



# Knighly News

Glen Cove High School's Student Newspaper

Holiday Issue 2023

*much more inside!*

## GC Masquers Wows Audience W/ The Laramie Project *by Phoebe George*



For this year's fall production, the Glen Cove High School Masquers put on *The Laramie Project*. *The Laramie Project* is tonally extremely different to past productions put on by our theater group. In contrast to the Harry Potter spoof from yesteryear, this show delves into very real and serious events of 1998, when gay university student Matthew Shepard was murdered in Laramie, Wyoming—an event that many Glen Cove High School staff members such as Mr. Norris, our school's choral director, remembers happening and the immense impact it had.

*The Laramie Project* is a piece of documentary theater. As the show details, the Tectonic Theater Project, a theater group from New York City, traveled to Laramie Wyoming to conduct interviews with the people of the town in reference to Matthew Shepard's recent murder. While this play is known by the greater public as, "that gay show," it delves into the entire range of opinions expressed by the people of Laramie.

From the rampant homophobia expressed by Fred Phelps of Westboro Baptist Church, played by Michael Renga, to the political activism of Romaine Patterson, friend of Matthew Shepard, played by Anna Miller, the show has a lot. As it progresses, the audience is walked through how people across the country and around the world's lives were impacted by Matthew's death. Many people such as Catherine Conolly, Laramie resident and member of the LGBTQ+ community, played by Kayla Hogan, recounted her reaction as "catatonic", having a hard time eating and sleeping.

While other people separated themselves from the event, a character named the "Baptist

Minister's Wife", played by Kai Kielczewski, expressed how she wished the whole event would just fade away. Throughout the show we see extreme character development in many characters, notably through Jedadiah Schultz, university student played by Aiden Van Ommeren, whose opinions of the LGBTQ+ community evolved throughout the play. While character development of any nature in theater is no new concept, due to Jedadiah Schultz being a real person, it gives the audience an extremely unique and moving experience. Jedadiah Schultz represents a very real process many people went through during this time—slow acceptance of gay people as the impact of Matthew Shepard sent shockwaves through the world.

The unique experience does not stop at the audience. The Masquers actors noted that their experience putting on this show was extremely different and moving for them as well. As mentioned before, the documentary type formatting of the show was an uncommon viewing experience, but also very different for the actors. Returning GCHS theater members who were used to playing fictional characters found this experience profoundly interesting. Kasey Miller, cast member and one of two vice presidents of Masquers, said, "The Laramie Project was definitely really exciting. I found it was interesting how the show was structured as a documentary and the lines in the shows were real things people in Laramie said."

The profound messaging was not lost on the actors as they worked to properly portray the intense imagery, emotions and scenes they were given to work with. Along with the acting changes, the staging of this show was immensely different from any

production many cast members have done before. While *The Laramie Project* unfolded before the audience, you may have noticed that actors nearly never left the stage, sitting on the sidelines reacting to the scenes other actors were performing. This gave the show a unique viewing and acting experience that was an adjustment for cast members. The cast had to know each and every one of their lines and monologues perfectly, which is expected of course, but the crutch of having scripts backstage to check in on, which soothes the nerves of many cast members, was non-existent. While it was a struggle, the cast pulled through, performing a production that brought many to tears, including fellow actors, despite performing the scenes countless times.

The new experiences didn't stop at the cast. The crew of this production also faced all new challenges that come with a show of this nature. With cast members never leaving the stage, there was no room for microphone switches. Every cast member had their own personal mic thanks to Rodni Leftwich, our sound supervisor. "My experience as stage manager this year was very new to me," remarked Carlyne Datkhayeva, a past cast member of GCHS productions who took up the mantle of stage manager alongside Barbara Cristina Benitez Vasco, "I very much enjoyed learning and seeing the differences between acting and stage crew! It really just brings out the importance and how working behind the scenes is just as crucial as the acting itself," Datkhayeva added. Masquers crew members also took up the task of managing the lights with the guidance of John A Mitchell, lighting supervisor.

None of this would have been possible without Jar-

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# GC Laramie Project

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ed Ross, Masquers director. Thanks to the masterful direction of Mr. Ross, Masquers was able to put on The Laramie Project and it goes without saying that many were very grateful to see this type of messaging put on for our community. Mr. Norris remarked that he had never seen anything like our production before on GCHS' stage. In Mr. Ross' director's note, he says, "For my first project at GCHS, I aimed to present our students with a challenging yet deeply rewarding play. The Laramie Project offers them the opportunity to delve into a narrative with profound themes, delivering transformative lessons." It goes without saying that the cast and crew were deeply thankful for Mr. Ross' decision to put on this production, Rebecca Goldaper, GCHS' GSA advisor who assisted in helping the cast properly convey the messaging of this show put it best when she said, "The cruelty and hatred towards Matthew Shepard was a wakeup call for the entire nation regarding the importance of LGBTQ rights."



## Song Review

### Can't Catch Me Now

by Peyton Angalet

After the release of her debut single, 'drivers license' in 2021, Olivia Rodrigo quickly rose to mainstream status when it became an instant hit. The song broke various records and had 15 million streams on Spotify within 24 hours of its release. The singer-songwriter was originally known for her career as a child actress on several Disney series shows, yet lately her solo music career has become a primary focus. At 20-years old, she has already put out two massively successful albums: "SOUL" and "GUTS". Rodrigo's latest release, titled "Can't Catch Me Now" was created as a single for the soundtrack of The Hunger Games: The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes. The song 'Can't Catch Me Now' draws inspiration from the story told in The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes while Rodrigo carries it out with beautiful vocals and lyrics. The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes is originally a novel written by Suzanne Collins and its movie was adapted by director Francis Lawrence.

