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A MAKEOVER**

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THE SPARTAN SPEAR

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A SEASON OF BROTHERHOOD



Seniors Aiden Hazen and James Harvey hug after the 4A State Championship game against Henley. Photo by Toni Cooper

Rory Yasenchak
EDITOR

In a season defined by standout success, unity and a commitment to consistency, the Marist Catholic Spartans football team etched its legacy on the program for years to come.

Under the guidance of new head coach Charlie Landgraf, the Spartans emerged with an impressive 11-2 overall record and undefeated in league, showcasing a distinctive pass-heavy offense that left opponents struggling to keep pace. Throughout the season, including playoffs, the Spartans outscored opponents by a commanding margin, finishing with a cumulative score of 477-240.

Leading the offense were some key players including senior wide receiver Brady Bidwell, junior quarterback Nick Hudson, and senior wide receiver Kaden Erlenbush. According to MaxPreps Statistics, Hudson's aerial ability saw him dominate the 4A division, amassing 3,766 passing yards and throwing 47 touchdowns in the process. Bidwell, a force to be reckoned with on the receiving end, led the team with an impressive 1,037 yards on 80 receptions.

Adding to the offensive firepower was 6-foot-6 senior Kaden Erlenbush, a vital component for the Spartans and a go-to target for deep shots down the field. While Erlenbush ended up coming in second place in receiving yards for the Spartans with 988, he led the team in receiving touchdowns with 15 on the year.

(continued on page 7)

WE ARE #1

Volleyball gets to hang another banner



The volleyball team and fans join head coach Shari Pimental in celebration after winning the 4A volleyball State Championship on Nov 4. Photo by Toni Cooper

Taylor Murphy
STAFF

Marist Volleyball finished their season in November with a bang! By fighting hard and playing together, they pulled off an incredible and exciting victory over No. 1-ranked Marshfield in the 4A State Championship Game at Springfield High School in front of a packed gym full of family, friends and a rowdy student section.

The energy that filled the gym was unmatched as everyone watched in suspense, hoping their team would come out on top. The championship came down to extra points in the fifth set. The No. 2-ranked Spartans knocked off defending state champions Marshfield with a final score of 3-2.

"I was in such shock and didn't even realize we had won until the crowd stormed the court," senior middle blocker

Abigail Schombert said. The team was beyond overjoyed with the outcome – and it was especially sweet after having to share the league title with the Pirates.

Getting to the title game was a tough battle from the start. "We got the harder end of the bracket," Coach Shari Pimental said. But but the team was up for the challenge and they managed to take care of business.

The Friday afternoon quarterfinal game against Crook County was a hard-fought match. Marist pulled off the win 3-2, but only after losing the first two sets in the match. "After Crook County, I was so excited. I felt like I was going to throw up the whole match; it was unreal," Schombert said.

The semifinal game against Mazama was a little easier but still went four games, and had the girls playing late into

the evening on Friday.

It was another long battle for the championship. Sets were traded until the fifth and final set. It was senior Avia Tuguldur's kill and then solo block in the championship game that gave the Spartans the advantage at game point, before the Spartans finally won 17-15 on a mishandling of the ball by Marshfield. "At the moment I got that solo block, I immediately dropped to the floor. I shocked myself, I couldn't believe I had blocked such a hard hitter," senior Avia Tuguldur said.

With a game-high of 28 kills, junior outside hitter Giana Elgarico was awarded Player of the Game and was also a First Team All-Tournament selection "I was so excited and proud of everyone. I knew we could do it," Elgarico said.

Their season ended with an overall (continued on page 7)

A SEASON FOR THE BOOKS *Girls soccer earns second in 4A state after a record-breaking season*



The girls soccer team receives their second place trophy in the State Championship held in Hillsboro. Photo by Toni Cooper

Asher Pellegrini
EDITOR

A historically great season came to an end for the No. 1-ranked Marist girls soccer team on Nov. 11 at Liberty High School in Hillsboro in the OSAA 4A State Championship Game. They lost in penalty kicks to the No. 3-ranked North Marion Huskies with a final score of 1-2.

After 80 minutes of regular time, the score was knotted at one apiece, and 20 minutes of overtime wasn't enough to break the tie. The game was decided in a penalty shootout, with North Marion emerging

victorious.

Marist dominated their regular season schedule by outscoring opponents 93-7 and forcing ten shutouts along the way. They were perfect in Sky-Em League play, allowing zero goals, and were the Sky-Em League Champions. They finished the season with a 17-1-1 overall record, with one draw against the eventual OSAA 3A state champions, Catlin Gabel, the week before the 4A state playoffs began.

Marist continued their streak of success through their playoff run, beginning with a 6-0 win on Halloween against Astoria, which (continued on page 7)

NEWS

briefs

NHS WORKS FOR GOOD

During the month of November, National Honor Society students raised \$1716 to help feed food-insecure families in our community. All proceeds were donated to Food for Lane County and were doubled by an anonymous donor. For every dollar raised, two meals will be provided to individuals during the holiday season. The NHS students raised the funds by working concessions and holding 50/50 raffles at Marist football games.

ACADEMIC ALL-STATE

The Marist football, girls soccer, volleyball and boys cross country teams made it into the top ten of the OSAA 4A Academic All-State this fall for their team average GPA.

FUTURE FIRST CITIZEN CHOSEN

This November, senior Elizabeth Tucker was chosen to be Marist's Future First Citizen nominee to become Eugene's next Future First Citizen, awarded by the Eugene Chamber of Commerce. She was chosen out of six Marist students based on her merit and her service to the community. One student from every local high school is nominated and the winner will be announced at an award ceremony in January.

NEW FLAG POLE

At halftime of the football game on Oct. 20, thanks to junior Jackson Fort and his Eagle Scout project, Kevin Teller Field got a major upgrade to its flag pole: the flag can now fly later into the night because of a new light and the new pole is taller and can hold a bigger flag. Fort is still planning on adding a turf "M" around the base.

WINTER SPORTS BEGIN

The first home contests of the winter season are approaching! They are as follows: Boys and girls basketball at Marist on Dec. 8. Girls at 7 p.m. and boys at 8:30 p.m. Swimming has their first home meet at Echo Hollow Pool on Dec. 15 at 3 p.m. The Ski Team has their first league race at Hoodoo on Jan. 10.

NATIONAL MERIT SCHOLAR

In October, senior Jimmy Smythe was awarded the National Merit Commended Student by the College Board, after scoring in the top 3% of the 1.5 million students who took the PSAT's in the fall of their junior year.



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LOST IN WONDERLAND

Marist's Fall production is a wondrous success



The entire cast takes a bow for the crowd following their successful production of "Alice in Wonderland." Photo by Frankie Bianchina '26

August Santin
STAFF

Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* follows the young child Alice through a world of dreams – a world that was captured on stage in Marist's November production of "Alice in Wonderland" in all its hilarious and fantastical madness.

From critiquing flowers to haphazard tea parties, Alice wanders and wonders at her new world as she attempts to find her way home. "The whole story was one of her learning to grow up," said junior Maya Williams who played Alice. "I wanted Alice to seem younger but starting to grow up – and that showed when she would let her emotions out."

The play's two acts captured Carroll's rich story and the actors were able to capture the characters' personalities brilliantly. It was filled with iconic roles such as the Cheshire Cat, played by sophomore Sofia Copley, the Mad Hatter played by freshman Joshua Jesiah and the March Hare played

by freshman Josie Walkoviak.

Tweedledee and Tweedledum, however, stole the show with their childish antics. Played by seniors Asher Pellegrini and Peyton Tyner, the duo often brought the house down with laughter. "We tried out a lot of ideas and if they felt good we used them ... We just never said no," said Pellegrini.

This was Tyner's first time acting in a performance. "It was a fun experience getting to be funny with my friend," Tyner said.

This adaptation of Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* was directed by Tony Rust. Rust's son Glenn, who is now a playwright in Chicago, adapted the book for Cottage Grove High School in 2014 and Marist first performed it in 2015. For this production, He made additional edits to improve the narration to make the play easier to understand.

