies, including *The Roofman*, aren't generating that amount of revenue anymore; if this pattern continues, studios will have to spend less on their projects in order to make a profit. And a smaller budget means less quality in everything that goes into a production. Similarly to the music industry, it's become much harder to find opportunities within the business to succeed.

One had to be great to make it in the art world but now, with budgets reserved only for the guaranteed hit, one has to be the greatest. Studios are becoming scared to gamble on projects, and this becomes a horrific cycle leading to the bleak end of movies.

In order to not go down that dystopian road, I encourage people to sacrifice the dollar and go to the movie theater on occasion. It is part of a culture, of a tradition, but also the most important part of the film industry itself.

Wildcats Women Are Back For Another Season

Chloe Fisher ’26 Managing Editor

The St. Ignatius Varsity Women’s Basketball team is back and ready for their upcoming season! The team had an amazing 2024-2025 season and dominated against top-ranked teams. Their pre-season for the upcoming winter has been nothing but intense, with the players putting in numerous hours into preparation for tough competitors. Weeks filled with early lifts, to late night running, to full-on scrimmages, the Women’s Basketball Team has never been more ready.

Senior and four-year varsity player, Mary Ennis ’26, is a significant impact and player for the team. In a conversation we had about the upcoming season, Mary told me how the team was very excited for the Bruce-Mahoney game against Sacred Heart Cathedral. She explained how this game brings a lot of excitement and anticipation, as it attracts one of their largest crowds throughout the entire season.

Ennis also highlighted how their biggest competitor this season will be Mitty. She shed light on her beliefs for how the team will do: “We have put in so much hard work this preseason and cannot wait to go out and finally play other teams. I know this team will have a lot of success. Everyday we are getting better and I cannot wait to show what we can do”. This quote reveals exactly how ready these cats are!

Players jump to mimic a perfect shooting form.

I spoke with another senior, Tatum Conroy, who has been dedicated to the sport of basketball for most of her life. Tatum gives her all to the St. Ignatius basketball team and is a great leader on and off the court. I asked her about team chemistry and how she believes the athletes will play together this winter. She stated, “I am excited for this season especially because we have so many returners. I feel like we’re super close as a team and ready to play.”

Both Conroy and Ennis shed light on what an amazing season the Varsity Women’s Basketball team has ahead. Due to a dedicated pre-season with many hours in the gym, the team is ready to face opponents that are going to be challenging. Their games will attract crowds like no other and the St. Ignatius community will be there to cheer this team on.

Wildcats Men Take On Another Basketball Season

Joseph Keegan ’27 Contributing Editor

The St. Ignatius Wildcats enter the 2025 season with confidence, experience, and serious championship potential. After reaching the CIF - Central Coast Section open Division finals and the Division 1 regional semifinals/state quarterfinals last year, the Wildcats have proven they belong among the elite teams in California. With a returning core that is strong from momentum, expectations are high.

Leading the way are senior guards Raymond Whitley and Shawn Boquiren, both *San Francisco Chronicle* All-Metro selections - Whitley on the Second Team and Boquiren an Honorable Mention. Whitley, a 6-foot-3 combo guard averaged over 14 points, 4 rebounds, and 4 assists per game last season and earned First Team All-WCAL honors. Their versatility and playmaking give St. Ignatius one of the prime backcourts in the Bay Area.Their performance at California Live 2025 shows how dangerous this team is.

SI opened with three straight one-possession wins (61-58 over Cypress, 78-76 over Vanden, 73-71 over Inderkum) before rolling past Palisades 90-70 to take the NHSBCA title.

