

The Green & Gold



**Spring Semester
April, 2021**

Vol.1

**A Student Led
Newspaper**



See further in Article 8

Welcome to The Green and Gold, a student newspaper written exclusively by Viking students. The journalism students created the newspaper to inform, entertain, and inspire readers. While striving to become better writers and communicators of their ideas.

Editor and Chief: Charlotte Mckinley

Contributing writers:

Helen Bandy
Nia Bedard
Michel Bedard
Miranda Cincotta
Anna Hou
Austin Johnson
Jasmine Milbourn
Yen Trong
Alisha Mason
Grace Rish



1

Mr. Knotek Speaks on Transition From Principal to Head of School

By: Nia Bedard

Vice-Principal by Dr. Powell, which then morphed into the principal role, which Mr. Knotek currently holds, at Saint John's Catholic Prep., Mr. Knotek stated that "I've been very happy here despite the challenges. I had my first year, which is never a normal year, then last year started off okay but then did not become as normal as I had hoped, and now into my third year, which has not been normal at all." Despite the challenges faced during the current Covid-19 Pandemic, Mr. Knotek is committed to putting the student body's education

the student body's education first while balancing the student's mental and physical health needs. With his transition from Principal to Head of School, Mr. Knotek has high hopes for his role change and for the opportunity to grow the school in the future. As Head of School, Mr. Knotek will have a much more expansive role. He will continue to oversee the faculty and day-to-day operations, but he will begin to oversee athletics, enrollment, and school advancements.

In addition to his role change, Vice Principal, Mrs. Seaman, will remain in her current position, and Mr. Knotek begins the search for a Dean of Students. Mr. Knotek is confident in a smooth transition; he continues to have biweekly meetings with Dr. Powell leading up to the transition. Dr. Powell will remain involved as construction continues within the school.

Overall, Mr. Knotek is excited about the new changes that he will make in his new role as Head of School and is excited to see his role at SJCP grow into a much more significant part of his life.

Mr. Knotek does have lots of goals to achieve and ideas to implement once his transition is official. Some of these include fostering our Catholic and religious identity by having mass together again and growing campus ministry; developing better relationships with alumni by holding more alumni events; pushing for more competitive academics, AP courses, and creative courses for students; growing the school spirit, pride, and culture through the encouragement of the student body voicing their opinions; and increasing the involvement of student government so they can implement the student's ideas for the student body.

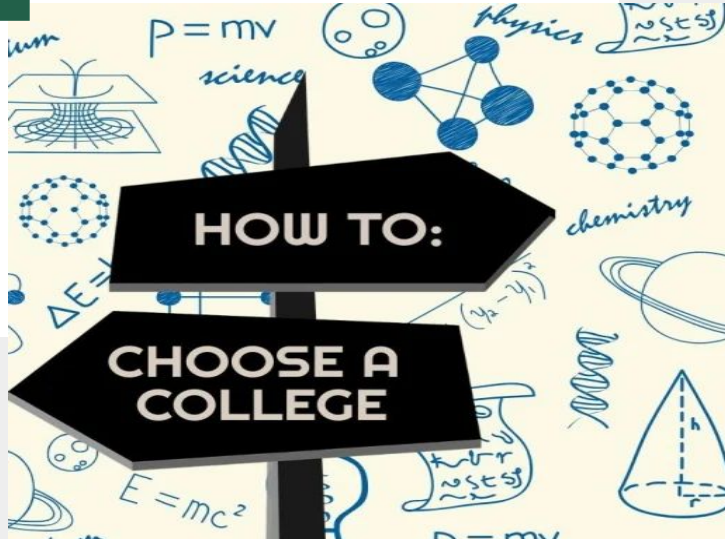
In the broader picture, Mr. Knotek will be focusing on working with the school community, donors, construction, etc., as well as the Board of Trustees and working on building connections outside of the school building. However, Mr. Knotek's biggest goal for the next year is to focus on opening up the school to the entire student body as soon as possible while focusing on rebuilding traditions and events that have been disrupted during this year of Covid-19.



