

The Guardian



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Freshman Community Weekend Brings New SJR Class Closer Together

By Aidan Woods '22



Photo by Shane Brennan '22

Mr. Stoto tells his scary stories at the campfire on every Freshman Community Weekend.

Going to a new high school is exciting for most freshmen, and they are often eager to see what is ahead of them. St. Joe's is different from other schools because of the multitude of opportunities that are available to these freshmen. The first opportunity that they had was the Freshman Community Weekend in Esopus, New York.

The Freshman Community Weekend is a staple of almost every SJR freshman's experience. Since St. Joe's is a Marist-affiliated school, it offers the students many opportunities to travel to the Marist Retreat Center at Esopus. The Freshman Community Weekend was the first of these opportunities, and over 50 freshmen participated in it.

The students traveled by bus to Esopus on Thursday, September 23rd, and they came home on Saturday, September 25th. This was also the first major religious event at SJR led by Mr. Scott Becker, the school's new campus minister. He worked closely with Matt Fallon, who is a major leader at this retreat every year. They were aided by senior leaders at SJR who were eager to guide the new students into a great four years at their new school.

For most of the freshmen, this weekend was their first major Green Knight experience. Mr. Becker started the retreat with some ice breakers, since many of the freshmen

barely knew each other. The senior leaders also discussed their experiences that they had at St. Joe's for the past three years. James Titolo '22 was one of those seniors; he taught the freshman about the amazing brotherhood that is present at SJR every day. Throughout the weekend, students played sports and team building activities in the gym recreational center and the field. The freshmen also walked down to the Hudson River, where they were overcome with breathtaking scenery.

On Friday night, students were presented a slideshow about the history of St. Joe's by Mr. Barry Donnelly '71. After the presentation, the students played Jeopardy in teams on the information that was presented. After the Jeopardy competition, everyone went out to a campfire, where Mr. Stoto told scary stories about Esopus. These stories are a tradition at every Freshman Community Weekend, and many of the students looked forward to it all trip. On Saturday morning, there was a small prayer service where students reflected on the trip and themselves. They thought about God's creation and how they can be more respectful and appreciative for everything in life.

The Freshman Community Weekend was a great experience for the new Green Knights, for they learned more about their SJR brothers. The senior leaders also enjoyed the retreat and said that it was a great opportunity for them to act as role models for the new generation at St. Joe's.



Photo by Luis Saenz '22

Barry Donnelly '71 presented the history of St. Joe's to the new freshman.

Entertainment

Halloween: History and Hearty Retrospective



This is an example of one of the bonfires lit during the Celtic festival of Samhain, the origin of Halloween.

By Jaden Hernandez '22

Back in elementary school, October held a mystic, eerie, yet exciting place among the holidays. As kids, my friends and I would count the days until the final day of October, the 31st, otherwise known as Halloween.

Halloween started out as a tradition. It began with the ancient Celtic festival of Samhain, where people would light bonfires and deter ghosts by wearing costumes. This is how we ended up wearing costumes, but we wear them for different reasons than the Celts, who saw it as a ritual. Samhain became Halloween in the 700s when Pope Gregory III moved All Saints' Day to November 1st. It was also known as All-Hallows/All-Hallowmas, and it celebrated all the past and present saints. October 31st became known as All-Hallows' Eve coincidentally, and it was eventually referred to as Halloween.

We went from bonfires and dead saints to plastic masks and candy corn in America, particularly the South. The Puritans in New England were very devout about their religion and didn't promote the secular values of Halloween, while the people in the South wanted to have fun and encouraged the holiday.

The real explosion of Halloween came in the late 1800s, when the New Immigrants came from Asia and Eastern Europe. Through them, any bit of religion still associated with All-Hallows' Day was stripped away. Pumpkins came into the mix when the Irish myth of Stingy Jack and the Devil came about. When Jack died, he wasn't accepted into Heaven or Hell and was set out to roam the earth for eterni-

ty with a single light source inside a turnip to guide him.

Despite this ominous history, Halloween is now a joyous holiday in which people dress up in costumes, walk around towns, go up to people's doorsteps, and say, "Trick or treat!" It's simple yet fun, and we love it because of the fantasy of dressing-up and the free candy that we eat over the following week. In addition, my friends and I would usually trick-or-treat in groups, partly for safety, but mostly to have a fun time.

However, costumes are only one part of Halloween. The other part is all about pumpkins. My family and I used to go out to a pumpkin patch and pick pumpkins to bring home for carving. We then bought carving kits and proceeded to carve the pumpkins.

Now, as a senior in high school, I can say that personally, Halloween has lost the mystical atmosphere it once enveloped me in as a child. Halloween could really be at any time of the year now due to cosplaying (the act of dressing up as a character from a movie, book, or video game) being more prevalent than ever.