The show was a funny and imaginative telling of a story about growing up and how, despite the strangeness of the world, or maybe because of it, we can make it home.



Tweedledee and Tweedledum, played by seniors Peyton Tyner and Asher Pellegrini, share a moment while talking to Alice played by junior Maya Williams in the fall production of "Alice in Wonderland." Photo by Toni Cooper

RETREATS CAN'T BE BEAT

Co-ed retreats bring new opportunities for students

Asher Pellegrini
EDITOR

The Women's Encounter on the week-end of Nov. 18 kicked off the 2023-24 retreat season and was quickly followed by the Sophomore Girls Journey Retreat on Dec. 2-3.

The fall Women's Encounter was made up of only five Marist Retreat Leaders and just 17 junior and senior candidates. But despite the small number, the Encounter was still a success – as it always is.

"The Women's Encounter was a ton of fun," said senior retreat rector Haley Ross, who worked beside Stacy Baker to run the retreat.

"The [Fall Women's] Encounter was one of the most amazing experiences of my life, and I'm so grateful to have gotten the opportunity to spend such a special time with such a great group of people," senior

Avia Tuguldur said.

This year, for the first time in Marist's rich history, a co-ed Encounter and co-ed Sophomore Journey Retreat have been introduced into the retreat season. Instead of having four different retreat date options (two for each gender), it has been cut to three (one for each gender plus a co-ed.) The typical Fall Men's Encounter was not needed due to numbers and was replaced with a co-ed retreat in the spring.

Due to smaller class sizes particularly in the class of 2025, two retreats per gender would have been too many and Campus Ministry worried that having a smaller number of students per retreat would not be as impactful due to the need for optimal small group sizes.

The announcement to add co-ed retreats was made in early October, and sign-ups for the retreats opened up a week and a

half later. Head of Campus Ministry Dr. Rick Martin said this was an intentional decision, in order to let the students consider the change and make the best choice for themselves.

The co-ed Encounter option filled up quickly, at least on the boys' side. As of Nov. 21, likely due to the boy-dominated class, there was a waiting list on the boys' side of the sign-ups for the co-ed Encounter, with room left for the girls.

Mixing genders on a retreat may be able to bring a new perspective to such impactful high school moments, and could very well enrich the experience.

While the retreats have just begun, the Marist Retreat Team has been in full swing since their Formation Retreat in September. The Formation Retreat, which is also a co-ed retreat, is set at Camp Tapawingo outside of Falls City and consists of a three-day, two-night retreat led by Marist staff and alumni.

The purpose of the formation retreat is to develop skills for retreat leadership, along with creating a stronger bond among Retreat Team members. The skills prepare the Retreat Team to give Marist students the best possible experience on their respective retreats.

"The formation retreat was a great place to get to know the retreat team members," said senior retreat team member Becket Nelson.

Throughout the year, the Marist retreat team engages in weekly meetings, along with several other meetings specific to team members since not all team members work on every retreat.



Junior Miranda Hopkins, senior Avery Walkoviak and junior Annie Culver have fun playing a game of human-knot with their eyes closed. Photo by Toni Cooper

LOST AND FOUND

What did Covid change at Marist?

 **Jimmy Smythe**
EDITOR

This year is an interesting landmark; each student on campus today has only experienced Marist during and after Covid. Nobody remaining knows what it was like – before.

The first thing you'll hear stories about is the cafeteria's former glory. Rather than vending machines stocked with microwaveables, Marist boasted kitchen staff and provided fresh food each day; the hot scones were said to be legendary and well worth the long wait in line.

In addition to the things that are missed, there's also the things that we gained. The plethora of cleaning products that can be found in most classrooms is a carry-over from Covid: hand sanitizer units mounted in hallways, air purifiers built into ceiling panels found in many rooms as well as filtration systems in the cafeteria, gym, and ARC are keeping us healthier.

One tradition that changed during Covid is the outdoor graduation ceremony.

Whether it will remain this way is unsure, but since Covid, graduation has taken place on the football field instead of in the gym.

Covid also offered an opportunity for increased awareness of students' personal experiences in a way completely unique to the pandemic. The portal into students' lives allowed Marist staff to become more aware of the demographic of their students and challenge assumptions, letting them have greater empathy and an easier time making allowances for individual circumstances.

When asking a few of the teachers around campus, one difference following Covid appears to be the way students interact with their learning material. "I see a different sense of ownership that students have over their own learning," says math teacher Jeanette Herro about her student interactions following Covid. "There's a little bit of passivity there, or maybe they feel like they've lost their agency in terms of being in charge of their own learning."

Reducing the school experience to a to-do list and a phone call seems to have

lingered even after we've returned in person, with students emphasizing the process of doing rather than the process of learning.

Instead of focusing on how his students have changed since Covid, Mr. Moser reflected on how his own teaching was affected by Covid, saying that it had allowed him "to choose the things that are really important."

He cut some of the extraneous topics from his courses to put more class time into the essential ones. "Instead of spending 70% of the time on something that's important and 30% of the time on something that wasn't important now we spend maybe 80 to 85% of the time on that really important thing and less or no time on that other thing."

Moser says it could be an important change to keep even after Covid: distilling courses into a thorough coverage of the essential topics to ensure that students fully understand and connect with class material while being willing to leave behind extensions or topics that took away the

limited class time.

Instead of viewing those things that have been left behind as lost, we can instead see them as new opportunities. Where before we were locked into doing things the way they'd always been done, now we have a chance to think about and carefully consider anything that we want to bring back, justifying its contribution to the Marist community.

Mr. Moser fears that we will miss this opportunity by blindly returning to the way things were. "It was kind of nice to have that interruption that just took away the things that weren't important."

Whether a list of forgotten traditions and lost connections, or a chance to start anew with opportunities for change everywhere, Covid has deeply affected the Marist community. But we have come back together appreciating the time we have together all the more. We have grown stronger together and worked to rebuild the Marist community that has thrived for so many years.

FROM LETTERS TO LIKES

How different generations consume and share information

 **Elizabeth Tucker**
EDITOR

In Mark Chronister's 7th period Economics class, students asked him to display a fishbowl on the screen as visual stimulation while they listened to a 20-minute podcast. "I can't believe you guys need something on the screen in order to listen to a podcast," Chronister said. This folks, is the generation that all current high schoolers are a part of — Gen Z.

Gen Z is unique, as their main form of information consumption is from visuals through the swipe of a phone. Instagram, Snapchat, and TikTok all come to mind when understanding how this generation consumes and communicates information. Gen Z is often referred to as "tech-savvy" and yet simple emails go unseen. This shows that if someone in this generation isn't on their phone all the time, they are out of the loop.

"These days, being online provides entertainment, connection with friends and family, and information about the world that you would otherwise not have access to," said senior Claire Saxman.

Before Gen Z, were the people that made YouTube big — Millennials. Communication via acronyms on the Motorola flip phone was the craze of the day — TTYL, OMG, LOL. Tech was advancing with new forms of communication, MySpace and Facebook were the biggest hits when many Millennials were in high school. They were some of the first social media apps and were a way to share information and insights about oneself.

"Millennials were the first generation that realized the internet would be a good tool to gain information. Google is my best friend... I used to look information up on the computer at home," said Communications Coordinator and Millennial

Natalia Zreliak ('15).

Before Millennials, were the people who were alive when computers were just beginning to transform the management, creation and consumption of information as a whole — Gen X. Prior to phones and most of today's technology, Gen X grew up in a time when everything was "awesome" and "radical." "Dude" was common vernacular for "bro" Communication was most often done over the phone using the family landline which is still reflected now. This generation was in their 20's and 30's when Facebook and email grew in popularity.

"We used to think the encyclopedia was the only way to get information... I am simultaneously wary of where I get information but also completely amazed I can look up information at any time," said journalism teacher and Gen X-er, Toni Cooper.

And even before Gen X, there was the generation of letters, postcards, and phone calls. — the Boomers. Boomers grew up with a value for face-to-face communication. Currently, Boomers are the grandparents to Gen Z and the parents to either Millennials or Gen X. They are the most technologically challenged generation since the world was very different when they learned the social norms of communication. Even in a world full of technology, Boomers often still choose the written word to communicate and consume information.