The song is told from the perspective of a girl who has escaped the person trying to reach her, likely modeled after the main characters Lucy Gray Baird and Coriolanus Snow. The song's tone has a taunting manner, stating that even though the singer has left, she knows that there are constant reminders of her existence. The line, "You'll see my face in every place, but you can't catch me now," emphasizes this point. There is also subtle anger etched into every word, which becomes evident as the music crescendos at the bridge. Overall, it portrays the haunting tale of the female protagonist of the book/movie and even foreshadows the future events told in The Hunger Games. As a longtime fan of both The Hunger Games franchise and Olivia Rodrigo's music, Can't Catch Me Now is an amazing work. While the song drastically differs from her previous albums and songs in terms of style, she manages to switch seamlessly from her usual pop/pop-rock music into folk-rock.

Rodrigo and producers layered her voice to create the echoed effect heard throughout the song, which only further highlights her voice in the absence of layering where she sings a one-off lyric. The main usage of the guitar is an excellent choice as it brings the folk aspect to life, following a similar chord progression until the break at the



## Film Review

### Five Nights at Freddy's

by Chance Costa



Five Nights at Freddy's, a 2023 PG-13 horror film, was a movie directed by Emma Tammi that was based off of a videogame and follows off the same name, which was created by Scott Cawthon. The movie itself is pretty graphic, but is not too grisly if you've seen or played the games. A couple of the well-known actors in this movie are Josh Hutcherson, Matthew Lillard, Mat Pat and Cory Kenschin.

The movie is about a security guard who begins his job working at a place called Freddy Fazbear's Pizzeria, but later on finds out that the job won't be as simple as he expects it to be. The movie is 1 hour and 50 minutes long, which is quite surprising due to how fast the scenes are and how over-edited some of them tend to be. However, if you are a partially-dedicated fan of the games, then this shouldn't be too much of a shock to you, due to its overall ominous and dreadful tone. This overall chilling tone the games have can be the main reason

as to how they've gotten so popular.

The film can easily be described as a kid's version of a horror story or movie—an interesting mystery that has many more hidden factors to it that slowly reveal themselves as you continue to discover more about them. If you are

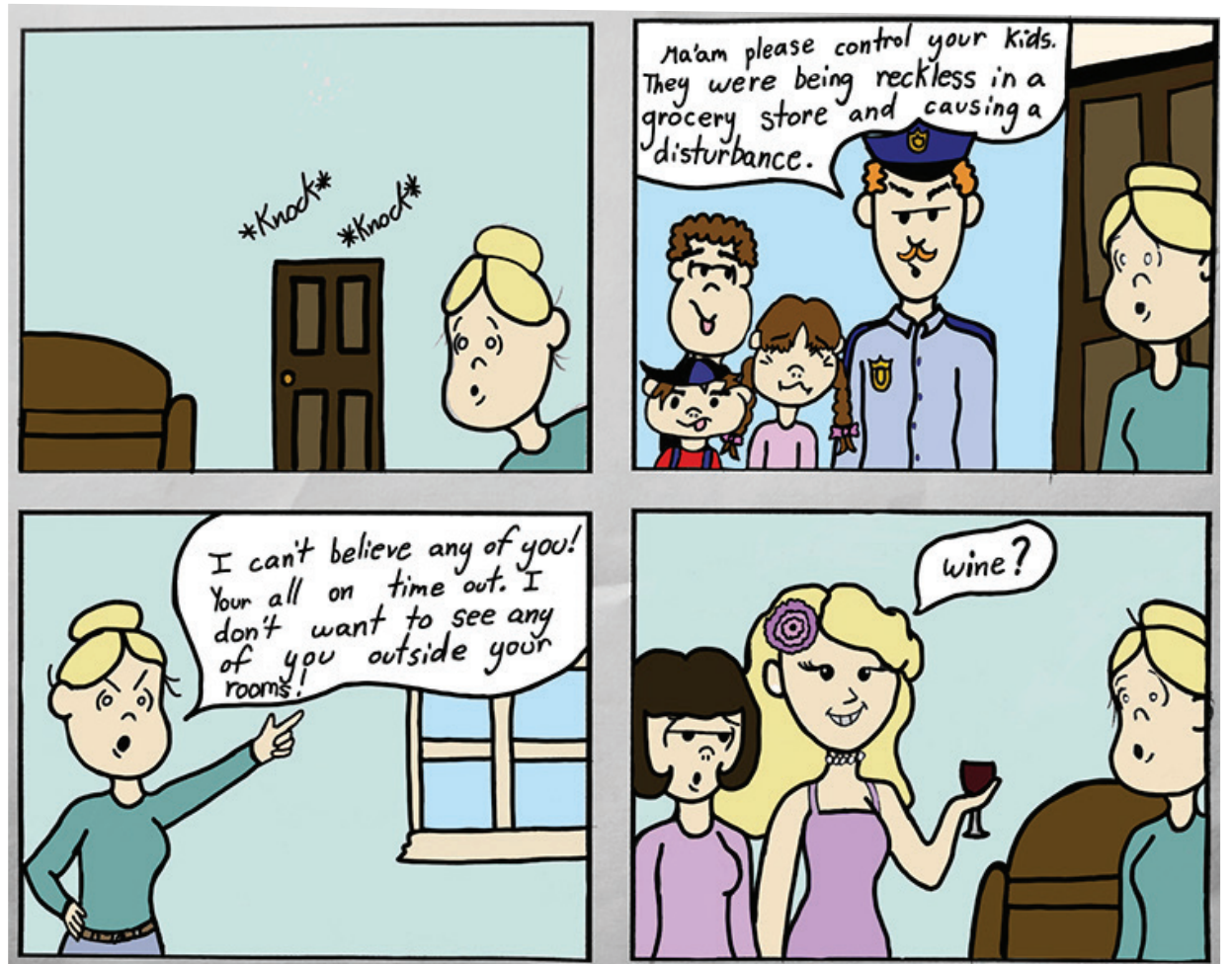
a fellow player of Scott's Five Nights At Freddy's games, then you might be particularly interested in the backgrounds of each character, as the games' stories progress more and more, each having their own variety of sequels.