The idea of receiving candy has also lost its value because as a young adult, I can now just drive to a Walgreens or CVS and buy multiple bags of candy. I wouldn't even have to go out in the cold October temperatures to even get a chance at getting my favorite candy, for I could just buy it.

Although the spirit of Halloween has been lost for me, I'm certain the spirit will be perennial, because there will always be kids in elementary school that will have the same excitement for Halloween as I once did. I believe that this is the moment of realization where I'm going to "pass the baton" to those kids. If I could give those kids one message, it would be this, "enjoy it, you never know when Halloween will stop feeling the same way."

Please email letters to the Editor to sjrguardian@sjrnj.org

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Feature

Service Mass Gives SJR Opportunity to Reflect



Deacon Joseph Sisco spoke at the Service Mass, honoring the SJR faculty who have served.

By Michael D'Eletto '22

On October 7th, St. Joseph Regional students and faculty attended a service Mass that highlighted the contributions and sacrifices of those who serve their community. The service was celebrated by Father Sean Manson of Our Lady Mother of the Church in Woodcliff Lake, New Jersey.

Firefighters and other first responders were also present at the Mass. This gave the SJR community an opportunity to recognize these heroes and thank them for their service. Many students were also surprised to learn about the service of some SJR faculty members, such as Mr. Aguero, Mr. Fuchs, and Mr. Kintish.

In his homily, Father Manson told a stirring story about a disobedient child who eventually became a priest after actively rejecting God in the Church. Realizing that what he did was wrong, this child begged for forgiveness from God, and then decided to devote his life to service and priesthood. Father Manson then went on to talk about the selflessness of pursuing service, along with the risks involved in becoming a servant of God.

Mr. Peters, the senior class Theology teacher, said that “I

liked the idea of recognizing and honoring the service given to communities by civil leaders and first responders.” He added that “they put their lives on the line every day. The least we can do is be grateful for that.”

Those sentiments were echoed by Deacon Joseph Sisco, the sophomore class Theology teacher, who highlighted the service of the firefighters in his local fire department and illustrated how important they are to the safety of the community.

Community service and sacrifice are core principles of the Saint Joe’s community, which has the motto of “Think. Lead. Serve.” Just as Jesus “did not come to be served but to serve” (Matthew 20:28), giving back to the community through service is an important part of Vir Fidelis. Christians can better follow the teachings of Jesus and the Church through service, as exemplified through this Mass.

As students at SJR, we were fortunate to come together and take a moment to recognize and thank the people who risk their lives and contribute to service daily. This Mass was a relevant and important reminder that showed us the many ways in which we can continue to serve our communities.



Father Sean Manson gave a homily at the Service Mass about the importance of service and forgiveness.

Halloween Throwback



Counter-Clockwise from top right (All pictures L-R);

Pierce Kelly '22 is looking out of this world;

Alexander Almeyda '23 blending in with the pumpkins in the patch;

Ryan Tobin '22 (left) as a world-class sumo wrestler;

Christian Rajkowski '22 excited to eat his candy as Spider-Man;

Peter Held '22 as a bat, ready to suck your blood;

Thank you to all who sent in photos.



Halloween Throwback



Clockwise from top left (All pictures L-R);

Nicholas Lawliss '22 standing next to a pumpkin in his Smurf outfit;

Alexander Shahdanian '22 (right) and his brother (left) posing as the iconic duo: Buzz Lightyear and Woody the Cowboy

Peter Edmonds '22 as a bone-chilling skeleton;

Nicholas Steinhauser '22 is excited to be wearing his elephant costume;

Adyn Marte '22 as a fearless pirate ready to walk the plank;

Thank you to all who sent in photos.



Halloween Throwback



Counter-Clockwise from top right (All Pictures R-L);

Brendan Stapleton '22 going to infinity and beyond;

Jaden Hernandez '22 poses as Winnie-the-Pooh for the Halloween season;

Ryan Colella '23 poses as the amazing Spider-Man;

Logan Muniz '22 (left) as the king of the sea;

Michael D'Eletto '22 going on the hunt for candy;

Thank you to all who sent in photos.



Halloween Throwback



Clockwise from top left (All Pictures L-R);

Aidan Woods '22 is eager to go trick-or-treating in his frog costume;

Matthew Fernandez '22 ready for NASCAR in his racing costume;

James Titolo '22 dressed as a cowboy from the Wild West;

Marc Manfredonia '22 (right) making wishes come true on Halloween with Jared Zevzavadjian '22 (left), who is cheering for the Giants;

Jack Smiechowski '22 foreshadowing what he will later become at St. Joe's.

Thank you to all who sent in photos.



Entertainment

A 2021 Retrospective Review of *The Sopranos*

THE Sopranos®



The Sopranos is a classic television series that became a groundbreaking success and a template for modern television.

