



Saint Basil Academy  
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# Basilian Pillar

## Pennsylvania Women's Conference

Ann Abraham '19

Walking into the Convention Center of Philadelphia was a surreal moment. Women from different walks of life bustled around, eager to join thousands of women to discuss different topics, bolster their resumes, and gain new networking opportunities. Many influencers, such as Amanda Southworth, Amal Clooney, and Serena Williams, spoke about using their platforms to impact people in the world. Their insights and comments were inspiring and thought-provoking.

Amanda Southworth, a sixteen-year old iOS developer, spoke about her nonprofit software development company, Astra Labs. Southworth has broken the "glass ceiling" through the efficacious applications she has designed: for those suffering with mental health issues, Anxiety Helper, and for those facing abuse in the LGBTQ+ community, Verena.

Amal Clooney, a British human rights lawyer, explicitly makes a call for all women to "become leaders and stand up for injustice" in this corrupt world. Her work with women, who have faced the wrath of ISIS fighters, infused the room with an aura of solidarity among all women across the world. Not only has she "used her voice to help" the helpless, she has mastered the role of wife and mother. Besides all of her fame and fortune, Amal Clooney is a woman who "strives for accountability" and emboldens everyone to "make a difference in one life."

The long-awaited keynote speaker of the conference was greeted with applause and excitement as she confidently walked onto the stage. Serena Williams, a tennis champion, an investor, a philanthropist, and a new mother, has dominated and modernized the role of women in a dynamic



Ann Abraham '19

The Women's Leadership Seminar students stopped to pose in front of the inspiration wall.

society. She has conquered the game of tennis with 23 Grand Slam wins, created her own clothing line, and established two schools in Africa.

A common thread which tied all of the speakers' messages was to "take action" and "fight for solutions." As women in an advancing society, we should all strive to be powerful and influential. Young women should not be limited to creating

opportunities just for themselves. We can utilize the opportunities we are granted to "guarantee that women are seen and heard," as Serena Williams, Amal Clooney, and Amanda Southworth advocate for through their actions. We, as women leaders, should draw a focus to a cause that is lacking attention with passion, hard work, and perseverance. It is only a matter of taking action and initiating change in our society.

## Fast-Fix: The Opioid Drive-Through

Tess White '19  
Editor-in-Chief

Needles found in the holy water basin at Ascension of Our Lord Church, that is what the opioid epidemic in our city has become. Long time pastor at Iglesia Del Bario, Eunice Sanchez, accurately named the neighborhood the "Walmart of Heroin." Kensington has become an opioid drive-through with the largest open-air heroin market on the East Coast. It is a neighborhood with over 75,000 addicts and 236 fatal overdoses, according to *The New York Times*. These aptly named badlands have become the home for thousands, as addiction and the poverty that follows forces them to camp under bridges, in lots, and inside churches.

Some still call heroin addiction a "life choice." Does a businessman choose to throw his back out while playing a round of golf, use up his prescription painkillers, and then turn to something stronger and cheaper because he wants to become an addict? No, he desires a way to get rid of their pain, and opioid use is the unfortunate path to numb what ails him.

When Mayor Kenney took office in 2016, he made the opioid crisis a top priority, but in 2017, overdose and addiction rates only rose. As long as the main proposal to curb the problem- safe injection sites- is against federal law and hotly debated, a new solution must be found. Community organizer Dan Marino explained to *The New York Times*, "It has to be easier to get help than to get heroin."

## My First Time Voting

Maureen Kennedy '19

My journey toward Election Day began in May when I registered to vote and started to research the candidates and questions that would be on my ballot. From then on, my anticipation built while I attempted to foster excitement and encouragement in those around me. I constantly badgered everyone I knew would be 18 by Election Day to register to vote and research the candidates.