Although the movie is not in exact sequence to the events that happen chronologically to the FNAF series, it still does summarize the overall story in a rather quick-paced manner, rather than a full and thorough explanation of everything.

My personal opinion on the film as a FNAF fan is that it was a good movie based off of the first game in the series, but uses events from previous and recent ones, which can make it seem a little out of shape compared to the actual sequence that everything happens in. Despite these few little issues and mixups, I personally can say that the movie is not bad in the slightest, and has some scenes that can be quite amusing and/or startling, which adds to the ambience of the film.



## Student Comic *by Jade Ramirez*



bridge. Rodrigo also provides visuals with a stunning music video, featuring clips from the single's movie and Olivia's depiction of the story she told.

Though I have loved Rodrigo's music since her debut, I am not alone in the pleasant surprise to see her take part in the soundtrack for *The Hunger Games*. Several critics from news sources across the world have applauded the singer's genre shift and the song in itself. Enjoyed by the public, it went viral on social media platforms like X (formerly Twitter) and TikTok. Personally, I would put 'Can't Catch Me Now' at a 9.5 on a scale from 1-10 and I recommend giving it a listen.

## The Laramie "Talk Back" Panel *by Phoebe George*

After Glen Cove High School's first production of *The Laramie Project*, rather than the cast leaving the stage as they usually do, they stood until the thunderous applause ceased. Phoebe George, cast member and President of *Masquers* then stepped up and informed the audience, "Talk-Back panel will begin in 5 minutes!"

Leading up to the show, Phoebe George and Ms. Goldaper, GCHS GSA advisor, decided to plan a "Talk-Back panel" to further speak about the themes about this deeply important show. For those that do not know, a Talk-Back panel is a discussion type panel between moderator and panel members after a play or movie to give an audience a chance to gain deeper understanding of the messages and personal meanings of a show. The panel contained Ms. George as moderator, and Mr. Ross, *Masquers* director, Marsha Silverman, Glen Cove Counsel Person, Kayla Hogan, cast member and Co-Treasurer of *Masquers*, Ms. Goldaper, and Dennis Shepard, Matthew Shepard's father. Since the passing of his son, Mr. Shepard started the Matthew Shepard Foundation, a LGBT non-profit, with Judy Shepard, Matthew Shepard's mother.

Since then, they have been around the country speaking out against hatred and violence, and Glen Cove had the honor of having him zoom in to speak to our community. Coincidentally. "Speaking to Dennis Shepard was such a profound experience," George said, "The audience, panel members and I were hanging onto his every word. Everything he said was so powerful and moving, I will never forget what he said, as I was

brought to tears."

After he spoke, the other panel members continued, speaking on their individual experiences and takeaways from the show. Kayla Hogan who lived in Florida as the "don't say gay" bill was implemented recounted the horrifying experience seeing any mention of the LGBTQ+ community's existence disappear from the hallways. She hopes that "everyone who was listening to the panel was able to take even one thing from the panel away and learned something from it." While the messages of the show were reason enough for this discussion to be held, the current political climate is where the true motivation lies. As of this writing, there are 508 anti-LGBTQ bills in the United States Congress—at least one in nearly every state.

When asked why this Talk-Back panel is so important Ms. Goldaper said, "People do not realize that the hatred and cruelty on display in *The Laramie Project* are still major issues in our country. I feel it is our duty to spread awareness. It's important to see the dark moments of LGBTQ history to understand why we need to keep fighting to make the world kinder and safer."

"Even as the oldest cast member, being born in 2006, I am fairly removed from the events of the show time-wise." George stated, "This show is so deeply important for not just the audience, but the cast as well. We need to know about Matthew Shepard, and I am so appreciative that we got to spread the deeply important messages of this show and open the conversation about LGBTQ+ rights in our community further."

## GC Guest Artist A "Real Cut Up"



The Glen Cove Art Club invited American Pop Artist Michael Albert to the high school to impart his knowledge, experience as well as pitch and market his products to aspiring GC artists. An abstract collage artist, Albert's signature technique is chopping up cereal boxes and candy packaging and reassembling into something exciting and new. In preparation for the meeting, the art club, supervised by Ms. Palazzo, collected and gathered empty cereal boxes to repurpose into atmospheric decoration for the community. The 57-year old Albert also talked about his previous working experience of helping small businesses expand their brand and network, but found no personal joy and went in a different direction.