By Ashton Samson '23

For many years, I simply avoided watching *The Sopranos* because of its length and the commitment of watching 86 episodes of television. As fate would have it, I concluded that this past summer, mere months before the release of the prequel film *The Many Saints of Newark*, seemed like the perfect time to learn about one of television's most iconic shows. Throughout the two and a half month time span of watching the show, I was simply hooked. I could safely list five reasons not only why I loved it, but why this series was a groundbreaking success in its initial run and all these years later.

1. Paved the Way for Television as We Now Know It

As a fan of modern shows, it is easy for me to see how *The Sopranos* paved the way for television as we now know it. Before it aired, there were few shows, if any, that displayed such exceptional writing that is now commonplace on television. Before this show, television was not taken as seriously as film. However, as soon as *The Sopranos* aired, this changed. Television was gradually considered an equal to film, and *The Sopranos* showed that it could tell mature and sophisticated stories with amazing acting and layered characters and writing.

2. Aims to Please Everyone

Perhaps the greatest appeal of *The Sopranos* is that it aims to please everyone. There are at least a couple of hysterical moments per episode. If someone is looking for a fun, crude, gritty, and violent mob show that takes its cues from classics like *Goodfellas*, *The Godfather*, and *Casino*, *The Sopranos* is their show.

If there are people looking for more than a crude, violent mob story, then they also came to the right place. By having Tony Soprano in therapy, we learn about the psychological components that led to his criminal behavior and what circumstances led to his panic attacks. Therapy is what makes the show become truly groundbreaking. It is the means by which the show is able to explore complex, philosophical themes that heighten the show to levels that the other mob endeavors could never reach.

3. Fully Formed Themes

I can't recall many other shows that are able to juggle as many themes as this show does, without the result being confounding or jarring. This series revels in complexity, telling a dizzying number of stories about an enormous cast of characters, and yet it never feels out of focus, always managing to tie back to specific themes. By the time you've reached the end of the show, most of the principal themes reach a satisfying conclusion as the puzzle pieces align.

4. Emotionally Resonant, Layered Acting

Much has already been said about the phenomenal acting on the show and for good reason. For one, I can't imagine anyone else in the role of Tony Soprano other than James Gandolfini. He put such an indelible mark on the character and mastered the wide range of emotions that Tony had with finesse and genuine adoration for his job.

While Gandolfini was the lifeblood of the show, so many others brought the series to new heights with their performances, such as Edie Falco (the only one who could match Gandolfini's level of rage) Michael Imperioli, Lorraine Bracco, Drea de Matteo, Jamie-Lynn Sigler, Robert Iler, Nancy Marchand, Aida Turturro, Joe Pantaliano and Dominic Chianese.

5. Extra Layer of Relatability for Those from New Jersey

The show may have been popular all over the country, but the experience wouldn't be the same for someone who doesn't live in New Jersey. It's always fun to point out all the locations that you recognize because you have driven past them in real life. Additionally, the dialect is very specific to New Jersey. I was born and have lived in New Jersey my entire life. I am an Italian-American who exhibits a sense of pride in his heritage and family and enjoyed aspects of the show that went out of their way to dispel any notions that all Italians were from the mob. For these reasons, the series is very relatable.

Sports

Football Team Improves to 4-2 with Back to Back Wins



Photo by Karyn Ochituzzo

Linebacker Brendan Errity '23 catches the ball for the winning touchdown against the Saint Peter's Preparatory Marauders.

By Jake Persaud '23

The Green Knights took the field on October 1st at Robert J. Dinallo Stadium on Coach Tony Karcich weekend to face the Montclair Mounties. Given that it was Homecoming Weekend, the Class of 2022 was honored during a pregame ceremony on the field. It was also Senior Day, in which the parents of senior football players and the cheerleaders walked along the field to be applauded. After defeating the Pope John XXIII Regional Lions 31-5, SJR defeated the Mounties 38-0 in an explosive win. The Green Knights were then 3-2 in the NJSIAA (New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association) Non Public Group A league and 2-1 in the New Jersey SFC (Super Football Conference).

Kickoff began between 2:00 PM and 2:30 PM. SJR won the coin toss but chose to defer. The scoring began when running back Yasin Willis '24 ran for a 15-yard rushing touchdown. After a successful PAT by kicker Marcos Ruiz '23, St. Joe's led 7-0. Later in the quarter, Willis ran again for a 7-yard rushing touchdown. With another PAT by Ruiz, SJR led 14-0 at the end of the first quarter. In the second quarter, Ruiz extended the lead to 17-0 after a successful 36-yard field goal. Not long after, Willis again improved his stats by scoring a 16-yard rushing touchdown. Ruiz made another PAT for a 24-0 lead. Towards the end of the second quarter, quarterback Luke Henrich '23 threw the ball to wide receiver Donovan McKoy '23 for a 37-yard receiving touchdown. With another PAT by Ruiz, the Green Knights extended

their lead to 31-0 at the end of the first half.