See Further in Article 7

2

Advice and Tips For Your College Search, Q&A with Mrs. Anders By: Helen Bandy



In your busy high school life, it is all too easy to put off thinking about college. Preparing for college can seem like a daunting and overwhelming process. Many questions will arise: Where should you go? What's your first step? When should you even begin looking at colleges? With the help of our very own counselor, Mrs. Anders, we will answer some of these important questions for you.

The College Research Process

When should you begin the college research process?
It would be best if you started thinking about college as early as your freshman year. You can look up colleges, determine your

dream college and what GPA/SAT score you might need for it, join activities and clubs, and get involved in your community/school to build your resume. The major part of the college process starts in your junior year.

How many schools should you apply to?

I usually recommend 6-8 colleges (1-2 safety schools, 3-4 target schools, and 1-2 reach schools- as suggested by forbes.com), but it depends on the student. If you plan on entering a competitive major, competitive college, or a major that is not regularly found, you should apply to a few more.

What criteria should you use to find a college or university?
What if you're not sure of your major?

- *Whether you know your major or not, I always recommend that a great way to start searching for colleges is to ask yourself how far away from home you and your family will be comfortable with. You can search all the colleges in your radius and begin to narrow it down from there.*
- *Begin to think about your learning preferences (do you like participating in class, having one-on-one time with your professors, or do you like less participation and sitting in the back of a class with 200 kids), it's whatever works best for you.*
- *Location is also important. Do you want a city with a lot of opportunities or a more suburban/rural campus?*
- *If you know your major, research schools with the best program for you and narrow it down from there.*

What's a good website to start searching for colleges?
There are a lot of helpful resources out there, but Naviance is my favorite. You can search for all colleges by your major, location, admissions requirements, school type, athletics, and more. It is a great way to find the perfect fit for you.

Is visiting campuses necessary?
It is definitely important that you walk around and get a feel for the college; you want to try and picture yourself there. If time, cost, or location prohibit you from doing so, it is unnecessary unless you have been accepted and are trying to make a decision.

Application process
When should you take the SAT/ACT, and how many times?
I recommend taking your first SAT whenever you finish Algebra 2 or shortly after that period. The SAT rarely goes above Algebra 2 in math skills. Make sure you take three before you become a senior.

What is the difference between the ACT and the SAT?

The ACT has a math, science, and english section. Students who are stronger in the STEM areas usually will do better on the ACT. The ACT also goes into higher-level math (Precalculus). The SAT does not have a science section, and it rarely goes above Algebra 2 in math. Neither one is harder; they both test benefits for a different type of student. Figure out which test might be better for you so that you can achieve the highest score possible.

What advice do you have for each grade level?

- Freshmen: *Log into Naviance and start working on your resume. It is crucial to track events as they happen, so you don't forget them by the time you're applying to colleges. Include whatever sports, clubs, activities, jobs, events, etc., and how many hours you have participated in them. By the time you get to your senior year and applying to colleges, you won't have to worry about creating your resume.*
- Sophomores: *Visit colleges. As you're going on vacations or driving places (even if it is local), go through college campuses and towns to help you feel what type of atmosphere you like. This is an essential step in creating your list to have an idea of what you are looking for.*
- Juniors: *Narrow down your list to about 12-15 schools that you are really considering. Try to visit as many as possible. Make sure to take a look at what is necessary to get into the college (recommendations, SAT/ACT scores...), and by the time you get to summer, you should narrow it down to about eight.*

- Seniors: *Get it all done early (the application process), take advantage of the workshops, and help that Saint John's and other resources may offer. I advise seniors to try and get as much done as they can in August and September, so they have a lot of time to make their final decision.*

Which extracurricular activities do colleges want to see on the application?

Colleges are looking for students that get involved and have stuck with their activities. You want to prove to a college that you have been in something consistently and saw it through to the end goal (quality rather than quantity). An excellent example of this might be Girl Scouts or Boy Scouts because it is a long-term commitment. Participating in sports, clubs, having a part-time job, or volunteer work are just some things that will stand out to colleges. Make sure you are taking leadership positions if they are offered.