Needless to say, some of the participants found the workshop interesting. "His chatty personality and dedication to his own cause gave him an endearing countenance that really helped connect with the students," said junior Kaelyn Bonilla. Albert currently has his artwork being shown at Romany Kramoris Gallery at 41 Main Street in Sag Harbor.

## DECA's Newest Project

by Furkan Efe Ozdemir

Our friends at DECA work hard on improving the business as much as possible and students of Glen Cove High benefit tremendously from these upgrades. DECA comes up with brand new ideas each and every year generated by a freshly chosen set of officers. There are phases to the improvements of the project. First step is beatification and the decoration of the project to create more comfort. The second step is the introduction of new products of sorts to improve the overall.

This year, DECA has come up with an amazing idea. They are going to make big upgrades to the little front shop that they currently operate right next to the art rooms. This year's ideas and insights were a collaboration between our own DECA, the Art Department, the Special Education Department and Glen Cove Education Foundation. The new and improved shop will be a great addition to the daily lives of the Glen Cove High School community.

The new shop, "DECA Cafe" as it will be called, will be available to everyone during and after the 9th period (01:40 PM - 03:30 PM). DECA also stated that the shop's schedule could be changed due to different conditions in the future. DECA Cafe's main goal is for the students to have a relaxing place in the school after their classes where they can go to hang out with friends, eat a hot and delicious meal, do their homework in peace and just take a break when needed.

DECA is now focused on expanding their inventory with the students' favorites to create the best Cafe experience in our school. DECA Cafe will have a variety of new food and drink selections. On top of those, there will be personalized clothing and accessory options on sale with customizations such as heat press. All of the products being sold in the store will get updates and improvements depending on the popularity of the items. What DECA wants to accomplish is a serene and friendly environment for our friends and colleagues. The Cafe idea will help people feel like they are outside of school, just taking a break at a Starbucks.

The new and improved shop will increase the revenue of DECA, which will allow the program to improve the cafe event more, thus creating a positive feedback loop. Also, the profit made from the cafe will be available for use to fund other DECA projects and trips in the future.

While the Cafe is running as a project of DECA, the students will be the brains of the program and manage the shop. The students who manage the cafe will be able to gain rare business expertise which will definitely be, no doubt, an important factor in their success. It would not be wrong to say that DECA Cafe will be a first for Glen Cove High School as a cafe managed by our friends and colleagues. Ultimately, we wish them luck and hope to see you down there!



## Death Note by Ibaad Naqvi

Death Note is a psychological thriller show & manga created by

Tsugumi Ohba and illustrated by Takeshi Obata. The manga, which is a type of book in Japanese culture, which obviously came before the show itself was published in the year 2003 while the latter was produced in the middle of 2006.

This adaptation of the series is based in Japan and follows an intelligent high school senior named Light Yagami as he finds a supernatural notebook that has the power to kill anyone whose name is written in it. At first, Light believes that the notebook is some kind of prank, as any normal person would have thought. After he wrote the name of a criminal he saw being broadcasted on the television that was a part of a hostage situation, he waits to see what happens to this criminal. After exactly 40 seconds of endlessly waiting for something to happen, nothing does. Light finally decides that the notebook was just a prank all along as he previously believed and starts to turn off the TV when he is interrupted by the news anchor reporting that the criminal had fallen unconscious. This horrifies Light as he is in denial of the notebook actually working and believes it to be a coincidence. Light decides to test the notebook out once more just to make sure that the notebook did really work.

Just after this thought, he is interrupted by his mother telling him to get ready for cram school. Light, being the genius that he is, goes to cram school just to cram in some more studying, especially since the entrance exams to get into the university of his dreams, To-Oh University, are just around the corner. While at cram school, Light decides that he has to test the notebook on someone that is right in front of him to make sure that the notebook is real, but he realizes he can't just test it on someone he knows, such as the bully in his class. After leaving his school, he sees a group of people harassing a young lady and decides to write one of the guy's names when one of them announces their name for all to hear. After a few attempts of writing the person's name, the lady escapes the gang while the guy decides to chase after her, getting hit by a truck in the process.

From that moment, Light realizes that the notebook is real and it wasn't just a coincidence. He realizes that he just killed two people, making him a murderer, causing him to feel nauseous, which ultimately brings him to a decision of if he should burn the notebook, throw it away or to keep and use it to get rid of the evil in the world. He thinks about all the evil in the world and how he was thinking about getting rid of the plague of crime, so he decides to go with his plan and become the "god of the new world" by getting rid of all evil through the means of killing every criminal in the world.

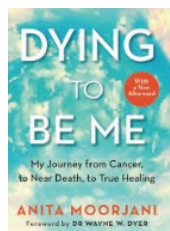
Light realizes that if he goes with his plan, anyone would figure out that someone is getting rid of all the bad guys, especially the police. However, this would cause people to be afraid of committing any crime, small or large, since the fear of getting killed would be on the criminal's mind. After a couple of days have gone by, and Light has started to kill several criminals, he meets Ryuk, a shinigami, or god of death, who admits that he dropped the Death Note from the shinigami world, so that someone might pick it up for the sole purpose of entertaining him.

Although Ryuk purposefully dropped the notebook, he is shocked by the amount of criminals Light has killed in just 5 days. A few more days go by and people start to realize that someone is killing a whole bunch of criminals, just as Light predicted. Light notices this and looks at websites on the internet where they call him Kira. Unfortunately for Light, the police have found out too and they aren't taking this lightly. The Japanese authorities held a National Police Agency meeting discussing the recent events that have happened.