"We're pretty diverse. A lot of us are stuck in older forms but some have welcomed the new stuff" said the Director of Campus Ministry and Formation Dr. Rick Martin who identifies as a Boomer.

It remains to be seen how Gen Alpha will learn to consume information but it will be sure to be different from what came before.



 **Hailey Trank**
EDITOR

On Nov. 25 many students and staff members noticed a new Marist fan at the football 4A State Championship Game — Sparty is in full swing and with a new mojo!

The much-anticipated makeover has finally taken center stage with a distinct Marist logo, drawing praise from staff and students. "It's so great to see the completed Sparty with the Marist logo that's very specific to our school," exclaimed art teacher McCall Sherrod.

The intricate design process was a collaborative effort with inputs from the Student Council, and various students and staff. Office volunteer Jill Cole, a Marist alum from the class of 1996 and current Marist parent, added her creative touch and put the gathered ideas into an initial drawing that was then sent to Street Character in Canada, setting the foundation for what promises to be a one-of-a-kind symbol for Marist, and who has created many local mascots.

Envisioned as an active participant in the Marist community, the new Sparty is hopefully to become a constant presence at pep rallies, assemblies, home games, and special gatherings like Preview Day and the annual Ice Cream Social for incoming students.

Principal Bob Fraley said the ultimate goal is to build morale and school pride across various sports and events, creating lasting memories for students and faculty alike.

Over the last 15 years or so, Sparty has made very few appearances at games and assemblies, relying on a few motivated students to put on the old and dilapidated mascot to entertain the crowds. It was last seen whole in 2019, only the head and the cape remained.

Counselor Shari Pimental, who played a pivotal role in ordering the original mascot in 1997 when she was the Activities Director

and Student Council moderator, expressed her excitement about Sparty's arrival, emphasizing its long-overdue necessity.

"The hope is to get it off the ground, see what the staff can do, and hope it goes far," Pimental said. With her experience as the Activities Director, she envisions Sparty being used by student-led school spirit groups and cheer teams. A few students have already expressed interest in donning the costume for the winter sports season.

Since realizing that the original Sparty was missing half the costume the Student Council has taken up the cause. Senior Student Council president Haley Ross, who initiated the Save Sparty campaign during her junior year, remains steadfast in her commitment. "I won't give up the Save Sparty Campaign, and I hope others won't as well!" Last year's student body fundraising efforts raised just about \$2000 so, a significant fundraising effort lies ahead.

The new Sparty, carrying a price tag of \$12,593, is more than a costume. For the cost, the mascot package also includes annual cleanings and the option for mascot training as well as being weatherproof, has heating and cooling capabilities, is lighter, and is made of cloth so there is nothing to break.

To safeguard Sparty's uniqueness, the decision was made to trademark the mascot's design. Fraley deems this crucial in preserving Sparty's uniqueness to Marist and its community. This strategic move prevents other schools from replicating or using Marist's distinctive mascot, underscoring the school's commitment to maintaining its identity and standing out among peers.

Fraley is looking to the Student Council and individuals passionate about enhancing Marist's school spirit to step forward and continue raising funds to make sure we pay for this awesome addition to our school community.

And what we got is awesome! And some lucky students are going to get to wear it soon!

Every Monday, the staff of the Spartan Spear open up a Google Doc and wait patiently for a prompt that grabs their attention before filling a page with whatever comes to their mind. Here's a few of our favorites ...

Monday Stories

PROMPT: DESCRIBE A VEGETABLE YOU DO NOT LIKE:

Onions are a disgusting vegetable. They not only attack you with poisonous air particles when you try to eat them — which, why would you want to deal with that — they're gross. They're all papery when you grab them and it's this gross, dry, dirty layer that you have to peel before you even get to the sticky layer of the onion.

Underneath the sticky layers are the weird rings of the onion. Why isn't it just a full vegetable. Why does it have to be all stringy? When you try to cut into them you end up bawling from how terrible the onion is. Is it truly worth the pain you go through to eat it? It's not even that great. If it was some delicious piece of heaven, then maybe I would consider eating it. But it's just this gross armpit-smelling thing.

I have to give some respect to the onion, however, because it does go through a lot of effort to not be eaten. The air poison is a very good defense. Anyone in the area of an onion being cut will have stinging eyes, which honestly is not fair because I did nothing to that onion, but because my mom decided to slice into it, I have to suffer. I think any vegetable that goes through that much trouble should just be left alone.

It's also inhuman to order anything with onions at a restaurant. You're forcing someone to have to chop it up and go through that pain. That's just cruel. Why would someone want to make another person cry just to have two slices of onion on their burger?

On top of that, onion rings aren't even good. Everyone raves about them but when you try to eat them, the onion is stretchy and when you try to bite a piece off you end up eating all the onion and then are left with this crunchy piece of fried flour. I can't think of a single dish that actually needs onions and tastes good.

Also, if you got some fast food, and you're eating your burger in the

car, then the whole thing is going to smell like armpits and why would you put yourself or anyone else in the car through that horrid smell? It's like you want no friends. That smell will last for up to a week unless you roll all your windows down and drive a hundred miles at Lighting McQueen speeds.

So, in conclusion, onions are terrible and gross and clearly don't want to be eaten. So, we should try and live in harmony by leaving them in the ground where they belong.

-Kaylynn Guevara

PROMPT: WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE GAME TO PLAY OR WATCH?

A constant in my young life was baseball. I grew up hearing stories of my dad playing in the minor leagues, and spent many a Sunday afternoon playing tee-ball with my sister. Whenever we had a family barbecue, my grandparents would set up bases in the grass of their backyard and pitch to all of my cousins and me. I remember swinging a big red bat that was almost as tall as me and aiming for the fences. My grandpa is a huge fan of the Giants and decorates his whole house on game day. My dad, on the other hand, is a die-hard Dodgers fan, and I grew up wearing those blue and white jerseys.

My dad hangs a flag on our porch with a big LA logo, and my grandpa grumbles in annoyance at the sight of it. He's convinced that my sister and I used to be Giants fans and my dad has corrupted us over the years. Some of my favorite memories revolve around watching baseball. I love watching the World Series with my parents and waving rally towels in the bottom of the ninth inning. I love seeing that not-so-big red bat that my grandparents still keep in the shed in their backyard. I still hear stories about my dad's 'glory days,' and I get to see his name on a plaque at the stadium my boyfriend now plays at. My mom tells me stories of watching my dad play,

and about the groupies that used to come to his game. Watching the games makes me feel connected to them and the past.

I have my dad's baseball card taped to my mirror on my vanity. He's wearing the Cleveland Indians uniform he still has in his closet, and the back of the card has all of his stats. It's a piece of my family's history, and every time I see it, I'm reminded of all of his hard work and dedication to his passion for the sport.

My grandpa and dad might fight on game day, and my cousins and I don't run those bases anymore, but baseball is a common thread in my family that seems to connect us all.

-Ava Konrady

PROMPT: WHAT IS LUCK? DO YOU AGREE THAT YOU CREATE YOUR OWN LUCK?

According to the Oxford Dictionary, the definition of luck is "success or failure apparently brought by chance rather than through one's own actions." A strictly surface-level analysis of this definition might lead one to believe that it's simply impossible to change or alter one's own luck, whether it be intentional or not.

However, one could certainly argue that people have the ability to intentionally place themselves in a situation garnering a greater — or better yet, greatest — chance of the desired result. Although this intriguing scenario is explicitly excluded from the definition of luck, there's a clear connection between the ideas. The thing that everyone needs to understand is that luck isn't just a measure of one's success but a measure of circumstances beyond their control that have either a positive or negative effect on their intended outcome or goal regardless of the context. As soon as you act with the goal of somehow "making your own luck," it becomes a different thing entirely.