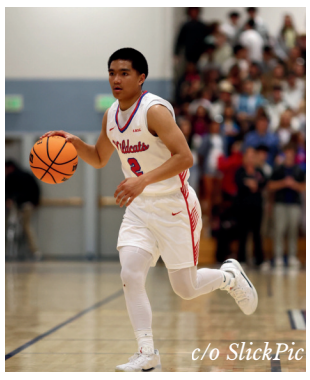
Each of those first three opponents went 3-0 outside of their losses to SI, meaning the Wildcats beat four teams that otherwise combined for a 12-0 perfect record. Against a competitive bracket featuring Cardinal Newman, San Ramon Valley, Saguaro (AZ), and Franklin (Elk Grove) and others, SI dominated, impressing D1 scouts throughout the event.

Beyond the 2 mentioned before, the Wildcats’ supporting roster is well-rounded and reliable.

Athletes pay respects during the national anthem.

Senior guard Steele Labagh adds defensive toughness with veteran leadership, while 6-foot-9 sophomore forward Alex Moore provides size, rebounding, and rim protection. Under Head Coach Jason Greenfield, St. Ignatius hopes to emphasize the discipline that powered last year’s 22-9 season and a 10-4 league record.

The Wildcats are ready to make another run at the CCS Open Division title and push even deeper into the state playoffs. The team’s blend of senior leadership and young promising potential could contribute to a 2025 season where the Wildcats reach new heights.

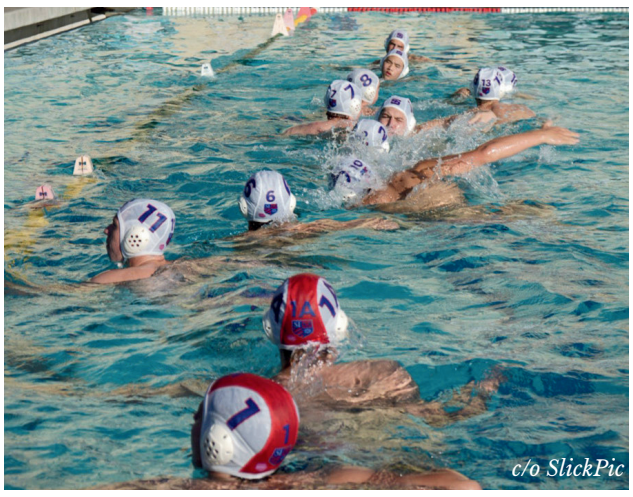


Two senior varsity players dribble with ease.

Waterpolo Season Recap

Jeremy Hornik ’26 & Chase Kendall ’26 Contributing Editors

On Saturday, November 8th, the historic season of our men’s water polo team came to an end. After defeating Bellarmine in the WCAL playoffs a week prior, the Wildcats qualified for CCS DII, but unfortunately fell to the third seed in the bracket. Despite a short playoff run and a challenging regular season record, the team achieved several memorable highlights.



The waterpolo team warms up before a game.

One of the most significant moments was the historic regular season victory over Bellarmine, a long-time water polo powerhouse. Going into the matchup, SI had not beaten Bellarmine in over a decade. The game was a tense, back-and-forth battle that went into overtime, but a clutch lob shot from mid-pool by Ryan Cole sealed the Wildcats’ victory and ended the streak. Ryan Cole also broke a school record this year, finishing the season with 136 total goals. Reflecting on the year, he shared, “We had our ups and downs, but the memories I made with my teammates are what really matters to me.”

The senior waterpolo boys celebrate on Senior Day.

Memories were made on the midseason trip down to LA, where the boys took on tough competition in the water polo mecca of the U.S. They battled hard and came away with a solid 2–2 record in the tournament. Another memorable moment was when senior Bryson Lewis, nicknamed "Captain of Culture” and a D1 lacrosse commit, stepped onto the pool deck and played water polo for his first time ever.

The team graduated 11 seniors, whose leadership and dedication set the standard for the program’s future success.

Jeremy Hornik ’26 winds up to take a shot.