Is applying Early Decision and Early Action better than Regular Decision?

Early Action is a type of admission where you receive a decision well in advance of the regular response date. It gives you a lot more opportunity and flexibility. There is more time to research the college, financial aid, and scholarship opportunities. If, for some reason, you are denied from any schools at this deadline, you still have time to add a few more colleges to the Regular Decision deadline. Also, applying Early Action lets a college know that you are organized and interested in their school. Your application will be on the front end of the committee. If you decide to apply Regular Decision, the admission committee will have already read thousands of essays and countless applications.

Early Decision is something that I rarely recommend because so much can change in your senior year. Early Decision is different from Early Action because Early Decision plans are binding; if you are accepted, you must go to that school. However, if it is your dream school, then Early Decision will be advantageous because you are already telling the school that you are 100% joining them.

What do admissions officers look for in an application essay?

Admissions offices want to know about you and a moment in time to tell them who you are. Rather than writing an essay about your volunteer work, for example, as a camp counselor, you may want to talk about one child that you impacted (what did you feel, what did you see, what was happening). You want to really get that reader into that exact moment with your essay. You can also write about something that impacted you: an athletic event, volunteering, a part-time job. The admissions officers want to get inside your head and focus on a moment in time, getting to know who you are as a person by going through all your senses. Do not write a generic and general essay; it needs to be original. Writing is an essential skill in college so show admissions officers you can do it well. Make sure to be yourself and pick a topic that you're passionate about. If you aren't sure of what to do, brainstorm a few ideas with your parents because they may remember a situation that affected you.

When should you start applying to colleges?

Generally, a student should begin the application process by the start of their senior year of high school. However, some colleges have different deadlines, but most applications for regular fall admission will be due by January. Make sure you

If you don't know your major, should you declare a major on the application or apply undecided?

I don't think there is a problem with applying undecided. However, you may have to declare a major in some schools because they will not allow you to transfer into another major. It depends on the school. Undecided is the way to go if you truly have no idea what you want to do, and it will not affect you within the application/college process.

What do you think is the most important thing admission officers look for in an application?

Admission officers want to know what a student is going to give back to their college. They are looking for active students (participating in sports, activities, leadership, etc.) and a well-balanced student who will make an impact.

If you had to give your best advice for high schoolers about to begin this process, what would it be?

I truly believe if you want to go to college, there is a college out there for you no matter your GPA, resume, etc., and it is a college that will fit you. Some people get hung up on the names and competitiveness, but the fit is most important. You need to find a place where

You will thrive for the next four years. Students need to realize that college is a huge undertaking financially, so you need to find the best college for you.

3

Fighting Covid: The Final Stretch?

By: Jasmine Melbourn

In early March, the one-year anniversary of the COVID-19 shutdown occurred. As it felt like yesterday, Saint John's students were told that they would be doing virtual school for only two weeks. But life surprises people in funny ways. It's been over a year of adapting to the new "COVID schedule": leaving the house with a mask, six feet distance, and zoom classes.

Frederick has had it's fair share of COVID cases; the numbers going up and down everyday. As businesses have been opening up more and

more, people are starting to get back to their regular routine. This is due in part to the three available vaccines. The vaccine came out in January and has been available for older age ranges and with preexisting conditions. Still, many are struggling to get their first vaccine appointment. Vaccine appointments are organized by prioritizing groups by the need of the vaccine. Vaccines are available for people who are a part of groups known as 1A, 1B, and 1C. The first group, 1A, includes all health care workers, residents, and the staff at nursing homes, first responders, public safety, and corrections. The second group, 1B, includes assisted living, adults 75 and older, educational staff, and government officials. The third and final group, 1C, includes adults 65 and older, essential workers in lab services, agriculture, postal services. Please get more information at: health.frederickcountymd.gov. The Saint John's school community has many teachers now who have been vaccinated! Teachers such as Mrs. Ballenger and Mr. Bubbers just recently received their second shot. Others are sure to follow. Ages sixteen and up have been approved for both the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines. The timeline

for younger students is still unclear, but the vaccine is readily available for most of our Viking Family.