After months of preparation, it was no wonder that on the night before November 6 I could barely fall asleep, just like a child on Christmas Eve waiting for Santa



Maureen Kennedy '19

Maureen was thrilled to receive her very first "I voted" sticker.

to arrive. I awoke that morning, donned my red headband to accompany my blue uniform, and checked my sample ballot one last time before heading to the polls. As I stepped into the voting booth, my excitement did not wane. I selected each of the candidates that I believed could make a difference in politics, and as I pushed the green "VOTE" button, I felt a rush of pride.

In the current state of politics, it can be hard to remain optimistic about our country's future. The actions we make can seem

insignificant, but I firmly believe that voting is the first step in exacting change in politics. I felt that I played a part in that change when I submitted my ballot. I voted on November 6, did you?

## Midterm Mania

Siena Wanders '19  
Editor-in-Chief

The Midterm elections delivered a split Congress and revealed a country whose political and cultural divisions appear to be deepening. Democrats gained control of the House as Republicans strengthened their hold in the Senate.

The Democratic win means a deadlocked Congress and a setback for the Trump administration, which is likely to face an onslaught of congressional investigations as Democrats take control of House committees. The new majority plans to prioritize the fight against climate change, the investigation of voter suppression accusations, and the re-insertion of consumer protections rolled back by Republicans. On the other hand, the Republican party's dominance extended within the Senate. Nevertheless, the president will have to choose between escalating conflict in Washington or attempting to reach

**We will strive for bipartisanship. The American people want peace. They want results. They want us to work for positive results for their lives.**

*Rep. Nancy Pelosi*

across the aisle.

Representative Nancy Pelosi, a likely candidate for Speaker of the House, called for unity in the name of the vision of the Founding Fathers within her victory speech emphasizing that "we have a bipartisan marketplace of ideas that makes our democracy strong." Pelosi stressed, "We have all had enough with division."

The 2018 Midterm elections truly marked a year of historic firsts as voters chose from a set of candidates among the most diverse ever to run in the United States. Ilhan Omar in Minnesota and Rashida Tlaib in Michigan became the first Muslim women elected to Congress after winning their respective House races. Jared Polis, a Democratic congressman in Colorado, became the first openly gay man elected as governor in any state, and Representative Marsha Blackburn, a Republican, will be Tennessee's first female senator.

# Hello, Is [Blank] Home?

Siena Wanders '19  
Editor-in-Chief

Voter turnout for the 2018 midterm elections reached new heights: in all, an estimated 113 million voters cast their ballots. According to the United States Election Project, nearly 48% of eligible voters exercised their right in these midterms, a significant increase when compared to the 39% in the 2014. Although much of this increase is due to the intense political climate, Get Out the Vote (GOTV) campaigns have also been extremely influential in the immense increase of voter turnout.

On the Saturday before the polls opened, senior Maureen Kennedy and I knocked on doors and emphatically encouraged our neighbors to take an active role within the running of their district, state, and country. We volunteered at the campaign office of the PA-4 Democratic candidate Madeleine Dean, a former state representative running US House of Representatives, eager

to motivate and educate local voters. Readied with a stack of candidate literature, polling place information, and a clipboard, we set out on our first canvassing expedition. Helping voters locate their polling place and organizing rides for Election Day were rewarding experiences and great introductions to the political workings of our society.

After an enthusiastic day of canvassing, I had a chance to speak with Madeleine Dean regarding her thoughts of the midterm elections.

Dean emphasized, "This election cycle is the most consequential of my lifetime. These public servants who we vote for are going to determine so much of the upcoming 5, 10, 20 years. So, be engaged. Be informed."

On November 6, Madeleine Dean along with three other women in PA were elected to the House of Representatives within their respective districts.



Siena Wanders '19

Seniors pose with Madeleine Dean after a long day of canvassing



Erica Miller '20

The History Club beams after a fun day of learning at the Franklin Institute Viking exhibit and Constitution Center scavenger hunt.

## Nerding Out in Philadelphia

Erica Miller '20

The History Club, along with Mrs. Castellano and Mrs. Kazimir, traveled into the city on Friday, October 26, to not only learn more about an interesting topic, but immerse themselves in the history of Philadelphia. They explored an exciting new Viking exhibit at the Franklin Institute, followed by a competitive Constitution Scavenger Hunt throughout Old City.