Wildcats on the Run

Natalia Juarez ’26 — Contributing Editor

On November 5th, the St. Ignatius Cross Country program celebrated their 11 seniors at the WCAL #3 Championship Meet at Crystal Springs. Congratulations to Natalie Bravo ’26, Audrey Kronk ’26, Maddie Murray ’26, Beatrice Sopko ’26, Kevin Chin ’26, Joseph Dito ’26, Anthony Gines ’26, Aiden Guerrero ’26, Niall McDermott ’26, Dominic Regalia ’26, and Chase Spolin ’26 for their dedication to the program!

The Wildcats marked Senior Day with standout performances from both varsity groups. The varsity girls secured a strong second-place team finish, led by Eliot Marsh ’28, who placed third overall in 18:10.1, and Kennedy Foster ’29, who crossed the line ninth in 19:08. Consistent efforts from Farrah Almajdalani ’27 (11th, 19:24), Bella Riesenfeld ’29 (13th, 19:34), and Maya Guerra ’27 (20th, 20:22) completed the lineup for St. Ignatius, underlining the team’s grit and determination. After the race, senior Murray reflected, “Senior day was surreal because it felt like just yesterday I was a freshman watching the seniors on their senior day and I have helped the last two years to organize senior day… so it was a very special feeling being the one to experience it.”

On the boys’ side, seniors McDermott (5th, 15:33) and Dito (10th, 15:44) set the tone early with strong front-pack performances, helping the Wildcats stay competitive against some of the league’s top runners. Chin (13th, 15:49) provided steady leadership in the middle of the lineup, while juniors Ignacio Hoglund ’27 (14th, 15:52) and Gilbert Farnsworth ’27 (15th, 15:54) closed the gap with a strong finish that secured valuable points for SI. The boys’ consistency across their top five runners highlighted the program’s balance of experience and talent, earning them a well-deserved second-place team finish. Both varsity teams secured second place overall, finishing as WCAL league runners-up.

Both varsity teams secured second place overall, finishing as WCAL league runners-up. At the CCS Championships held Nov. 15th, the girls team placed first, and the boys team came in second. The teams also performed well at the State meet held November 29th.

Cross Country races towards the finish line.

Wildcats Take Down Irish and Head to State Championship

Julia Pellegrini ’26 — Contributing Editor

As the fog rolled in on Friday night, November 7, the Wildcat Varsity football team prepared to take on their city rivals, the Fighting Irish, in the 78th Bruce Mahoney series. Running onto the field at Kezar, tensions were high as both teams had the same record, not only fighting for the Bruce-Mahoney trophy, but also for the top seed in the playoffs. The stadium was flanked in a sea of red, SI pride fueling the team and helping them achieve a dominant 23-14 victory over the Irish.

The Cats started the game off strong, on the opening drive scoring a 34-yard field goal from kicker Thomas McKeon ’26. This set the tone for the rest of the game. SI buzzed with excitement and energy as they continued to execute. Luke Tribolet ’27 carried this energy into an impressive 34-yard catch and run, scoring the Cats' first touchdown of the game and putting them up 10-0 in just the first quarter. The team carried over this dominance into the second quarter, where the defense had an impressive stop in the red zone with a big sack from Tucker Jones ’26.

Team captain Charlie Ball ’26 said that “this was the turning point of the game, which gave us the momentum and confidence to finish out the game”. The energy from this stop carried over into the next offensive possession, where quarterback Caedon Afsharipour ’26 launched a 59-yard pass to Zui Shelton ’26 for another touchdown, giving the Cats a whopping lead of 17-0 at halftime. SI continued to step on the gas, never slowing down in the second half. Both the defense and the offense continued to play hard and gave it their all, the competitive spirit of the rivalry fueling the Cats. Both the defense and the offense continued to play hard and gave it their all, the competitive spirit of the rivalry fueling the Cats.

The team race onto the field to face off against the Irish.

In the third quarter, the Wildcats pulled a unique play to clinch their victory. Quarterback Afsharipour ’26 handed the ball to Shelton ’26, then to Jake Batchelder ’26, who threw a successful touchdown pass back to quarterback Afsharipour ’26. The crowd went wild, this incredible play allowed the Wildcats to coast to a 23-14 victory.