Silence fell upon the stands in the second half with the exception of a 5-yard rushing touchdown by fullback Brendan Stapleton '22 and another successful PAT by Ruiz for a 38-0 lead by SJR. With no scoring during the fourth quarter, the Green Knights defeated Montclair 38-0 in a monster win.

The following week, Green Knights took the field at 1:00 PM, facing off against the Saint Peter's Preparatory Marauders on Tony Karcich Field. After a long, hard fought game, SJR defeated the Marauders 21-14 to improve their record to 4-2, which was a big win for them as they prepared for the following week's match. This game was the beginning of rivalry month for the team.

The theme of the pre-game tailgate was pink, with the school selling pink shirts with #TackleCancer on the back of them and the SJR logo on the front. The SJR football team wore pink bands throughout the game.

St. Joe's received the ball at kickoff. The scoring began minutes into the game when Marauders free safety and strong safety Jayden Bonsu intercepted the ball for a 28-yard interception return, resulting in a touchdown. After a successful PAT from kicker Nico Duarte, St. Peter's Prep led 7-0. Later in the quarter, quarterback Luke Henrich '23 threw the ball to wide receiver Kenyon Massey '24 for a 21-yard receiving touchdown. After a successful PAT from kicker Marcos Ruiz '23, the game was tied 7-7 at the end of the first quarter. In the second quarter, running back Yasin Willis '24 ran for a 28-yard rushing touchdown. With another successful PAT by Ruiz, St. Joe's led 14-7. Later during the quarter, Marauders running back Paul Lefkowitz ran for a 7-yard rushing touchdown. With another PAT made by Duarte, the game was tied 14-14 at the half.

The last of the scoring occurred in the third quarter, when Henrich threw the ball to linebacker Brendan Errity '23 for a 12-yard receiving touchdown. With a PAT made by Ruiz, the final score was 21-14, earning SJR their fourth win of the season.

Sports

SJR Cross Country Team Wraps Up Season



Photo by Erika Brennan

Shane Brennan '22 cheering on Saul Garcia '22 as he finishes his race at the Bergen County Group Championship.

By Shane Brennan '22

The Saint Joe's country team has finished its season. After two weeks of training between the second and third meets, many of the SJR runners improved. However, the team did lose captain Shane Brennan '22 to an injury following the second meet.

Even without him, the team performed well at the Brett Taylor Invitational on October 2nd. Aside from Brennan, the team was also without Tom Mendoza '22 and Nick Steinhauser '22. This only left Aidan Koliopoulos '25, Dylan Gutowski '25, Jeffrey Guneratne '23, Saul Garcia '22, Matthew McCarvill '24, and Fintan Henry '23 remaining, but they still showed improvement.

Fintan Henry finished first on the team, with his race time being two minutes faster than his previous best. Saul Garcia and Jeffrey Guneratne completed the race just a few seconds apart, and Matthew McCarvill came in two minutes behind Guneratne.

In the freshman race, Aidan Koliopoulos once again finished quite high and received a top 25 medal. Dylan Gu-

towski also ran well, but not quite to his potential. This was a good performance with a very limited team.

The next race was the Big North Championship United Division Meet on October 8th. At this event, both Koliopoulos and Gutowski finished in the top twenty in the freshman race and ran their season bests.

In the varsity race, the team was led by Mendoza, who ran just over nineteen minutes in a season best. Henry and Guneratne followed him, running just under 23 minutes, and Garcia and McCarvill finished about a minute after them. Nick Steinhauser came after them with a season best by running a 24:24 time and rounding out the varsity team.

The last race of the season was the Bergen County Group Championship on October 23rd. Unfortunately, Koliopoulos was unable to race at this meet due to an injury that ended his cross country season early. Gutowski had a rough race without him, for he ran thirty seconds slower than normal.

In the varsity race, however, Henry, Garcia, Guneratne, and McCarvill all ran their best times of the season. Henry showed the most improvement, since he ran 2 minutes faster compared to the previous meet. Mendoza once again led the SJR team by running just under twenty minutes. Steinhauser unfortunately had a very hard race due to a headache, but he showed great resilience by pushing through the race.

This was a good year for the St. Joe's cross country program, and there is a lot of promising young talent on the roster for next year. Freshmen Koliopoulos and Gutowski definitely have the greatest opportunity to improve over the next three years. McCarvill will also be key to the team going forward as middle-of-the-road racer.

As for leaders, Henry and Guneratne will be great replacements for the team going forward. Unfortunately, the team will lose Brennan, the captain for the past two years, Mendoza, a constant presence within the top five on the team, Steinhauser, the hardest-working member of the team, and Garcia, an amazing teammate and an incredibly driven racer.