The Viking exhibit was more impressive than the girls could have ever imagined. The club marveled at the old weapons, ships, and clothes of the Vikings from 800 to 1066 CE. Students even had the opportunity to try on some of the rough but warm clothing. The 122-foot steel structure of a Viking ship found at the bottom of the Roskilde fjord in Denmark fascinated the girls. Pieces of the original ship were laid out in the outline to capture the full grandeur of the Vikings' military prowess. The enthusiastic students of history were also able to use computer tablets to virtually see what the ship would have actually looked like during the Viking Age. The history club then experienced a group stimulation of a ship and rowed as if they were Vikings themselves.

After their time at the Franklin Institute came to a

close, the club met in front of the Constitution Center, where the scavenger hunt would begin. The girls were given a list of famous statues and buildings to locate throughout the city. They were to take a group selfie with as many of the historic sites as possible before the hour was up. Basil girls frantically ran from the Liberty Bell to the Betsy Ross House to Christ Church and other prominent historical buildings. Extra points were given if the students incorporated Ben Franklin in any way.

After seeking out the famous locations throughout the streets of Philadelphia, the groups all gathered at the Constitution Center to see which team would come out on top. The "History Hunters" won and held their rewards of mini Liberty Bells and scrolls of the Constitution with pride.

A member of the winning team, Junior Taylor Pajak, recalls the day saying, "It was probably one of the best trips I have ever taken. Everything was so much fun! I cannot wait to go back again."

Although only one group reigned victorious, all of club members had won a fun-filled, historically educational day and made memories that would last a lifetime. The History Club is extremely thankful to have this adventure and is already looking forward to the next trip in the Spring.

# Catholic Church Scandal

Grace Comas '20  
Associate Editor

On January 6, 2002, the *Boston Globe's* Spotlight News Team released an article titled, "Church allowed abuse by priest for years." Since the explosive allegations that emerged from this article, the Catholic Church has been shaken by the sexual abuse scandal for more than 15 years. The Catholic Church has acknowledged the flawed realities, attempted to help victims, and ultimately worked towards a protocol to prevent reoccurrence of such abuse. Although the initial Spotlight article only focused on Father John Geoghan, it slowly opened the doors of justice for each victim. His case resembles many Church officials who were shuffled through parishes rather than punished for their crimes, enabling a continuation of the abuse. Protecting Geoghan created the image of the "pedophile priest" within the media, shaming anyone who wore a collar. As cases like Geoghan's began to surface in the media, Catholics all over the world were left in shock. An institution founded on the golden rule, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," failed to help their most vulnerable neighbors in a time of need. So in the midst of crisis, where do Catholics turn?

As a teenager coming of age in the Catholic Church, I sympathize with those who associate the church with scandal rather than shelter. Jesus built the Church on a rock to be a stronghold, representing the sense of security found in the Catholic faith. The distrust prompted by the institutional concealment of the abuse leaves Catholics struggling to grasp this rock. SBA theology teacher, Miss Violi, expresses her disappointment in the men of the Church who have made her job and life as a Catholic harder than it ever was intended to be.

Miss Violi sums up her commitment beautifully by saying, "Those in the Church have failed us, but the Church can never fail us."

After reading these words in Miss Violi's ar-

ticle on the "Blessed Is She" blog, I was eager to get the opinions of others involved in the church and learn how the events have affected their faith.

Recently, I had the opportunity to speak with a Sister of Saint Joseph about the scandals. After our conversation, I became confident in the future renewal of community in the Church. Sister noted that we never forget our victims.

"We are not in a place anymore where the Church needs to be perfect," Sister said, as she discussed the needed change in attitude from the Pope down to each parishioner.

She continued stating, "Imagine if you went to confession and instead of the priest acting superior to you, he said, 'It's okay. I sin too.'"