-Rory Yasenchak



By Elizabeth Tucker

- Eggnog is better than hot chocolate.
- One should ALWAYS choose pie over cake.
- Math is the best subject.
- Banana is the superior flavor of Laffy Taffy.
- Pizza is just not good.
- "La La Land" is bad, and "Star Wars" is overrated.
- Instagram is better than Snapchat.
- Tom Holland is the best Spider-Man.

it was quite easy. In fact, she has many friends there that she has made during previous visits. She also gets to spend quality time with her cousins. While Addie may be used to the Australian way of life, some of their customs may surprise us, like the fact they get their driving license at 17. "I could use my U.S. license so I was the only one out of my friends that could drive," said Addie. "School is also set up differently there because they have primary and secondary school but no middle school." Addie and I decided to message some of her friends who live in Australia to ask about their favorite Australian colloquialisms. Among these were, "she'll be right" which means you'll be alright and "snag" which refers to a sausage sandwich, which is a popular Australian snack. Addie also asked the native Australians what some stereotypes are and whether or not they're fact or myth. "A lot of them said that riding kangaroos to school is a myth, but some others told me that they do ride kangaroos to school. That's very interesting because during my time there I always rode a kangaroo to school." Addie said. While I may never learn the truth about kangaroo rides, I did learn the truth about Australian stereotypes. I also had the opportunity to learn a lot more about someone I've been friends with for nearly a decade. It is unclear if these discoveries made me more or less likely to visit the outback, but one day, you may just find me on an Australian safari with the dingoes.

since she was young. She was often Down Under during our summer vacations, which is the winter season in Australia. Other stereotypes, like the notorious phrase "g'day mate" rang true. "I still say mate," Addie told me. "It's also true that we have a ton of weird animals and surfers. The weirdest animal I ever saw was a bin chicken. Those things are mad as a cut snake." "One of the most common misconceptions is that there's kangaroos everywhere," explained Addie. According to her, kangaroos are not all that common Down Under, and she has seen a couple during her time there. Addie also gifted me with some authentic Australian chocolates during our conversation, that may or may not have been from World Market. They were delicious and indeed transported me to the outback. But chocolate isn't the only popular Australian food. "Every morning I would wake up and eat some vegemite by the spoonful. I wish it was more popular here because it's so good." Vegemite is an extremely popular spread in Australia and is most commonly eaten on toast. Unfortunately, this reporter was unable to try vegemite, due to an inconvenient gluten allergy. Addie's role model and famous Australian soccer player, Sam Kerr, was a highlight of her time there. "My favorite memory was getting to watch Sam Kerr in the Women's World Cup and see all of the teams play," said Addie. While some may think going to another country is a difficult transition, Addie said

To learn more about this island continent, I sat down with senior Addie Ruckwardt, who also happens to be my friend since the second grade. Addie has dual citizenship and recently moved back to the States after living in Australia with her grandparents for the last year. Addie's mom was born in Australia but currently lives in Eugene. Addie has visited them nearly every year

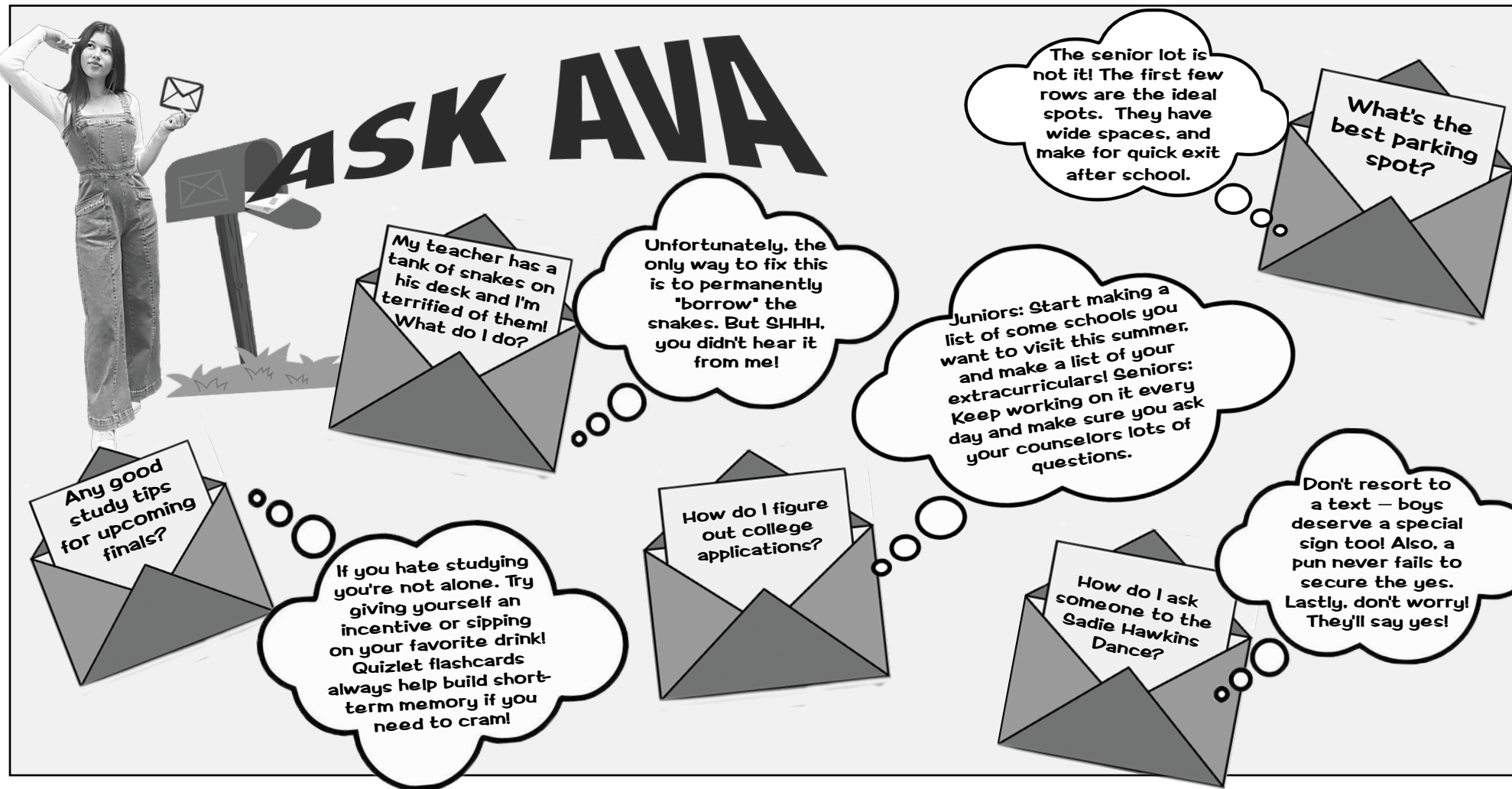
Down Under than meets the eye. Perhaps there's a lot more to this country vegemite. But are these stereotypes true? Of the phrase "g'day mate," or eating think of Australia. Or maybe you think surfing, oh my! These might be some kangaroos and boomerangs and EDITOR Ava Konrady

Addie Down Under

Analyzing and articulating Aussie adages and assumptions along side ...



ASK AVA



Any good study tips for upcoming finals?
If you hate studying you're not alone. Try giving yourself an incentive or sipping on your favorite drink! Quizlet flashcards always help build short-term memory if you need to cram!

My teacher has a tank of snakes on his desk and I'm terrified of them! What do I do?
Unfortunately, the only way to fix this is to permanently "borrow" the snakes. But SHHH, you didn't hear it from me!

How do I figure out college applications?
Juniors: Start making a list of some schools you want to visit this summer, and make a list of your extracurriculars! Seniors: Keep working on it every day and make sure you ask your counselors lots of questions.

How do I ask someone to the Sadie Hawkins Dance?
Don't resort to a text — boys deserve a special sign too! Also, a pun never fails to secure the yes. Lastly, don't worry! They'll say yes!

The senior lot is not it! The first few rows are the ideal spots. They have wide spaces, and make for quick exit after school.
What's the best parking spot?

MARIST'S SECRET SWIFT SCORES

How much pop star Taylor Swift is truly liked on campus

Asher Pellegrini
EDITOR

Taylor Swift could, quite possibly, be the most famous person on the earth right now. She is everywhere. Commercials, billboards, and she just claimed the title of Spotify's "Global Top Artist." Swift's recent involvement with NFL star Travis Kelce has also done nothing but expand her kingdom of fame.

