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2025



Front Cover Art Inspiration

This years Front Cover of the Vignette Magazine is a sketch of two hands grasping for each other and nearly connecting. This sketch was done in 2024 by senior member of the Vignette Ruthwik Panga '26.

The inspiration and motive behind this captivating illustration is companionship and friendship that humans desire, and that although imperfect, is worth something. The artist chose to misalign the hands showing that, though they don't meet perfectly, but they're still trying.

Completed by Ruthwik Panga '26

Back Cover Art Inspiration

This years Back Cover of the Vignette Magazine is a sketch of our school's mascot, a falcon. This sketch was completed by senior member Ben Yao '26 upon seeing one fly past his house one evening.. This sketch (also) completed in pencil depicts the falcon in a natural environment, posed in its beauty.

Completed by Benjamin Yao '26

*Vignette Literary
and Art Magazine*
2025

Volume 64

Saint Joseph
A College Preparatory School
145 Plainfield Avenue
Metuchen, New Jersey 08840



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Editorial

When undertaking a revival, fulfilling expectations is always a challenge. However when rendered great support, one's confidence can supercede the external doubt and weary support. Moreover, provided personal passion, and intrinsic motivation, any given obstacle becomes pleasure when with a dedicated team driving the most arduous of journeys to completion.

The *Vignette Literary Magazine* has been an annual trophy amongst the student body since the foundation of our school, and a distinguished compilation regarded as such beyond its decoration. Even through continued success, a lack of zeal coupled with inconsistencies left the *Vignette* a mere pending artifact. Provided this volatile future, the magazine lies within the hands of those who retain a passion for it. Therefore, in an attempt to restore venerable creativity, and to forge a desirable future, this year's *Vignette Staff* has diligently worked to compile the very best of the St. Joseph High School's literature and art.

Motivated to position itself as the supreme display of visual art, our team has dedicated themselves to both gathering and creating mediums solely for this edition.

From weekly meetings of discussion, to inspiring photography, our staff has worked inside and out of school to elevate this very edition. Prided on the pursuit of visual art in particular, the *Vignette Staff* has set its sights on truly pushing the boundaries past common, replicable art. In completion, the 2025 *Vignette* team is proud to present this 64th edition, marked by its mission of revival and showcase.

Santino Oliveti '26

Editor-in-Chief

Warm Summer Day In August

Soft sand beneath my feet so bright,
Where ocean meets the shore's delight,
The quiet waves that softly roll,
A dance that soothes my weary soul.
Seashells scattered on the golden ground,
Smooth pebbles where seashores are bound,
The horizon stretches blue and wide,
Where sunlight and the waters glide.
Seagulls circle high above,
Their wings a sign of endless love,
The salty breeze, like a gentle hand,
Brushing both the sea and land.
White foam that touches sandy shores,
Where memories live forevermore,
Where time stands still and worries cease,
And sunlight brings its quiet peace.
The beach, a world of enjoyed delight,
Where nature shows its fullest might.

Bennett Magliochetti '25
First Place, Senior Poetry



A Morning Walk

A photograph of a picturesque morning walk taken in a Pagoda in Vietnam.

Ruthwik Panga '26

Late Night Drives

Late night drives with friends,
Cooling off from pickleball's end.
Voices rise passionately in song,
Highway speeds ever so strong.

With struggles of school left behind,
NYC pizza is the only thing on my mind.
Night's embrace, a soothing air,
Friendship's warmth, a bond so rare.

Street lights flicker, a golden hue,
Stretching shadows in an avenue.
Laughter echoes, stories unfold,
Moment's we'll treasure as we grow old.

Winding roads, the world feels wide,
A fleeting escape, a cherished ride.
Together we find where joy resides,
In these late night drives, side by side.

Mihir Joseph '25
Second Place, Senior Poetry



Antiquated Architecture

An inspiring photograph of the ornate design
the lower end of Manhattan once was prided
upon.

Santino Olivetti '26

Mystery at Night

As a full moon rises on the night of a greatly awaited party, with all the nobles and rich men of the city, so does a series of murders with no way out of the party room. The first one to notice the deceased body in the corner of the room behind a cabinet was a nobleman. He screams and shouts and demands the party to be put on hold. As the party comes to a pause, he leads everybody to the body. This was the corpse of the host's wife, Marianne. As the host laid his eyes upon his wife's deceased body he began to blame everybody around him. Almost everybody in the party was face to face with the host one after another getting yelled at and blamed for killing his wife. The irrational host began to sprint towards the door to lock everybody inside the party room, but as he glanced over to where the door should be he began to vanish from the wall. Everybody in the room was looking at the host sprint over to the door and all saw the door vanish. This supernatural event caused everyone to panic and the room to grow tense. As the entire room was panicking and shouting the lights suddenly cut and a raspy, startling voice began to say that the only way out of the room was to either find out and expose the killer of the host's wife, kill the wife's murderer, or kill when the lights cut out and be the last one alive.

As the lights flickered back on in the tense party room, so did the horror among the people gathered inside. When the glow of the lights returned, a second corpse lay on the polished floor. The merchant, who earlier was pointing fingers accusing the others, now lifeless. The sight deepened the panic through the room. A quiet rustling drew the attention of a few toward the artist, whose hands shook as he held a crumpled paper found in a corner. It said "the truth lies right in front of you". Causing suspicion and unease, the artist's discovery drew the eyes of the others, and the group moved toward the center of the room, closer to the host and his wife's corpse. As the host knelt by Marianne's body, his movements slowed, as though fearing that he might uncover the truth to all this. Something small and shiny fell from her gown, a key, stained with blood. The weight of its discovery was felt by all, and a growing awareness came over the group. The host's hands shook as he held the key, the realization that it had been there all along, unnoticed by everyone too panicked to see. The lights flickered, casting long, moving shadows across the walls. The room felt like it was shrinking, and as time moved on, the lights cut out once more, plunging everyone back into darkness.

Avery Cambero '25
Third Place, Senior Fiction

“La Luna”

The moon rises into the night sky,
Yet, its glimmer feels so different tonight.
Though your presence is no longer near,
Your memory I hold, so cherished and dear.

The graceful light you brought to the air,
A glow so bright, bright beyond compare.
Each night, as I gaze at the moon,
I recall how your shine dispelled all of the gloom.

Your absence is felt and you are missed very much.
I yearn for the day when once again I'll feel your touch.
Your time here ended far too soon.
Now with regret, I mourn beneath the moon.

I know I'll see you again someday,
And though it may not be today,
I'll look at the moon and softly pray,
Knowing you're at peace, reflected in the moon's radiant ray.

Daniel Diaz '26

Second Place, Junior Poetry

The Wonders of Aviation

Ever since I boarded my first flight at the age of 6, I became an avid enjoyer of flying, and every time I got on the plane, I would press my face against the window, and watch the ground slowly shrink beneath me until there was only a layer of white clouds. I soon became fascinated with the magic of flying and its history. One day while flying with my family, my father told me something astonishing - that Humankind progressed from the Wright brothers to the first man on the moon in just 66 years. From that conversation, I became eager to learn more about the ingenuity and perseverance that made each flight possible. My early experiences only deepened my appreciation for the skills required to navigate the skies while quietly fueling my dream of becoming a pilot.

My interest in aviation grew even stronger when I first learned about one of the most heroic landings ever which was carried out on the Hudson River by US Airways 1549, done by what many considered among the greatest pilots ever-Chesley "Sully" Sullenberger. He was able to recover his Airbus A320 unharmed when both engines failed after a bird strike. Because of Captain Sullenberger's quick thinking and precise skills, he was able to save the lives of all 155 passengers on board. He quickly became my idol that rode alongside me in my aspirations of becoming a pilot who rises to the occasion just like him. Qualities such as determination and perseverance are just some of the traits that I aim to emulate in my future career as an airline pilot, especially in moments of uncertainty.

What resonates with me most about Sully's story is that he showcases what great pilots can do. It is composure under pressure, split-second decisions when necessary, and putting passengers' lives before anything else. His example of leadership and professionalism motivates me while I'm pushing my goal of becoming a pilot. For me, flying is not only about the thrill of being shoulder to shoulder with the seagulls; It's about earning the trust of every passenger and their family back home, ensuring they can reach their destination safely. Captain Sully's story is a constant reminder of the great responsibility and privilege that comes with being a pilot. Every time I see an airplane sail through the sky above, I am reminded again of why I want to take to the blue—to be part of a profession where skill, humanity, and resilience come together to connect the world.

Hao Chen '25

Second Place, Senior Non-Fiction



Vibrant Sky

Captured by a walk in the beach during a sunset in Seminyak, Bali, Ruthwik painted the incredibly vibrant sky above.

Ruthwik Panga '26

A Flight

As the jet stops taxiing for the final time, everyone holds onto their seats, waiting patiently. The pilot makes an announcement. Suddenly, everyone's heads snap to the back of their seats, teeth gritting and mouths uttering words of prayer. Babies are crying over the revving of plane engines and the rough and bumpy travel of rubber on asphalt. The cabin shudders, along with every passenger, until it suddenly doesn't. A sudden tranquility rushes over every passenger as the cabin quiets and calms. The plane has taken flight.

I open my window shutter to peer outside my temporary home and see only darkness. Collections of trees do not provide much illumination for a heavenly viewer. However, the farther up my vehicle flies, the more the window allows me to view outside.