Such transparency and understanding is needed to help the hierarchy connect with its parishioners, a state that should have been established long ago. In many parishes throughout past decades, priests were perceived as God themselves, men who could never do wrong or be questioned. Despite this notion, priest, bishops, and even Popes, are all human too. Their mistakes, whether

mortal or venial, should face the same consequences - and forgiveness - as any other person.

As we move forward and bring justice to the victims by holding those at fault accountable, we also need to represent what the Church, as SBA teacher and layperson Ms. Mahon says, should have always been, "a safe, unwavering stronghold, rooted in every good thing about our Catholic faith."

To the students of SBA: Let us be the generation of change, the generation who remembers each victim and prevents reoccurrence, while reminding ourselves of the beauty, humility, and security of the Church, now and in the future. Let us provide a new meaning to the rock on which Jesus built his church. Let us raise our future children in a world where God is seen as the omnipotent, forgiving father he is, rather than a man in a white collar who is meant to represent him.

Those in the Church have failed us, but the Church can never fail us.  
-Miss Violi

## Where Do You Get Your News?

Bridget McShane '19

"The Democrats are apparently paying the migrants to march against the border," I heard one student say in the halls.

Another answered, "I saw on Twitter that Trump says that's true."

Unfamiliar with the intricacies of the trending news story, I could not help but wonder where the students heard this information and if there was any evidence to back up their claims. These recent thoughts sparked my curiosity with an even more essential question: "What news source do students get their news--and why?" After all, the misleading information was not totally the fault of the students, but rather the source of the misinformation was at fault.

A survey of questions was sent to all students, asking how often they received news from what sources. A last question asked the students why they were drawn to a particular news source.

As a whole, the SBA community is aware of current events; only 1 out of 144 respondents stated that she did not pay attention to the news at all. Out of the four news options provided, 69% of students use social media platforms such as Snapchat, Twitter, and Facebook as their primary, daily news source. Students said that "Snapchat is easy to understand" and certain platforms like Twitter and Facebook are "convenient" and "easy to access" sources of information. While news stories found on these

applications are sometimes reliable, others lack critical evidence to support major claims and are simply opinion pieces formulated into what appears to be truth.

The younger generation must remember the equation to someone's opinion is: their experiences plus their beliefs plus their fears. You are not in the equation. In other words, always demand evidence. Question the headings of online news. We need to be informed with reliable information to effectively bring change to our nation.



Bridget McShane '19

Associate Editor

# Why is Spirit Day So Important?

Abigail Fox '19

Spirit Day at Saint Basil Academy is not just a day full of school enthusiasm; it is a day to celebrate the school year and sisterhood. Now it is true that every day spent at Basil's is a day to celebrate, but Spirit Day is the time when we can formally recognize how special Saint Basil Academy really is. Spirit days traditionally are days of dressing up in school colors and celebrating the new school year with fellow classmates. SBA Spirit Day definitely fits those characteristics, but our Spirit Day is unique. Spirit Day takes place every year on the day before Thanksgiving break begins. Activities consist of each grade's separate religion classes choreographing a dance. They base the songs they choose and dance they create on the theme the Senior Student Council chooses, with the input of senior peers. When the anticipated day finally arrives, students know that it is a half day, they can wear a crazy outfit to match their dance theme, and they get to perform an awesome dance with their Basil's sisters.

As Saint Basil Academy senior, Mary Kate Johnston says, "Spirit Day is a Saint Basil Academy tradition everyone comes to know and love. We all become so much closer with our class as we make our crazy dances to our favorite songs. At first it can be scary to perform in front of the whole school, but once you get out there and dance your heart out, you

will look forward to it each year. Spirit day has really brought us together as a school to celebrate how awesome it is at SBA!"

The faculty and staff even prepare a dance for the students, for which the theme is highly anticipated and secretive. Students decorate their student sections with their grade

colors, take tons of pictures, and get to watch all of their other sisters perform their dances as well.