Though there is still stress for the older generation, the vaccine might soon be available for all students, which is crucial for herd immunity. These steps bring the hope for being back at school full time and, on a broader scale returning to everyday life. Until then, it is essential to mask up and social distance and keep our Viking and Frederick community safe.

Cited:

<https://health.frederickcountymd.gov/614/Novel-Coronavirus-COVID-19>

<https://www.houstonmethodist.org/blog/articles/2020/dec/how-was-the-covid-19-vaccine-developed-so-fast/>



See further in Article 5

4

Frederick's Best Beans: A Guide to Local Coffee By: Caroline Mackin



As the school year draws closer to an end and with AP tests around the corner, many students find themselves in need of a quick pick-me-up, a frothy and sweet, or dark and rich cup of coffee. Luckily for Saint John's students, the proximity to Downtown Frederick and Westview allows for a myriad of options not too far from school. With the numerous options for cafes and coffee shops, it may feel a bit overwhelming, so mask up and come along with me as we enter Frederick's world of coffee.

Frederick Coffee Co. & Cafe

To start off strong (no pun intended), one must acknowledge one of Frederick's most iconic cafes, Frederick Coffee Co. & Cafe. This coffee shop, which opened in 1991, is located on the corner of East and Church Street in Downtown. The atmosphere is warm and welcoming and attracts many patrons daily. To accommodate the influx of people, the Cafe is fairly large and offers plenty of indoor and outdoor seating and a designated free parking lot behind the cafe. They offer an extensive coffee menu consisting

of drips, espresso drinks, and specialty lattes. They also have many different sandwiches, salad, and soup options and a daily rotation of baked goods. Frederick Coffee Co. & Cafe also has online ordering available on their website, allowing for low contact pickup.

Baltimore Coffee and Tea Co.

One of the closest shops to Saint John's Catholic Prep, Baltimore Coffee and Tea is a personal and community favorite. The shop, which is part of a small chain local to Maryland, is tucked just outside the Westview Corner Shopping Center. The drink menu consists of a daily rotation of self-serve drip coffees, espresso-based drinks, and tea lattes. Baltimore Coffee and Tea is notable for its massive selection of whole or ground coffee beans available in store along with its wall of loose-leaf and bagged teas creating an unforgettable coffee aroma. The atmosphere is cozy and inviting, and after a few visits, many of the baristas will make a point to learn your name and order. They also offer a large selection of made-to-order sandwiches, salads, and soups, as well as a selection of bakery items daily. Currently, indoor seating is unavailable, but there are a few outdoor options.

Dublin Roasters and Coffee

Located in the North Market Center, Dublin Roasters and Coffee is easily the largest shop on the list. Vaulted ceilings and multiple rooms give Dublin Roasters and Coffee an airy aura. There are many different seating options inside and outside. The coffee is Fair Trade and sourced from small farms worldwide, and true to their name, it is roasted in-house. Dublin Roasters has a daily flavor rotation for brewed coffee, espresso drinks, and lattes, it does not have a large menu, but it features many vegan and vegetarian options. Dublin Roasters also has a certain Irish flare in their food, coffee flavors, and decor. Dublin Roasters and Coffee has a grandma's house aesthetic to it as your food and drinks are served on an array of mismatched ceramics, and the furnishings look like they have come from many different thrift stores. The eclectic shop has its own parking lot making it the perfect pit stop.

Cafe Nola

If loud music and a constantly changing display of local art sound up your alley, then Cafe Nola is the place for you. The shop on East Patrick Street is dimly lit with dark walls

and lots of natural wood furnishings; it embodies the west coast hipster java atmosphere. They have a drink menu of drip coffees, espresso-based drinks, and specialty lattes. Cafe Nola is fairly well known for their vegan and vegetarian options, and they now offer soy and oat milk substitutes in their coffee drinks. The Cafe offers indoor and outdoor seating and a menu that includes American breakfast, lunch, and dinner foods. Cafe Nola is a good place for a sit-down meal anytime of the day or for a latte on the go.