People walking on the sidewalk appear like minuscule ants, crawling on little paths of dirt. Cars, moving like snails, provide light to the dirt paths meant for those ants. Streetlights look like small white and yellow dots from such a distance. From the plane, life seems peaceful and calm down below. Society seems to be utopian and in a perfect state; this is never the true reality.

From down below, someone is likely looking up at the plane I'm traveling in. He or she probably does not give much thought to the sight, thinking of it as a daily view. They then bring their attention back to the ground, where the streets are bustling with people trying to get to where they need to be, whether home, a late-night shift, or anything in between. Cars are honking and the traffic is jammed. On top of that, everyone feels humidity in the air - rain is coming.

I find it hard to believe how different life can seem, looking at the same event but from two different perspectives. Through my eyes, life is peaceful and quiet, with everything running as smoothly as it should. Through someone else's eyes, however, life is exciting, fast-paced, eventful, rushed. Everyone perceives events differently; understanding someone else's view can help you understand the true and unbiased nature of a situation.

Gurkeerat Singh '25
Third Place, Senior Non-Fiction



Windmill

A lone windmill overlooking a bed of millions of flowers.

Ruthwik Panga '26

And The King Yawned

The trumpets blair and the choirs sing. A man no younger than fifty walks out towards a throne. He is the king and has been for over twenty years. He sits himself in his throne and stares blankly from it. Throughout the day, diplomats, countryfolk, artists, and businessmen approach his throne. They whisper, yell, beg, and demand. However, the king never once responds to them with an answer or statement. Instead, his advisors and generals speak in his place. They bicker and boast with the visitors and amongst themselves. Yet they never once mention the king in their conversations. The king watches these people and ponders to himself. He was raised and taught by a family of prestige and dignity from the moment he was born. He had been shamed and beaten to be the infallible, supreme being of this land. The man before him was a tyrannical creature that only resembled a father on paper. That man was the idol of the king. An idol whose legacy of terror he must carry on for the sake of their family. But where was that legacy now? The king yawned and closed his eyes.

When the people of the land rose and the banners of his father fell, the new king was stripped of his power and thrown onto his throne. His generals put a barrel to his head and labeled it his divine mandate. His advisors put a pen to a paper and called it his royal decree. His name alone kept him on a throne, and he bowed to the people his father had brought to heel. He had hoped for decades that his time would come. To rise and regain his power so that he may bring vengeance upon the masses who had brought him shame. Alas, this was a delusion which he himself knew to be false. He opened his eyes and yawned once more.

Ta-Ji Umukoro '25
First Place, Senior Fiction



Tower of Tale

Taken in Provincetown Massachusetts,
this tower evokes admiration and flashes
its audience with fantasy-like design.

Santino Oliveti '26

The Dust of a Kingdom

He awoke once more to the stench of decay, not just of flesh, but of concepts, of history, and a kingdom long past its time. The air was thick with the smell of mildew and rain, clinging to his body like a second skin. He laid still for a moment, listening to his surroundings, hoping for at least one familiar sound, no matter how many centuries had passed. The city around him was no longer alive, it was a corpse of its former self. There were no merchants peddling their wares, no clang of the blacksmith's hammer, but only the creak of rotting buildings slouching under their own weight, their foundation long since infested by pests and fungus. Pontifica, once the golden, beating heart of Trepezuntos, had become a shell.

With effort, he pushed himself upright, his gauntlet scraping against stone worn and cracked by centuries of neglect. His armor, dull and blemished, caught a sliver of fading moonlight through a hole in the roof of a once great cathedral, dedicated to Skarnios, the one who had abandoned them. The banners that once bore the royal eagles of Trepezuntos hung pitifully, their holes growing bigger day by day, and the color all but faded. He walked, slowly but surely, through streets filled with debris. Statues of emperors from a time long past loomed above, with chunks of marble missing from them, and all sorts of creatures making their home in them.

A golden laurel was nearly buried in all of the filth, but its faint glimmer still caught his eye. He knelt, brushing the grime away, to reveal the sigil of Skarnios.

Something that had once demanded the reverence of all, now reduced to a chipped and ruined trinket for scavengers to loot. His gauntleted fingers traced the edges, lingering on the myriad of cracks and dents that littered its once perfect form.

His pondering was interrupted by a sound from behind him, which was a shuffle, of heavy feet being dragged against the floor. He turned, and witnessed a figure, a once battle ready war-golem now nearly rotted away, its magical core barely willing the destroyed body to move. He remembered how revered they used to be, the last, and one of the strongest defences of the city. But it no longer mattered anymore. His spear came quickly, easily piercing through its rotted hide, impaling its magical core, causing a spluttering explosion of dust, debris, and faint magical energy. The golem collapsed, its body turning into dust after it was severed from what gave it its twisted sense of eternal purpose.

He stared at his shaking hands, his eyes wary. Once... so long ago, he fought to protect this land. Now? He was no better than an invader, looting and destroying the remains for his own survival.

The dust from the collapsing golem intruded into his nostrils, and the scent of decay deepened. He inhaled, and then he walked on.

Clark Dias '25
Second Place, Senior Fiction



The Castle

A grand fortress surrounded by towering mountains is a view not only meant for the eyes, but also for the pen. Inspired after seeing this great sight, Ruthwik created a digital rendition of the castle. The warm colours juxtaposed with cool mist create a sense of surrealness between the impressive sights and the poignant gorge below.

Ruthwik Panga '26

Amidst Clashing Titans

The briny tempest splits the great zephyr
Heaven's spears char the earth and cleave the seas
The ocean's hand's persistence won't defer
Dark skies are the harbinger of unease
Wrathful waves strikes with zero prejudice
All shall cower under heaven's judgement
All have Beared witness to saline malice
The sky stands In total envelopment
Crypts of mystery where none can remain
The prey are lanced by giant avians
Suffocating in a sunken domain
Hostile and Blinding to all aliens
Though hope remains amidst nature's titans
The gulls soar through without being frightened

Ryan Abbott '26
First Place, Junior Poetry

A Second Chance

The experience of crew tryouts freshman year taught me that sometimes it's worthwhile to give something a second chance. My first experience was at the Learn to Row camp when I was a rising 8th grader. I hated it. Carrying the boats was painful for a 13 year old who never lifted weights. It felt as if I had a truck on my shoulders. The rowing was monotonous. My legs always felt like jello. Later, as a rising freshman, my parents made me tryout for the team. I was completely opposed to it. Despite this, they pushed me to do it.

Before tryouts, there were captain's practices at the school gym. At the first session, one of the coaches made their kid, who was a scary junior at the time, give me his phone number. So, I felt it would be really awkward if after that, I didn't make the team. I was determined to go to every practice over the summer. I would also have grueling gym sessions on my own.

On the first day of tryouts, we were expecting a 2k test, which every rower dreads. If done right, you should have pushed yourself to the point of throwing up or nearly passing out. I prepared, but never expected the coach to surprise us with a few mile run first! I was physically and mentally exhausted just from the run. Then, it was time for the 2k. It was utter misery. It felt like I was going to pass out. So, the coach told me to sit upside down on a chair so the blood would flow back to my head. I wasn't happy with my time, but when I looked around, everyone else was still rowing. Later, I learned my time was the fastest. I started to feel better.

The next day, we did a 5k and the day after we had the option of repeating either test. Despite feeling good about my times, and having the coach's reassurance, I was still worried about whether or not my friends & I would make the team. It took days for the roster to be posted before I would discover that I made it. Sadly, not all my friends did.

Since joining the team, I have made many new friends and great memories. It was worth giving it a second chance.