I believe Taylor Swift is an extremely talented artist. She makes wonderful music, writes passionate lyrics and her

concerts always seem to be a hit. But when posed with the question, "Could you go without Taylor Swift?" My answer would simply be, yes.

That's where I think I differ from the average Taylor Swift fan. A "Swiftie" if you will. I could take or leave her music, while some consider it a basic necessity. I would personally give her a "Swift Score" (1 being "I strongly dislike her" and 10 being "I love her.") of 6.5.

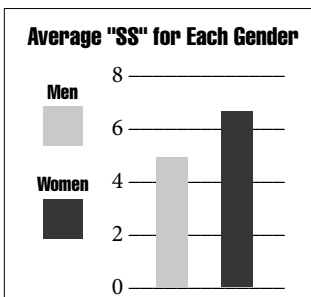
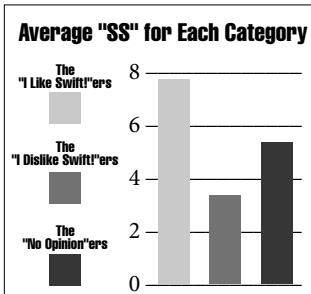
Swift is definitely making a positive impact on the world, but not on me. So the question begs to be asked; "How much is Taylor Swift liked at Marist?"

After conducting a survey, I broke down the numbers (below).

The survey was conducted like so; The first question was stated as: Do you like Taylor Swift? This question may seem pretty normal, but was very intentional. I made sure not to mention music, fame, or any other details that could affect the answer. I wanted to know what people thought when they simply heard the name.

There were then three possible answers: yes, no, or no opinion. After answering the first question, the volunteers were then asked to give her an SS on the 1-10 scale.

THE NUMBERS

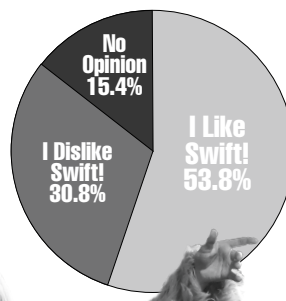


Of the 27 people sampled, 14 liked Taylor Swift, nine said they disliked her, while four didn't care or had no opinion. Of the people who liked T-Swizzle the average SS was 7.93. Of the people who didn't, the average SS was 3.44. Interestingly, the no opinion answer average SS was 5.63, higher than the expected five.

Gender-wise, females preferred Taylor Swift, which wasn't a surprise as it seems all over the world, Swift is generally more favored by women rather than men.

When giving such dramatic scores as a 1 or a 10, I further investigated what prompted such a score. If the score was a 10, answers ranged from "Swift is a great writer, singer, and person," or "she's such a big success, and I like her story" to "she's chill and dating Travis Kelce."

However, the perspectives of those giving a score of one were more animated: "I don't perceive her as a genuinely good person." "Fake and for the money; I would describe her as white bread." These paint the contrasting pictures on both ends of the Swift spectrum.



I VOTE FOR MORE PRIVILEGES

Taylor Murphy
STAFF

Being a senior comes with responsibilities and privileges, for example, going off-campus for lunch. Why is this option not available for juniors?

Off-campus lunch would give juniors a much-needed break from, arguably, the hardest schedule of their four years and something to look forward to. With college life on the horizon, juniors would benefit from more opportunities to be independent as most juniors are old enough to have their license.

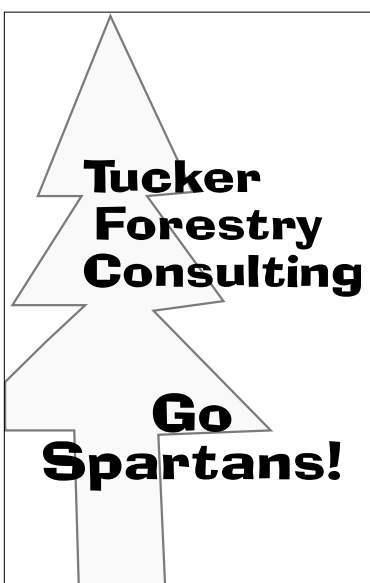
"The school's reasons behind all students not being able to leave campus for lunch is because of community and safety. School community isn't able to be built if students aren't on campus during the one time of day they aren't in class. To be able to go off-campus is viewed as a privilege for the seniors," Assistant Principal Stacey Baker said.

I see the point, but community bonding can be built on a deeper level beyond lunch hours. Juniors are far more familiar with the community and their classmates, having completed half of their high school career already. While underclassmen are new to the Marist community, most don't have their licenses and social hours spent on campus are crucial for bonding.

I do share, however, some of the school's views on safety. Off-campus lunch for juniors would mean more work for the attendance officer and more risks of accidents in the parking lot from students coming and going so quickly.

However, with the new addition of the front gate, the attendance issue would be taken care of if juniors were given key cards, which currently only seniors have.

Despite the safety concerns, it would make for a happier junior class and give underclassmen more to look forward to.

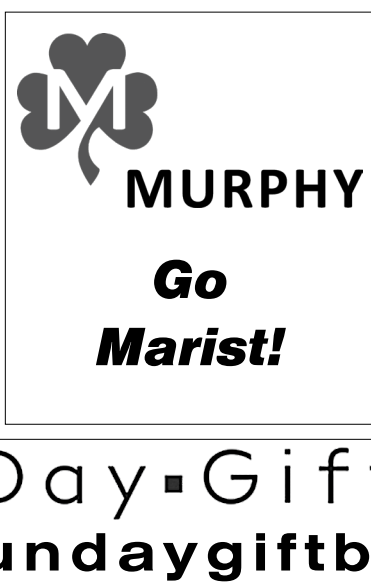


Tucker Forestry Consulting

Go Spartans!



Quantum HEALTH



MURPHY

Go Marist!



SWARM
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Donate today: Spartan Bee-Cause

Swarm and Spartan Bee-Cause are raising money to transform Marist into a bee-friendly campus. All donations used exclusively at Marist & tax deductible. Learn more and donate at Bee-Swarm.org



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THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE ANNOYING OF THE CHRISTMAS SEASON

Brady Bidwell
EDITOR

Christmas is a season of togetherness, in which everyone sets aside their needs in order to enjoy time with each other. This period brings me joy and anticipation as my family and friends take part in creative and nostalgic traditions to fully indulge in the spirit of the season.

I believe some customs are necessary to the total experience of the holiday and are flawless in both idea and execution each year. However, not all customs can reach such a scale of popularity and success, some are instead, downright awful.

Traditions such as movie nights incorporate nostalgia by watching films each year. Decorating Christmas trees, cookies, and the exteriors of houses are no-brainers when the season rolls around as it brings the members of my household together and brings fresh smells into our home.

As good as these are, not all traditions deserve

such attention. There are certain practices and ideas that confuse and occasionally disgust me.

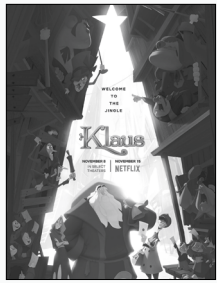
Cheesy traditions such as matching pajamas give me second-hand embarrassment. Their idea of a “cute” family photo ends with their Christmas card dumped in my trash.

Other rituals are creepier, including the ominous “Elf on the Shelf.” Instead of getting kids to act better around the house, it holds them in a perpetual state of fear as the little freak teleports around different parts of the home to spy on every little moment.