The Wildcats now prepare for the first round of CSS playoffs, hoping to carry over the momentum from this big win. Running back Steve Malone ’26 is confident in the team's ability to ride off of this win because of the shift in the team’s energy and attitude. He says, “That’s how we got here, the energy. Playing hard, practicing hard, and trusting in one another”. This rivalry win was a great victory for the Wildcats, as it is a stepping stone in the right direction as the Cats gear up for an intense postseason, while also putting SI in a 2-0 lead in the Bruce-Mahoney series. SI only needs one more win to clinch the trophy!

On Friday, December 5th, the Cats beat Monte Vista for the Nor Cal Div 3AA championship and are headed to LA in hopes of securing a state title on Dec. 12th.

Sports Update

Bear Vida ’27 and Chloe Fisher ’26 — Managing Editors

Men’s Soccer

Liam Finnerty ’26 throws the ball with force.

Men’s soccer gets ready to start another dominant season this winter. Their first regular season game begins on January 7th, 2026.

Women’s Soccer

Record as of 12/8: 2-1

Women’s soccer poses together during media day.

Women’s soccer, led by 13 seniors, has all of the tools they need to have another winning season.

Rugby

Men’s Rugby tryouts are officially over and they are ready to start their season off strong with their new players.

The rugby players lift their teammate to catch a ball.