Conrad Francis '27

Second Place, Sophomore Nonfiction

Glassy Eyes

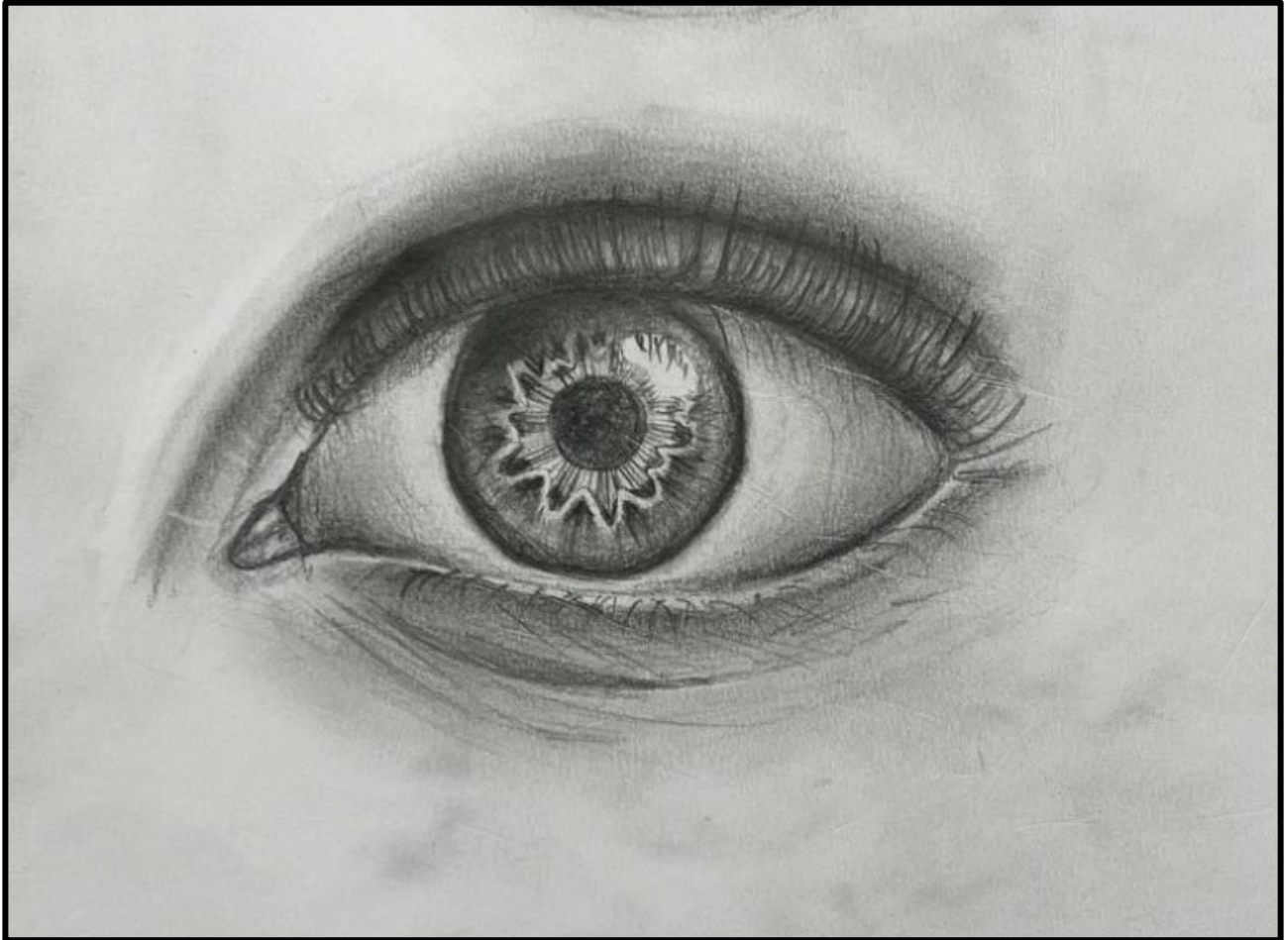
A comely lady with icy eyes, a disposition carved of winter snow,
Blooming a gentle flower within, her sight drifted upon her side.
A delicate old woman admiring her tummy, her curious gaze comforting and low,
“When are you expecting?” asks the old woman to the young bride.

The sound of sweet silence rang mellow upon the platform,
“A fortnight and a half,” whispers the lady with a gingerly caress.
“Your eyes have softened, is your family excited?” the senior asked, soul warm.
“My grandmother is ill, shes all I have left” says the lady, visibly depressed.

“Trust me, I believe you will be just fine” affirmed the gleeful former mother.
“I’m afraid,” confided the young lady who was wondering if she could play her part.
“Cheer up, I’m sure your grandma loves her butterfly like no other” the elder says.
The ice lady looks away, with dull ache that pulsed within her heart.

“Grandmother, the train is approaching, we must get home now.” remarks the butterfly,
confused, the old woman peered up with wide, glassy eyes.

Mukul Agarwala '26
Third Place, Junior Poetry



Eye to Eye

An eye is a perfect medium to convey any emotion, like a blank canvas it's up to the artists to depict what it wants to show.

Ruthwik Panga '26

Forge

I thank God for my pain because it made me this,
It made me reminisce,
All these memories of strength and shame.

All those hills climbed and stairs ran up,
Put me in the right mind, all these man tryna catch up.

But lot of man let their jealousy creep in,
They got double layers, extra skin.

They envy the shine, but they don't see the grind,
The nights I fought wars within my own mind.

And I stay in my own lane,
Focused on growth, not chasing fame,
Focused on the game.

Every fall taught lessons, every loss had gain,
And every time I was brought down I knew it wasn't in vain,
And like a sword, I was hammered into form,
Now I'm tryna perform.

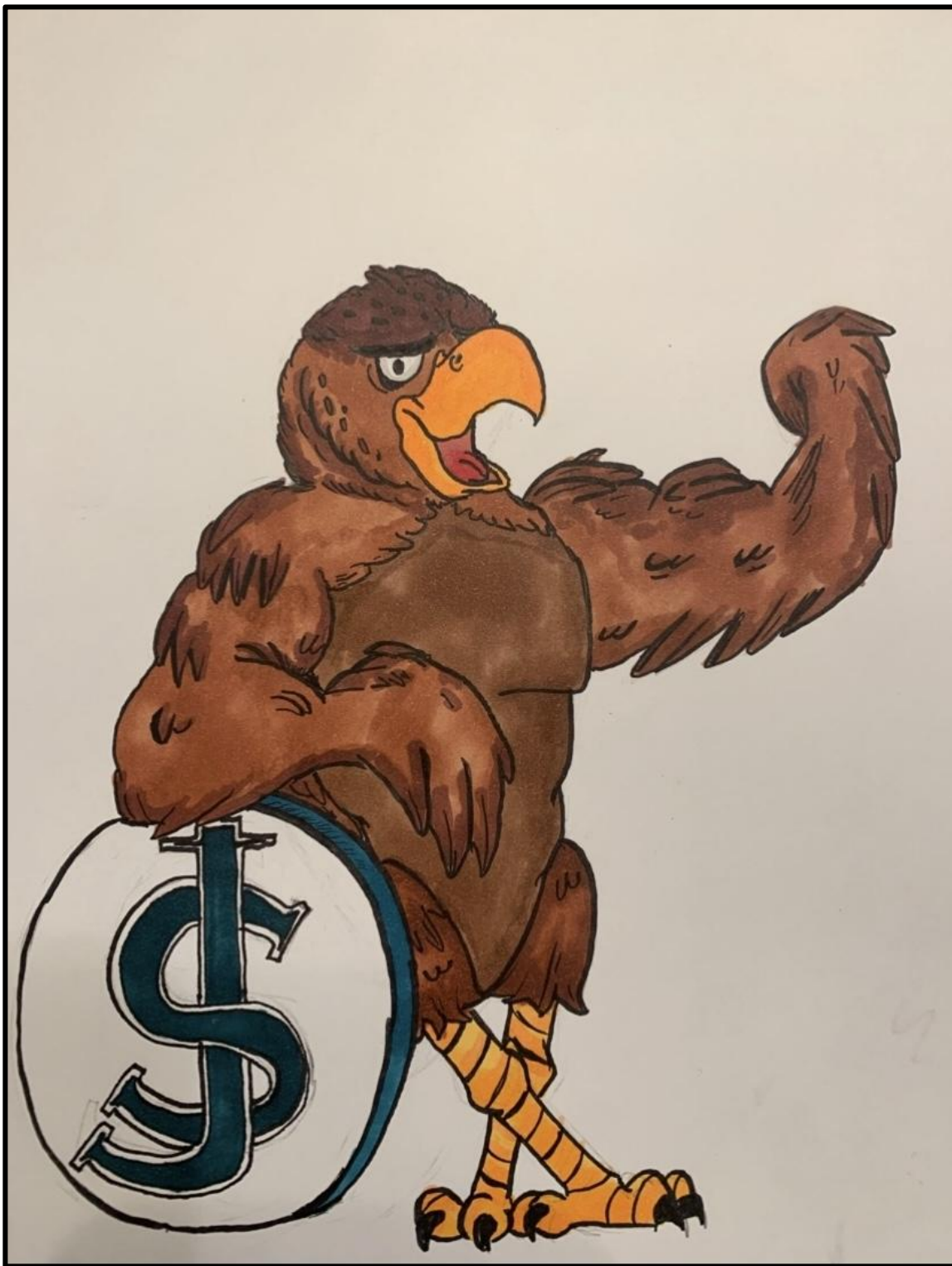
Patrick Cui '27
First Place, Sophomore Poetry

My Journey

I always loved sports. I fell in love when I was around 5 years old. I always wanted to be the best. The worst part about sports was injuries. One injury in particular changed my sports life forever. The summer before my freshman year I was already set on wanting to play football and basketball for the High school team. I have been waiting for this moment my whole sports career to play in high school. Things took a turn for the worst when one day at a basketball summer camp I got fouled really hard and I fractured my ankle. The doctor said I'm out until the day of Basketball tryouts. One day in a car ride with my mom she took me to a bowling alley. I asked her why we were here and she said, "I want you to watch the high school practice." I laughed. I didn't think at the time bowling was a sport until I walked into that practice. After I watched that practice I was all in on this bowling thing. I asked the doctor and he said I would be cleared to bowl. At first I wasn't good but with my determination to be the best I went to the bowling alley everyday after school. Now ever since that injury I am part of a two-time state champion team averaging around 200 and have qualified to bowl for The best youth national tournament in the country.

Brian Burke '26

Second Place, Junior Non-Fiction



Mascot

An artistic depiction of a cartoon-like falcon who would push St. Joe's students to be their best.

Artist: *Brendan Mullins '28*
Author: *Santino Oliveti '26*

Praying Mantis

A helpful insect belonging to the Mantodea order is the Praying Mantis. It helps keep pests under control in agricultural settings. Because the hands and limbs are arranged to mimic a "praying" pose, it is called the "Praying Mantis." Although they can be found throughout the world, tropical and temperate zones are where they are most common. Fields, gardens, underbrush, grasses, and bushes of woodlands are among the places where they are most specifically to be found. Their life cycle usually starts in the spring when they hatch from an egg. They molt multiple times as they mature into adult Praying Mantises, getting bigger each time. Praying Mantis wait for their target to approach before attacking. Because they eat a diverse range of insects, they defend a variety of plants. Because of their predatory tendencies, fewer dangerous insects that injure crops are present. For example, crops like corn, soybeans, and wheat benefit greatly from praying mantis.