After a bunch of arguing between the police forces, the NPA decides to bring in the world's best and most renowned detective, known as L, to track down the person or organization behind these mysterious deaths. Kira, Light's new persona, realizes that this detective is after him, especially since he knows what's going on in these meetings since his dad is the captain of the Japanese police force. L decides to create a task force based in Japan to track down Kira and prosecute him.

The whole show is a cat and mouse chase between L and Light and it greatly represents the truth of some people's actions and how deceptive they can truly be. Overall, the show has a great plot and development, while also maintaining its comedic aspect and mood throughout the show. I would rate the show as a whole a 10/10 just because of its compelling story and dialogue as well as staying fresh and being a comprehensive masterpiece.

English classes at the high school use a portion of their class time for Independent Reading, where students and teachers select a book of their choice to read freely. Each month the Knightly News will talk to one teacher and one student to share their thoughts about what they're currently reading. Here's what they had to say:



**Ms. Butler**

Dying to Be Me by Anita Moorjani

**Would you recommend this book to someone? Why or why not?**

*I would absolutely recommend this book and you think everybody should read it, but especially to people who fear death and/or grieving.*

**Why do you think other readers would enjoy it? Why did you enjoy it (if you did) or why didn't you (if you didn't)?**

*Readers will enjoy this book because this woman had a near-death experience and she comes back into her body fully healed and brings back with her an understanding of the universe and our role in it. When I read this book, I find myself crying joyful tears.*

**What ages or types of readers do you think would like the book?**

*Readers who are seeking a deeper understanding of our purpose in life.*

**How much did you know about this book before picking it up? What surprised you the most about the book?**

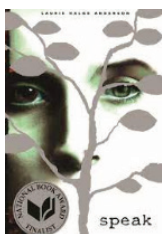
*It was recommended to me in a Facebook group, but I wasn't expecting to connect so much with this author...like I feel like I need to meet her in person.*

**How thought-provoking did you find the book? Did the book change your opinion about anything, or did you learn something new from it? If so, what?**

*It is the most thought-provoking book I have ever read. I feel enlightened with every chapter I read.*

**How did the book make you feel? Did it evoke any emotions? Make you laugh, cry, or cringe?**

*The book has made me feel nothing but happiness, joy and hope!!*



**Janet Granados**

Speak by Laurie Halse Anderson

**Would you recommend this book to someone? Why or why not?**

*Yes I would recommend this book to someone because although it's a small book it holds a lot of meaningful things.*

**Why do you think other readers would enjoy it? Why did you enjoy it (if you did) or why didn't you (if you didn't)?**

*I feel like other readers would enjoy reading "speak" because some of them might relate to the main character while others might not but it is also a hooking book that would want you to keep reading.*

**What ages or types of readers do you think would like the book**

*I think teenagers would like this book especially those who are just beginning to be teenagers.*

**How much did you know about this book before picking it up? What surprised you the most about the book?**

*I didn't know anything about "speak" before reading about it. I think what surprised me most about this book was that it wasn't about what I thought it would be about.*

**How thought-provoking did you find the book? Did the book change your opinion about anything, or did you learn something new from it? If so, what?**

*There wasn't anything new I learned nor did it change my opinion about anything because I relate to that book on a personal level but it was very intriguing*

**How did the book make you feel? Did it evoke any emotions? Make you laugh, cry, or cringe?**

*The book "speak" made me feel understood, but it made me feel much more annoyed in most parts of the book for certain reasons but also made me cry from anger and joy.*



**The Godfather 2:  
Why you  
should watch  
it today**

by Emmanuel Aschalew

When it comes to the history of film-making, it is a well known fact that sequels are always, at best, a slight disappointment. The reason for this is quite simple.

Often, a director, desperate for money, will create a film with a new idea and concept, one that is entirely unique in its theme and depth. The film then proceeds to sell extremely well and draw in audiences due to its distinctive qualities. Then, the creators of the film (desperate to milk the cash-cow that has brought them money) will proceed to make a sequel, or perhaps even a trilogy, or, in the worst cases, a tetralogy. The new films proceeding the first always re-use the ideas and themes of the first without ever presenting anything new and the lack of creativity and obvious cash-grab from the creators of the film is obvious.

Watching a sequel is painful, because even if the story is as good as the original, a rare feat, it is a clearly fruitless attempt to simply take as much money from its watchers as possible. Film's are supposed to be a form of art, always distinctive and beautiful, not a soulless corporation's golden-goose. Now that my long introduction explaining the inherent patheticness of sequel's is over, let me present to you what is widely considered to be the greatest film of all time, and one that surpasses its predecessor: The Godfather 2.

Let me preface this statement with this: Before you read any further, if you haven't already watched the Godfather (reviewed in our last edition of the Knightly News), watch it. Now. It's one of the greatest films ever, and you have to watch it to even understand the ideas of the Godfather 2. That said, I will now finally jump into the critically acclaimed sequel and explain why you should watch it now. I'll cover the plot and medium quickly, as it is a mere tool to convey its ideas. The film covers two separate timelines of the Corleone family: Vito in his up-and-coming youth and Michael after the end of the first Godfather film. It explores Vito coming over as just another immigrant looking for honest work, while also exploring the utter and complete moral nightmare that is Vito's son. But at its core, the movie examines the corrupting nature of power. It meticulously portrays the rise of Vito Corleone,

## Getting Into The Christmas Spirit

by *Flordeliz Toribio Rosario*

The turkey ran away means it's Christmas! The holidays are a joyful time of the year. Many people celebrate by eating dinner on Christmas Eve and opening presents at midnight. Many different things and traditions get done during these two days of December 24th and 25th. The holiday overall is fun, but how do you prepare and get into the spirit? Well you are in the right place since this is the guide of how to get into the Christmas spirit.