It is true that Spirit Day is only one day, but the days spent preparing for it are what makes the day so special. Since the are dances performed, the classes need time to practice

and perfect the dances. The weeks leading up to Spirit Day are fun and exciting because time is put aside to choreograph dance moves at different periods during the day. It is a time to work together with your class and even to step up as a leader to make sure the dance is perfect for the final performance on Spirit Day.

As senior Ann Marie Coates says, "Creating and performing a Spirit Day dance is one of my favorite traditions at SBA because it really allows you to bond with your class. You are always working together and trying to get the best dance possible. Each person has a role in creating and executing the dance, which allows us to all become better leaders. The time is filled with non-stop laughter because of our sometimes ridiculously bad dance moves."

Tradition is very important to the students at SBA not only because it is part of the school's history, but because we love the school and want to continue to celebrate our unique activities. Tradition is one reason that makes Saint Basil Academy and the students special.

As Senior Maddy Yevoli expressed, "Tradition at Saint Basil Academy brings everyone together and emphasizes the idea of sisterhood, which is very important to us here as it stresses our connection to one other. The traditions at SBA are special and different because they encourage you to be yourself. It makes the school and each student unique."

Spirit day is one of the most beloved traditions at SBA as it represents who we are as a school: unique, special, and united.



Mrs. Ryan

After portraying Miley Cyrus last year for Spirit Day, the Seniors are ready to perform yet another amazing performance.

## Pittsburgh Shooting

Erin Drumm '20

On October 27, 2018, eleven people were killed in a shooting during morning Shabbat services at The Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh. The shooting stands as the deadliest attack on the Jewish community in United States' history, according to the Anti-Defamation League, and proves that anti-Semitism and hatred are alive as rampant plagues today. To combat hate, solidarity and love have been expressed by people of all faiths across the country.

Here, in our local community, I joined a diverse group at Keneseth Israel Synagogue to pray for not only the eleven Squirrel Hill victims, but also for our country to come together as one and rise above senseless acts of violence. Participating with a multitude of various ethnicities and religious identities and uniting to fight against hate crimes gave me a greater perspective regarding the significance of the shooting. Sitting in the pews of Keneseth Israel synagogue, I realized that

this was not solely an act of violence against the Jewish community, but against the morality upon which our country was founded - equality, opportunity, and most importantly, freedom.

Josh Shapiro, Pennsylvania Attorney General, spoke at Keneseth Israel, acting as a voice of hope in a time of darkness. He said, "What we know now more than ever is leaders must speak with moral clarity. To be sure this killer was deranged, but he had an audience. He had cheerleaders. And enablers. We must condemn that culture. Left unchecked, we will inevitably experience more horror. Understand this, friends: hate speech begets hate crimes."

This quote resonates with me as it illustrates the idea that hate crimes are not random acts of violence but are often spurred by leaders who encourage division and inspire the growth of hatred. Despite the prevalence of hatred and violence in the United States today, the response to the Tree of Life Synagogue shooting reminds that love and unity always outshine hatred.

## A Dangerous Profession?

Erin O'Reilly '20

All over the world, journalists increasingly have been targeted for acts of violence. On October 2, 2018, Jamal Khashoggi went missing after entering the Saudi Arabian consulate in Istanbul, Turkey. Khashoggi was a journalist who once was very close to the Saudi Arabian royal family. Khashoggi moved to the U.S. last year for a self-imposed exile and contributed to the Global Opinions Column in the "Washington Post".

While still in Saudi Arabia, he wrote many significant stories, such as articles about Osama Bin Laden and the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan. Also, he wrote about the fear of arrest by Saudi royals who were in line to be the next king of Saudi Arabia after King Salman. Khashoggi had even alluded to many people being arrested due to "having an independent mind and not even being dissidents."

On the day of his disappearance, he reassured family and friends that nothing would happen to him. There were still suspicions that something could happen. He had his wife wait outside for him and told her to let a Turkish Official know if he never came out. And after ten hours of waiting, she called.