Beans and Bagels

Small but mighty, Beans and Bagels is an understated gem in Downtown Frederick. Located on East Patrick Street, it is right across from the Carroll Creek Parking Garage. Their drink menu has many well-known drip and espresso coffees, along with house specialties. They are possibly more well known for their array of hot and cold sandwiches, omelets, and of course, bagels. Currently, seating is not available, but if you find yourself near the Civil War Museum or Venus on the Half Shell, Beans and Bagels is a good place to get your coffee or snack fix.

Ibiza Cafe

The Ibiza Cafe is located on West 4th Street in Downtown Frederick. It has a variety of brewed coffees you can choose based on the beans' country of origin. It has a relatively simple menu of espresso drinks and food, but the cafe really functions on the principle of quality over quantity. The Ibiza Cafe offers bubble teas as another option for those who are not as fond of coffee and a daily rotation of baked goods. The cafe offers indoor and outdoor seating and is open and airy. The Ibiza Cafe really pours (another pun!) its heart into every cup. If you are a fan of latte art, are easily overwhelmed by complicated menus, or uncomfortable with the traditionally small and packed coffee shop, look no further.

Boba and Beans

Boba and Beans is a new locally owned downtown coffee shop that opened earlier this year. Located on Market Street, the shop's exterior and interior style is black, stylistic, and modern while managing to preserve the welcoming and warm vibe characteristic of metropolitan Frederick. They offer an array of seasonal drinks and hand-made espresso-based coffees. Coffee is not all the cafe is capable of,

'Boba' refers to the shop's customizable bubble teas. Boba and Beans have received attention regarding the high quality of its baked goods in the short time it's been open. All and all, Boba and Beans' location and diverse options make it ideal to stop at for a quick cup during a walk along Market Street.

The Buzz Cafe

In all honesty, this cafe is pretty far from Saint Johns, but as it is within Frederick County limits, about 20 minutes south of Downtown, it feels wrong not to include it. The Buzz is located in the Green Valley Shopping Center and is a super cozy little cafe. The walls are covered with art from students of all ages from Frederick County schools, and the menu is constantly changing obscure themes (think 'shark week') with the breakfast and lunch items frequently being renamed after fun puns. They have brewed coffee, espresso drinks, and lots of distinctive latte flavors. Their large amount of fresh baked goods is one of The Buzz's best parts, and it's a great breakfast stop to or from Mount Airy.

I hope that a warm or cold cup of joe has the same effect on you as it does me. There is something quite lovely about supporting

these small and locally owned businesses; it exists in a barista knowing your name, having a favorite chair, or knowing the best drink on the menu. Whether you find your comfort in eclectic hole-in-wall places or large and well-trafficked shops, I hope this guide helped. Cheers.

5

Mr. Nogay's Favorite Creamy Spinach Chicken Pasta

BY: Mr. Nogay and
Charlotte Mckinley

This might be in the group with classics like Maggiano's rigatoni D and others. Bacon, heavy cream, tomatoes, and smoked paprika give it that very distinct flavor. Have some bread handy for sopping up any sauce

INGREDIENTS:

5 slices bacon

11 pound chicken breasts (2 each), sliced

Salt and pepper, to taste

2 ½ teaspoons Italian seasoning

1 ½ teaspoons smoked paprika

½ teaspoon red chili flakes

5 ounces baby spinach

4 to 5 small tomatoes, diced

5 cloves garlic, minced

1 ½ cups heavy cream

2 cups Parmesan, shredded

12 ounces penne, cooked al dente

DIRECTIONS

1. In a large skillet over medium heat, cook the bacon until crisp. Remove, drain on a paper towel, and chop. Drain grease from the pan and reserve.

2. Add 2 to 3 tablespoons of the bacon grease back to the pan. In batches, so as not to crowd the pan, add the sliced chicken and season with salt, pepper, Italian seasoning, paprika, and chili flakes. When the chicken is cooked and no longer pink, remove it from the pan and set aside. Continue cooking in batches until all the chicken is cooked and set aside.