In commercial agriculture, praying mantises are occasionally employed as a biological pest control method. In organic farming, where integrated pest control reduces the use of synthetic chemicals, an environmentally friendly substitute like Praying Mantis in place of chemical pesticides might be helpful. Because they naturally manage insect populations without endangering the environment, mantises are a great part of sustainable farming operations. Because of their distinctive characteristics and behavioral patterns, praying mantis have been employed as pets and as in agriculture. The praying mantis is a very useful insect in ecological and agricultural settings.

Carlos Venegas Banuelos '26

Third Place, Junior Non-Fiction

Golf

I'm standing over the ball, the shine of the iron glinting into my eyes. I ask myself, is the ball in the middle of my stance? Is my left thumb far enough to the right of the grip? Am I squeezing the club too hard? I could ensure that I've done everything properly, however, I will never be able to hit the exact same shot, distance, and flight consecutively. To me, this is where I find beauty in the sport of golf.

I often think back to the first time I swung a club at a resort in the Catskill Mountains, which myself, my great aunt, and great uncle return to every year. I didn't even have a set of clubs but my uncle refused to let me go home unless I played a round with him. It was a struggle searching the lost and found room of the clubhouse for clubs that would fit six-year-old me, but I emerged victorious. I teed up my ball and looked towards the pin, which back then seemed so vastly far away. There are large oak trees lining the left side of the fairway to this day, and to the right a long road where the occasional car drives up to Lake Loree to go fishing. I swung wildly with all the force my small arms could muster, and topped the ball embarrassingly as it rolled only about forty yards. However, to my uncle and I's amazement, it went dead straight towards the pin.

Leave it to my great aunt to instantly gift me a set of junior clubs and sign me up for a summer camp at a local golf course upon returning home. These camps focused not only on tips for how to hit your driver longer or how to putt better, but also the stewardship of the game. I was taught how to repair and respect the greens, not to lie about your score or cheat, and how to repair divots and ball marks. I found it so interesting at how high a level the game of golf was focused on respect between players and making it an enjoyable experience for everyone involved. These teachings about respect and sportsmanship became clearly intertwined with my personal life, whether it's something as simple as putting a shopping cart back in the return after using it or turning away the urge to cheat on a test.

Growing older, observing the world around me, and becoming more mature and socially aware has made me recognize the most important parts of my life. My great aunt and uncle have granted me the greatest gift that could be bestowed on anyone, opportunity. They have been behind my back every step of the way, ensuring that every part of my life has been filled with enjoyment. Without their support I would've never been exposed to a private education or the virtues of a sport I love. Even now, they have ensured that my next four years will be spent at a college that is the best for me and not a worry of money. It is them alone I have to thank for the chances to be the best person I can be, and I plan to continue to seize it to the fullest.

I believe that people reveal who they are when no one is looking. When golfing alone, I create an opportunity to stay true to my values by not cheating and repairing the damages I cause to the course. The result of what I have been taught by the game of golf and my great aunt and uncle is me holding myself accountable and the drive to pursue every opportunity to its fullest.

Aaron Guempel '25
First Place, Senior Non-Fiction

Is it Fake?

The mind is funny. Sometimes a laugh, sometimes a cry,
But with each and every laugh I wonder. Is it fake?
With each and every cry I wonder. Is it fake?
With each line of love that strokes the heart...I wonder. Is it fake?
With each and every heart full of hate...I wonder. Is it fake?
The mind changes at every twist and turn,
And with each trifling twist and trialing turn, I wonder...is it fake?
Is it all just some chemical in our brains...a synthetic guardian to our dreams?
And whether it is or isn't, it all fades sooner or later so...
Is it false? Is it fake? Or is it all simply imperfectly real?

Christopher Stark '27

Second Place, Sophomore Poetry

A Dog's Intelligence

To own an intelligent dog is a gift that, in practice, undoes its own advantages. Humans admire and marvel at how they sometimes even seem to think like us. However, this cleverness we celebrate in many situations, becomes at times a source of frustration in our daily lives. My own dog is no exception to this.

His wit is commendable, but in many cases it leaves me with inconveniences. He often sits at the base of my chair and watches me. I see his eyes dart from hand to hand as he observes. He almost appears to be studying what I am doing. At times, it seems that he is waiting, waiting for the chance for me to leave so he can climb up onto my chair and snag whatever it was I was holding. One afternoon, as I was writing a card to my Grandfather for his birthday, my dog sat there watching with that same curiosity. When I stood up and left to ask my Mom to sign it, I returned to find him devouring the birthday card I had worked so hard on. Out of all the papers on my desk, he chose to destroy the one that mattered in the moment. His seemingly malicious yet interesting cleverness does not end here, as he has a knack for getting past the barriers we set in place for him. He has figured out how to grab and open pantries and other small gates around the house with his mouth and nose, and watching him do so is certainly entertaining. However, the entertainment ends when he sneaks behind your back and gets into something he shouldn't have. Just recently, I came home to my father asleep and a rummaging sound came from the kitchen. When I went to investigate, I found my dog looking guilty sitting next to torn up cereal and oat boxes beside him. It somewhat felt like he knew of his wrongdoings, and sat there, knowing that he was in trouble for what he had done. No matter how many barriers we place for him, he always eventually finds a slip up on our part, a crack in the doorway for him to sneak through. It always seems as if he acknowledges the boundaries we set for him, and strives to get past them, leaving me always with the reminder that his cleverness is my dilemma.

In the end, I realize that admirable intelligence my dog has is as much of a burden as it is blessing. His wits, which seem so impressive, so often become the very thing that disrupts the peace of my day. But the truth does stand: the same thing that makes us think a dog would be fun and easy to manage, intelligence, ends up being the same reason why that is not true. To own a smart dog constantly makes you wonder if their gifts are a boon or a flaw after all.

William Lockey '27
First Place, Sophomore Non-Fiction

Keep Trying

When life pushes you down
And you wipe off tears from crying
Always push away the frown
And just keep trying

The clouds may choke the day's sky
The golden sun seemingly dying
Look past the darkness with your mind's eye
Push on, and keep trying

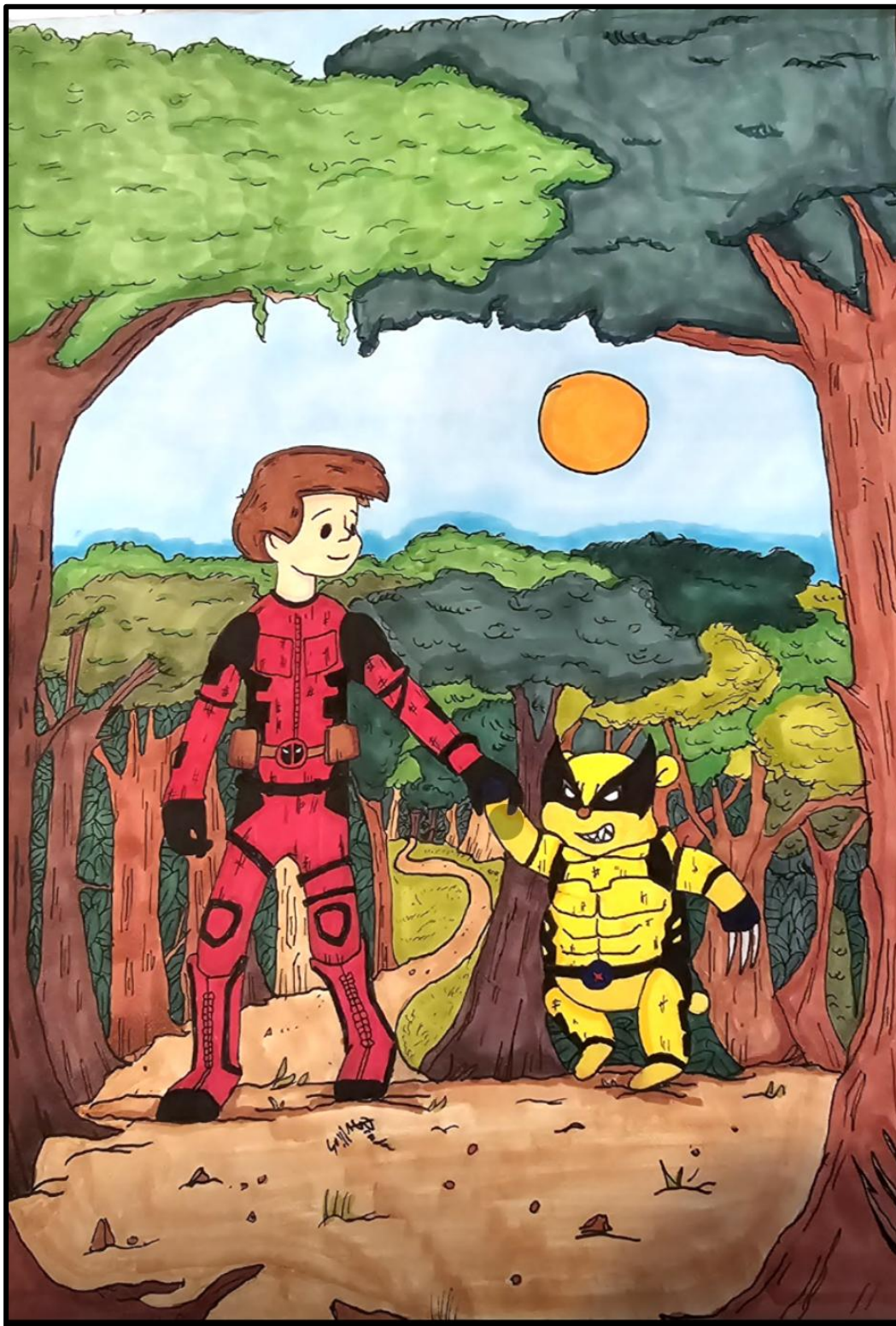
You may fail a huge task
With effects being terrifying
But pry away this intimidating mask
And gain courage, keep trying

Friends may be lost to time
With grief and sorrow amplifying
Nowhere to go but up you must climb
You will then soar, just keep trying

Dreams may be void and crushed
And negative thoughts high-flying
The sorrow and pain must be brushed
And you must think to keep trying

No matter how much weight is on your back
There is no need for sighing or crying
As long as strength and courage is not what you lack
Always push forward, always keep trying

Xavier Giangrante '27
Third Place, Sophomore Poetry



Best Buds

Even the strongest of heroes need the best
of friends.