In New York, there are so many things to do. For example, New Yorkers like to go to "The Big Apple" and go to the marketplace that sells different Christmas-themed foods like hot chocolate, cookies, and other delicious foods. You can also go ice skating. Ice skating is fun and also a good form of exercise that doesn't feel like exercise (Pro tip: Be careful!). A beautiful event that also takes place in this jolly month is the Macy's show. Macy's is a popular department store that has their yearly event and puts on a show for everyone to get into the spirit. Coming from someone who went to the show, it was gorgeous! The weather was cold, everyone in their fancy coats and it snowed! It was the perfect night.

A Christmas activity that my family has made into a tradition is going to luxury neighborhoods and looking at the beautiful homes decorated for Christmas, then afterwards, getting a hot chocolate at Dunkin donuts just to burn your tongue. This specific activity is very low cost and a good bonding activity for families. A home activity you can do is make a festive hot chocolate and get a Christmas-themed coloring book and draw. Needless to say, it's a very fun and relaxing activity. You can also have a Spa day with your friends or family members and listen to Christmas music. This one activity is something everyone should do or

Another obvious activity is putting your Christmas tree up! Not only will it help get you into the Christmas spirit, it's also really cute. This activity might be expensive, but go on a shopping spree, drink festive hot chocolate and get a few Christmas presents. You can buy Christmas presents for your loved ones online or in-person. A very popular and crafty activity would be making a gingerbread house. Not only would it be fun and creative, it would also be so yummy.

Another thing that is very important to do if you are religious is to read your bible and thank God for Christmas and other blessings. Another religious activity would be attending Christmas church events. They have so much variety of activities. Overall, everyone has different methods to get into the Christmas spirit. I shared some to give ideas on how to have the best Christmas yet. I hope you enjoyed it.

## Teacher

### Feature

**Ms. Silva**

by *Nawar Ahammed*



This edition's teacher feature is on Ms. Silva. She is a Math teacher here in Glen Cove and this is her fifth year teaching. Beyond her academic prowess, Ms. Silva's expertise extends to coaching the JV Cheerleading team, where she has proven to be one of the best mentors a student could have. As a former member of the cheer team, I had the privilege of being coached by her. It is worth mentioning that Ms. Silva is an alumna of Adelphi University, where she completed both her undergraduate and graduate degrees through the esteemed Scholar Teacher Education Program (STEP).

Interview with Ms. Silva:

What inspired you to become a teacher, and what do you enjoy most about teaching?

"I knew from the age of a little girl that I would become a teacher. I actually recently came across my elementary school yearbook and under my photo and name read the word "teacher." We were tasked to write what we wanted to be when we grew up for our yearbooks and my dream was to become a teacher. I always enjoyed helping people and would

take any opportunity to show my friends and others how to figure things out. There was just no better feeling than knowing you have a positive impact. The relationships fostered in my classroom with my students is hands down my favorite aspect of teaching. The highlight of the majority of each and every one of my days consists of the little moments and interactions that bring a smile to my face."

How do you create an inclusive and engaging classroom environment that supports the diverse needs of your students?

"As a teacher, it can be very difficult to keep students engaged and ready to learn. I try to ensure that I have as much success with this by taking the time to get to know my student's interests, while bringing some sarcastic energy to the classroom. Students are most receptive to learning when an educator brings relevance to the material, as well as spontaneity every now and then."

What do you enjoy most about coaching cheerleading and inspiring young athletes?

"Cheerleading has always been a passion of mine. As an educator, I find myself to be a cheerleader every day, cheering on my student's success', while motivating them to never give up. I believe that the core value of a cheerleader is to promote a "we can do it" energy. This is special because it is so often that society brings light and focus to negativity, whereas many individuals lack confidence in themselves. My aim is to promote the belief that any one person can accomplish anything that they set their mind to as long as they put in the work and effort." How do you motivate your team and help build confidence and teamwork skills?  
"Both inside of my classroom and on the football sideline, whether I wear the hat of teacher or coach, the emphasis will always be placed on teamwork.

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## WANTED

Greetings from the staff of The Knightly News!  
We are looking for energetic, dedicated writers and journalists to join our newspaper team!  
Writing in other languages is a bonus as we are looking to make the newspaper bilingual! Please stop by Room 138 on Tuesday afternoons after school if you are interested! We look forward to seeing you then!  
*Mr. Lombardo & Mr. O'Donnell*

## Poetry

### Christmas

by *Mariah Cueva*



Snowflakes fall on the forgotten leaves  
Tales are spoken that every child believes  
Chilly mornings and frosty afternoons  
Hot cocoa and late cartoons  
A time when no one grieves  
Cities decorated with lights  
Fresh baked delights  
Families come together  
No matter what whether  
Gifts they get  
The joy they share  
On Christmas day  
Another year to prepare

## Teacher Feature Continued

When a part of a team (inside or outside of the classroom), we win together and we lose together. There will always be individuals who may outperform others. However, a team is only as strong as its “weakest link.” The reason I use this phrase is because sometimes the weakest link isn’t necessarily the one who hasn’t developed their skills as much as the others; sometimes it’s the individual who has a one-track mind and thinks they can do no wrong. Cheerleading is the perfect sport for encouraging teamwork because of the idea of stunting and the necessary roles to create what is a beautiful picture in the air. Without the foundations of a stunt group, this could never occur. Every individual is necessary and plays a key role in the overall success.”