Saudi Arabia denied any knowledge at first, but has since admitted that Khashoggi was killed during an interrogation that "went wrong." The Saudi Arabian government said that it will take action against those accused of the murder. President Donald Trump has been pushed to put sanctions on Saudi Arabia to punish them for the death.

Trump has stated that the U.S. has orders for 450 billion dollars in equipment for the military, and that sanctions would have a negative effect on current American interests.

Violence against the media does not just happen in foreign countries. This past July, four journalists and a sales assistant from Capital Gazette Communications, located in An-

## Juniors Ring it On!

Maria Storck '20

Here at Saint Basil Academy the students pride themselves on their annual traditions. Since the beginning months of school, the juniors have been eager to receive their stamp of approval as SBA upperclassmen. On November 5th, 2018, the junior class received their class rings. The tradition of the class rings has been at Saint Basil Academy for as long as anyone can remember. To this day, the girls still design their own school rings, to wear with pride and joy, in and outside of school.

Junior Lauren Ems stated, "I was ecstatic to get my ring because it will forever be a sign of four years of memories with my sisters." She was not the only one who was thrilled to get her ring.

Junior Darragh Flowers said, "I was so excited see everyone's beautiful rings and to take pictures with all of my sisters. This ring will be a reminder that Saint Basil Academy will always be my forever home."

The Ring Mass consists of a traditional Ukrainian Mass and the presentation of each ring on the stage in the auditorium. The sophomore student council assists in this Mass, and the entire school has a part in making the ring Mass a special and a memorable night for everyone. The juniors truly appreciate everything that Mrs. D'Angelo, the faculty, and their fellow students did for them. Ring Mass is significant to her. She says "The Ring Mass is an important tradi-

tion at SBA for me because it is a celebration of the unity that the class has with the Academy and with one another. It is a symbol that connects all the students together and that they wear proudly as they represent SBA. It is important to me as principal that the experiences that students have at Basil's is one that will be memorable. When they are no longer walking through these hallways, that their ring will remind them of their time here."



Maria Storck '20

After months of anticipation and practicing poses, the Junior class was ready to Ring It On!

napolis, Maryland, were killed by a gunman. This comes after a series of incidents where President Donald Trump referred to media outlets as the "fake news media." Since the attack, security has been ramped up in news organizations.

In October, Viktoria Marinova, a Bulgarian journalist, was raped and murdered in Ruse, Bulgaria. Marinova was investigating corruption and misplaced European Union funds. It is unknown whether her murder was related to her work or not. The Deputy Prime Minister, Valeri Simeonov, had threatened journalists and broadcasters in Bulgaria prior to the death. Also in October, a Slovak jour-

nalist was shot and killed in his home with his fiancé. People suspect that his death had to do with his reporting. In October, 2017, one of the best-known investigative journalists of Malta, Daphne Galizia, was killed in a car bomb attack.

Fortunately, the American media is protected by the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which protects the right to free speech. Freedom of Speech is a fundamental right that covers almost anything, except hate speech, speech that incites violence, defamation and a few other categories. Freedom of Speech always must be protected; it drives our American democracy.

# Panthers Celebrate Fall Sports' Success

Kelly Grant '20

As winter rolls around and the fall season nears its end, excitement surrounds the SBA sports teams. The cheering fans, also known as the Panther Pit, are ready to go out, show their pride, and support their school. Our cross country, volleyball, and soccer teams should all be given huge congratulations for their hard work and determination, ultimately achieving significant results. With state championships and district titles on the line, SBA fall sports teams have had extremely successful seasons.

With a record of 11-8-1, the SBA soccer team captured its third consecutive District 1 Championship, defeating New Hope High School 4-3 after two overtimes and a shootout, and made it to the State playoffs.

Senior Cara Hughes commented, "This soccer season has been one of the most amazing experiences at Basils for me. I'm leaving the team with amazing friendships and memories that I will cherish forever."

The volleyball team has had its best season since 2013, ending with an outstanding record of 15-5. On senior night, SBA volleyball rallied against Gwynedd Mercy, claiming a critical 3-2 victory. The team headed to the District 1 championship after their 3-0 playoff win against Mast Charter.