Artist: *Brendan Mullins '28*
Author: *Santino Oliveti '26*



Lone Wolf

Powerful, solo wolf, posed in a
poised yet demanding stance.

Photographer: *Thomas Myers '26*
Author: *Santino Oliveti '26*

Benefits of a Meal Plan for a Wrestler

Wrestling is a unique sport, different from all the others. What separates wrestling from all other sports is the element of cutting weight. Wrestlers cut weight in order to be the most successful they can be at a lower weight class. Many wrestlers struggle to wrestle at the highest level while cutting weight. This is why every wrestler needs a meal plan.

To maintain energy throughout the day to support a wrestler for practices and workouts, a strong breakfast consisting of protein, carbohydrates, and fats is needed. Proteins help to rebuild and repair muscles, carbohydrates are the body's energy source, and fats help people stay full for longer. For example, on a 1200-calorie meal plan, breakfast throughout the week would look like two eggs, oatmeal with a cup of milk, a bagel, or even protein pancakes.

Lunch is another crucial meal because once breakfast wears off you will become tired and unfocused leading to problems in the classroom and on the mat. For example, on a 1200-calorie meal plan, a typical lunch would consist of a cold-cut sandwich with a granola bar or yogurt, a grilled chicken sandwich, or a chicken cutlet with rice and broccoli. Nutrient-dense lunches will help a wrestler stay focused during the school day and at practice.

The final meal of the day and most important is dinner. At practice, wrestlers' bodies become beaten up and must be repaired. Wrestlers lose salt, vitamins, and minerals, and their muscles get worn out during practice. To heal the body, a wrestler needs a dinner consisting of protein and carbohydrates. For example, on a 1200-calorie meal plan, a typical dinner would consist of a source of protein whether it be chicken, fish, or beef, a carbohydrate which could be bread, pasta, or rice, and a vegetable. These foods will provide a wrestler with the nutrients he or she needs to keep their physical ability throughout the season.

Another important part of a meal plan for a wrestler is snacks. On a meal plan, there are usually three snacks, a morning snack, a workout snack, and a nighttime snack. The morning snack for a wrestler should be fruit. Fruits are complex carbohydrates, which means they take longer to digest and are packed with vitamins, minerals, and fiber. Fruits will also help spike blood sugar levels which will increase energy throughout the morning. The next snack is the workout snack. A workout snack for a wrestler should consist of protein which can give them energy to get through a practice. A workout snack should be a low-calorie protein shake, protein bar, or Greek yogurt. The third snack of the day comes after dinner and it is a nighttime snack. These snacks are to help get rid of a sweet tooth a wrestler might have while cutting weight. A good option for a nighttime snack would be a Greek yogurt bar which tastes exactly like ice cream but is much lower in calories.

The third and final component of wrestlers' diet, besides meals and snacks, is water and supplements. As a wrestler, you should drink about a gallon of water a day and as match or tournament day gets closer, slowly cut down water intake and the weight will come off much easier than most expect. Another important part of a wrestler's diet is supplements. Every morning a wrestler should be taking a multivitamin to help get extra vitamins and minerals. Another supplement many wrestlers should consider is Branch Chain Amino Acids (BCAA). This is a powder that a wrestler can add to a bottle of water which will help give the body amino acids that can not be found in food.

In conclusion, cutting weight is the hardest thing to do in all of sports. While on a meal plan, a wrestler can keep eating the foods they enjoy while still being able to cut weight. All wrestlers should look into finding a nutritionist with a meal plan suited to their needs. It is a valuable tool that can help wrestlers reach their goals in the postseason and discover their full potential.



Young Yield

Early summer photograph of a fig tree bearing premature fruit.

Santino Oliveti '26

The Sparkle of Light

An old man lied pondering about all the missed opportunities. He envisioned him self embracing those moments, rather than running like he always had. Struggling to sleep he arose, and looked out the window. Across the darkness that engulfed the outside, there was a sparkle of light. One tiny sparkle, but seemed powerful enough to push a spirit. The man began to look closer and closer at the sparkle, feeling as if it was telling him something. He walked out of the room into the kitchen, turned on a light, brewed a coffee, and sat down. With each sip his hope increased, he began to see the light in the darkness. He arose, walked back to his room, and stared out the same window. The small sparkle was now a dimming, glimmer of a light. The man, confused about the losing light, began to stare harder. He noticed 3 men standing there talking. He could faintly see them. He began to watch, as they entered the tiny house, and after 10 minutes ran out. Confused, but accepting the situation he lied down and went to sleep.

The next morning, the old man awoke, turned on his television, and put on the news. The reporter began to talk about a crime that took place in his town the previous night. She began by saying, “3 robbers broke into a house on Hallows Ave.” The old man remembered the 3 men he saw standing outside of a tiny house the previous night. The reporter continued, “ the men entered into the residents home, and left in about 10 minutes.” The old man connecting the dots, fearful of what he witnessed, wanted to keep it to himself. His fearful self taking over, fearful of the knowledge he possessed. Remembering the sparkle, he knew he couldn’t run. He had to go to the authorities, and tell them all of the information. During his staredown with the light, he could faintly see the men’s faces. The police have already collected 9 suspects. The old man arose all bravely, about to do something he's never done before. He hastily ran to the door, got into his car, and drove to the station. The police were already investigating the men, when he arrived. The old man said he saw the crime at about 11:00 pm through his window. He pointed out each of the 3 men. Successfully stopping a crime, one feat which he's always been too scared to do. To speak up, to believe in himself, but suddenly it all seemed to work out. Grateful for the tiny sparkle that shined into his soul the previous night, began a new journey for him. A journey of bravery, and action. The old man was reborn as a new man, who acted on all of the opportunities.



Home

Using graphite, Ruthwik explored how different textures, organics, perspectives, shapes and more interact with each other to complete a final, whole image.