Can you share a story about a time when you went above and beyond to help a struggling student succeed?

“The teaching profession is one that is incredibly rewarding. In order to be a teacher, I feel as though you must be an individual who loves to give back. I have found myself to be the type of educator with an open door policy. Regardless of whether it is my lunch period or staying past the designated extra help time after school, I am always willing to help students on their road to success.”

I feel truly blessed to have Ms. Silva as our teacher, coach and mentor. Her dedication, support and genuine kindness make her an invaluable presence in our lives. Thank you Ms. Silva for everything you do for us. Your impact reaches far beyond the cheerleading mat and we are incredibly fortunate to have you guiding us along this journey.

## The Godfather 2: topping the Original

*continued from pg 5*



highlighting his transition from an oppressed immigrant to a revered figure in the criminal underworld. Vito’s journey exposes the allure of power and the moral compromises inherent in its pursuit. His principles, initially rooted in justice and family loyalty, gradually give way to the pragmatic decisions needed for survival in a ruthless world.

Michael’s story is the conclusion to Vito’s. The moral ambiguity Vito created was ultimately inherited by Michael and we see this pushed to its furthest limits. Michael’s story serves as a cautionary tale about the perils of unchecked ambition. After inheriting his father’s empire, his descent into moral decay becomes evident. The film showcases the erosion of his principles, symbolizing the tragic cost of ambition and the dehumanizing effect of wielding absolute power. One might think that the aspect of Michael in this film copies from the first Godfather film, but it does not. Far from it, the first Godfather film portrays Michael’s slow transformation from a genuine good citizen to a man who has lost his moralities, forced to trade those precious morals of his for the sake of family.

Yet, throughout the first installment, Michael remains human. He remains real. Despite the moral confusion he drowns himself in, he is still relatable. He still loves. He is a man you can feel love for. But in the Godfather 2, all of that changes. He becomes a true monster. Even the things he does in the name of love are soulless. In both films, Michael does wrong things. The difference is that in the first film, Michael mourned when he saw the wrong he

had done. He was ashamed of what he had to do, and what he chose to do, even as he was doing these very same actions. Even if he doesn’t say it, you see that what he’s done takes a toll on him.

In the Godfather 2, that changes. He doesn’t feel bad anymore. And why should he? He’s done monstrous crimes enough times that he simply doesn’t care anymore. Some believe that Michael gets worse and worse throughout the film. This is not so. He simply reveals more and more of himself and what he is willing to do. He has completely and utterly sold his soul for ambition. In terms of relatability: He’s not some human who’s doing things he doesn’t want to do but must do, rather he now does these things without any restraint or care. In fact, there are parts of the film that make it seem he might even enjoy these shameful actions. The only time when he shows the slightest hint of being human is when he pretends.

Ultimately, he became a beast far worse than his father ever was. In the end, it costs him dearly. We see that even the most basic thing Vito had prided himself on, loyalty, is ultimately trampled upon. In the first film, we see men change. Compromise. Now we see that process in its completion: true and ultimate moral death. We see the price of this death and how it costs Michael everything...that is, everything except what he sold his soul for. And in the place of his soul, what has he put there? Ambition...soulless ambition. Quite like the average 9-5 high-earning American I might add. Let both these men serve as a warning to all.

I would like to close with a quote from Jesus Christ himself, from verse 36 of the Eighth chapter of the Gospel according to Saint Mark: “For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?”

## Clubbing: Mindfulness Club at GCHS *by Barbara Benitez*

Have you ever wondered why or how Mental Health Awareness began? Well, mental health was not taken as seriously until 1949, when, due to the increasing number of veterans suffering from mental illness after World War II, the United States Congress decided to establish a Mental Health Awareness Month. Nowadays it is taken more into consideration, there’s things such as Unity Day or World Kindness Day and celebrities and famous people from such diverse worlds as show business to sports to politics have stressed the importance of mental health and wellness.

The Mindfulness club is a good place to start if you want to get involved. Navigating these choppy teenage waters in this post-pandemic world can be a handful and high school can get overwhelming real

fast; being part of a club might help distract one’s mind off all the stress. Advised Ms. Brosnan and Mr. Bilder, the Mindfulness Club has carefully curated a positive presence here in the high school and students of all grades and backgrounds are welcome.

Co-president Nicolette Cappiello gave her perspective on why she became a part of the club. “Mindfulness club has helped me with my mental health since the start. Now as the president, I want to help others with their mental health,” said Cappiello. “Let them know they are ok and can get through this!”

The Mindfulness Club has organized various events and activities for students to get involved. Throughout October and November they organized small campaigns for Unity Day and World Kindness day, they also got permission from the district to paint the

“Unity Rocks” outside the high school. Last year they also brought in a therapy dog, Sophie which “was a big hit during AP week”, after all, a dog is a man’s best friend. The club’s focus is to normalize and reduce the stigma about mental health. As an advisor, Mr. Bilder sees some of the rewards of the club on a first-hand basis. “I like watching some of the more shy kids to come out of their shell, be part of something and participate in the club with others,” he said.

Ms. Brosnan agrees as well. “In year two, we’ve had more kids and participation now that they know what we are doing,” she said.