3. Add the spinach and tomatoes to the skillet and cook until the spinach is wilted. Add the garlic and cook for 30 seconds more.

4. Add the heavy cream and bring to a simmer. Cook until thickened, then add the Parmesan cheese. Stir until the cheese has melted and the sauce has thickened.

5. Add the cooked pasta, chicken, and bacon back into the skillet. Stir to evenly mix.

6. Remove from the heat and let stand for 5 minutes to allow the sauce to absorb and thicken.

7. Serve with additional shredded Parmesan and chili flakes, if desired.

The original recipe link:
<https://tiphero.com/creamy-chicken-bacon-pasta>



6

Interview with Ben Davis on Pride & Prejudice Rap

By: Miranda
Cincotta

For an assignment in Mr. Bubber's class, junior Ben Davis decided to try something creative, writing a rap, to sum up chapters 19 and 20 of *Pride and Prejudice* instead of writing your average summary. Of his writing process, Ben said that he didn't even intend for it to be a rap at first, just a short rhyming verse but eventually it gained momentum and rhythm. "I wish I could say I was attempting a masterpiece," Ben said. "But honestly it just kind of happened." The final product

came together quickly and according to him, it was the fastest assignment he had ever completed in that class. Not only that, it was the first rap that he had ever written but Ben says, "Rhyming has always been easy and fun for me so that's what I tried and it worked!" All in all, trying something new and out of the ordinary worked for Ben and made an average homework assignment extraordinary.

Chapter 19 opens at Longbourn

Mr. Collins starts to declare in form

Everybody else in the room dismissed

Not wanting to be present just in case he's dissed

He says to Elizabeth, "Marry me please"

"This is quite an offer, one you should seize"

"As a man of stature will you be mine"

Elizabeth decides to politely decline

Mr. Collins not discouraged, with a wave of his hand

Says "it's just like a woman-a second and third offer demand"

Elizabeth states "upon my word sir"

"I will not accept your offer to confer"

Elizabeth says "can I be more plain"

"For me to accept I'd be drunk on champagne"

And she turns to leave to end his campaign.

Chapter 20

Mrs. Bennet runs in, representing the gang

She opens the door with tremendous delight

Mr Collins responds, "This did not go so right."

Mrs. Bennet dismayed with promises unkept

Demands that her husband make Elizabeth accept.

On the down low, dad has Elizabeth's back

He basically says, "You don't owe that man jack"

Mrs. Bennet freaks out and complains to her friends

She repeatedly states "This is not how this ends"

Lydia stands by, as does Charlotte near and listening

The other's however, find it all quite sickening

Mr. Collins exclaims "I just want you to know"

"My interest in Elizabeth I no longer bestow"

Mrs. Bennet says "please", Mr. Collins says "no"

"This is the last that we'll talk, let it go"

7

AP Art Studio Student Highlight Ashlyn Turner

By: Charlotte
Mckinley

Ashlyn Turner is a Senior at Saint John's who is a part of Mrs. Miller's AP Art Studio Class this year. Ashlyn, beyond being a talented artist, is an athlete for the Saint John's cheerleading squad and is a focused student.

Ashlyn's Portfolio Theme: "My AP is focused around my experiences as an Asian American and my feelings towards the past, present, and future, as I imagine it."



Ashlyn Turner, '21, standing next to her art, shown at the Delplane Center of the Arts.



8

Track and Field Tackles Upcoming Season

By: Yen Troung

COVID-19 has made it very difficult for Saint John's to continue back to the way it was before. However, that did not stop sports teams from halting their activities. The Viking coaching staff has been relentless in practicing social distancing and keeping players masked during sports events at Saint John's, so the sports that so many athletes look forward to all year have been possible. In the fall, cheerleading, cross

country, football, girls and boys soccer, tennis, and volleyball played close to a full season. Over the winter, boys and girl's basketball, indoor track, wrestling, and basketball cheer, played a condensed season. Now in the spring, many teams at Saint John's are excited about the upcoming season. One of these teams is the SJCP track and field team.