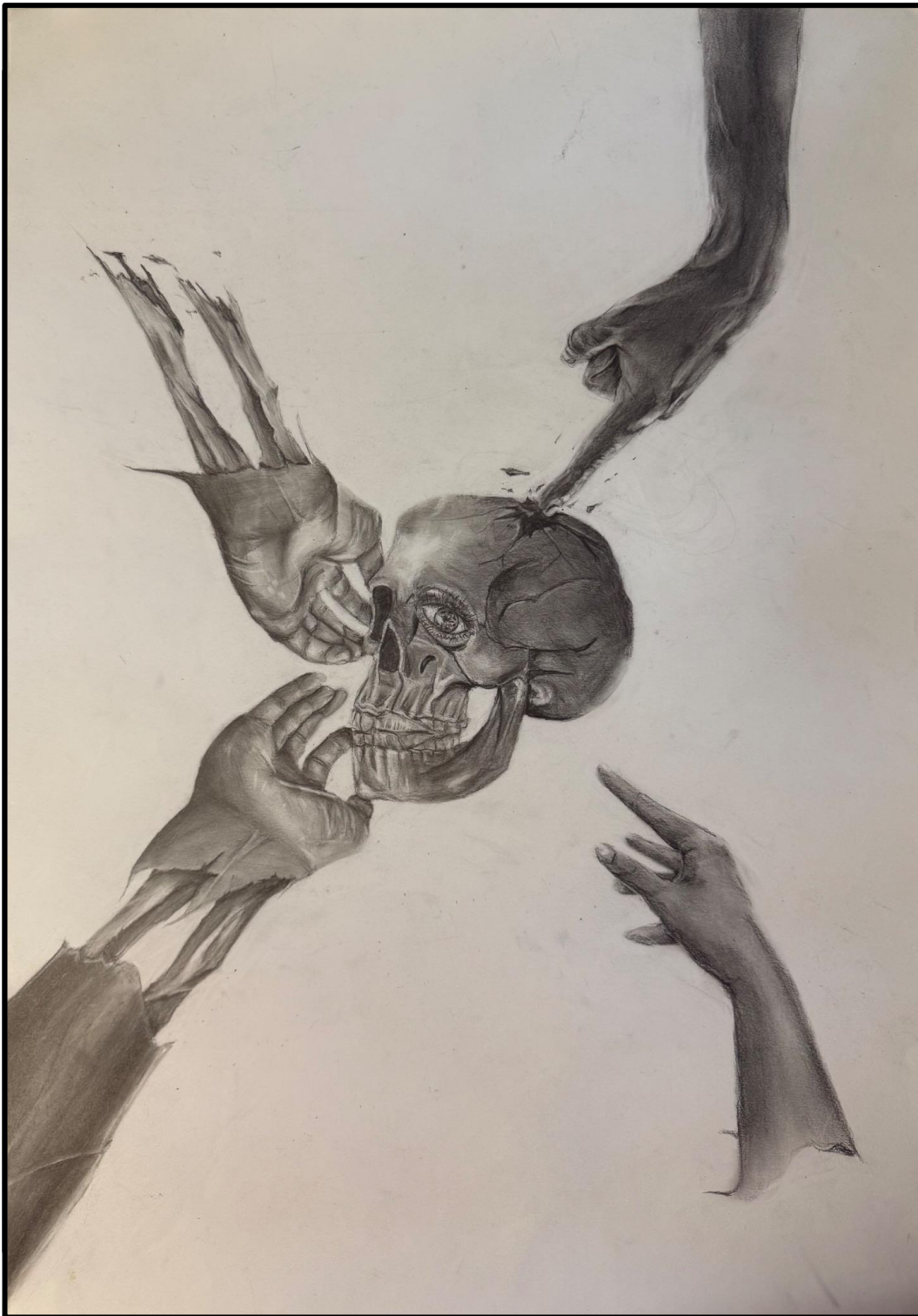
Ruthwik Panga '26

Doomed

Doomed. Dead. Lost. All these thoughts swim around us as we enter Ekincik Bay, off the coast of Syria. Our captain, consumed by greed, led us through the darkly shrouded inlet. The lot of us, twenty years of age and superstitious, realized our mistake in accompanying him on his avaricious quest for riches. We had no problems with laying sieges on ports, no issues with massacring entire towns in the name of our never-ending pursuit of gold. However, many of us would have given up all we had obtained to never, in our lives, enter that accursed shore of Syria. Our captain had heard of a great treasure that had been hidden away on the beaches that now lay ahead of us, by the Knights Templar. He convinced us to aid him on the charter, claiming that it would make us all rich beyond comprehension. However, the captain was cunning and neglected to tell us of the path we had to take to get there. Had we known, we never would have left port. He did not tell us the treasure was hidden deep within a den of the most evil, murdering savages God placed on this earth. Mermaids. They were carnivorous and vile, with the upper body of a beautiful woman that hid away gargantuan razor sharp teeth, while its lower half was that of a fish. We had made it as far as we could in our ship and now needed to set out in our fleet of row boats. We had made it half the distance when we first heard it. It was the most eerily beautiful voice any of us had ever heard, echoing off the dark lifeless rock of the cove. I knew that our cause was lost and begged our captain to escape to the ship, but he laughed me off and pressed forward. Then, I saw it. The most beautiful young woman I had ever seen, just treading water, towards the back of our row boat. The first mate, a lustful young sinner, turned to it, believing it to be what it appeared. I knew better and saw it for what it was. The creature beckoned him closer, and, despite my cautions, he obliged. Closer and closer he came to the edge of the boat, when at last the mermaid lunged at him. It dragged him, screaming, from the boat and into the black waters. Panic erupted as the fleet attempted to flee towards the ship, while men were picked off one by one from their row boats. Half of our crew remained by the time I reached the supposed safe haven of the ship. For hours it seemed we felt the remorseful cries of our comrades. Then, there was silence. After a time, our captain demanded we make a second push for the Templar's treasure. For the first time, no one followed him. He pleaded, threatened, and bartered, but no one moved a muscle. He cursed angrily that he would go and claim the treasure for himself, and no one would share in the bounty. He boarded a row boat by his lonesome and sailed off towards the shore. We would never see or hear of him again. Whether he reached the shore or perished along the way we will never know. Personally, I believe he didn't have enough soul left to die. All we know is that we heard the eerily beautiful voices of angels and demons as we departed, slowly and silently, from the bay.

Kevin Watson '27

Third Place, Sophomore Fiction



Their Pain

The hands that cradle you. The hand that reaches out to you.
The hand that breaks you.

The World Today.

They wake to the buzz, the hum of their day,
A world outside, but the screen pulls them in.
Notifications light up, calling their name
A chain of pixels, where does it begin?
The maps know their paths, the clock tells their time,
They thoughts no longer their own to decide
Once they could recall numbers, streets, and names,
Now it's all fed to them, nothing to hide
They reach for their phones, though they're not quite alone,
Their minds adrift in the digital sea.
They used to see faces, they used to hear tones,
But now it's just them and their WONDERFUL phones.
What happened to a world where there was no screen?
Where people looked up, and the world could be seen?
Where silence spoke louder, and time moved slow,
Now they're all trapped, trapped in the glow.

Arjun Sudhaker '28
Second Place, Freshmen Poetry



Bridge to Brooklyn

Connecting land link within one of our
country's greatest cities.

Santino Oliveti '26

Ramen

Ramen is enjoyed globally, by people of all backgrounds and ages. Instant ramen especially, is popular between college students and ramen enthusiasts alike. Through the years, ramen has had a rich history and a rich flavor. Although ramen is a Japanese dish, its origin can be traced back to China. In the 19th century, Chinese immigrants brought their wheat noodle soups with them as they settled in Yokohama, Japan. These soups generally contained wheat noodles, pork broth, and Chinese roasted pork as a topping. The noodles themselves were unique in that they had a “springy” texture, achieved by utilizing kansui, or alkaline salt water during the cooking process. This “springy” texture is still a defining characteristic of modern ramen noodles. During World War II, the Japanese government enacted a wartime ban on outdoor food vending. They did this as a way to control rations. Later, when the American military gained control of Japan from 1945 to 1952, they maintained this ban. These actions led to one of the largest black market cultures the world has ever known. Since government rations were often weeks late, Japanese people were forced to obtain food in other ways. Food carts called yatai were everywhere and would serve ramen to these people in secret. Tokyo, for example, had 45,000 black market stalls by 1945. These carts were equipped with drawers filled with noodles and toppings, along with pots of broth and water. These carts were some of the only successful business ventures during this time. This was because of the cheap, new American wheat and lard. That being said, they weren’t without risk. About 90% of yatai were under the control of an organized crime group: the Yakuza. The Yakuza extorted the yatai owners. However, since they weren’t legally allowed to operate themselves, there wasn’t anything they could do but comply. Instant ramen has enjoyed its share of popularity over the years. Although seen by some as nontraditional, instant ramen is just another way to enjoy this dish. It was invented by Momofuku Ando to combat the post-World War II food shortages in Japan. In control of the post-war Japanese territory, the United States provided wheat to the Japanese and instructed them to make bread; however, Ando didn’t see the point in making bread when wheat-based ramen was already an integral part of Japanese culture. Ando then searched for a way to make ramen more convenient and accessible to the public. After significant trial and error, he finally achieved success by flash-frying the noodles after watching his wife make tempura. In doing so, he revolutionized ramen consumption and helped overcome the post-war food shortages. Modern ramen has a lot of variability. There are generally 5 parts to a modern ramen bowl: tare, aroma oil, broth, ramen noodles, and toppings. Tare is the main source of seasoning in ramen, and it actually defines the type of ramen. The 3 types of tare are shio (salt), miso (fermented soybean), and shoyu (soy sauce). Aroma oil adds depth and richness to the ramen and, along with tare, is usually added first. The next part to be added is the broth. A ramen broth is either kotteri (rich) or assari (light). Kotteri broths are usually made from bones and will be thick and opaque. Assari broths will be thin and clear. They are usually made from a combination of vegetables, fish, and bones cooked at a light simmer. The noodles themselves are generally added after the broth. The final part of ramen to be added is toppings. They can be anything, but some of the most popular are Chashu (thinly sliced pork) and Nori (seaweed). The journey isn’t over, either! Ramen continues to evolve to suit the needs of its consumers. Its versatility and customizability make ramen an appealing option to all. There is no doubt that ramen has made its mark on people around the world. Whether used as a cheap means of sustenance or for a fulfilling meal, ramen has played an important role in many lives.

Rudra Patel ‘28

First Place, Freshmen Nonfiction



Avocado

“Peel the avocado, peel the avocado~
Peel the avocado!, peel the avocado!
Guacamole! Guac-guacamole!

Guacamole! Guac-guacamole!” inspired by Dr. Jean’s Banana song and by the freshly ripe avocados in his backyard, Ruthwik created a still life of two avocados that had just fallen from his tree.