Junior Morgan Schissler said, "This season we worked really hard and it has definitely paid off because we have defeated teams that we have not beat in past years. Although we came in second place for the AACA league, we are still de-

termined to continue our season and go further."

SBA would like to express congratulations to freshman Alina La Forest who captured a silver medal at the District 1 Cross Country Championship and qualified for the PIAA State Championship in Hershey, Pa.

Junior Taylor Thomas of the cross country

team said, "Our goal was not to be better than anyone else, rather it was to be better than what we were before. And in the end, it all played out exactly as planned, with everyone running a personal best."

Junior Caitlin Ponert reflected on the tennis team's months of hard work, "At the end of our

season, we came really close to winning against tough competition. Although we may not have won each game, my team and I still had fun and made great memories."

Sophomore Kerry Pinkerton of the field hockey team adds, "This season the team showed tremendous improvement. We could not have made it as far as we did without Coach Dowd's encouragement and confidence in each one of us. My teammates and I cannot wait to see what next season holds!"

Although the weather getting colder, SBA and the fans, also known as the Panther Pit, are just warming up for the cheer, basketball, and indoor track seasons.

With great success last year winning back-to-back Catholic Academy League and District 1 Championships, the SBA basketball team is eager to get back into the gym. Freshmen Sam White said, "As volleyball finishes up, I am excited to start the basketball season with my new teammates! I hope that I can help the team repeat the success they have had for so many years."

Last year, girls of the indoor track team, such as Jayla Bernard and Tia Taylor, qualified for the state championship meet. The indoor track team is ready to prepare for the upcoming season and also hoping to repeat the success they have had in previous years.

Saint Basil Academy is not only proud of all of the sports teams' great success, but excited by the athletes' talent and dedication to the teams and games they love. We wish the best of luck to all of the winter sports teams with their upcoming seasons. The Panther Pit has much to look forward to as they root for the SBA!



Tess White '19

The SBA soccer team enjoyed a season of new memories, teammates, and victories.

## Social Media Influencers

Selah Wright '21

Abigail Fox '19

Seventy-seven percent of teenagers in the United States are subscribed to a YouTube channel and 91.4% say YouTube is a positive aspect of our society.

Recently, on the well-known website, YouTube, there has been a flood of inspired teenagers uploading videos to the platform. Many popular types of the videos include beauty tutorials, lifestyle do-it-yourself lessons (DIYs), and video blogs (vlogs). YouTube provides a platform for people to share their unique talents. The site is becoming a source of revenue and livelihood for many of the creators, offering amazing opportunities to the social media influencers.

One rising star on YouTube is Antonio Garza. Antonio is a beauty guru from Texas who started her YouTube channel this year. A Valentine's Day makeup tutorial began her rise to stardom as an influencer. Since her first video, she has gained one million subscribers on YouTube within the short span of three

months. Teenagers find her to be engaging, funny, and creative. Recently, she uploaded a collaboration video with one of the most popular YouTubers at the moment, James Charles. Together they ate food, talked about editing, and discussed the YouTube "community".

Another YouTuber, Joana Ceddia, is on the rise as well. Joana is seventeen years old and began her YouTube channel with a video that showcased her unique personality. People love her videos because she is authentic, artistic, and hilariously upbeat. Her claim to fame is her video about the expensive merchandise of fellow influencer Emma. Joana solves the problem by teaching viewers how to recreate the looks for far less money.

These internet sensations have entertained millions via the web, with makeup tutorials, vlogs, and DIYs, but they have also taught people the power of social media and the future of a new industry: social media influencers. YouTube is giving teenagers around the world a platform on which they can share their talents. Maybe one day we will see a Basil girl express her unique talents on YouTube as a social media influencer.

## A "Must See" Movie is Born

Emily DeMarshall '19

Over the past month, there has been a steady and constant stream of humming to the tune of "Shallow" by Lady Gaga and Bradley Cooper from the movie *A Star is Born*. This powerful song had the ability to captivate moviegoers across the nation with lyrics that are synonymous to the movie's plot and message.