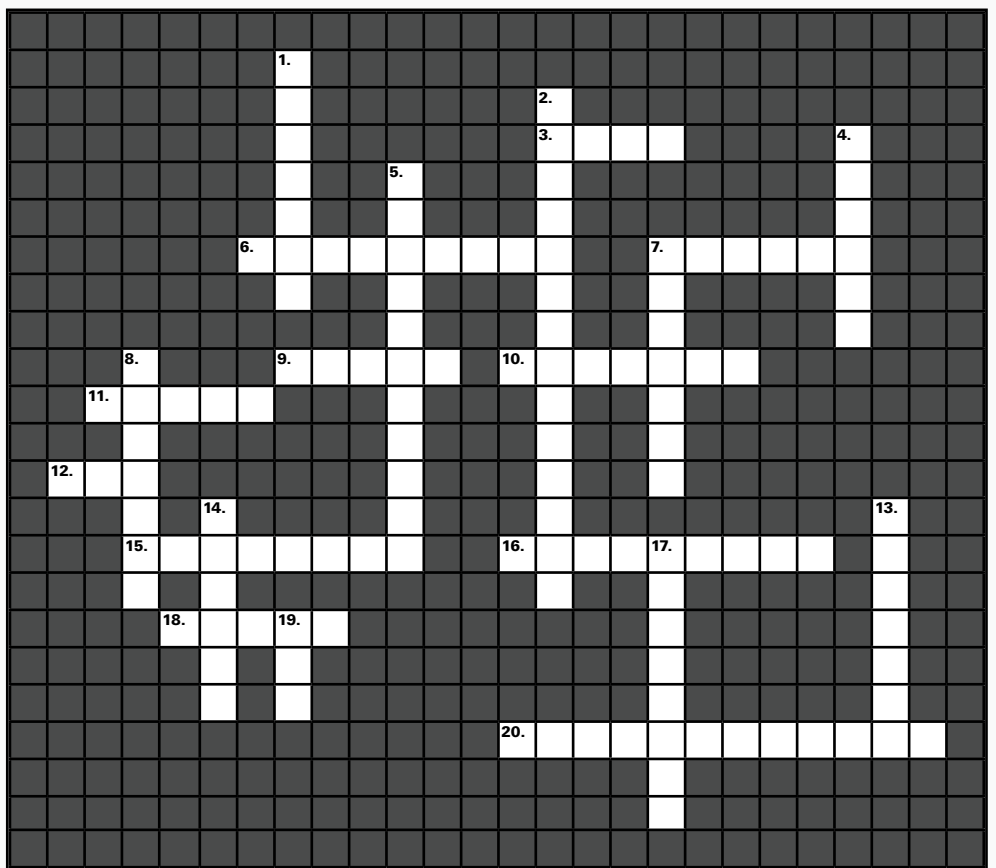
Another thing that bugs me is people lazy enough to ditch the family trip to the local tree farm and the exceptional smell of the Noble Fir to buy a phony, reusable piece of tree-shaped plastic from Walmart. These bad traditions not only prohibit the true, full Christmas experience, but also draw unnecessary attention to poorly executed ideas.

WHO LIKES WHICH CHRISTMAS MOVIE?

By Kaylynn Guevara



A JOLLY GOOD CROSSWORD



Across

- 3. Fill in the word: Silent Night, _____ Night.
- 6. Always give yourself an _____ when studying for finals. (hint: Look at Ask Ava)
- 7. What was Frosty the Snowman's nose made of?
- 9. “On, _____! on Cupid! on, Donner and Blitzen!”
- 10. What Christmas tradition that you hang on your door has a religious meaning of eternal life?
- 11. Who's "birthday" are we celebrating at Christmas?
- 12. _____ Holland. Argued to be the best Spiderman (hint: look at Hot takes)
- 15. Santa Claus is based on the Christian bishop St. _____
- 16. What city in Canada claims to be the birthplace of the first ugly-Christmas-sweater party?
- 18. What is a common decoration to put on top of your tree?
- 20. Christmas comes from the words Cristes Maesse which means _____.

Down

- 1. What are the eight maids doing in the famous Christmas song?
- 2. What best-selling Christmas song was written by Irving Berlin?
- 4. Debatably, better than hot chocolate. (hint: look at Hot Takes)
- 5. What popular Christmas song was originally written for Thanksgiving?
- 7. What country did eggnog originate in?
- 8. Which country started the tradition of putting up a Christmas tree?
- 13. A yummy “good” Christmas tradition (hint: look at Christmas traditions good and bad)
- 14. What popular morning snack is no longer sold at Marist because of COVID-19 (hint: look at Lost and Found)
- 17. What was the last state to declare Christmas a holiday?
- 19. Mr. Gilchrist's favorite Christmas movie (hint: see the matching teachers to their favorite movie)

By Will Barsotti

Create Your Own Song

Madlibs Style

By Elizabeth Tucker

_____ through the _____
[VERB ENDING IN ING] [WEATHER]
 In a one-_____ open _____
[ANIMAL] [NOUN]
 O'er the _____ we go,
[NOUN]
 _____ all the way,
[VERB ENDING IN ING]
 _____ on bobtails _____
[PLURAL NOUN] [ONOMATOPEIA]
 Making spirits _____
[ADJECTIVE]
 What _____ it is to _____ and _____
[ADJECTIVE] [VERB] [VERB]
 A sleighing _____ tonight.
[NOUN]

Jingle _____, jingle _____
[PLURAL NOUN] [PLURAL NOUN]
 Jingle all the way,
 Oh, what _____ it is to _____
[ADJECTIVE] [VERB]
 In a one-_____ open _____!
[ANIMAL] [NOUN] [EXCLAMATION]
 Jingle _____, jingle _____
[PLURAL NOUN] [PLURAL NOUN]
 Jingle all the way,
 Oh, what _____ it is to _____
[ADJECTIVE] [VERB]
 In a one-_____ open _____
[ANIMAL] [NOUN]

THE NIGHT CAP OF OLDE

The disappearance of an iconic piece of sleepwear



Rory Yasenchak
EDITOR

In the dimly lit bed chambers of yesteryear, the nightcap was a cherished addition to one's evening. It was a final glimpse of warmth before retiring to bed. But in modern times, this comforting ritual has faded into obscurity, leaving many to wonder what caused the downfall of the nightcap of olde.

The tale of the nightcap is steeped in history, with roots tracing back centuries. Worn by nobles and commoners alike, this fashionable accessory symbolized comfort, earning a place of honor in every

home. However, as time has passed its glorious reign has essentially vanished. As an elegant yet simple head covering, it served as protection against the night's chill and unwanted creepy-crawlies whilst also making a statement about one's social status. Whether crafted from silk or wool, these comical crowning pieces found their way into the wardrobes of millions of our ancestors.

Tragically, over the course of time, the popularity of the nightcap has experienced a steep decline. A number of technological advancements have significantly harmed one's need for a nightcap, as the introduction of reliable heating systems across the world has essentially rendered this headwear frivolous.

Changes in fashion preferences have also played a significant role in the decline. What was once the hip swagger of the 18th century is now a practice societally deemed as odd and outdated. In this era where people tend to opt for trendy clothing choices, the nightcap with its old-fashioned appeal has struggled to stay relevant.

I've spent many long nights dreading the possibility that I'll never know exactly how it feels to slide on a soft nightcap before fading off to slumber. It's nothing short of a crime that in our modern world, the vast majority of us will never get to utter the phrase “mamma in her 'kerchief, and I in my cap, had just settled our brains for a long winter's nap.”

CROSS COUNTRY GOES THE DISTANCE



(Above) Junior Conor Thompson battles through the wet conditions at the 4A State Championship Meet at LCC. Photo by Toni Cooper (Below) The girls team gathers together at the end of the District meet. Photo by McCall Sherrad

 **Will Barsotti**
STAFF

On a rainy, muddy Nov. 4, the boys cross country team finished in 6th place at the OSAA 4A State Championships at Lane Community College. Junior Conor Thompson was the standout with a 9th place overall finish and received First Team All-State honors.

At the Sky-Em League Cross Country District Championships the week before, the boys finished second with a score of 46. They were led by Thompson and freshman Corbin Sage, who both earned First Team All-League honors with their 3rd and 5th place finishes respectively. Lone senior and team captain Becket Nelson finished 9th and freshman Brock Cranmer finished 13th, both earning Second Team All-League. Junior Reed Sims and freshman Andrew May were All-League Honorable Mentions.

The freshmen on the team performed well. At the state meet, Sage held off a would-be passer in the last 100 meters, to finish 29th less than a tenth of a second faster than his competitor. Cranmer finished 13th in districts and nearly made the top 50 at state. "I'm really excited to see what we can do next year," Thompson said.