Connections

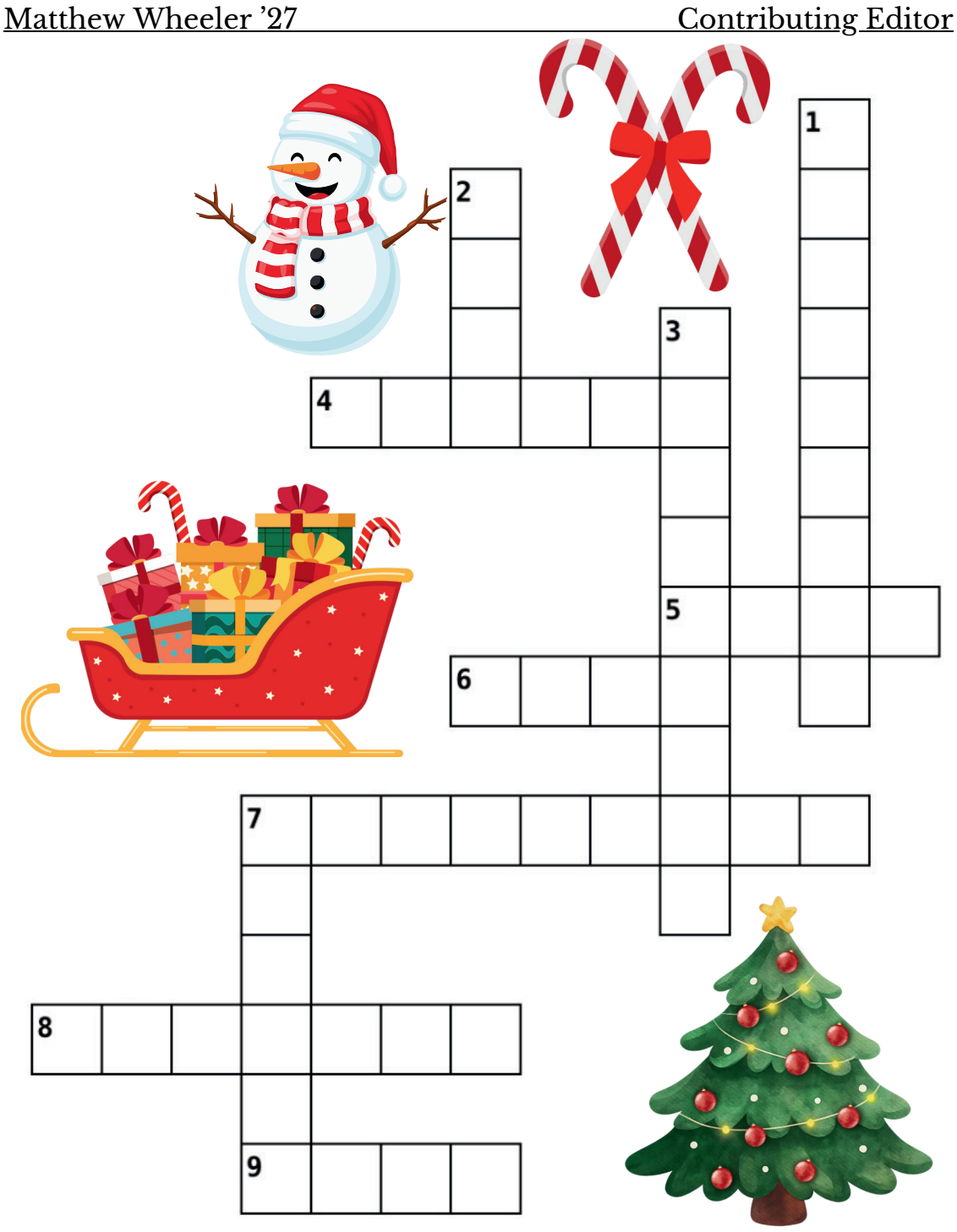
Bobby Mullin ’26 Managing Editor

SATIN	SHARK	VALKYRIE	MACBETH
CHATS	PATH	GIANT	RUMORS
MEAN	WRENCH	AWAKENING	WOODS
TOWN	WARRIOR	ODYSSEY	CRUCIBLE

How to Play:
Sort 16 words into four groups based on a shared theme. For example, “types of fruit” or “things that are green.”

Christmas Crossword

Matthew Wheeler ’27 Contributing Editor



Down

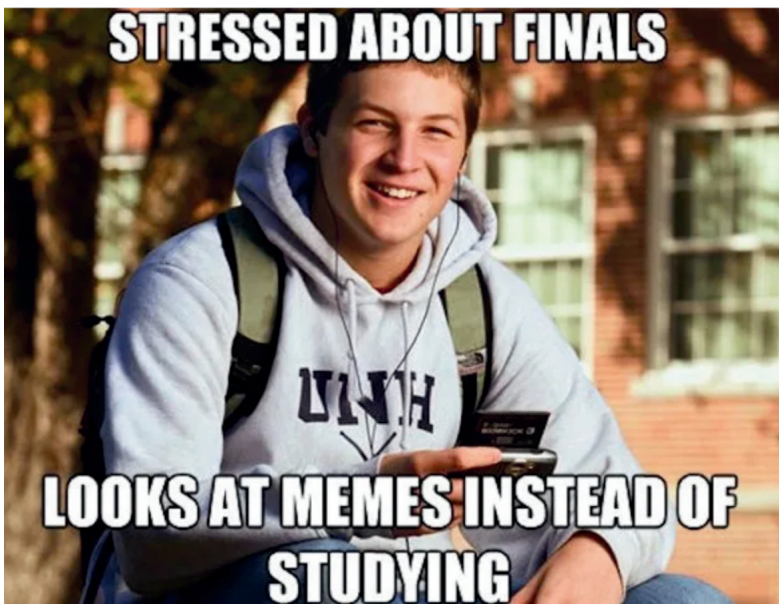
1. — Plant hung above doorways for kissing
2. — Evergreen tree used for decorating
3. — Holiday celebrated on December 25
7. — Songs sung during the holiday season

Across

4. — Santa’s mode of transportation
5. — White winter weather
6. — Wrapped surprise placed under the tree
7. — Sweet striped holiday treat
8. — Reindeer with the glowing red nose
9. — Shines at the top of the Christmas tree

Holiday Humor

Mason Wong ’27 and Connor Comolli ’27
Managing & Contributing Editors



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