*A Star is Born* tells the story of a struggling waitress, Ally, who rises to fame with the help of troubled rock star, Jack. In this movie, viewers watch the effects of fame on human beings' mental, physical, and emotional health as well as aspects of fame that are often glossed over such as addiction, pride, and the lack of privacy. More interestingly, viewers watch a tragic, yet timeless love story unfold, the plot mirroring the 1976 and 1954 renditions of *A Star is Born* starring Barbra Streisand and Judy Garland, respectively.

Although it has been months since the movie's release and decades since the first telling of the plot, the film's powerful message is still lingers in the minds of both the media and fans.

The unlikely duo of Lady Gaga and Bradley Cooper come together to star in arguably the best movie of the year. The two have an unmatched chemistry that is both emotional and genuine. With many movies of today relying on special effects, auto-tuned voices, and ridiculously unrealistic plots to draw in crowds, it was a relief to see a movie that was raw, authentic, and realistic.

There are many important takeaways people of all age can pull from this movie. One of these lessons is to believe in yourself and your abilities. Throughout the movie, we see Ally struggle with confidence in her voice. She is shy and afraid show her talent to the world, but ultimately succeeds. *A Star is Born* encourages people of all ages to utilize their talents and never sell themselves short.

## College Tips and Tricks

Julia McCann '19

It's that time of year again when seniors scramble to compile their final college list, gather their transcripts and recommendations, and edit countless essays. The fall of senior year is often characterized by late nights and paralyzing stress. This unfortunate situation does not have to be the case. Underclassmen now have a chance to educate themselves on the college admissions process in order to make senior year an overall more enjoyable experience.

First and foremost, it is never too early to look at colleges. Now is the time to schedule campus tours, attend open houses, and ask questions not just about academics, but also about student life. In addition to picking an institution to further one's educational career, students are picking their home for the next four years. Touring students are advised to also take steps to visualize themselves attending the prospective school. Not every university will be a perfect match.

Stay organized. It is extremely important to stay on top of all deadlines, essays, letters of recommendation, test scores, transcripts, application fees, FAFSA forms, and CSS profiles. Most importantly, the college admissions process is much to keep track of, so plan enough time to get everything done. Creating an excel spreadsheet to keep deadlines and tasks organized works well.

Apply Early Action to the colleges that offer it. Applications will be completed and the decision will be made before the holidays. Front-

loading the hours of college application work will free up time later to make senior year a more enjoyable and stress-free experience.

Finally, it is okay to go into to college with an undecided major. College is a time to explore one's interests. In fact, 50-70% of undergrads switch the major they started with at least once.

Even though the search can seem overwhelming, be sure to enjoy the fun parts of senior year and appreciate the time you have left at Basil's by taking it one day at a time.



Siena Wanders '19

Deadlines, essays, and decisions are on the SBA seniors' minds this fall.

After Ally becomes a successful pop star, the pressure of fame begins to affect all aspects of her life. Ally begins to transform into an artist that her fans want to see, not the person she truly is. Building her career and pleasing her fans became everything for Ally, and she began to forget about the relationships in her life. The shocking end of the movie prompts Ally to reflect on what is truly important in her life and helps her return to her true self.

Jack, an aging rock star who falls in love with Ally, struggles with fame as well. However, Jack deals with fame in a much different way than Ally. Instead of neglecting

relationships, Jack turns to alcohol and drugs as a coping mechanism. Jack's character illustrates that addiction is a serious disease and needs to be treated as such. If not treated properly, addiction can take a serious toll on the life of the abuser as well as those around him.

Both Ally and Jack enjoy the fortunes of fame and the beauty of true love, but, prompted by an identity-crisis and addiction, it is inevitable that their lives will go down different paths. Despite the hardships that they face, viewers can all agree on one thing: the love that Ally and Jack shared was a true and genuine.