Ruthwik Panga '26

The Extinction of Rhinos

Rhinos, or rhinoceroses, are one of the most recognizable creatures on the planet due to their ancient appearance. Unfortunately, they are on the brink of extinction, and are critically endangered due to heavy poaching and habitat loss. The future of these unique and remarkable animals is hanging on by a thread. Rhinos are typically found in Africa, in grasslands and savannas. Though rhinos may look terrifying, they are herbivores. Their diet mostly consists of grass, branches, and leaves. They are typically about five feet tall and 12 feet long. They weigh anywhere from 2,000 - 3,000 pounds. There are five species of rhinos. The main reason rhinos are becoming extinct is because of poaching. In some parts of Africa and Asia, the rhinoceros's horn is used for traditional medicines, and it is seen as a status symbol. This fuels the high demand for rhino horns. Rhino horns are composed of a material called keratin, which is the same thing that our fingernails and toenails are made up of. But as this was not known before, they were falsely believed to have medicinal value. This pushed the rhinoceros population extremely low. Habitat loss is also a significant threat to rhinos. As humans expand for agricultural reasons, rhinos are forced to leave their homes. Encroaching the land not only reduces the available space for rhinos to live in, but it also separates their populations, creating difficulties to find mates and maintain genetic diversity. Conservation efforts have been established to protect rhinos. Many measures have been set up to primarily stop poaching. There has been increased surveillance, harsher penalties for poaching, and the deployment of guards around the natural territory of rhinos. Many rhinos now roam in protected habitats, so poachers can't enter. Additionally, there have also been attempts to restore the original habitats of rhinos. However, these efforts have been futile because they are often underfunded, and face challenges, like obtaining the needed land and the lack of political will and help. One of the most successful conservation stories is that of the southern white rhino. In the early 1900s, there were only a handful, but they were brought back from near extinction to 17,000 of them due to many dedicated efforts. On the other hand, there are the northern white rhinos. Currently, there are only two female rhinos left, who are incapable of natural reproduction. The last male northern white rhinoceros passed away in 2018 at the age of 45. Similarly, the Javan and Sumatran rhinos are also critically endangered, with less than 100 individuals remaining in the wild. The extinction of rhinos would have tragic ecological consequences. As one of nine megaherbivores (herbivores that weigh more than one ton as an adult), they play a crucial role in their ecosystem by shaping vegetation by spreading seeds with their dung. Their disappearance would disrupt these ecosystems, leading to severe consequences for biodiversity. The critical endangerment of rhinos is a stark reminder of the impact of human activities on wildlife. Urgent and dedicated efforts are necessary to combat poaching and further habitat encroachment. By taking important actions now, we can hope to secure a future for these magnificent creatures and ensure that they continue to thrive in the wild for generations to come.

Vetrivelan Ganesh '28
Second Place, Freshmen Nonfiction

CHAIR MAN

It sounded like leather giving way under a massive amount of weight. She sat up straight in bed, breathing heavily, nightgown wet with a steady stream of sweat. The room was silent. Same cream wallpaper, same cream curtains, same alarm clock—now reading 2:01 A.M.—but something wasn't right. The room, in a way, felt heavy. To her, it felt like the room was carrying an enormous weight inside of it. In a process of frenzied thoughts, she had the foreboding feeling that the bedroom was watching her. She glanced at the door. The old knob was locked, closed and secure. But then she saw the chair. It was an ugly shape, sitting in the right hand corner of the room. It contrasted the whole room, looking 50 years older, tarnished, its arms and seat sagging and deformed. The thing was, she hadn't touched that chair since her husband died. Her husband died of a heart attack, even after his local doctor warned him. He weighed 300 pounds—at least—at the end of his life. But she couldn't leave him, not like that. So she stayed with him, hoping his body would finally give way to his weight, to not be able to withstand the burden anymore. Eventually, he died; he died in that exact chair. The old, beaten leather chair that he sat in all day, every day. But she wasn't thinking about that—all she knew was that something didn't feel right, and she couldn't take her eyes off the grotesque, sagging chair. She heard the ringing too—the one that people feel when their adrenaline pumps through their veins, the persistent sound that one feels when in the height of a dangerous moment. But it wouldn't stop. The room was holding its breath, and she could sense it. She tried to rest her head on the pillow, lying back down carefully. But then she heard it—the breathing. Cumbersome, large, strained breaths in...and out. She held her breath. She slowly untucked her hand from under the pillow, and as the room held its breath, she reached for her phone. She picked it up carefully, and two things happened: the breathing stopped and, at that exact moment, the moonlight cast through the windows shined on her phone's black screen. She found herself looking at the chair again, its reflection on her phone. Or...was it a chair? She couldn't tell. Its arms looked saggy, burley, and somehow...pale. Its cushion had folds and wrinkles in it. The legs were thick and husky...not like she remembered. And, atop the backrest of the chair, she somehow could make out a spherical shape...and it suddenly looked back at her. She screamed, dropping her phone. She sat up once again to face it. The chair was pulsating like a living creature. Her husband's head turned upwards, revealing an unsightly stretched and distorted face. She could make out his large, thick legs supporting himself, almost as if he was squatting. And his arms were resting on his knees, pale and disgustingly large. The room now reeked with sweat and rot. And the ugly, beaten, leather chair undulated and throbbed, standing up as a horrible, hulking thing. He wobbled and rumbled towards her. And the dark room let out its breath

Brendan Mullins '28

First Place, Freshmen Fiction



Sailing Ship

The ship sails to shore while the sun sets,
closing the day.

Tom Myers '26

The Deep Desolate

Deep under the bare rocks of Nevada lay a facility. Composed so compactly, yet working so effectively. Only those who worked there knew of its existence. A secret facility. An older man of tall stature who carried himself in a prideful way glanced around the large observatory before locking his eyes on someone “Agent Montgomery,” he remarked.

“Yes Captain,” replied a smaller woman with light brown hair who had been examining something. “Was anything found at the site? Anything of use to us?”

“Other than debris, not much.”

The Captain turned away from the young scientist before she stopped him again exclaiming, “Sir. We did find this book. It seems to be a journal. Be careful with it because the water has made it fragile.” The Captain took the shriveled grey book. If he hadn’t known better he would have mistaken it for just a piece of old paper. He opened the book slowly and read...Journal 53: The day started out as usual. Wake up, check cabin pressure, and prepare for a day of searching. As always cabin pressure remained stable. After checking the stability of the submarine I walked back to the tight living quarters which was simple yet our home. The room consists of two twin sized beds on each side. A narrow passageway was made down the middle of the beds. There was a small sign on the thick steel wall of John’s bed. This sign depicted a colorful ecosystem full of fish and life. Out here at the bottom of the Atlantic there is no similarity. This deep there is no life or light. Just an empty void. It can make even a skeleton lonely. Despite this we are still looking for the monster that lives down here. The ...A water stain faded the next words making them unrecognizable. The Captain flipped to the next page as if he were a surgeon holding a heart. The following pages read as this. The second and only other room is the control room. It is the same size as the living quarters except the control panel is at the end with a massive glass that extends the entire front. Along the side of the room are smaller glass windows with harpoon and net artillery on the outside. Most of the information we were given on it is redacted and hidden but clearly whatever it is, it must be dangerous. “John,” I shouted, “time to get to work.” John remarked, “I know. I know. Hey man, don’t you think it’s weird how we don’t know what we’re looking for. It’s like they’re throwing us into the dark with a deadly monster. I just want to make it back home. I just took this job to give a better life to my daughter. “Why didn’t you tell me you had a kid? I’m sure this thing is nothing.” Another chunk of water covered the next pages. With the journal continuing... “John! No John!” I yelled as his body lay there, a pool of blood around it. That thing had killed John and destroyed our weaponry. The cabin pressure dropped tremendously by now and I am now stuck in a destroyed room and blaring sirens. I now sit here writing this journal as my last effort. A search team is on the way and hopefully I will be okay. Looking around. Scribbles fell upon the page. Then clear but poorly written writing spelled out. IT’S HERE. THE

... The word was ripped out of the page. The writing continued. It looks like there is a way to kill it. If I strike it on i–

A dark red stain covered the rest of the page and seeped into the previous entries.

The Captain closed the book carefully and ordered, “Prepare the next group!”

Brais Santos '28
Second Place, Freshmen Fiction



Long Horizon on the Long Beach

Photograph of setting sun on Long Beach Island.

Santino Oliveti '26

Whispers of Winter

The frost air is crisp, the group is white,
The winter's chill arrives with soft delight.
The trees are bare, their branches reaching high,
While snowflakes dance beneath the twilight sky.
The winds are cold, but whispers through the nights,
A silent world aglow with pale moonlight.
The frozen lakes reflect a starry gleam,
A winter wonderland, a perfect dream.
The fire burns bright and warms the night,
While frost collects in silver light.
The world feels still, with soft snow's glow,
As winter whispers, calm and slow.

Julian Apilado '28

Freshman Poetry



Triumphant Tree

Beloved, and grand symbol stationed
in central Manhattan.

Santino Olivetti '26

The Cold

A door kicked open. Snow rushes into the cabin like a raging river. A table, two chairs, a lamp and a bunk bed are all that are in the cabin.

A man walks in. Brown fur coat. Black jeans. An axe. This man was strong. He had muscles that one can compare him to the great Hercules. He had a beard that one can compare him to the great Blackbeard. And he was cold...that one can compare him to himself.

The man sighs. "I need...need...to heal."
He takes a seat by the table and closes his eyes. After a few minutes, he awakes. The man slowly opens his jacket while wincing in pain. Once he fully opened it, he couldn't believe his eyes.

"The cut," the man said to himself, "...it's too deep."
Five deep cuts were made in the front of his body, all near the stomach. The cuts looked as if they were made by a ferocious animal. Blood stains are all over his body, but his cuts are frozen. The man closes his jacket back up and sits in silence.
As the man rests, he looks at the lamp next to him on the table. The lamp is dying. The fire is about to go out, but it fights to keep itself alive, like a soldier in the midst of a battle. And after a few minutes, the fire in the lamp finally goes out.

The man is frustrated. "Great, now I don't have anything to keep me warm. Only myself."