Track and Field is a sport that includes athletic contests established on the skills of running, jumping, and throwing. The name is derived from where the sport takes place, a running track and a grass field for the throwing and some of the jumping events. Some well-known events can include the long jump, 100-meter dash, and 400-meter dash. The Track team is coached by one of the best, Coach Rogers, also the football assistant coach. Joining him by his side is Coach Villarosa, who attended Saint John's before becoming a coach. This year, Coach Rogers emphasizes how this year's season will be "laid-back" due to the global pandemic. Many members of the team appreciate his relaxed approach. However, the practices are rigorous and not for the faint of heart. Practices take place every day on campus, and the team does intense training. Coach Rogers' goal for everyone is to be in the "best shape they have ever been in their lives." Exercises can include long-distance running and core workouts. Coach takes pride in the students and describes them as the "finest people of Saint John's Catholic Prep."

The team's first meet is on Sunday, April 18, at Mount Saint Joseph High School, shortly after spring break. After this meet, more meets will take place in the upcoming weeks. Let's wish these speedy Vikings the best of luck!

9

Finding Your Thing

By: Austin Johnson

Many people have their "thing." For some people, it's sports while for others it may be singing. I will tell you right now that singing and sports are definitely not my things. Every single person in life will have different experiences- some good, some bad. Sometimes the bad

experiences will actually help you. In my case, it did.

When I was about three years old, my grandfather on my dad's side got lung cancer. Lung cancer is one of the most deadly types of cancer that a person can get. Unfortunately, my family knew that our time with him would be minimal. My grandfather lived in west Texas, and for us, that was a three and a half hour plane ride. After he was diagnosed, we started flying down there every other week. After about five months of flying down there, he passed away.

I remember the feeling of waking up early and going to the airport. As a little kid, nothing beats waking up at 3:00 am, getting into the car, and walking into the empty airport. Many people find traveling exhausting, but I always enjoyed it. My favorite part was being able to see the big plane through the window at your gate. As a little kid, the planes looked massive compared to my short self. At the end of each flight, I always thanked the pilot. When I was thanking them, my mom always asked if she could get a picture of me sitting in the pilot's seat. Little did I know that's where I would end up sitting by myself in the future.

When I turned eight years old, I had my very first flying lesson on my birthday. Many of my mom's friends thought it was way too soon for me to do that, but she supported me. I remember sitting up there with my instructor and thinking, "Wow, I can't believe it is just my instructor and me up here." When we landed, I knew this is what I wanted to do. This would become my "thing."

Fast forward a few years later; I continued to take flying lessons every week. When I was fifteen, I got my very first Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) certificate. It was called the student pilot's certificate. This was my first step into becoming a pilot. As I started getting more advanced, my instructor started to let me do more advanced flying. After a few months, it started looking like I could fly by myself. I was so ready to fly solo and felt like nothing could stop me, then COVID hit. The airport where I flew shut down for a while. I was so bummed out and sad, but I persevered and continued to study. Finally, after a few months passed, the airport reopened, and I was ready to fly again. After a few more sessions with an instructor, my life changed. On July 4th, 2020, I officially flew a plane by myself.

After a few weeks of flying solo, I received my Solo pilot's certificate, which allows me to fly a plane by myself. I was so happy. I dreamt of that day since I knew I wanted to fly. After countless times of flying by myself, I felt like I was ready for the next step. I wanted to be able to fly with other people. This was my new goal to obtain. I continued to study for hours on end, I continued to fly, and I continued to learn. After transferring schools, I stopped flying for a while to get adjusted. But after a few weeks, I picked it right back up. To this day, I am learning more about flying and continuing to pursue more of it.

Flying is my "thing." I enjoy every aspect of it. If I am stressed, bored, overthinking, or just wanting something to do, flying will always help me. I hope you find your "thing". If you already have your 'thing' figured out, I hope you continue to pursue it because no matter what it is, it will always help you in life.



Austin Johnson, '22, standing on the wing of his airplane