The entire girls team consisted of just seven runners and only one, Hannah Behrends, was an upperclassman and was unfortunately injured most of the season. This left room for freshman Lucy Shah to lead the team at meets. Shah was the only girl to qualify for state where she pushed past two people in the last 100 meters to get 29th. "I'm excited to start getting ready for the upcoming track season and the next few years of cross country!" Shah said.

At the district meet, Shah placed 6th which earned her First Team All-League recognition and sophomore June Robinson made All-League Honorable Mention. The girls placed 4th at the Sky-Em District Meet.

BOYS SOCCER BATTLES TO QUARTERFINALS



Senior and team captain Javier Sandoval-Gongora jumps for the ball while junior Will Barsotti runs to back him up in a match against North Bend. Photo by Toni Cooper

 **Brady Bidwell**
EDITOR

The boys soccer program had a great run at the 4A State Tournament this year and finished the season with a 0-3 loss in the quarterfinals against Newport/Waldport on Nov. 4. They advanced victorious from the first round of playoffs, defeating Hidden Valley 5-4 in penalty kicks following a 0-0 tie in regulation. Kellen Fitzpatrick saved two penalty kicks and scored the final goal to help the team seal the victory.

The boys finished in second place in the Sky-Em Conference just behind Cottage Grove and were ranked No. 11 in the state with a final record of 10-4-2.

One of this season's standout players was senior and team captain Javier Sandoval-Gongora who was named to the First Team All-League and was also chosen as the Sky-Em Player of the Year. Sandoval-Gongora, a four-year starter, played mid/left wing on attack and had the team best of 16 goals and seven assists in his final season.

Another athlete who also received First Team All-League was right wing Alex Atkerson who finished the season with 8 total assists and six goals.

Junior co-captain Alex Peterman, freshman Hudson Cheeseman, senior Joey Cooper and junior Kellen Fitzpatrick all earned Second Team All-League honors and junior Raith Huffman earned Honorable Mention All-League.

FAMILY SPIRIT KEEPS WATER POLO AFLOAT



Senior Micah Hugo looks for a teammate to advance the ball in a game against Ashland. Photo by Elizabeth Tucker '24

 **August Santin**
STAFF

The Marist co-ed water polo team had a season of growth and success. The team, which plays in the league's boys division, finished their season in late October with a record of 1-8. While losses outnumbered the wins, the team maintained a positive mindset and fostered a sense of family spirit. "We've all grown in friendship, community, and care for each other," junior co-captain Gwyneth Westover said.

Throughout the season, the team saw an improvement in both working together as a team and in strategizing as well as improving their shooting and defending skills.

"We definitely improved as a team this year ... By the end of the season we were working together better than ever," junior co-captain Piper Van Buskirk said.

A highlight of the year was beating the Sheldon co-ed team 11-8 and breaking a three-year losing streak. Their last win was by forfeit in 2019. As one of the few co-ed teams, most of their games are against all-male teams. "It was so great to finally be able to play girls and get a fair fight. It was especially nice for me because this is my first time ever playing so it is hard enough, let alone always having to only play guys," junior Miranda Hopkins said.

"I'm extremely proud of all my teammates, but especially Charlie and Addie, who had never played but ended up being some of our best players/scorers," Van Buskirk said.

"This is the first time I've played water polo and I had an absolute blast! My teammates made it an amazing experience and one I won't ever forget!" said Addie Ruckwardt.

Many players were chosen to receive honors by their league. Van Buskirk was named to the Second Team All-League and Westover and Ruckwardt were named the Third Team All-League. Junior Steen Swartley, senior Micah Hugo and freshman Charlie Westover were all named to the league's Honorable Mention team.

VOLLEYBALL: (Continued from page 1)

record of 23-2 and a league record of 7-1. Their only losses were to Pleasant Hill in the championship of the Marist Tournament and to Marshfield on the Pirates' own court. In Coos Bay, they were playing without their phenomenal freshman setter, Lauren Rohman, who Pimental refers to as the "glue of the team." She's not only a great setter, she also made a lot of points over the season with her sneaky, left-handed dumps.

Tuguldur led the team in aces with her unreturnable float serve. She was formidable at the net as well, finishing second in kills just behind junior outside-hitter Giana Elgarico who led the team in kills for the season.

Elgarico and Rohman were both named as First Team All-League selections and Tuguldur was a Second Team selection. Junior middle-blocker Avy Roundy led the team in blocks, and sophomore libero Kegan De Lee led the team in digs; both were named as All-League Honorable Mention selections.

This is the third state title that head coach of 32 years Shari Pimental has won at Marist. Pimental describes her team as "just different." With their silliness and dedication to the sport, the girls embraced the team goals they had set, which included maintaining positive mindsets, showing grit, and putting in the effort which was evident by their results.

"We did it together. I couldn't have done it without our amazing coaches and adaptable players who followed the principles that they had set throughout the entire season," Pimental said.

The volleyball program has been hoping for this win since 1999, when the volleyball team last hung a championship banner in the Holy Dome. It's going to be a proud moment when they get to hang one again after 23 years!

FOOTBALL: (Continued from page 1)

The Spartans' offensive success was further underscored by a new coaching style implemented by Landgraf. Focused on promoting leadership within the team and individual accountability, this approach led to an environment and mindset that many of the players, such as defensive star Aiden Hazen, felt allowed them to be "comfortable yet remain focused."

The defensive front, anchored by senior linebackers James Harvey and Aiden Hazen, saw Harvey tally an outstanding 155 total tackles and Aiden "Big Bosa" Hazen closely following with 135.

The camaraderie among players was evident, fostering a sense of unity that translated into victories on the field. "As soon as I got to Marist, my teammates grew very close to me, and were super welcoming. I'm so glad I got to be a part of such a fun season," Bidwell, a senior transfer, said.

Although the state title game against Henley ended in a 28-42 defeat, the Spartans' playoff journey this season and exceptional achievements will be remembered for years.

Their legacy extends beyond the scoreboard, embodying the values of hard work, dedication, and the pursuit of excellence. Perseverance is the word Hazen used to describe his team's year. "Our season was not just about wins and losses; it was a collective effort, a brotherhood that surpassed expectations,"

GIRLS SOCCER: (Continued from page 1)

they followed up with a 3-1 win against Gladstone four days later on Nov. 4. In the semifinals, and their final home game of the season, Marist had a close win 1-0 over Hidden Valley on Nov. 7 before their loss in the title game to North Marion.

One of the biggest highlights of the regular season for the Spartans came on Oct. 12 at Junction City when University of Oregon commit and senior team captain Clotine Chase scored her 100th goal in her high school career. "Scoring my 100th goal was so rewarding and felt so surreal," Chase said. "I wanted my last year as a Spartan to be my best." Chase was a First Team All-League selection and earned the Sky-Em League Player of the Year award.

With only one senior on the team, Chase, there was a lot of talent spread out amongst the younger players. Freshman striker Libby McLaughlin had the second most goals on the team with 24, behind Chase's state-leading 51.

Sophomore Piper Paslay was awarded 4A State Final Player of the Game for Marist. "It was really exciting," Paslay said. "But I couldn't have done it without the team." Paslay also was a Second Team All-League selection.

Junior Ella Braunger was also given First Team All-League recognition. Sophomores Ava Snyder and Emily Meigs along with juniors Kate Firth and Mattie Andrus all earned Second Team All-League honors.

Earning All-League Honorable Mention were sophomores Gina Schroffner and Sadey Woodrum and freshman Tori Sherman and coach Stefan Schroffner was named Sky-Em Coach of the Year.

STUDENTS of the ISSUE

FRESHMEN

COEN RUSHTON

Would you rather swim in a pool full of chocolate syrup or a pool full of maple syrup?

"A pool of chocolate syrup."

What is the best Christmas cookie?

"The ones with chocolate and peanut butter because they don't have a heap of frosting on them."

What's the best gift you have been given?

"Probably my Xbox because I've been using it for like six years."

When do you start decorating for Christmas?

"Like a couple weeks before."