If you are interested in joining, the club meets weekly on Mondays after school at 2:30 in room 224. Feel free to stop by!

# GC Basketball Taking “Their Shot” *by Ben Brenner*

Teams of all sports want to find their identity going into the season once they lose a cornerstone player like a Jeter, a Jordan or a Brady. So this begs the question: what is the identity of the GC Boys Varsity Basketball Team?

Gone are the days of all-star Londell Wheeler, who was a 2-year All-County player and the heart and soul for the Knights. You could always rely on the five-year man to get the big bucket or a key defensive stop. Who will that be in this season? Coach Falen is looking to figure that puzzle out, but it won't always be easy as his team has a ton of youth and inexperience at the varsity level. He knows in the early going that his team will experience the proverbial growing pains and have to “work out the kinks”.

“The biggest thing with this team is will we see improvement from late November to early February,” Coach Falen stated. Emerging from those ashes of inexperience could be sophomore shooting guard and go-to guy Mark Reeves, who will be starting in the backcourt along with his 8th-grade brother Makhi Reeves at the point. According to his big brother, Makhi is a laid back person who doesn't talk much since he is so young compared to teammates, but that hasn't stopped him from scoring 10 points and 14 points respectively in GC's first two games. Reeves stated that he enjoys sharing the court with his younger brother. “Personally, it's

a great feeling & I consider it to be a blessing,” he said.

In fact he dreamt about playing alongside his brother for years. “We talked about playing in the same backcourt one day,” he said. “Personally, I want to lead and be a mentor to him since it's his first year in varsity. Year one for Makhi is we'll see what we can do.”

For the younger Reeves, who practiced with the team last year during break and weekends, it can be a lot on your shoulders for a kid in middle school. “I'm usually nervous and there's definitely pressure, but once you hit that first shot, it goes away,” he said.

Aiding the Reeves duo are a returning supporting cast of juniors in Angel Santana, Peter Satchell and Derrick Brown. Since they are under-sized up front and may lack an inside game, coach Falen is hoping that the aforementioned trio can rely on their athleticism and stamina to wear opposing teams out.

Seniors Ruben Martinez, Manny Olivier and James Coelho will be the team's vocal leaders and look to provide leadership and keep the team focused. “It feels nice to be the voice of the team since we are a young team and the seniors can play the role of teacher to the younger players and teach them like we were taught when we were young,” said Olivier.

## Simmons-Basil Connection Propels GC Hoopsters *by Ben Brenner*

Brooke and Izzy. It sounds like the title of a bad cop buddy comedy that flops at the box office and not the vaunted backcourt duo for the Glen Cove Varsity Girls Basketball team. Thankfully, Brooke Simmons and Isabel Basil are the one-two punch for the Lady Knights, who look ahead to the new season with optimism.

Autumn has given way to winter and Coach Freitag is looking for his team to play a competitive brand of basketball and hopefully make that playoff push. Last season, GC fell short by two games, but a new season is here and that comes with expectations when it comes to the sophomore Simmons.

Entering her third season as a varsity player, the 5,8” Simmons is the captain steering the ship and was voted All-Class A and All-County Runner Up as proof. She averaged 10 points a game as a freshman and coach Freitag looks to her to lead the way. “In terms of Brooke and her leadership, I look for her to lead our team on the floor each night. I look for her to push not only herself, but her teammates day in and day out to make us better,” he said.

Simmons also knows she will be the focal point and knows the pressure and responsibility that comes with it, but it also comes with the territory. “It's definitely nerve-racking at times since everybody looks to you for everything, but it's also a joy since it's a leadership thing and I feel I have grown into that,” she said. Arguably one of the team's best ball handlers and drivers to the basket, Simmons fell in love with the game around the age of 10, which she owes to her father, who it should be noted, played center at Glen Cove on the varsity team. “My dad is my biggest inspiration, my biggest advocate and taught me everything I know,” she said. Her personal goal is to make All-County.

Every good duo needs a reliable partner and the Knights possess one in the junior Basil, who's adept at handling the ball and can rack up a few assists in the process. An All-Class A and All-County runner-up player two years running, Basil is an ideal floor general on and off the floor. “I think I like getting assists more than scoring,” she said.

For coach Freitag, Basil is everything you



photo courtesy: Jared Orellana

Martinez echoed those sentiments.

“Being able to be a role model and mentor is a gift since I didn't necessarily get a lot of that from seniors when I started in the program,” he said. “I'm really looking forward to watching them mature.” Falen is hoping the team's athleticism and up-tempo style can give them an advantage.

“We have good athletes who play a variety of sports and we can utilize this to pressure opponents, which can lead to steals and easy baskets in transition,” he said. Although he thinks the team can shoot a little from the outside, Reeves agrees with coach Falen's assertion. “I agree with coach that we can press, cause some turnovers and score from those turnovers,” he said.

Well time will tell.

GC sophomore: Brooke Simmons

could want in a point guard. “Isabel is one of the team's point guards and is a leader on and off the floor. She excels in the classroom and on the court and is one of the hardest working players. She is a very composed player and is always calm, cool, and collected even in high pressure situations.”

With that being said, the duo feels the team needs to work on their rebounding and transition defense for the Big Red to be successful long-term. According to Simmons, another objective is beating rival Hewlett, who they play twice after the holiday break. “We really wanna beat them,” said Simmons. Like all teams entering a season, the postseason is usually the goal. “I expect a good year,” said Basil. “We have a very young and fast team that has good shooters and aggressive players that drive to the basket.”