A few hours go by. The man is still sitting in silence, as if he was in a long prayer to God. Suddenly, he hears growls coming out of his cabin. The door is open, and he looks outside. Multiple yellow eyes come out of the darkness of the forest. Moments later, a long, chilling howl is made.

"Wolves," the man muttered. "We meet again."
The man stares outside. He squints his eyes as the descending horizon turns into night. He realizes that tonight is a full moon, even if it hasn't fully risen yet.
The man looks at his axe. He laughs to himself. And out of the blue, he hears a voice.

"Rise, my love," the voice whispers. "Do what you must."
The man stands up in pain, determinedly. He picks up his axe. The horizon had disappeared, and the moon had risen. The moon hovers over the cabin, as if it had haunted the man his whole life.

The man sighs. He looks up into the night. "I will be with you soon."
Slowly, he walks out of the cabin with his axe. The wind blows intensely against his face. And the cabin doors shut, as if the wind was the one who closed it.

The End

Rafael Manuel Paayas '27
First Place, Sophomore Fiction

The arctic's silent night

In the arctic's silent night,
Colors dance through the dark skies,
Natures magic the common folk say,
Memorizing all that see its way,
The Auroras' glow lights up the cold land,
It whispers secrets of the ancient land,
Our Ancestors who used the light to guide,
The Northern Lights, what a sight

Chris Coppa '25
Third Place, Senior Poetry



Flower

To flourish in darkness is a feat we all strive for but one we've already accomplished.

Ruthwik Panga '26

Powers Combined: Do We Need Connections and Intellect or Either to Succeed?

In our journey to achieve success, two major factors often stand out: connections between others and intelligence for jobs. While some argue that success depends on who you know, others believe that intelligence is the ultimate key. However, nobody has asked: could it be both? Is it important to have connections and intellect in the journey of life? Connections are the relationships and networks we build throughout our lives. These connections become bridges to various resources, like knowledge, recommendations to others, mentorship, and guidance. For example, someone with ties to several experts may secure an interview or collaboration that was hardly possible otherwise. Connections create extra options for people, making opportunities easier to obtain than for someone working alone. However, not every aspect of success seems to be based on connections... Smarts, which we know as intelligence, knowledge, and problem-solving abilities, play an equally vital role. Being smart allows a person to recognize opportunities, make decisions, and solve problems that using connections alone cannot. For instance, someone who knows several outstanding scientists and lawyers might be presented with a promising job in technology but lacks key skills needed for the post, an issue of which wastes a potential opportunity. Intellectuals have the skills necessary for those jobs, which they could benefit from. Success, as it seems, requires the combination of both connections and smarts. If an entrepreneur wanted to make a new product, he would need several connections to various fields. If he tried making a soap product specifically, for example: he would contact experts in chemistry and plants. However, to design the product, he would need intelligence to keep up with reports, and for which he would need to make decisions. If he had prior knowledge, it would streamline the process. In conclusion, taking either intelligence or connections alone is weak; however, when combining them, they become a force to be reckoned with. Connections create doors of opportunity, but they are locked. These examples have proven that being smart and having connections is better than only one or the other; so, meaningful relationships and sharp skills are the ways to success. After all, life is a journey, where connections are the bridges and smarts are the tools that help us cross them.

Yuvraaj Nair '28
Freshman Nonfiction



A New Dawn

A serene view of the sun dawning
over the calm waves of the sea.

Artist: *Ruthwik Panga '26*
Author: *Christopher Stark '27*

O a Life That Lies Before Us

One in which is rich in possible prosperity.
One in which we grow for progression.
One in which we experience for experience.
One in which we depend on the past to pave.
One in which we languish for success.
One in which we learn from failure.
One in which we regard to be esteemed,
One in which we admire to be admired.
One in which we love, to produce
One in which we provide to foster.
One in which we guide to protect.
One in which we fear for what will be,
One in which we weep for what has been.
One in which we appreciate from proceedings,
One in which we leave following arduous fulfillment.

O a life that lies behind us; one in which felt perpetual, yet proposes an ephemeral
symphony of mellifluous memories.

Santino Oliveti '26
Junior Poetry

Vignette Staff

Editor-in-Chief:

Santino Oliveti '26

Staff Members:

Antonio Tuccio '26

Thomas Myers '26

Benjamin Yao '26

Ruthwik Panga '26

Steffen Hettiarachchi '27

William Stephen '27

Christopher Stark '27

Arnav Pillai '27

Brendan Mullins '28

Massimo Oliveti '28

Aaron Stephen '29

Moderators:

Dr. Robert Longhi '81

Policy

All students enrolled at Saint Joseph, and all faculty members who work at the school, are encouraged to submit poetry, fiction, nonfiction, artwork, and photography to the literary and arts magazine. Submissions are judged equally on all grade levels. Writing submissions are collected in conjunction with the school's Robert Frost Writing Contest. Robert Frost Contest winners, in all grade levels, are published in the magazine. Other writing that is published in the Vignette, as well as all the artwork and photography, have been reviewed and approved by the literary staff.

Each student may submit a maximum of five works. Previously published pieces are not eligible. All writing entries must be typed. Each submission (writing, photography, and artwork) must include the following information: student ID number, grade level, title, and category (poetry, fiction, nonfiction, photography, artwork).

Submissions are judged by the Vignette literary and layout staff, which is comprised of students who try out for their positions. The English Department also provides guidance and feedback with regards to critiquing written submissions, as well as judging the winners of the Robert Frost Writing Contest. With the exception of artwork and photography, submissions are not returned. The editors and advisors reserve the right to edit manuscripts for grammar, spelling, punctuation, and clarity.

Colophon

The Vignette is published annually each spring by the literary and art staff of the Vignette at Saint Joseph. Copies are distributed free to all students and staff at Saint Joseph.

The body copy was set in Libre Baskerville 13 point for a majority of the pieces, with the font being altered on some to fit the piece on one page. Headlines were set in Libre Baskerville 20 point. Student's names are also set in the body copy size and italicized as well. Page numberings are set in Libre Baskerville 17 point font. The Vignette was completed in Google Slides for this edition, after a successful pilot edition for the 62nd Volume.

The front and back cover artworks are original creations by seniors Ruthwik Panga '26 and Benjamin Yao '26 respectively. These works were finished originally in sizes 8.5 x 11 and 8.5 x 11. Folios were designed by the Vignette staff. This magazine is 62 pages using a 8.5 x 11 inch format.

Thanks to the Saint Joseph English Department and the members of the Vignette Staff for your assistance with submissions and the compilation of this work as a whole. Unequivocally deserving of a thank you is our magazines' moderator Dr. Robert Longhi '81 for his diligent guidance and work, as this could not be possible without him.

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## *Vignette Awards*

2024: ASPA - "First Place"

2023: ASPA – "First Place for Top Scoring High School and College  
Literary and Art Magazines and Advisors"

2022: ASPA – "First Place with Special Merit"

2021: ASPA – "First Place with Special Merit" &  
"Outstanding Photograph"

2020: ASPA – "First Place with Special Merit" &  
"Most Outstanding High School Literary-Art Magazine"

2019: ASPA – "First Place with Special Merit"

2018: ASPA – "First Place with Special Merit"

2017: ASPA – "First Place with Special Merit"

2016: ASPA – "First Place with Special Merit"

2015: ASPA – "First Place with Special Merit"

2014: ASPA – "First Place with Special Merit" &  
"Most Outstanding Private School"

2013: ASPA – "First Place with Special Merit" &  
"Most Outstanding Private School"

2012: ASPA – "First Place with Special Merit"

2011: ASPA – "First Place with Special Merit"

2010: ASPA – "First Place with Special Merit"

2009: ASPA – "First Place with Special Merit"

2008: ASPA – "First Place with Special Merit"

2007: ASPA – "First Place with Special Merit"

2006: ASPA – "First Place with Special Merit"

# Dedication

This year's *Vignette Magazine* is dedicated to Mrs. Susan Kaloyerakis, a Partner in Mission, who passed away on March 16, 2025. The Saint Joseph community mourns her loss deeply and dearly misses her.

Born on February 13 1958, Mrs. Kaloyerakis was raised in Menlo Park Terrace where she grew up with her husband of 45 years, Grant. Deeply connected with the St. Joe's mission and the Brothers of the Sacred Heart, Mrs. Kaloyerakis became a staple to this home of hers. Starting as a food server for St. Joe's in the 1980s, she established roots of service before moving into the admissions department years later. Mrs. K continued to be a part of the community as she became a falcon mother to her son Anthony Kaloyerakis '02. Only deepening these roots through her time here, Mrs. K guided, now Partners in Mission, through the admissions process here at Saint Joseph High School. Being the loving, caring, and seemingly perpetual presence that Mrs. K was, she became a glue-like liaison that everyone enjoyed to be around.

A part of the main office Mrs. Kaloyerakis was the hospitable and understanding leader that touched many students and incoming families. From assisting prospective students through scheduling, to matching them with current students for the *Freshman for a Day* experience, Mrs. K truly was, the first here at St. Joes, that students came to love.

Despite a difficult battle with cancer, Mrs. K's commitment and dedication shined through to the end as she insisted on remaining a part of team, working remotely through her final days. Amid the darkness felt in her passing, Mrs. Kaloyerakis' light that touched a myriad of students, alumni, families, and staff here at Saint Joseph High School, will be the lasting memory they hold in her remembrance.



*Santino Oliveti '26*  
Editor-in-Chief