ALANNA SCALA

Would you rather swim in a pool full of chocolate syrup or a pool full of maple syrup?

"Maple syrup."

What is the best Christmas cookie?

"Sugar cookies because they taste good."

What's the best gift you have been given?

"Airpods. I use them almost everyday."

When do you start decorating for Christmas?

"The day after Thanksgiving."

SOPHOMORES

EDISON YANG

What is your favorite holiday tradition?

"Appreciating Ryder Dame, Green-Jeep-Man."

Would you rather get food poisoning on Christmas or Thanksgiving?

"I'd rather get food poisoning on Christmas since we have a longer break."

What's the worst gift you've ever been given?

"Not enough love from Kai Allen Holmes, or homework."

If you had to swap your legs with any animal, what animal would you choose?

"Banana but if I have another choice a giraffe."



KIRA STUCKEY

What is your favorite holiday tradition?

"The turkey."

Would you rather get food poisoning on Christmas or Thanksgiving?

"Thanksgiving because I want to be happy on Christmas."

What's the worst gift you've ever been given?

"Socks with eyes."

If you had to swap your legs with any animal, what animal would you choose?

Great Dane. Because I want to be tall and fast."

JUNIORS

CALEB SINGLETON

What's the best \$5 gift you could give someone?

"Fuzzy socks."

Which holiday movie would you want to live in?

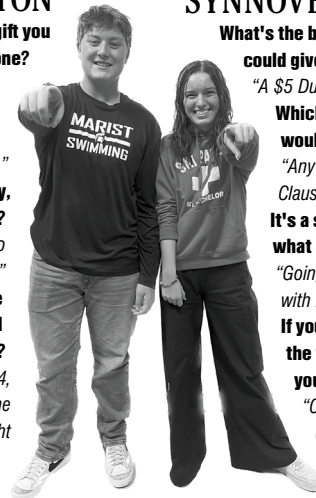
"The Night Before."

It's a snow day, what are you doing?

"Making an igloo with my friends."

If you could be a day of the year what day would you want to be?

"December 24, everyone loves the night before Christmas."



SYNNOVE SLAYDEN

What's the best \$5 gift you could give someone?

"A \$5 Dutch Bros gift card."

Which holiday movie would you want to live in?

"Any of the Santa Clause movies."

It's a snow day, what are you doing?

"Going sledding with friends."

If you could be a day of the year what day would you want to be?

"Christmas, because everyone likes Christmas."

SENIORS

LUKE JASPERS

What is your favorite Christmas song?

"God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen."

What would your elf name be?

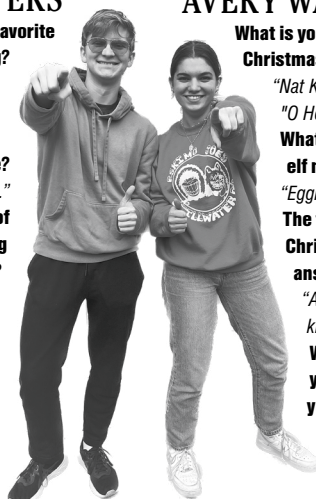
"Chip."

The true meaning of Christmas is [wrong answers only]?

"Getting free stuff."

Whose voice would you pick to narrate your life?

"Morgan Freeman."



AVERY WALKOVIK

What is your favorite Christmas song?

"Nat King Cole's 'O Holy Night.'"

What would your elf name be?

"Eggnog."

The true meaning of Christmas is [wrong answers only]?

"A Chick-Fil-A kids meal."

Whose voice would you pick to narrate your life?

"Martin Short."

MOVIE REVIEWS

Hailey's Pick of Scary Christmas Movies

Are you in the mood for a Christmas movie, but need a little spice with it? Well, let me introduce you to a unique genre: Christmas horror. It's a genre of horror spin-offs imbued with Christmas cheer, while these movies aren't terrifying they will add a little spice to the holiday season. Looking at these blasts from the past, I would recommend "Gremlins" for those who are looking for 80s comedy and creature themes. As the Christmas equivalent of Don Mancini's Chucky franchise, I would recommend "Jack Frost" to people who love dark humor and mutation themes.



Gremlins (1984) (PG) is a classic horror-comedy film that marries the whimsical with the terrifying. Directed by Joe Dante, the story revolves around a young man named Billy who receives a unique pet called Gizmo, a "Mogwai" as a Christmas present. The film takes a darkly humorous turn

as Gizmo's offspring transform into mischievous and malevolent creatures known as gremlins. The practical effects, especially considering the film's era, are commendable, bringing the mischievous gremlins to life in a way that captures the audience's imagination. *Gremlins* has become a beloved cult classic, cherished for its unique blend of horror and comedy. The film's success lies in its ability to balance the cute and cuddly with the sinister and scary. While not a film for those seeking a purely terrifying experience, it is a must-watch for fans of the 80s horror-comedy genre, offering a delightful mix of laughs, scares and inventive creature effects.

Jack Frost (1997) (PG-13) is a unique horror-comedy film that combines the absurdity of a killer snowman with a dark sense of humor. Directed by Michael Cooney, the story follows a serial killer named Jack Frost (not the friendly snowman from children's tales) who, after a freak accident involving a genetic mutation and a



truck full of experimental chemicals, transforms into a murderous snowman. He continues his reign of terror in a small, snow-covered town. The film offers a mix of gruesome, albeit tongue-in-cheek, deaths and moments of hilarity as the town's residents try to outwit the malevolent snowman. The practical effects, considering the film's low budget (\$7 million), are surprisingly creative, and the humor often takes a dark turn. *Jack Frost* is a cult classic, appreciated for its absurd premise and entertaining blend of horror and comedy, making it a must-see for fans of "cheesy" slasher horror films. However, it's not for those seeking a genuinely scary experience.



LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

Dear Asher,
What is the most recent news on "monster hunting?"
-A Curious Soul

Dear Curious Soul,
Some of the UK's most renowned "monster hunters" are planning to conduct the largest search for the Loch Ness monster in the past fifty years. Hopefully, they find something.
- Asher

Dear Elizabeth,
My hand is stuck in a jar. What shall I ever do?
- Student in a Jar

Dearest Student in a Jar,
You shall amputate the hand. It is the only option...
My Condolences,
- Elizabeth Tucker

Dear Jimmy,
I keep hearing people talking about firewalls on their computers. Will a firewall burn me?
- Confused Keyboarder

Dear Confused Keyboarder,
Not if you're careful. Always wear gloves when handling firewalls and make sure to have a fire extinguisher handy.
Behind a safety shield,
- Jimmy S.

Dear Hailey,
I recently got a fish named Billy and I'm curious... does he get thirsty? Should I give him something to drink?
- Floundering Fish Owner

Dear Floundering Fish Owner,
I'm honestly surprised that Billy has survived this long. Like any other fish, Billy will need to be given a liquid to drink (preferably not water 'cause duh), every other day.
Bubbling,
- Hailey

Dear Kaylynn,
Which of the seven dwarfs are you most like?
- Snow White Enthusiast

Dear Snow White Enthusiast,
I don't know why you're bothering me with such a question but if you seriously need to know I've been told I'm like Grumpy.
Leave me alone,
- Kaylynn

Dear Rory,
Where is Mario Judah?
- A Seeking Soul

Dear Seeking Soul,
He very well could be at his home in Flint, Michigan, however, one can never be sure...
- Rory

Dear Ava,
My tennis forehands are looking a bit shaky. Being the tennis GOAT you are, what are some tips to perfect it and finally win some matches?
- Frightful Forehands

Dear Frightful Forehands,
Unfortunately, I am not the tennis GOAT, but fortunately I can refer you to my tennis state champion boyfriend, who also thinks he's my coach. Good luck on your tennis journey!
See you on the court,
- Ava

Dear Brady,
How can I successfully grow out a mullet?
- Future Flow

Dear Future Flow,
The most important step to achieving such luscious locks is believing that it can be done and having a vision. As long as you are confident in the big step in your life, you can make the idea your own and tame the wild beast of headress. I look forward to the upcoming best chapter of your life,
- Brady